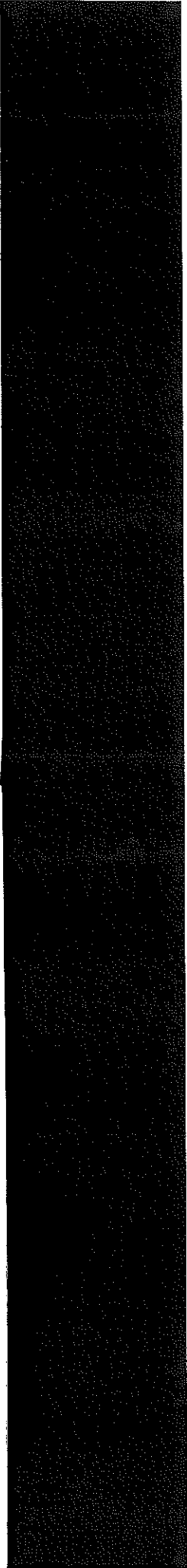


conceptual art: a critical anthology
edited by alexander alberro and blake stimson

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paragraphs on conceptual art sol lewitt

Conceptual art is not necessarily logical. The logic of a piece or series of pieces is a device that is used at times only to be ruined. Logic may be used to camouflage the real intent of the artist, to lull the viewer into the belief that he understands the work, or to infer a paradoxical situation (such as logic vs. illogic).² The ideas need not be complex. Most ideas that are successful are ludicrously simple. Successful ideas generally have the appearance of simplicity because they seem inevitable. In terms of idea the artist is free to even surprise himself. Ideas are discovered by intuition. *Sol 1-5 to 3-4 of paragraph 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.*

What the work of art looks like isn't too important. It has to look like something if it has physical form. No matter what form it may finally have it must begin with an idea. It is the process of conception and realization with which the artist is concerned. Once given physical reality by the artist the work is open to the perception of all, including the artist. (I use the word "perception" to mean the apprehension of the sense data, the objective understanding of the idea and simultaneously a subjective interpretation of both.) The work of art can only be perceived after it is completed.

Art that is meant for the sensation of the eye primarily would be called perceptual rather than conceptual. This would include most optical, kinetic, light and color art.

Since the functions of conception and perception are contradictory (one pre-, the other post-) the artist would mitigate his idea by applying subjective judgement to it. If the artist wishes to explore his idea thoroughly, then arbitrary or chance decisions would be kept to a minimum, while caprice, taste and other whimsies would be eliminated from the making of the art. The work does not necessarily have to be rejected if it does not look well. Sometimes what is initially thought to be awkward will eventually be visually pleasing.

To work with a plan that is pre-set is one way of avoiding subjectivity. It also obviates the necessity of designing each work in turn. The plan would design the work. Some plans would require millions of variations, and some a limited number, but both are finite. Other plans imply infinity. In each case, however, the artist would select the basic form and rules that would govern the solution of the problem. After that the fewer decisions made in the course of completing the work, the better. This eliminates the arbitrary, the capricious, and the subjective as much as possible. That is the reason for using this method.

When an artist uses a multiple modular method he usually chooses a simple and readily available form. The form itself is of very limited importance; it becomes the grammar for the total work. In fact it is best that the basic unit be deliberately uninteresting so that it may more easily become an intrinsic part of the entire work. Using complex basic forms only disrupts the unity of the whole. Using a simple form repeatedly narrows the field of the work and concen-

*sound about the
Judd's process*

The editor has written me that he is in favor of avoiding "the notion that the artist is a kind of ape that has to be explained by the civilized critic." This should be good news to both artists and apes. With this assurance I hope to justify his confidence. To continue a baseball metaphor (one artist wanted to hit the ball out of the park, another to stay loose at the plate and hit the ball where it was pitched), I am grateful for the opportunity to strike out for myself.

I will refer to the kind of art in which I am involved as conceptual art. In conceptual art the idea of concept is the most important aspect of the work.¹ When an artist uses a conceptual form of art, it means that all of the planning and decisions are made beforehand and the execution is a perfunctory affair. The idea becomes a machine that makes the art. This kind of art is not theoretical or illustrative of theories; it is intuitive, it is involved with all types of mental processes and it is purposeless. It is usually free from the dependence on the skill of the artist as a craftsman. It is the objective of the artist who is concerned with conceptual art to make his work mentally interesting to the spectator, and therefore usually he would want it to become emotionally dry. There is no reason to suppose, however, that the conceptual artist is out to bore the viewer. It is only the expectation of an emotional kick, to which one conditioned to expressionist art is accustomed, that would deter the viewer from perceiving this art.

can be measured. The intervals and measurements can be important to a work of art. If certain distances are important they will be made obvious in the piece. If space is relatively unimportant it can be regularized and made equal (things placed equal distances apart), to mitigate any interest in interval. Regular space might also become a metric time element, a kind of regular beat or pulse. When the interval is kept regular whatever is irregular gains more importance.

Architecture and three-dimensional art are of completely opposite natures. The former is concerned with making an area with a specific function. Architecture, whether it is a work of art or not, must be utilitarian or else fail completely. Art is not utilitarian. When three-dimensional art starts to take on some of the characteristics of architecture such as forming utilitarian areas it weakens its function as art. When the viewer is dwarfed by the large size of a piece this domination emphasizes the physical and emotive power of the form at the expense of losing the idea of the piece.

New materials are one of the great afflictions of contemporary art. Some artists confuse new materials with new ideas. There is nothing worse than seeing art that wallows in gaudy baubles. By and large most artists who are attracted to these materials are the ones that lack the stringency of mind that would enable them to use the materials well. It takes a good artist to use new materials and make them into a work of art. The danger is, I think, in making the physicality of the material so important that it becomes the idea of the work (another kind of expressionism).

Three-dimensional art of any kind is a physical fact. This physicality is its most obvious close eye or emotions. The physicality of a three-dimensional object then becomes a contradiction to its non-emotive intent. Color, surface, texture, and shape only emphasize the physical aspects of the work. Anything that calls attention to and interests the viewer in this physicality is a deterrent to our understanding of the idea and is used as an expressive device. The conceptual artist would want to ameliorate this emphasis on materiality as much as possible or to use it in a paradoxical way. (To convert it into an idea.) This kind of art, then, should be stated with the most economy of means. Any idea that is better stated in two dimensions should not be in three dimensions. Ideas may also be stated with numbers, photographs, or words or any way the artist chooses, the form being unimportant.

These paragraphs are not intended as categorical imperatives but the ideas stated are as close as possible to my thinking at this time.³ These ideas are the result of my work as an artist and are subject to change as my experience changes. I have tried to state them with as much clarity as possible. If the statements I made are unclear it may mean the thinking is unclear.

rates the intensity to the arrangement of the form. This arrangement becomes the end while the form becomes the means.

Conceptual art doesn't really have much to do with mathematics, philosophy or any other mental discipline. The mathematics used by most artists is simple arithmetic or simple number systems. The philosophy of the work is implicit in the work and is not an illustration of any system of philosophy.

It doesn't really matter if the viewer understands the concepts of the artist by seeing the art. Once out of his hand the artist has no control over the way a viewer will perceive the work. Different people will understand the same thing in a different way.

Recently there has been much written about minimal art, but I have not discovered anyone who admits to doing this kind of thing. There are other art forms around called primary structures, reductive, cool, and mini-art. No artist I know will own up to any of these either. Therefore I conclude that it is part of a secret language that art critics use when communicating with each other through the medium of art magazines. Mini-art is best because it reminds one of the mini-skirts and long-legged girls. It must refer to very small works of art. This is a very good idea. Perhaps "mini-art" shows could be sent around the country in matchboxes. Or maybe the mini-artist is a very small person, say under five feet tall. If so, much good work will be found in the primary schools (primary school primary structures).

If the artist carries through his idea and makes it into visible form, then all the steps in the process are of importance. The idea itself, even if not made visual, is as much a work of art as any finished product. All intervening steps—scribbles, sketches, drawings, failed work, models, studies, thought, conversations—are of interest. Those that show the thought process of the artist are sometimes more interesting than the final product.

Determining what size a piece should be is difficult. If an idea requires three dimensions then it would seem any size would do. The question would be what size is best. If the thing were made gigantic then the size alone would be impressive and the idea may be lost entirely. Again, if it is too small, it may become inconsequential. The height of the viewer may have some bearing on the work and also the size of the space into which it will be placed. The artist may wish to place objects higher than the eye level of the viewer, or lower. I think the piece must be large enough to give the viewer whatever information he needs to understand the work and placed in such a way that will facilitate this understanding. (Unless the idea is of impediment and requires difficulty of vision or access.)

Space can be thought of as the cubic area occupied by a three-dimensional volume. Any volume would occupy space. It is air and cannot be seen. It is the interval between things that

Even while writing these ideas there seemed to be obvious inconsistencies (which I have tried to correct, but others will probably slip by). I do not advocate a conceptual form of art for all artists. I have found that it has worked well for me while other ways have not. It is one way of making art; other ways suit other artists. Nor do I think all conceptual art merits the viewer's attention. Conceptual art is only good when the idea is good.

NOTES

1. In other forms of art the concept may be changed in the process of execution.
2. Some ideas are logical in conception and illogical perceptually.
3. I dislike the term "work of art" because I am not in favor of work and the term sounds pretentious. But I don't know what other term to use.

This text first appeared in *Artforum*, 5:10 (Summer 1967), pp. 79-84.

the dematerialization of art

lucy r. lippard and john chandler

an "empty" work, or one with a minimum of action, seems infinitely longer than action-and-detail-filled time. This time element is, of course, psychological, but it allows the artist an alternative to or extension of the serial method. Painter-sculptor Michael Snow's film *Wave-length*, for instance, is tortuously extended within its 45-minute span. By the time the camera, zeroing in very slowly from the back of a large loft, reaches a series of windows and finally a photograph of water surface, or waves, between two of them, and by the time that photograph gradually fills the screen, the viewer is aware of an almost unbearable anticipation that seems the result of an equally unbearable length of time stretched out at a less than normal rate of looking: the intensity is reinforced by the sound, which during most of the film is monotonous, moving up in pitch and up in volume until at the end it is a shrill hum, both exciting and painful.

Joseph Schillinger, a minor American Cubist who wrote, over a twenty-five year period, an often extraordinary book called *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts*, divided the historical evolution of art into five "zones," which replace each other with increasing acceleration: 1. pre-aesthetic, a biological stage of mimicry; 2. traditional-aesthetic, a magic, ritual-religious art; 3. emotional-aesthetic, artistic expressions of emotions, self-expression, art for art's sake; 4. rational-aesthetic, characterized by empiricism, experimental art, novel art; 5. scientific, post-aesthetic, which will make possible the manufacture, distribution and consumption of a perfect art product and will be characterized by a fusion of the art forms and materials, and, finally, a "disintegration of art," the "abstraction and liberation of the idea."¹

Given this framework, we could now be in a transitional period between the last two phases, though one can hardly conceive of them as literally the last phases the visual arts will go through. After the intuitive process of recreating aesthetic realities through man's own body, the process of reproduction or imitation, mathematical logic enters into art. (The Bauhaus dictum "Less is More" was anticipated by William of Occam when he wrote: "What can be explained by fewer principles is explained needlessly by more"; Nominalism and Minimalism have more in common than alliteration.) From then on, man became increasingly conscious of the course of his evolution, beginning to create directly from principles without the intervention of reproductive reality. This clearly corresponds to the Greenbergian interpretation of Modernism (a word used long before Greenberg, though his disciples insist on attributing it to him). The final "post-aesthetic" phase supersedes this self-conscious, self-critical art that answers other art according to a determinist schedule. Involved with opening up rather than narrowing down, the newer work offers a curious kind of Utopianism which should not be

During the 1960's, the anti-intellectual, emotional/intuitive processes of art-making characteristic of the last two decades have begun to give way to an ultra-conceptual art that emphasizes the thinking process almost exclusively. As more and more work is designed in the studio but executed elsewhere by professional craftsmen, as the object becomes merely the end product, a number of artists are losing interest in the physical evolution of the work of art. The studio is again becoming a study. Such a trend appears to be provoking a profound dematerialization of art, especially of art as object, and if it continues to prevail, it may result in the object's becoming wholly obsolete. (. . .)

A highly conceptual art, like an extremely rejective art or an apparently random art, upsets detractors because there is "not enough to look at," or rather not enough of what they are accustomed to looking for. Monotonous or extremely simple-looking painting and totally "dumb" objects exist in time as well as in space because of two aspects of the viewing experience. First, they demand more participation by the viewer, despite their apparent hostility (which is not hostility so much as aloofness and self-containment). More time must be spent in experience of a detail-less work, for the viewer is used to focusing on details and absorbing an impression of the piece with the help of these details. Secondly, the time spent looking at

confused with Nihilism except in that, like all Utopias, it indirectly advocates a *tabula rasa*; like most Utopias, it has no concrete expression.

Dematerialized art is post-aesthetic only in its increasingly non-visual emphases. The aesthetic of principle is still an aesthetic, as implied by frequent statements by mathematicians and scientists about the *beauty* of an equation, formula or solution. "Why should an aesthetic criterion be so successful so often? Is it just that it satisfies physicists? I think there is only one answer—nature is inherently beautiful" (physicist Murray Gell-Mann); "In this case, there was a moment when I knew how nature worked. It had elegance and beauty. The goddam thing was gleaming" (Nobel prizewinner Richard Feynman).² The more one reads these statements, the more apparent it becomes that the scientist's attempt to discover, perhaps even to impose order and structure on the universe, rests on assumptions that are essentially aesthetic. Order itself, and its implied simplicity and unity, are aesthetic criteria.

The disintegration Schilling predicted is obviously implicit in the break-up since 1958 or so of traditional media, and in the introduction of electronics, light, sound, and, more important, performance attitudes into painting and sculpture—the so far unrealized intermedia revolution whose prophet is John Cage. It is also implied by the current international obsession with entropy. According to Wylie Sypher, for example: "The future is that in which time becomes effective, and the mark of time is the increasing disorder toward which our system tends. . . . During the course of time, entropy increases. Time can be measured by the loss of structure in our system, its tendency to sink back into that original chaos from which it may have emerged. . . . One meaning of time is a drift toward inertia."³

Today many artists are interested in an order that incorporates implications of disorder and chance, in a negation of actively ordering parts in favor of the presentation of a whole.⁴ Earlier in the 20th century the announcement of an element of indeterminacy and relativity in the scientific system was a factor in the rise of an irrational abstraction. Plato's anti-art statements, his opposition to initiative and representational art, and his contempt for the products of artists, whom he considered insane, are too familiar to review here, but they are interesting to note again in view of the current trend back to "normalcy," as evidenced by the provocative opening show of the East Village cooperative Lannis Museum of Normal Art, where several of the works discussed here were seen. Actually, the "museum" would be better called the Museum of Adnormal Art, since it pays unobtrusive homage to the late Ad Reinhardt and to his insistence that only "art-as-art" is normal for art. (The painter-director, Joseph Kosuth, admits his pedantic tendency, also relatable to Reinhardt's dogmas, in the pun on normal schools.) However, "no idea" was one of Reinhardt's Rules and his ideal did not include the

ultra-conceptual. When works of art, like words, are signs that convey ideas, they are not things in themselves but symbols or representatives of things. Such a work is a medium rather than an end in itself or "art-as-art." The medium need not be the message, and some ultra-conceptual art seems to declare that the conventional art media are no longer adequate as media to be messages in themselves. (. . .)

Idea art has been seen as art about criticism rather than art-as-art or even art about art. On the contrary, the dematerialization of the object might eventually lead to the disintegration of criticism as it is known today. The pedantic or didactic or dogmatic basis insisted on by many of these artists is incorporated in the art. It bypasses criticism as such. Judgment of ideas is less interesting than following the ideas through. In the process, one might discover that something is either a good idea, that is, fertile and open enough to suggest infinite possibilities, or a mediocre idea, that is, exhaustible, or a bad idea, that is, already exhausted or with so little substance that it can be taken no further. (The same can be applied to style in the formal sense, and style except as an individual trademark tends to disappear in the path of novelty.) If the object becomes obsolete, objective distance becomes obsolete. Sometime in the near future it may be necessary for the writer to be an artist as well as for the artist to be a writer. There will still be scholars and historians of art, but the contemporary critic may have to choose between a creative originality and explanatory historicism.

Ultra-conceptual art will be thought of by some as "formalist" because of the sparseness and austerity it shares with the best of painting and sculpture at the moment. Actually, it is as anti-formal as the most amorphous or journalistic expressionism. It represents a suspension of realism, even formal realism, color realism, and all the other "new realisms." However, the idea that art can be experienced in order to extract an idea or underlying intellectual scheme as well as to perceive its formal essence *continues from* the opposing formalist premise that painting and sculpture should be looked at as objects *per se* rather than as references to other images and representation. As visual art, a highly conceptual work still stands or falls by what it looks like, but the primary, rejective trends in their emphasis on singleness and autonomy have limited the amount of information given, and therefore the amount of formal analysis possible. They have set critic and viewer thinking about what they see rather than simply weighing the formal or emotive impact. Intellectual and aesthetic pleasure can merge in this experience when the work is both visually strong and theoretically complex.

Some thirty years ago, Ortega wrote about the "new art": "The task it sets itself is enormous; it wants to create from nothing. Later, I expect, it will be content with less and achieve more." Fully aware of the difficulty of the new art, he would probably not have been surprised

to find that a generation or more later the artist has achieved more with less, has continued to make something of "nought" fifty years after Malevich's *White on White* seemed to have defined nought for once and for all. We still do not know how much less "nothing" can be. Has an ultimate zero point been arrived at with black paintings, white paintings, light beams, transparent film, silent concerts, invisible sculpture, or any of the other projects mentioned above? It hardly seems likely.

NOTES

1. Joseph Schillinger, *The Mathematical Basis of the Arts* (New York: Philosophical Library, 1948), p. 17.
2. Quoted in Lee Edson, "Two Men in Search of the Quark," *New York Times Magazine* (8 October 1967).
3. Wylie Sypher, *Loss of Self in Modern Literature and Art* (New York: Vintage, 1962), pp. 73-74. The word has also been applied to differing areas of recent art by Robert Smithson and Piero Gilardi; it appears as the title of short stories as well, for instance, by Thomas Pynchon.
4. In the New York art world, the idea seems to have originated with Don Judd.
5. José Ortega y Gasset, *The Dehumanization of Art* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1956), p. 50.

This essay was written in late 1967 and first published in *Art International*, 12:2 (February 1968), pp. 31-36.

dialogue piece lee lozano

NOTE: START WRITE UP OF PIECE WHEN YOU HAVE MADE THE FIRST "CONTACT". SO FAR THE PEOPLE CALLED ARE THOSE WITH WHOM A DIALOGUE HAS ALREADY BEEN STARTED IN THE "PAST", A DIALOGUE WHICH MIGHT BE INTERESTING TO PURSUE.

May 16, 69— Moose ret's call. We make a date for May 17 (Sat), 5 P.M.
May 17, 69— Moose visits, then we go to his crib, turn on and have a great dialogue, that is, a long intense talk without too much tension during which we exchange many ideas.

NOTE: THE PURPOSE OF THIS PIECE IS TO HAVE A DIALOGUE WITH AS MANY PEOPLE AS POSSIBLE, NOT TO MAKE A PIECE. ANY PERSONAL INFORMATION EXCHANGED DURING DIALOGUE WILL BE PROTECTED BY MY CONFIDENCE. IF ANYONE WISHES IDEAS TO BE PASSED ON I SHALL COMPLY. As much as poss.

May 18— Call John Giorno, leave name & no. w/ A. S.
" Call Claus Oldenburg. Speak to Putty who will pass message on to Claus when he gets back to N. Y. In 2 wks.
" Call Yvonne Rainer. We make date for Sun, May 25.
" Call my mother, who is ill. She is having first drug experience & I invite her to have dialogue by long-dist. phone.
" Attend opening of Lucy's show at Paula Coopers. Speak to at least 13 people whom I'll call for a dialogue.
May 19, 69— John Giorno ret's call, will call Wed or Thur.
" Call Heizer to acknowledge rec'd of repros, invite him for dialogue, he'll call soon and bring more prints to show me.
" Call Ian Wilson, leave name/no. w/ his wife?
" 20, 69 David Lee calls from downstairs waking me up & we have a beautiful two hour dialogue (before I even have a chance to take a shit).
" Ian Wilson returns call. After a very unpleasant conversation he refuses to visit. I suggest taking a walk, he refuses and can't wait to get off phone. The conversation yielded an enormous amount of information in spite of his being adamant about not believing in "passing information", and some of his questions forced me to think more about what I am

(Started April 21, 69) OR VERBALL. CALL (OR WRITE/SPEAK TO) PEOPLE FOR THE SPECIFIC PURPOSE OF INVITING THEM TO YR LOFT FOR A DIALOGUE. IN PROCESS FOR THE REST OF "LIFE". (printed in the notebook's margin) NOTE: DEFINITION OF "DIALOGUE" REMAINS OPEN. VERBALL GIVES SOME INDICATION.

April 21, 69— Call Moose (Robt Morris). Leave name & number with his answering service.
May 11, 69— Call Walter DeMaria. Leave name only with A.S.
May 13, 69— Call Walter DeMaria. Leave name & number with A.S.
May 14, 69— Call Jap. (Jasper Johns) at Caselli Gallery. Leave name & no. with David White who promises to get message to Jap although Jap is "very busy & in & out of town this week".
May 14, 69— Call Poonsie (Larry Poons). He answers phone, we make a date for May 21 (Wed), 4 P.M.

"element" missing from this dialogue which happened to be present in all the previous dialogues was love.

Claire Copley mostly talks during dialogue, is interested in learning, she said.

Dan Graham & I have important dialogue in that definite changes were immediately effected because of it.

Call Poons, leave name & not ul A.S.

Call Brice, make date for June 3 (Tue), 8:30. Will Brice Manden bring his old lady I wonder?

No Brice doesn't come with Helen & we discuss "the Revolution", Brice talking almost entirely abt shitty business practices in the art world, & shitty treatment of artists by each other.

Larry Stafford who is in bldg to visit Ray Sieminowski knocks on my door & we have spontaneous dialogue, much abt gallery & dealer pitfalls.

Alan Saret returns both these nights & we continue dialogue. More later re this.

Vögel visits, we have long "dialogue".

Serra comes over a little high on beer & no food. Just into a dialogue with him (we've been smoking Saret's hash) when he gets an attack (too stoned), falls off chair to floor with a crash, has "convulsions" & passes out. Later he feels sick, lies down on bed until Saret comes over.

Call more people for dialogue. From now on I won't enter those calls in Piece but only dialogues per se, & calls when they are relevant.

Meet with Dick Anderson. We walk to 8th st. histories & return to his loft for rest of "dialogue". He talks continuously.

Gary Bower comes for dialogue at 3:00 P.M. & leaves at 9:00 P.M. It was engaging almost the whole time.

Gary Stevens talks abt his job at mental hosp. & other interesting subjects but I sense something (resistance, tension)? which keeps him at a distance. Perhaps he was just uncomfortable?

Send following postcard to Walter De Maria: "The reason I called you twice to which you have not been gracious enough to reply was to invite

" 28

" 30

June 2, 60

"

" 3

" 4

" 5 & 6

" 6

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June 16, 69

" 17

" 18

doing. He put his ideas into art mag jargon: "Are you setting up an environment?" He said something about the first "conversation" we had (abt a yr ago, at Longview, thru Lucy's suggesting that he talk to me), that it made him vomit, or something we talked about concerning art mags which I don't recall. I must now decide what to "do". Note: Mention inviting an animal to I. W. during this call.

No word from Poonsie. Call him at 6:16 P.M. He said (a bit fakely) "Oh this is Wednesday isn't it," that he was "inta sumpthin", could I call next Tues, I said I'd be glad to call next week, and he called me "Dear".

John Torrenceat calls. I invite him over & we have a dialogue on grass he brought. At end he stays too long but then I am so tired, I would not have been "up" to anything today. It was a good dialogue, very "dense". I clarified some important ideas.

DECIDE TO INVITE A CAT & A BABY FOR A DIALOGUE EACH. (May 22, 69)

May 23— Call Larry Weiner (as I promised at Cooper opening). Make date for visit Mon, May 26, 4 P.M.

May 24— Kalenbach comes at last for our first "official" dialogue. We trade a lot of our art ideas & discuss doing a piece together when he returns from Cal. (He leaves on June 3 for teaching job).

May 24, 69 When I call Claire Copley to apologize for abrupt departure last night from LaMonte's I invite her & we make date for Wed. May 28, after 7 P.M.

" 25 Call Yvonne around 2 P.M., no answer. Again later (to be correct) at 6:15. No answer.

" 25 Call David Dian, he'll call very soon for a visit.
" 25 Call Alan Saret, he will come tonight at 9:00. Later. It was very sluggish dialogue but I learn more than can be expressed verbally from Alan (a lot abt his no-scene), and about this time & place in history. Also realize I have no floor-pad for stoned guests stretching.

" 28 Larry Weiner & I have a "fast-paced" dialogue. He seems to behave as though to let the other person talk is to let the other person win. The

- you for a dialogue. Love, Lozano." (Walter replies by letter before he leaves town for summer. July.)
- " 23 Felix Roth comes for a "dialogue", laying on me all the problems of the middle class including operations.
- " 24 Jake (neighbor, 2 left bldg east of mine) unexpectedly drops in thru fire escape door which I open in hot weather. We have dialogue including stock market info & drug info.
- " 30 I receive a visit from Ronny McDonald & her friend Margo who were given my name in England by Tim Head. Pass info.
- July 9, 69 Jason Crum comes & is interesting but we do not have dialogue.
- " 9 Arthur Berman comes & is not very interesting but we do not have dialogue. (see July 17).
- " 10 Kass Zapkus & I have terrific dialogue, much abt art workers coalition, but then our dialogues have always been good & are mellow by now.
- " 11 Start dialogue with Hugo the Cat, who will live here for a while while his owners (neighbors Bill & Charlotte Saylor) are out of town. He mauls my arm as a start but the dialogue progresses slightly to a good fighting dialogue. One weekend is all I can take with Hugo.
- " 15 Bob Hout comes. We have rather stiff formal exchange. I try an abrupt move to wake him up.
- " 16 Bob (Smitty) Smithson arrives early. It is a matter of discomfort I think. But I got a lot of info out. (He wants my info.)
- " 17 Arthur Berman brings Doc Hughes. Doc does his napp & then goes to sleep. Have better talk with Arthur.
- " 24 Receive a visit from Phyllis Rosen & Portia Horcus, who have galleries in Boston. We talk a lot & I learn a lot, it was a good dialogue (trialogue). Aht 3 hrs, maybe more.
- " 25 Weston Naef has his own info but also allows himself to be drenched by my info. 4 hrs.
- " 28 Marcia Tucker stays 3 hrs, asks good questions, intense if somewhat gossipish dialogue, but she enjoys the play. Dialogue meaning.
- Aug 1, 69 Mike Shore & I were falling asleep from boredom with "conversation" so I suggested we go out & we ran around doing errands & stopping in stores, especially the bicycle store in E. Village.
- Aug 8, 69 Kent Cunow. Told a great "How I got my L. Y. rating" story.
- Aug 19, 69 Jim Harribas is as modern & interesting as ever—we have very good dialogue. Info from the world of museums, trustees & "political heavies".
- Aug 28, 69 Larry Stafford ret'ns.
- Sept 2— David Lee ret'ns. Contrast with his visit May 20, 69.
- Sept 10— Jerry Kastner comes back to pick up dope. This visit was slightly better than last time he came to see me.
- Sept 10— Ted Castle. For some reason, I no longer get turned on by his ideas, but he wasn't relaxed.
- Sept 11— David Levin, faggot, ex-Andover, stays 6 hrs, honest talk.
- Sept 19— Jillan Love comes to see uk (she's a double Leo).
- Sept 20— Ted Castle ret'ns once more for a brief visit.
- Sept 21— James Lee Bryars stretches out on bad for entire dialogue enjoying window view, bourbon, grass, etc.
- Sept 22— Jillan Love ret'ns bringing Baron & Baroness John & Helen Von Echt (both rich, young, beautiful & a lot of fun). For a change a pleasurable exchange with collectors.
- Sept 29— Jillan Love brings Jeff Paley. This was more of a triologue. Jeff Paley was more interest (ed) than (ing).
- Oct 1— Clement Meadmore brings the Englishwoman Jennifer A. Towndrow for a brief, packed dialogue betw. them & my work. She's with Studio Vista publ., London.
- Oct 1— Keith Sonnier & I on some previous visits he made here had more fun talking than we did today, but it was okay.
- Oct 8— Billy Bryant Copley & I has as good a dialogue today as any previously & we didn't even turn on till the end.
- Oct 12— Miles Ford hasn't been here for a long time but unfortunately I was too tired to be enthusiastic.
- Oct 14— Gregorie Muller & Whee Kim come unannounced (from Paris) given my name by Bellamy. Dan Graham happened to be here & he & I both dumped our own info in them. Gregorie says I am the only artist enthusiastic abt N.Y.C.
- Oct 16— Max Hutchinson from Australia invites me to join gallery he's opening

here but I tell him at present I don't want to join any gallery. Dialogue mostly about galleries. Jolly Max.

Oct 16— Miles Fort & I have a much better talk, a lot about teaching.

Oct 22— Have we of the best dialogues I've had in a long time. Murray Hochman.

Oct 27, 69— Mac Dady (from Whitney Mus.) doesn't get turned on by abstract painting but sure digs my comix. That's all right. Belts two bourbons for his trip to the suburbs.

Nov 1, 69— Larry Stafford ret'ns & we are both more relaxed & have more fun.

Nov 7, 69— Rolfe Ricke brings friend Hans, from Germany.

Nov 8— Amanda (Mackie?) from Wheaton College visits as a result of the colloquium there on Nov 6. She is bright & sophisticated, pretty, family lives in N.Y.C. (16th & Ave A?). We have very good talk especially towards end. She has her own grass & we get smashed on it. Her (male) family picks her up (her mother calls when she is here).

Nov 10— Alan Bayman (Bairman?) who was sent by Jillen Louie is very druggie from Brooklyn (but not Jewish, but I never know who is & who isn't).

Nov 11— Connie Bower visits to pick drawings for "Art Resources Center of the Whitney Museum of American Art" (Nov 22-Dec 6, 185 Cherry St. near Manhattan Bridge & South St).

Nov 11— Brief dialogue with Jerry "Walker" to whom I give some acid (instead of as. As Kaltenbach said). Pick up from St. Adrians.

Nov 16— Kas-Kas Zaphus brings over Mr & Mrs Frankel. The Frankels, from Chicago, to turn them on. They got high just fine, offer me money which I refuse telling them I'm insulted that they offered, & we part sugarly.

Nov 17— Cindy Nemser. Aries. I like Aries women, they're not sentimental. The big Brooklyn rebellion.

Nov 18— Larry Frisfeld (sp?) drops in, good talk.

Nov 19— George ("Dick") Bellamy comes agatin, slightly less hard work than last time he was here, enigma at end (both very high), inscrutable as sometimes before.

Nov 20, 69— Finally a group dialogue. Gary Bower brings kids from Arts Resources Center of Whitney Mus. for a terrific experience for me. About 18 kids. Talk mostly to a boy* who's going back to his farm in Mch., said he's the

only one who's not staying in N.Y.C. of his group. Said mine of all their symposiums so far was most "disorderly", the least "strict". *Bill Goers.

Nov 28, 69— Dr & Mrs Milton Bruton from Philadelphia. Dr Brutten, a child psychologist, wanted to talk about art & I wanted to talk abt psychology which seems like the conditions favorable to a good dialogue.

Dec 4, 69— Fred Gutzeit & I have instant good Scorpio communication.

Dec 5, 69— Agnes Denes tells me abt Dialectic Triangulation, her do-it-yourself philosophy.

Dec 5, 69— Eric, a student, comes by with Kaltenbach & the dialogue is mostly non-verbal.

Dec 8, 69— Ed Shostak, an old friend, gives a very generous & high-info dialogue which I enjoyed.

Dec 12, 69— Gary Bower ret'ns for a 7-hr dialogue this time. I thank him for letting me get out so many ideas.

Dec 13, 69— Lefty (Sebastian) Adler & I were just getting into a dialogue when Bob Stanley who brought him drags him away.

Dec 18, 69— Dine at Ed & Cindy Feldman's where the most exquisite dialogue takes place.

This text was begun by Lozano in April 1969. It has never before been published in its entirety.

introduction to information kynaston meshine

to be provincial, or to exist only within its own history, or to continue to be, perhaps, only a commentary on art. An alternative has been to extend the idea of art, to renew the definition, and to think beyond the traditional categories—painting, sculpture, drawing, printmaking, photography, film, theater, music, dance, and poetry. Such distinctions have become increasingly blurred. Many of the highly intellectual and serious young artists represented here have addressed themselves to the question of how to create an art that reaches out to an audience larger than that which has been interested in contemporary art in the last few decades. Their attempt to be poetic and imaginative, without being either aloof or condescending has led them into the communications areas that *information* reflects.

Superficially considered, some might seem to be directly involved with dandyism and the "gesture," and while some are, others use these as approaches to more subtle, sophisticated, and profound ends. The activity of these artists is to think of concepts that are broader and more cerebral than the expected "product" of the studio. With the sense of mobility and change that pervades their time, they are interested in ways of rapidly exchanging ideas, rather than embalming the idea in an "object." However, the idea may reside on paper or film. The public is constantly bombarded with strong visual imagery, be it in the newspapers or periodicals, on television or in the cinema. An artist certainly cannot compete with a man on the moon in the living room. This has therefore created an ambiguous and ironic position for the artist, a dilemma as to what he can do with contemporary media that reach many more people than the art gallery.

In the reevaluation of their situation, some artists have attempted to extend themselves into their environment and to work with its problems and events. Some have become aware of their own bodies, in a way that has nothing to do with the accepted idea of the self-portrait, but more with the questioning and observing of sensations. Others have embraced natural phenomena in ways that are at times romantic and at times bordering on scientific.

An intellectual climate that embraces Marcel Duchamp, Ad Reinhardt, Buckminster Fuller, Marshall McLuhan, the *I Ching*, the Beatles, Claude Lévi-Strauss, John Cage, Yves Klein, Herbert Marcuse, Ludwig Wittgenstein and theories of information and leisure inevitably adds to the already complex situation. It is even more enriched by the implications, for example, of Dada, and more recently happenings and Pop and "minimal" art.

With an art world that knows more readily about current work, through reproductions and the wide dissemination of information via periodicals, and that has been altered by television, films, and satellites, as well as the "jet," it is now possible for artists to be truly international; exchange with their peers is now comparatively simple. The art historian's problem of who did what first is almost getting to the point of having to date by the hour. Increasingly

Each artist was invited to create his own contribution to this book, a situation which meant that the material presented would be either directly related to the actual work in the show, or independent of it. Therefore, this book is essentially an anthology and considered a necessary adjunct to the exhibition. Contrary to the McLuhan thesis, books are still a major communication system, and perhaps becoming even more important, given "the global village" that the world has become. After all, *Time* magazine is available almost everywhere on Wednesday mornings.

The material presented by the artists is considerably varied, and also spirited, if not rebellious—which is not very surprising, considering the general social, political, and economic crises that are almost universal phenomena of 1970. If you are an artist in Brazil, you know of at least one friend who is being tortured; if you are one in Argentina, you probably have had a neighbor who has been in jail for having long hair, or for not being "dressed" properly; and if you are living in the United States, you may fear that you will be shot at, either in the universities, in your bed, or more formally in Indochina. It may seem too inappropriate, if not absurd, to get up in the morning, walk into a room, and apply dabs of paint from a little tube to a square of canvas. What can you as a young artist do that seems relevant and meaningful?

One necessity is, therefore, at least to move with the cultural stresses and preoccupations (as if you had a choice), particularly with the obvious changes in lifestyle. The art cannot afford

artists use the mail, telegrams, telex machines, etc., for transmission of works themselves—photographs, films, documents—or of information about their activity. For both artists and their public it is a stimulating and open situation, and certainly less parochial than even five years ago. It is no longer imperative for an artist to be in Paris or New York. Those far from the "art centers" contribute more easily, without the often artificial protocol that at one time seemed essential for recognition.

Inevitably for art, film and videotape are growing in importance. It is quite obvious that at this point they are major mass media. Their influence has meant that the general audience is beginning to be unwilling to give the delicate responses needed for looking at a painting. Artists are beginning to use this to their advantage. They hope to introduce a large public to more refined aesthetic experiences.

The films and videotapes in this exhibition and listed in this book have often been described as "minimally structured," which means that the content is non-narrative and that the style, while being almost an extension of *cinéma vérité*, is like so much of the other work in the show, simply a method of distributing the visual information that interests the artist.

The general attitude of the artists in this exhibition is certainly not hostile. It is straightforward, friendly, coolly involved, and allows experiences which are refreshing. It enables us to participate, quite often as in a game; at other times it seems almost therapeutic, making us question ourselves and our responses to unfamiliar stimuli. The constant demand is a more aware relation to our natural and artificial environments. There is always the sense of communication. These artists are questioning our prejudices, asking us to renounce our inhibitions, and if they are reevaluating the nature of art, they are also asking that we reassess what we have always taken for granted as our accepted and culturally conditioned aesthetic response to art.

It is only too obvious that there are unpredictable implications for the established systems. For example, the whole nature of collecting is perhaps becoming obsolete, and what is the traditional museum going to do about work at the bottom of the Sargasso Sea, or in the Kalahari desert, or in the Antarctic, or at the bottom of a volcano? How is the museum going to deal with the introduction of the new technology as an everyday part of its curatorial concerns?

I have purposely made this text short and very general. *Information* will allow for a more careful and thorough analysis of all the aesthetic and social implications of the work. My essay is really in the galleries and in the whole of this volume.

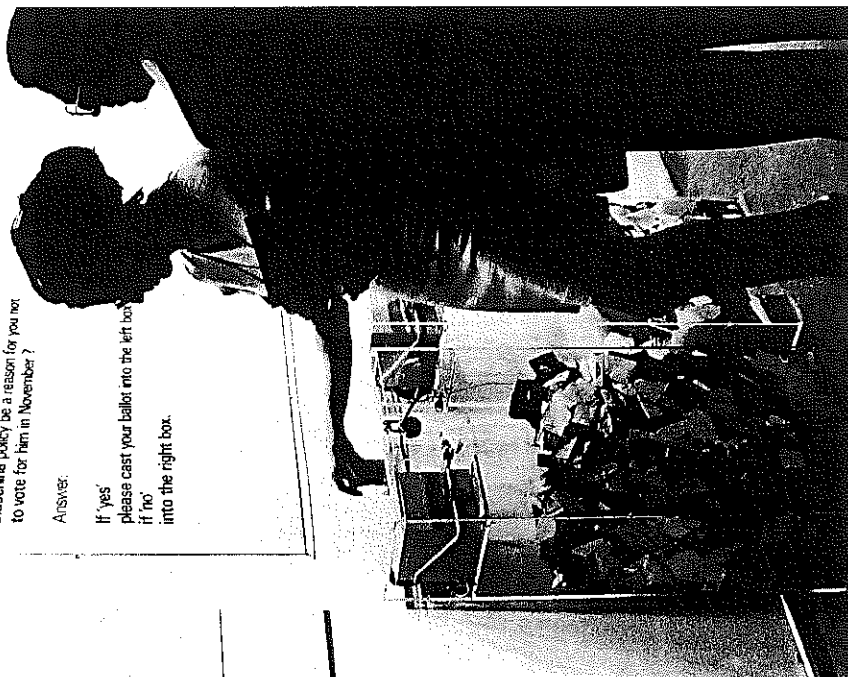
This text was written as the introduction to the catalogue for the exhibition *Information*, organized by McShine and staged at the Museum of Modern Art, New York (2 July–20 September 1970).

Question:

Would the fact that Governor Rockefeller has not denounced President Nixon's Indochina policy be a reason for you not to vote for him in November?

Answer:

If 'yes' please cast your ballot into the left box if 'no' into the right box.



thing, or talk; or find ourselves blindly working away for no good reason; or any, all, or other processes of this kind.

Procedures might include how we come by the materials we use; what we do in order to get them; whom we must deal with, and in what capacity; what kinds of decisions we make concerning them (aesthetic, pecuniary, environmental, etc.); to what extent the work demands interactions (social, political, collaborative) with other people, etc. In general, by procedures I mean what we *do* to realize the work as contrasted with how and what we *think*.

Whereas getting at thought processes and procedures is largely a matter of perspicuous description of what is immediately available, getting at presuppositions is not. Here there are many possible methods, all having to do with analysis of some kind. One might be what Kant called the method of "regressive proof" which he used in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Such an analysis would consist in beginning with the fact of the work itself, and from its properties inferring backward to the conditions necessary to bring it into existence. Luckily there is no need to insist that such conditions be transcendental. They might just as easily be social, psychological, political, metaphysical, aesthetic, or any combination thereof. Still another kind might be based on a loosely construed Hegelian method, in which the work is treated as thesis, an antithesis is posited, and a synthesis arrived at which in turn becomes thesis. The resulting dialectic attempts to specify the work with respect to the system of which it is a part. A third might be some variety of formal or informal psychological analysis: Freudian, Jungian, Reichian, etc. in terms of which we would try to make clear our subjective assumptions about the world.¹ Clearly there are others. We might do induction on the dreams we've been having, conduct ultimately *ad hominem* arguments with friends about the nature of art, etc.

The distinctions between the above are not intended to be sharply drawn. Generally what is required in meta-art is that we stand off and view our role of artist reflectively, that we see the fact of our art-making as itself a discrete state or process with interesting implications worthy of pursuing; that we articulate and present these implications to an audience (either the same as or broader than the art audience) for comment, evaluation, and feedback.

2. (. . .) Meta-art is genetically related to art, art activity, and being an artist. The impulse to meta-art is unfathomable in the way the impulse to art is; meta-art is unique in just the way art-making activity is, and for the same reasons; its subject matter is, like both of these, immediately accessible to artists. But unlike art and art-making, meta-art is not completely opaque because its tools are the discursive, conceptualizing, cognitive abilities of the artist. Doing meta-art presupposes immediate and privileged access to the impulse, the activity, and the

I would like to make a case for a new occupation for artists. This occupation might exist as part of, alongside, or instead of the art itself. If it existed as part of or alongside the art, it might have the effect of giving the art a perspicuous and viable interpretation, support, or framework, although I don't see this as its intention. If, on the other hand, it were to replace the art, well and good. We could then add it as a nascent appendage to the field, and spend hours of discussion and many kilocalories deciding upon its status and implications. I will call the occupation I have in mind "meta-art." To establish something of its character, I will first give a loose account of what I mean by the term. Then I will try to sharpen the definition somewhat by contrasting it with other activities for which it might be mistaken, viz. art and art criticism. Finally I will attempt to justify the contention that we need such a thing.

1. By "meta-art" I mean the activity of making explicit the thought processes, procedures, and presuppositions of making whatever kind of art we make. Thought processes might include how we hypothesize a work into existence; whether we reason from problems encountered in the last work to possible solutions in the next; or get "inspired" by seeing someone else's work, or a previously unnoticed aspect of our own; or read something, experience some-

are hit by the social and political realities of the suffering of other people, the more the satisfaction of aesthetic proclivities seems a fatuous defense of our position.

In elucidating the process of making art on a personal level, meta-art criticizes and indicts the machinations necessary to maintain this society as it is. It holds up for scrutiny how capitalism works on us and through us; how we therefore live, think, what we do as artists; what kinds of social interactions we have (personal, political, financial); what injustices we are the victim of, and which ones we must inflict on others in order to validate our work or our roles as artists; how we have learned to circumvent these, if at all, i.e. how highly developed we have had to become as political animals; what forms of manipulation we must utilize to get things done; what compromises we must make in our work or our integrity in order to reach the point where such compromises are no longer necessary; whether, given the structure of this society, there can be such a point.

This is not to say that the justification for meta-art is social indictment alone. It can also be an epistemic tool for discussing the work on a broader basis which includes the aesthetic. But ultimately the justification for meta-art is social, because it is concerned with artists, and artists are social: we are not exempt from the forces or the fate of this society.

NOTES

1. For some recent examples, in this and other fields, from an observer's standpoint, see: Anthony Storr, *The Dynamics of Creation* (New York, 1972); Ernst Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (1962); Bruce Mazlich, ed., *Psychoanalysis and History* (New York, 1971); C. Hanley and M. Lazerowitz, eds., *Psychoanalysis and Philosophy* (1971); Rosemary Mayer, "Performance and Experience," *Art* (December-January, 1973), pp. 33-36. Evaluations of some of these efforts—predominantly negative, and justifiably so, include Robert Coles, "Shrinking History, Part I," *New York Review of Books* (February 22, 1973), pp. 15-21; and Emmet Wilson in *The Journal of Philosophy* (March 8, 1973), pp. 128-134.

This essay first appeared in *Artforum*, 12:2 (October 1973), pp. 79-81.

emergence of the art. It is all of a piece with these, but in addition requires an epistemic self-consciousness about them, viz. viewing ourselves as the aesthetic objects we are, then elucidating as fully as possible the thoughts, procedures, and presuppositions that so define us.

3. Obscuring the distinction between meta-art and art criticism has resulted in the conceptions of the artist as superstar, as financial con man, as political satrap, as public relations expert. But it makes a difference whether we describe our own machinations and the motives and presuppositions behind them, or whether these machinations are revealed or imputed to us by a critic. The interviews in *Avantgarde* attempt to circumvent or simply ignore this problem by allowing artists to speak for themselves. But this mode of self-representation is not immune to the problem of misrepresentation encountered in third-person discourse. The point I want to press is that it is one thing to handle the referents of *artworks* in the third-person case, or try to reduce them from the work: art itself can't, after all, protest that it is being misunderstood. But to handle artists this way is more often than not to make of them unpleasantly stylized biographical objects. This then creates near-inviolable prejudices which blind us to any genuine attempts to penetrate past the formal properties of the work for a framework in which to understand it. Artists almost always complain about the way they come off in such articles or interviews, the best intentions of the critic notwithstanding. Since they are clearly not averse to having the material revealed in the first place, the implication is that artists should take the means of revelation into their own hands. (..)

Because the focal point of meta-art is on the artist *qua* artist, it simultaneously accommodates all those broader referents which support the art (including its cultural, financial, social, etc. status), while circumventing the requirements of cultural anthropology to account for an entire social context. Although the values will be social, ethical, philosophical, political, as well as aesthetic, the meta-artist need merely explicate his or her particular condition in order to suggest the condition of the society.

The contrasts I have tried to bring out support a description of meta-art as artistic in its concerns, epistemological in its method, humanistic in its system of values. (..)

I said earlier that the values of meta-art were humanistic in character. I meant to contrast this with the narrowly aesthetic values of art, and then argue that aesthetic values alone were in fact never sufficient to explain or justify making art, when viewed in its broader social context. Our basic aesthetic proclivities may indeed be real enough; but curiously, they barely develop, if at all, in the face of poverty, overcrowding, fifth-rate education, or job discrimination. Having aesthetic proclivities presupposes gratification of survival needs, and the more we