

NEW YORK
LIBRARY

NOVEMBER

ART FRONT



ARTISTS
COMMITTEE
OF ACTION



ARTISTS
UNION

5¢

2B

LETTERS FROM OUR FRIENDS

FORD.

...ove for a Municipal Art Gallery is an at-
to establish a healthy relation once more be-
the artist and his community. What is
important is that it aims at three things. First: it
will help take art out of the sphere of mere con-
noisseurship and wealthy patronage. Second: it will
emphasize living and contemporary art, produced out
of the impulses, struggles, passions, and ideals of our
own time. Third: it will help make art part of the
daily routine of the mass of people, and so bring
painting and sculpture as close to them as the mov-
ing pictures and the comic strips now are. Both the
creation of art and its appreciation must be built
up from the bottom, through the enlargement and re-
finement of common experiences, common feelings,
common actions. A Municipal Art Gallery, con-
ducted as the Artists' Committee of Action has pro-
posed, would help free art from the false and un-
social pecuniary standards that now so largely domi-
nate its patronage and its enjoyment.

HORACE GREGORY.

I believe that everyone interested in art and in the
civic development of New York should support the
Artists' Committee of Action in its drive for a
Municipal Art Center. Such a center is sure to be-
come a lasting memorial to the work of artists who
have already made New York City one of the great-
est art centers in modern times.

MAX WEBER.

I am writing to thank you for your kind invitation
to speak at the New School for Social Research. It
is indeed a great compliment I do not deserve.

I wish I could accept your invitation, but I fear
I am not at all gifted as a speaker, and I know that
there are artists who can express from the platform
our viewpoint much more to the point than I could.

Please do not doubt my interest and fullest sym-
pathy. My heart is full; welled to the brim with
resentment, for I see clearly—as other artists who
are socially conscious—how nazism, chauvinism and
fascism are worming into the life of art and artists
with cancerous malignance.

Hoping to be of service in another capacity to the
Artists' Committee of Action in its efforts to secure
a Municipal Art Gallery and Center, I am,

MAX WEBER.

P. S.—As artists and citizens we are at least
entitled to as much as the fish in the aquarium, the
animals and birds in the "Zoo" and the old dusty
historic charts, war maps, documents and other
curiosities, or as much as the dead plaster casts in
museums.

ARTISTS' UNION

MEETS

EVERY WEDNESDAY

West 18th Street 8:15 P. M.
BORIS GORELICK, Executive Secretary

**JOHN DEWEY'S TELEGRAM TO MAYOR
LA GUARDIA.**

DEAR MR. MAYOR:

May I call your attention to a matter which is
close to my heart; a Municipal Art Gallery and
Center as proposed by the Artists' Committee of
Action. This project will in no way burden the city
treasury.

At a Mass Meeting held tonight, May 8th, at the
New School of Social Research, where I spoke to
artists and representatives of art organizations and
art lovers, a resolution was read and accepted.

A delegation of artists was elected, also the
speakers of the evening, including Alfred Steiglitz,
Lewis Mumford, Herbert Tschudy of the Brooklyn
Museum, and myself. We will call on you Wednes-
day, May 9th, at 4 P. M., to present you with the
resolution and confer with you on the proposed
project of the Artists' Committee of Action.

I wish to express my keen interest in this under-
taking which is in my humble opinion, of great im-
portance, not only to the artists of this city but also
to the community.

Signed: JOHN DEWEY, ALFRED STEIGLITZ,
LEWIS MUMFORD, HERBERT TSCHUDY.

**TO ALL ART GROUPS AND ARTISTS OF THE
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

**FORM YOUR OWN ARTISTS' COMMITTEE
OF ACTION IN EVERY MUNICIPALITY.
COMMUNICATE WITH US FOR INFORMA-
TION AND CO-OPERATION.**

Artists' Committee of Action
9 MacDougal Alley, New York, N. Y.

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AND PAINTINGS BY OLD AND MODERN MASTERS

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15 PER CENT DISCOUNT TO ARTISTS

D E S

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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 27

9:00 P. M.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 3

SUBSCRIPTION 25 CENTS

STUART DAVIS.

The project of the Artists' Committee of Action
has potentialities of tremendous importance to all
the artists of New York City in particular, and to
all the artists of the United States in general. This
project, the Municipal Art Gallery and Center, im-
plies in its achievement a new and necessary orienta-
tion of the artist to his audience.

That audience in the past, primarily composed of
a very small class of society with large incomes, left
much to be desired. This economically enfranchised
class automatically dictated through their patronage,
the art taste of their time. No artist could be free
from their vulgar domination.

The private art dealer, who, of necessity, flattered
the taste of the buyer, was the only outlet for the
artist who had to live by his work. The art dealer
demanded work he could sell to the money dilettante,
and the aesthetic connoisseur.

The Municipal Art Gallery and Center, adminis-
tered by artists, will be the realization by the artists
of New York of the necessity of putting an end to
this intolerable condition. Through the Municipal
Art Gallery and Center, which will be guided in its
policy by directors elected from the rank and file of
the artists, a cultural impetus will be established in
the community which will make possible a powerful
art expression, having its roots in the masses of the
American people.

A Municipal Art Center in New York City will
be followed by the establishment of similar centers
in cities throughout the country, with a consequent
realization of social solidarity on the part of the
American artists.

**EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE
DIRECTORS' MEETING OF THE INDE-
PENDENT ARTISTS WHICH WAS
HELD ON MAY 8th, 1934.**

There were present, John Sloan, Bernar Gussow,
Milton Avery, George Constant, Walter Pach, A.
Walkowitz, A. S. Baylinson, William Meyrowitz,
Amy Spingarn, Charles Logasa, Dorothy Eisner,
Leo Sarkadi, Edith Branson, and Mrs. Magda Pach
were represented by proxy; also present and invited
to this meeting were Mr. Lionel Reiss and Mr.
Zoltan Hecht.

On a motion by Walkowitz, seconded by Meyro-
witz: "That the Society of Independent Artists
agrees to co-operate with the Artists' Committee of
Action, and would desire a space in a Municipal Art
Gallery and Center for a period of four or five
weeks, at the usual time when the Independents'
exhibitions are held."

It was so voted unanimously.

ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION

MEETS

EVERY MONDAY

11 West 18th Street 8:30 P. M.
HUGO GELLERT, Chairman

ARTISTS

MASS DEMONSTRATION!

Saturday 9 A. M. Oct. 27th, Meet at 11 West 18th St.

ALL MARCH TO CITY HALL

FOR JOBS AND IMMEDIATE RELIEF FOR ALL ARTISTS

For the MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY and CENTER Administered by Artists

ARTIS COMMITTEE OF ACTION
ARTISTS UNION

DANIELS

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GRamercy 7-4825

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JOBS RELIEF

ARTISTS UNION

MUNICIPAL ART CENTER MANAGED BY ARTISTS

ARTISTS COMMITTEE OF ACTION



ART FRONT

11 WEST 18th STREET NEW YORK CITY

Vol. 1 NOVEMBER 1934 No. 1

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

A. C. A.	HUGO GELLERT	STUART DAVIS
	ZOLTAN HECHT	ABRAHAM HARRITON
	ROSA PRINGLE	HILDA ABEL
	JENNINGS TOFEL	HAROLD BAUMBACH

H. S. BARON, *Managing Editor*

A. U.	ETHEL OLENIKOV	BORIS GORELICK
	ROBERT JONAS	MAX SPIVAK
	MICHAEL LOEW	KATHERINE GRIDLEY
	HERBERT KRUCKMAN	C. MACTARIAN

ART FRONT is sponsored by the Artists' Union and the Artists' Committee of Action. The scope of this magazine will be as wide as art is itself.

Many art magazines are being published in America today. Without one exception, however, these periodicals support outworn economic concepts as a basis for the support of art which victimize and destroy art. The urgent need for a publication which speaks for the artist, battles for his economic security and guides him in his artistic efforts is self-evident.

ART FRONT is the crystallization of all the forces in art surging forward to combat the destructive and chauvinistic tendencies which are becoming more distinct daily. It calls upon those who are interested in a sane and logical foundation for the best interests of art and artists to rally to its support. A new art frontier is being created. Help to extend it.

In this issue the programs of the Artists' Committee of Action and the Artists' Union are presented. The outline of the complete plan for jobs, for adequate relief and for the establishment of the Municipal Art Gallery and Center is included. It is of immediate importance that this number be given over to those concrete formulations of their programs. In the forthcoming issues, ART FRONT will concern itself with topics of general interest in the art world: Reviews, criticism, articles and reproductions of art works, together with news and reports of activities of both organizations.

VANDALISM AND JONAS LIE

On August 31, 1934, a John Smiuske, twenty-six years old, a house painter, threw varnish remover on a painting exhibited in the Westchester Institute of Fine Arts at Tarrytown, and struck a match to it, thus destroying it.

The painting satirized President Roosevelt and his family. Jonas Lie, President of the National Academy of Design, furnished \$500 bail for the release of the vandal. In a statement to the press, he said the following: "I was outraged over the caricature, and admired the youth for his courage and for having been aroused by so cowardly a portrayal."—*New York Times*, October 5, 1934.

AN OPEN LETTER TO JONAS LIE, PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF DESIGN.

SIR: According to the reports of New York newspapers, you, an artist, the President of the National Academy of Design, and an important official on various governmental art-projects, seem to be in thorough accord with the aims and methods of Adolph Hitler.

The civilized world stood aghast as Hitler coupled the killing of men with the burning of books. The executioner's axe and the flames of the pyre are fitting symbols for the backward-march of confused humans to the caveman. This marching back to the beast is by no means confined to present-day Germany alone.

You have openly endorsed and upheld the destruction of the work of a fellow-artist.

An active member of the Artists' Union met her untimely death on the first of October. Diana Gellerman was killed by the police on the picket line in Boston. Her activity in the Artists' Union was particularly notable for its sincerity and militancy. We grieve her loss and honor her memory as an inspiration and incentive.

The question of merit or demerit of the mural burned by a misguided person at the Westchester Institute is beside the point.

What is important is, that you, of all people, should expose yourself by giving \$500 bail to secure the freedom of the vandal; and that you are setting yourself up as an appointed judge, jury and executioner of art-works, all in one person.

What right have you to judge and what standards do you go by?

We do not propose to punish the misguided person who destroyed that mural in the Westchester Institute, particularly in view of the fact that the perpetrators of the destruction of a much more important work (the fresco in the Rockefeller Center) were never even in danger of being hauled to court.

But you, the President of the National Academy of Design and an important government art-representative, endorse and encourage such acts of vandalism!

You transgress the limits of propriety and expose yourself as unfit for the tenure of such offices; nor is it possible for you, as an individual, to dissociate yourself from those offices for the purpose of avoiding the consequences of such disgraceful acts.

We, members of the Artists' Committee of Action, tolerate no bigoted, self-appointed art dictator. We tolerate no censorship.

We artists uphold our right to decide on the form and content of our work.

We, members of the Artists' Committee of Action, denounce you as an enemy of art and artists.

We call upon all members of the National Academy of Design to demand your resignation as President of that institution.

We call upon all artists engaged on governmental projects to demand that you be dissociated from all governmental projects and that another artist, duly elected by the artists, should take your place.

We call upon all artists' organizations and all artists to uphold this measure of the Artists' Committee of Action, which represents the best interests of the artists, by the artists and for the artists.

Artists' Committee of Action, for the Municipal Art Gallery and Center, Artists' Union

ART FRONT,
11 West 18th Street

Enclosed find 60 cents for 1 year's subscription (\$1.00 for 2 years).

Name

Address

JONAS LIE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS.

The following is a statement by Jonas Lie in answer to the open letter addressed to him by the Artists' Committee of Action and the Artists' Union. "I am opposed to the destruction of other people's property . . . on the other hand, this overt act (burning of a painting—ed.) was committed in passion and motivated by a high ideal, therefore I sympathize with him (the vandal—ed.) in his act . . ."—*N. Y. Times*, October 10, 1934.

According to Mr. Lie, President of the National Academy, the destruction of a painting is merely "the destruction of other people's property." He is either blind or too politic to admit that a far more important issue is involved: censorship—the attack against artistic freedom; the suppression of the opinion of the artist.

This is not the first act of hostility to art and artists, and it is perfectly compatible with Jonas Lie as we artists know him.

The destruction of the fresco in Rockefeller Center provoked the artists to demonstrate against holding the first municipally sponsored exhibition at the place of the vandals. On the night of the opening of that exhibit, members of the Artists' Committee of Action and the Artists' Union were on the picket line at the entrance of Rockefeller Center. Jonas Lie arrived, his stove-pipe hat cocked at a rakish angle, he jeered at the pickets.

The *New York Times*, as would be expected, sides with Mr. Lie in an editorial of October 11th, 1934. "In addition to being a good painter, the President of the National Academy of Design is no mean hand at dial." Mr. Jonas Lie explains that when he furnished for the young man who threw acid on the anti-Roosevelt cartoon in the Westchester Institute of Fine Arts, he was acting not as an official of the Academy, but as a private individual. Distinguishing number two says it is wicked to destroy an artist's work without his permission, but in the present instance the offender acted in passion and under the sway of a high ideal.

Citizens who believe that a flash of honest indignation now and then is a becoming thing, would have been rather glad to learn that the man who furnished bail was Jonas Lie, the President of the National Academy as well as the private individual, and that the sense of civic outrage was reinforced by the feeling that it was a pretty bad picture.

An artist's property right in his work is a serious matter, but one hears it often said nowadays property rights are not 100 per cent sacred.

The editor of the *Times* is quite correct. Lie "is no mean hand at dielectics." That of opportunism—he knows well on which bread is buttered. The *Times* takes him: "property rights." The *Times* is to uphold the rights of property, not only art and artist. But when it comes to shipping magnates, steel corporati industrialists . . . Human blood nets glisten; teargas, machine editorials rush to the aid of sacred: PROPERTY RIGHTS.

FOR JOBS AND

OR A FEDERAL PERMANENT ART PROJECT.

When, approximately a year ago, the Artists' Union was ushered into existence, as a consequence of the resentment felt by the artists, its first consideration was the immediate creation of a Federal art project to employ all needy artists. The necessity of precisely such provision by the Government was so keenly felt by the artists that throughout the country, spontaneously, organizations were formed with this as their major objective.

The organization of artists, perhaps for the first time around specific immediate economic issues, was a clear indication that their predicament had become desperate, that they no longer could exist or function, that private patronage, as a guarantee for security and the furtherance of art, had collapsed.

The translation of their resentment into concrete action and determination to fight for the right to live and create brought results. Their demand that the Government assume its responsibility and alleviate their plight led finally to the formation of the Public Works of Art Project.

This brand new deal for the artists, and gesture in their direction, proved from the very outset utterly inadequate and completely out of proportion to the actual situation.

The much-heralded and advertised benefactor of the American people, the blue eagle, needed justification and glorification. The creation of the Public Works of Art Project was proclaimed as giving new impetus to the hitherto neglected creative forces of the United States, as a veritable Renaissance, as a great inspiration, as a new approach to the artist problem.

Ironically, however, this enthusiasm only lasted for about four and one-half months. The project was suddenly terminated and the small fraction of artists given employment were laid off.

A few figures will prove illuminating and complete the picture of absolute inadequacy. Throughout the extent of the project about thirty-five hundred artists were employed, each averaging about one or two months' work. In New York City, about seven hundred out of four thousand applicants were juggled on and off the payroll. The bubble was burst. Again the artists were faced with the same disregard and brutal callousness which characterized the Administration prior to the Public Works of Art Project. Their situation was aggravated and made worse by the ravages of another year of economic crisis.

The State of New York at this point was forced to re-employ about two hundred or three hundred artists. The State Relief Administration, however, did not pay on the basis of the P.W.A.P., \$38.25 per week, but cut the pay down to \$24 per week, and that only after the most humiliating investigations, paupers oaths, and red tape.

The Artists' Union during this period correctly pointed out the necessity for organization and determined struggle and as a result has expanded and broadened its influence and at this time has more than 700 members.

The Artists' Union is the spearhead of the struggle for the immediate needs of the artists, for

Permanent jobs for all unemployed artists.

- (Extension of former Public Works of Art Project for all unemployed artists): Regional Federal Art Museums and Lending Libraries to serve as a clearing house and exhibition center for all works produced under this project for circulation among public institutions and general public.
- Mural Painting and Decoration in Public Buildings.
- Monumental and Decorative Sculpture in Public Buildings.
- Miscellaneous Fine and Commercial Art Works such as Stained Glass, Illustration, etc.
- The Teaching of Arts and Crafts.
- Permanent Federal Art Project.

no discrimination be shown artists of any derivations, influences and trends in contemporary art today.

and Conditions:

\$25 per week as per P.W.A.P. basis for four hour minimum week.

complete freedom in the conception and execution of work.

representatives of Artists elected by all artists to form Administrative Bodies.

- Adequate Home Relief until placement on jobs.
- Passage of Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill, H. R. 7598.
- For the establishment of a Municipal Art Center by the City of New York.

For the realization of these objectives all artists join the Artists' Union. We appeal to all artists and art organizations to support our program.

HISTORY OF THE ARTISTS UNION.

Artists who are now participating in the Artists' Union meetings and enjoy the spirited and mass attendance of the meetings and activities will be surprised to learn the very inconspicuous beginning of the Union. A small number of artists, about 25, threatened by the discontinuance of the first white-collar and professional Emergency Work Bureau, and the consequent loss of their employment as artists on a relief basis, met on September 24th, 1933, at the "Meeting Place" and organized what was then known as the E. W. B. Artists Group. They were motivated by the realization that only the artist can define the artist's needs and the conditions necessary for his maintenance as an artist. They were aware that many thousands of other artists were in the same plight, and that in presenting resolutions to the State, numbers and organized strength counted. The name of the organization was changed to the Unemployed Artists Group. For a number of months they wandered from hall to hall for their meeting places. They finally established their present headquarters at 11 West 18th Street.

In December, 1933, the Unemployed Artists Group presented a petition to Relief Administrator Harry L. Hopkins, which involved plans for teaching, mural painting, easel painting and commercial and applied art jobs for all unemployed artists. Part of this plan was incorporated in the Public Works of Art Project of the C.W.A. last Winter.

When the P.W.A.P. started to function it called for the employment of only a limited number of artists. The Unemployed Artists Group protested against the limitations in number and the "merit system," as not meeting the requirements of the many thousands of artists that needed work and relief. In a demonstration before the Whitney Museum, they exposed the false publicity of the P.W.A.P. which claimed that it was taking care of all artists. This demonstration forced the administrator, Mrs. Julianna Force, to increase the speed of the actual employment by hiring additional help to take care of the artist applicants. Up to the date of the demonstration, the administrators pursued the policy of inviting artists to the "honor rolls" from lists of well-known galleries, disregarding the necessary registration at specified C.W.A. offices. Many artists waited ten weeks without being called, while a few artists who had not registered at all were employed. After this demonstration, artists began to be called in order of registration. This demonstration was also responsible for the extension of the State program of work-relief for artists and soon after, the State Relief Administration through the College Art Association began to employ artists on State projects.

At about this time, some personal sculptor friends of Mr. LaGuardia attempted to grab off some of the

spoils of the city funds for an art project particularly designed for themselves. They called a meeting at a small room in the Greenwich House for self-styled "Masters" and a few invited assistants. The group, mostly of the faculty of the da Vinci Art School on 34th Street, included also "Master" Piccirilli, owner of one of the largest stone carving studios, and "Master" Adams. Hearing about this meeting, the Unemployed Artists Group called for all artists and sculptors to attend as it concerned public funds. The meeting place, due to the response of over 350 artists, had to be changed to the Auditorium of the Greenwich House. There, in an exciting meeting, the Unemployed Artists Group exposed the private plans of the Fusion Art Ring, by presenting a plan to employ all unemployed artists. It received the endorsement of all the artists present, with the exception of the few "Masters."

In order to unite both employed and unemployed artists, the Unemployed Artists Group decided to change its name to the Artists' Union. In another demonstration before the Whitney Museum, the Artists' Union protested against the layoffs taking place and asked for the continuation and extension of the P.W.A.P. After this demonstration, Mrs. Julianna Force, administrator, decided that the rising protests of the artists against layoffs would reflect on the reputation of the Whitney Museum and so closed it. Press notices distorted the real reason and tried to blame it on "alleged vandalism." The Artists' Union protested against the false and malicious statements and sent a delegation to Mr. Edward Bruce, head of the Public Works of Art Project. Mr. Bruce admitted to our delegation that the statements were false and recognized the union's activities as being justified. He admitted that only the organized strength of the artists could force through the continuance and extension of permanent art jobs by Government projects.

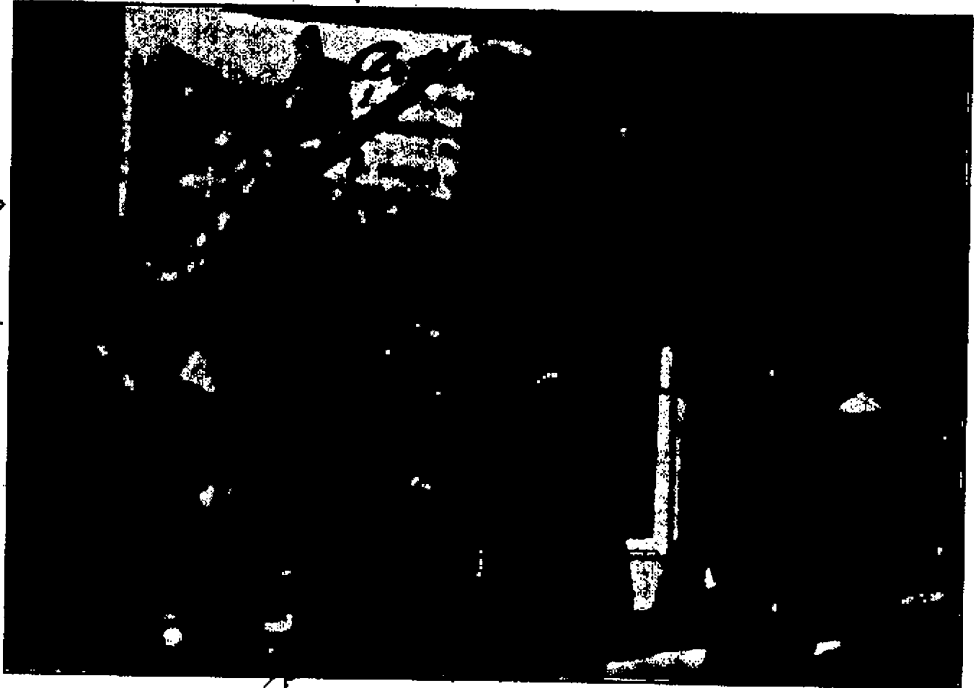
NATIONAL ARTISTS UNION

NEW YORK IS NOT the only city in which artists are organizing. Wherever there are painters and sculptors, the economic predicament is about the same. From San Francisco, Los Angeles, Santa Fe, St. Louis, Chicago, Detroit, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Boston and Baltimore, we have letters from individual artists who want organization.

Not everywhere is the plan of action sufficiently clear. The hope that private patronage will mother the artist still prevails. They call this patronage, oddly, "the artist becoming self-supporting." But in some cities there is the fighting spirit of the artist coming of age.

Joe Jones writes from St. Louis that the present organization there will evolve into one with the same basic functions as ours. Butch Limbach has been organizing in Cleveland. Detroit is making headway. Gorelick proposed our program in Chicago. Paul Weller has gone across country as far as Denver. From Baltimore Sam Swerdloff reports a good Artists' Union, practically a sister to the one in New York. The time is not far off when there will be a National Artists' Union!

Meanwhile, all who have ideas, who know good fighters in other cities who are artists, who have any contribution, communicate with National Corresponding Secretary.



FOR JOBS AND



INADEQUATE RELIEF

PURPOSE OF ARTISTS UNION.

The Artists' Union is the largest of the sixteen Artists' Unions which have been formed in important cities, like Chicago, Cleveland, St. Louis, Baltimore, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Boston and others. We quote from its preamble to its Constitution.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS ORGANIZATION

is to unite all artists engaged in the practice of graphic and plastic art in their struggle for economic security and to encourage a wider distribution and understanding of art. It recognizes that private patronage cannot provide the means to satisfy these needs in this period of grave economic crisis. Therefore, as a non-political, non-sectarian mass organization of artists, it demands that the Government fulfill its responsibilities towards unemployed artists, as part of the Government responsibility towards providing for all unemployed workers. It demands that the Government fulfill its responsibility towards the maintenance and furtherance of the cultural standards of this country by the proper use of the artists' talents and to set up the machinery necessary for the widest possible distribution of art to the general public. (This organization recognizes the needs of linking up of the struggle of the artists with that of all cultural, professional and manual workers for a united effort to win economic security and will co-operate with and support any organization of workers for such united action.)

IN ANSWER TO THE ART NEWS

The growing strength of the Artists' Union and its increasing crystallization of the problems of the artist is beginning to call forth the response, sometimes sympathetic, sometimes otherwise, of those arty art magazines which normally ignore anything outside the gallery world. In the October 13th issue of the *Art News* is an editorial called "Art and Politics," which with a barrage of stale platitudes re-asserts the time-worn yet never proven cliché that "the sincere artist will derive little benefit from identifying himself with the turmoil of political parties."

The Artists' Union has again and again taken the position that it does not align itself with any political party, but, it affirms and reaffirms that today, with the death of private patronage, with the possibility of the resuscitation of private patronage hopeless, the artist must ask questions about what the future holds in store for him. The *Art News* claims that the artist's "vital objectives and those of the politicians are miles apart." We, too, say that. The artist has nothing in common with politicians. But the artist is part of that world which is in the making. The artist is one with the power that will transform this old and decadent world which holds nothing of hope in it into a new one where the artist, one with all workers, will be able to "function freely, aided by the wise appreciation of his fellow citizens." And if as the *Art News* claims, without ample justification, such a world has not as yet been created, the artist must retreat to a vacuum if he wishes to remain apart from this tremendous travail which is now taking place. It is the cleavage between old world and new. On the one side is the old, with its politicians, its contradictions, its insoluble antagonisms; on the other the new, with its infinite possibilities for freedom and creative achievement.

The *Art News* states that it does not believe in ivory towers. And if an artist is to step down from his ivory tower, where, we ask the *Art News*, does he find himself? If he emerges from his vacuum, what does he see? Answer that truthfully, spread before you the vast panorama of a world torn by itself, and you will find that the artist must, as an artist, as a creative being, and a human upon whose sense impinge all the phenomena of life and death, orient himself with the struggle.

—ETHEL OLENIKOV.

IF THIS BE ART.

Mrs. Harry Payne Whitney, whose niece, Gloria Vanderbilt, is getting a chance to chisel while the family is disputing the custody of the youngster. Perhaps Gloria is being trained by Aunt Gertrude to follow in her footsteps as a well-known patron of the arts. Aunt Gertrude's Museum of American Art on West Eighth Street, under whose leadership Mrs. Julianna Force is collecting the works of American artists, is sending out three travelling exhibitions this season. Can this be a challenge to the College Art Association, whose announced forty travelling shows are starting off very soon?

The New Deal has certainly put art in strange places. The Modern Museum of Art as well as the larger one at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington, D. C., contained a mere fraction of the thousands of pictures now owned by the USA through the Public

Works of Art Project. Administration officials took their pick when the contributions from artists flooded the Capital. Senators, Congressmen, and travelling representatives of the Blue Eagle created the first Government travelling art exhibition. Thousands of paintings now decorate the private-public offices in the Federal Buildings in Washington while many an elected representative went home with an acquisition from the artists' concept of the American scene. The few which remain to exist unseen rest in a "morgue" in a cellar of the Treasury Department Building.

KATHERINE GRIDLEY.

BREAD UPON THE WATERS.

—MAX SPIVAK.

Big Business is giving Fine Art some serious consideration these days. It is welcoming Fine Art during ordinary business hours. This luxury at one time patronized in the leisure moments of prosperity has become a business necessity. They have discovered a new and cheap form of publicity for their sales promotion ideas.

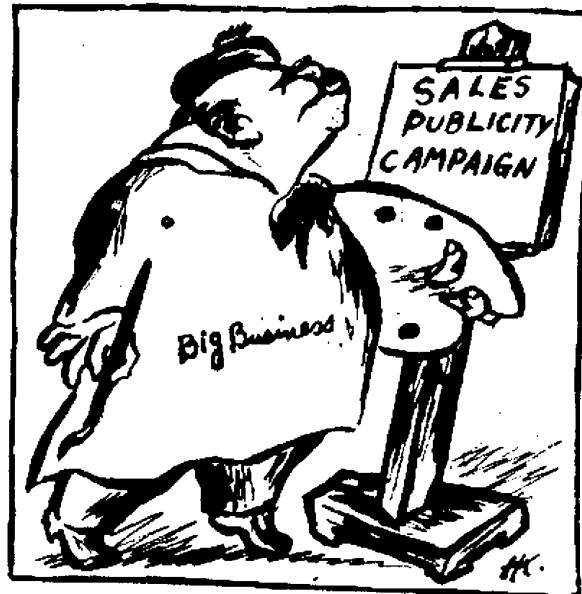
The Greenwich Village Association actively supported and initiated the Washington Square Open Air Art Show by managing to pull the proper political wires to secure the initial police and park permit. The real estate dealers, the Village stores and especially Hearn's and Wanamaker's hoped to, and did, cash in when the crowds at the open air art show really were crowds.

The Municipal Art Show was superbly managed (press-agently speaking). Front pages in the newspapers, official opening by the Administration, columns of space heralded the show of the "best people" and the "best artists" in Rockefeller Center. Thousands came for weeks to see the exhibition and at the same time to see the huge empty Rockefeller buildings that happened to be leasing unrented office and loft space.

On October 13th, the Wanamaker department store opened the Regional Art Show on the fourth floor of the Ninth Street Building. The prospect of prize winning has again attracted the "best" artists and the show is being sufficiently exploited for gains in department store business.

Sales of works of art still remain non-existent, but that does not mean that the institution of Fine Art in the domain of Big Business will be neglected. On the contrary, we can expect bigger and better art exhibitions in sales campaigns. This will be so because it is definitely in character with the business policy of cutting costs, wages and expense of advertising.

As usual, the easel artist, belogged by hot air about Fine Art, lags behind his fellow artists, the commercial artist and the mural painter. The commercial artist and mural painter are paid directly a specified price. Society leaders want payment for endorsements, writers ask lecture fees, musicians and actors demand performance wages, but the fine artist has been expected to exhibit his best works free. The easel painter is promised "pie in the sky" but here on earth gets little actual return for serving the ends of Big Business. A challenge must be made by all artists to the ballyhooed interest of Big Business in Fine Art. Artists must insist that a fee for the exhibition of their works be made a part of the cost of the business promotional schemes.



ART ON THE STREETS

"You're not entitled to eat," said the Home Relief Bureau to one of our members. "You're not entitled to live. You still have tools. Use those for food and shelter. When you have thrown away your tools, and have absolutely nothing, then we will permit you to come to us."

Using this as an argument, the Home Relief Bu-

reau had refused relief to one of our destitute members. He had in his home a set of tools and some machinery, kept ready and clean for any chance work that might turn up to net him a few pennies. The Artists' Union Grievance Committee went with him to the relief station. Should an artist, a craftsman, they asked the officials, throw away his brushes and the implements of his craft, and forever chain himself to the relief voucher? Cornered by the Grievance Committee, the stock answers of the officials were not sufficient to cover the situation. Unwilling to grant the demand but unable to parry the argument, the officials asked the Grievance Committee to wait for an hour while they went into conference. Then with marvelous ingenuity, as befits the officials of our great welfare system, they gave our Grievance Committee this reason for not granting relief: "The artist in question," they said, "lives 18 inches below street level. The law will not allow this. It is not good for the health. He might get sick. (This with much heaven-casting of eyes and murmured Lord forbids.) He might even die. It is the rule. It cannot be broken. There is no use arguing. We cannot give relief."

"You will give relief," the Grievance Committee answered, "as soon as possible." The officials are taking the case up with their legal department now. But the Grievance Committee is not waiting for a decision but intends to carry this case through to a finish.

Four months ago one of our members applied at the Home Relief Station for aid. The officials of the Bureau told him to wait in his house and they would send down an investigator to ascertain whether or not he was eligible for relief. He waited for two months. Day after day went by. Still no investigator. His landlord was threatening eviction. He had borrowed in all possible quarters for his food. He had been forced to forget about his painting because one can't easily paint without materials. It seemed as if the Department of Public Welfare was not going to function as far as this artist was concerned. Of course the traditional thing for him to have done was to have accepted the will of the Status Quo and to have starved quietly somewhere where no rent was asked. But there is now an Artists' Union, in itself a menace to tradition, and the traditional thing to do is not now the thing. This artist, a member of the Union, came with his story to the Grievance Committee. He told them of the long wait for an investigator, of the refusal of the Relief Station to grant anything until the investigator had come, of the threat of eviction, and the constant anxiety about food. The Grievance Committee heard the story, and wasting no time, arranged to go to the Home Relief Station with this artist the next morning.

"We're a delegation from the Artists' Union," they told the guard at the door when he tried to stop them, "and we insist on seeing the supervisor." The Home Relief Station hates delegations; the guards are afraid of delegations; delegations are abhorrent to all those administrators who fear the showing up of their system of red tape. Sometimes they try to scare off delegations with police, and arm the Home Relief Station like a wartime garrison. Sometimes they usher the delegations right in so that none of the quiet individual hushed ones waiting patiently in line shall be aroused by their militancy. But however they receive delegations, the Home Relief Station hates them and fears them, and grants their demands in advance of the individual cases.

Our delegation was not met by the police, but was ushered upstairs at once. There, before the supervisor, they presented the case of this artist who had been given the run around for over two months. She hemmed and hawed, and went to look up her records, and found, as the Grievance Committee stated, that the applicant had asked for relief eight weeks ago, and that nothing had been done. The supervisor, aware that something would have to be done now, promised the Committee that she would have an investigator down at the artist's house the next day. The Grievance Committee, having exacted that promise from her, left the Station intending to watch developments and to see that the promise materialized.

The next day the investigator came. Horror was granted. Today this artist is still for work; still unable to paint freely and worry. But at least until he finds work, or buy all the necessary materials, he is worries of starvation and eviction. His and money is given him for food. It is possible by the organized strength of the Union.

GRIEVANCE
OF THE

MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY ADMINISTERED BY ARTISTS

NEW YORK ARTISTS IN THE WINTER OF 1934, WITHDREW THEIR WORKS FROM THE FIRST MUNICIPALLY SPONSORED EXHIBITION EVER HELD IN THIS CITY.

Every conceivable method was used to break down this revolt of the artist. Intimidations through their galleries: threatened economic boycott: coercion, and downright chicanery were employed in the case of individuals and groups in an effort to force them to exhibit in Rockefeller Center.

Some artists, under such threats, weakened. Others were deceived by their leaders. The members of the Society of Painters, Sculptors and Gravers were deceived by their president, Mr. Leon Kroll. According to his own admission, he had suggested to Mr. Todd Robertson of Rockefeller Center, the publication of misstatements in the press, calculated to hoodwink the artist, and thus give them an opportunity to come back into the fold.

When questioned outright, as to the source of his material for the statements, Mr. Kroll referred to the existence of a letter in the possession of Mrs. Halpert of the Downtown Gallery. When questioned as to whether he had seen such a letter, he readily admitted that he had not.

According to statements printed in the newspapers, and purported to be excerpts from that alleged letter, the maker of the obliterated fresco was put into the unique position of actually enjoying the destruction of his own work.

ALL THESE OVERT ACTS HELPED TO WELD TOGETHER A GROUP OF ARTISTS WHO WERE DETERMINED TO COMBAT SUCH EVILS.

The artists decided upon a vigorous campaign of protest. A counter-exhibition was the first impulse. Then, upon second consideration, it became apparent that this would not solve the problem. What they were in need of was a permanent solution, and the idea of a municipal art gallery and center was conceived. A municipal art gallery and center, solely under the control of the artists would offer such a solution.

OUTLINE OF PROPOSED MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY AND CENTER.

1. A Municipal Art Center, with galleries for exhibitions, for the use of all artists throughout the year.

2. A fraternal meeting place for the artists enabling them to come in contact with their contemporaries.

3. A live forum for the discussion and exchange of ideas in art. The Artists' Committee of Action was formed.

4. A center for travelling exhibitions from which art works would be sent to all sections of the country; also, where art from other parts of the United States could be studied.

5. A department for the popularization of art and art appreciation.

6. Studios and laboratories where advanced experiments will be conducted in all mediums.

7. A circulating department for the loaning and rental of works of art to private individuals and public institutions.

8. An art committee to establish friendly relationships with art centers throughout the world.

9. The Municipal Art Gallery and Center shall be administered by and for the artists, by means of duly elected committees.

10. Any artist may join this institution who agrees to further its aims and purposes.

11. There shall be no discrimination whatsoever against any school of aesthetic belief, no political discrimination, nor shall race, creed or color constitute a barrier to membership.

12. Regular meetings shall be arranged as agreed to by the membership.

13. A charter shall be drawn up by the artists covering the details of administration.

14. Members of the administration elected to serve shall be responsible for their assigned duties and subject to recall by the membership.

15. The Municipal Art Center shall be a non-profit making project.

16. A comprehensive plan will be devised by cap- advisors, subject to the approval of the mem- for the sale promotion of works of art and e payments to the artists.

Methods and means shall be planned for the benefit of all artists. A percentage of all income from other activities will be a common fund to be utilized for the members.

There shall be no jury system. Exhibitions shall be of adequate character to the interests of the entire membership throughout the year.

19. Artist members having common purposes or character of work may hold exhibitions subject only to the time and space limitations of the galleries in the Municipal Art Center. Exhibitions of special nature shall be scheduled, to which members will be asked to submit works.

20. The principle which will govern all activities shall be on a democratic basis, administered by and for the artists.

REQUIREMENTS

It is requested that the City of New York recognize its responsibility towards its own artists. It must establish a Municipal Art Gallery and Center.

1. Space, sufficient in capacity, to house the activities herein specified.

2. Light, heat and janitor services for the premises.

3. A small sustaining fund for the first year. This institution will in time be self-sustaining.

THE ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION SET OUT TO WORK.

Delegations were elected and sent to see the Mayor. After repeated attempts, they had gotten no further than the secretaries of the Mayor. A mass-meeting and demonstration were then decided upon, to impress the Mayor with the urgent need of the project, and the extent of the support behind it.

An inspired mass-meeting was held. John Dewey, Alfred Steiglitz, Lewis Mumford, and Herbert B. Tchudy were among the speakers.

A RESOLUTION WAS PRESENTED BY THE ARTISTS COMMITTEE OF ACTION FOR THE MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY AND CENTER, AND ADOPTED BY 1,000 ARTISTS AND ART-LOVERS, AT THAT MASS MEETING HELD AT THE NEW SCHOOL FOR SOCIAL RESEARCH, NEW YORK CITY, MAY 8th, 1934.

WHEREAS, The ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION for the MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY AND CENTER unites more than 600 New York artists, as well as nationally-prominent figures in other fields of activity, who give these artists their wholehearted support, and their purpose is to gain a permanent Art Gallery and Center from the Administration of the City of New York, and

WHEREAS, The ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION in an outline of the proposed Municipal Art Gallery and Center, informed His Honor, the Mayor, of the character and aims of the project, when it was presented to the Secretary of the Mayor, on the 20th day of March, 1934, and

WHEREAS, The proposed outline contained four major points, which formed the basis of the project:

1. A permanent Art Gallery for all New York Artists.
2. A circulating library for pictures and sculptures.
3. No jury system, no discrimination against creed or color.
4. Administered by and for the artists, and

WHEREAS, The present economic debacle places the artists in a most precarious position, and thousands of the artists of New York City are without means of support, and

WHEREAS, The governmental projects, the C.W.A. and the P.W.A.P. are far too inadequate to alleviate the terrible hardships confronting the artists; and the unduly hard struggle for existence cripples their creative faculties; and the destruction and waste of the forces of culture and art is appalling, and

WHEREAS, The Municipality of the City of New York spends over a million dollars annually in subsidies to art institutions, which are primarily dedicated to the art of the past, and

WHEREAS, No provision is made by the Municipality of the City of New York for the benefit of the living artists and art of the community, and

WHEREAS, All previous attempts towards a Municipal Art Exhibition of the City of New York were exploited by private individuals and corporations for their own benefit, and

WHEREAS, The manifest need for a Municipal Art Gallery and Center, managed by and for artists, is evident in the rapid growth of the ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION, which organization was formed for the purpose, and

WHEREAS, His Honor, the Mayor, Fiorello LaGuardia, made the following statement at a dinner attended by persons influential in art circles: "There is great need for the recognition of American art . . . If you grow and make enough noise, the time may not be distant when we may have a Department of Fine Arts in Washington . . ." therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the aim of this meeting is to request the Mayor and the Administration of the City of New York, to "recognize" its own art and artists by establishing the Municipal Art Gallery and Center, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the request of the artists for the Municipal Art Gallery and Center is just and reasonable; and since an unused municipally owned building would answer the purpose, the city treasury would not be unduly burdened, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Municipal Art Gallery and Center would be valuable in promoting the economic interests of the artists, and the awakened interest of the people in art and culture would be gratified, and be it finally

RESOLVED, That the officers of the ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION are authorized to confer with the Mayor, and the Administration of the City of New York, for the speedy establishment of the Municipal Art Gallery and Center; and thus enable the artists to come in direct contact with the people of the community and fulfill his higher calling and duty to the people, and pave the way for the Renaissance of American Art.

THE ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION FOR THE MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY AND CENTER.

THIS MEETING SERVED AS AN IMPETUS FOR A MASS DEMONSTRATION OF ARTISTS THAT PROVED TO BE OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE. 500 ARTISTS MARCHED TO CITY HALL.

Huge banners bearing their slogans and demands were displayed, facing the steps of City Hall. Over 2,000 people gathered around the demonstrators, who were addressed by Alfred Steiglitz and the chairman of the Artists' Committee of Action. The crowd responded enthusiastically.

In the name of the Mayor, the President of the Board of Aldermen, Bernard S. Deutsch, received our delegation, and promised to extend his influence and co-operation for the establishment of the Municipal Art Gallery and Center. He instructed our delegates to approach various departments of the City Administration, and to locate a municipal building available for that purpose.

THE ADMINISTRATION RECOGNIZED OUR PROJECT.

A summary of the various dealings with responsible city-officials and commissions, would entail too lengthy an account to enumerate in detail. Briefly stated, it is as follows:

From the secretary of the Mayor, Mr. Dunham, to the President of the Board of Aldermen, Mr. Deutsch. From Mr. Deutsch to the Sinking Fund Commissioner. From the Sinking Fund Commissioner to the Park Department. From the Park Department to the Board of Education. From the Board of Education to the Welfare Department. From the Welfare Department to the Port Authority. From the Port Authority back again to Mr. Deutsch.

This short history of the "run-around" represents a period of five months.

On
City
Hall
Steps,
Chairman
Artists'
Committee
of
Action
Addresses
Crowd
of
2000
On
the
Left,
Wolkowitz
and
Stieglitz



GALLERY AND CENTER

UNDER DATE OF JULY 6th, 1934, A LETTER WAS RECEIVED FROM MR. DEUTSCH. THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXCERPT FROM IT:

"I conferred with the Mayor, and he has advised me that he has appointed a Committee on Municipal Art, and that he will have this committee confer with you."

Three days later, a piece of paper was slipped under the door of the secretary of the Artists' Committee of Action. The telephone number of the Mayor's new-born art committee was written upon it.

Over the telephone a conference was arranged with members of the Executive Board of the Artists' Committee of Action.

These representatives had given a verbal description of the aims of the Artists' Committee of Action, and its plans for the Municipal Art Gallery and Center.

The chairman of the Mayor's art committee, Mrs. Henry Breckinridge, insisted upon a written plan for the Municipal Art Gallery and Center. The delegates could not immediately comply with her request. They wished to consult the membership first. Mrs. Breckinridge, through her secretary, made urgent requests for the immediate written presentation of the plan.

ON AUGUST 10th, 1934, AFTER THE MEETING OF THE MEMBERSHIP, THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT WAS SENT TO MRS. BRECKINRIDGE:

In accordance with our letter to you dated July 30, 1934, the following outline of the administrative and organizational plan for the Municipal Art Gallery and Center was submitted and adopted at the meeting (August 6, 1934) by our membership:

Promotion Finance	Treasurer	CHAIRMAN	Secretary	Organization Publicity
EXECUTIVE BOARD				
ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION				
Chairman	Chairman	Chairman	Chairman	Chairman
Secretary	Secretary	Secretary	Secretary	Secretary
Treasurer	Treasurer	Treasurer	Treasurer	Treasurer
A	B	C	D	
Exhibition Committee	School Committee	Art Circulating Committee	Forum Committee	

The Municipal Art Gallery and Center shall be administered by and for artists. Any artist may join this institution who agrees to further its aims and purposes. There shall be no discrimination whatsoever against any school of aesthetic belief, no political discrimination, nor shall race, creed or color constitute a barrier for membership. The principle which will govern this institution shall be on a truly democratic basis. It shall be a non-profit making organization for the benefit of all artists.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the fulfillment of the administrative and organizational plans of the Municipal Art Gallery and Center.

All moneys received from sales of art works will immediately be turned over to the artists. A small percentage will be retained as a common fund for the benefit of all artists whether they sell or not.

A. Exhibition Committee.

The Exhibition Committee has a chairman, secretary and a treasurer; a painter, sculptor and a graphic artist. Four other member artists representing the various art tendencies will make up the personnel of this committee. The seven members of this committee will be responsible for all exhibitions held in the Municipal Art Gallery and Center. There will be no jury system. Exhibitions sufficient in number of adequate character to satisfy the entire membership will be arranged throughout the year. Artists having common purposes or character of work may hold exhibitions subject only to the time and space limitations of the galleries in the Municipal Art Gallery and Center.

More detailed plans for exhibitions can only be worked out after we are in possession of the building, the dimensions of which will determine the possibilities and limitation of exhibitions.

B. School Committee.

The School Committee has a chairman, secretary and a treasurer; a painter, sculptor and a graphic artist. It will include a staff of instructors for classes in painting, sculpture, mural decorating (fresco), woodcarving, stone cutting and the graphic arts (etching, lithography, etc.). The school will include a Saturday class for children. Our intentions are to make this a free school. We will request the State Educational Department or the Federal Relief Bureau to provide the necessary subsidy to compensate the instructors.

C. Art Works Circulating Committee.

This committee will have a chairman, secretary and a treasurer. The function of this committee will be to rent works of art to private people and public institutions. A low fee will be charged for the rental of each work of art. The income from such rentals will be turned over to the artists. A small percentage will be retained for a revolving insurance fund, out of which artists will be compensated for any loss or damage. We will encourage the purchase of works of art on the installment basis plan. Rental payments would be considered as part payment towards actual purchase. We plan a wide distribution of prints at popular prices.

D. Open Forum Committee.

This committee will have a chairman, secretary and a treasurer. The function of this committee is to conduct a Forum for the discussion and the exchange of ideas in the Fine Arts. The committee will arrange lectures and meetings. The Forum is to be a fraternal meeting place for all artists and the people. Its aim is to popularize art.

Each of these committees will aim to make their special work self-supporting. We expect the City Administration to furnish the Municipal Art Gallery and Center with light, heat and janitor services. We expect that the Federal Relief Administration will supply us with clerical help.

The officers of the Executive Committee will give their full services without any remuneration.

This brief outline, we hope, is sufficient to give you a clear idea of the manner in which the Municipal Art Gallery and Center will function. We expect the fullest co-operation from you and we urge immediate action. We, on our part, are ready to get to work at a moment's notice.

We trust that we shall hear from you in the very near future.

AFTER REPEATED EFFORTS TO HAVE MRS. BRECKINRIDGE ACKNOWLEDGE THE PLAN AND PROVIDE A SUITABLE BUILDING WHERE THE PLAN COULD BE PUT INTO ACTUALITY, THE FOLLOWING LETTER, DATED AUGUST 22nd, 1934, WAS RECEIVED:

"I do not want you or your group to be discouraged, as I have been working very hard with the Mayor, to find a place for your group. Something may develop today, which I am certainly hoping for. In any event, you will hear from me the first part of next week but I am sending you this little line to assure you that I have your problem very much in mind and to congratulate you for the very fine report you sent me."

Signed: IDA BRECKINRIDGE.

MORE LOSS OF TIME: IT BECAME IMPERATIVE TO REALIZE CONCRETE RESULTS AT ONCE.

To that end, another delegation interviewed Mrs. Breckinridge. During this conference, a building was mentioned, suitable for the Municipal Art Gallery and Center, which was centrally located, "somewhere in the fifties." It was disclosed that the building in question was owned by the Rockefellers. Our delegates expressed doubt as to the acceptability of the building under those conditions. It was made known to Mrs. Breckinridge that the opinion of the membership would be necessary in making a decision.

It had been made clear to her that the Rockefellers must, under any condition, relinquish the property first, and deed it to the City of New York, before it could become acceptable to the Artists' Committee of Action. Only under those conditions would the membership of the Artists' Committee of Action consider it.

Mrs. Breckinridge assured the delegates that this was precisely the intention of the municipality. She also stated that the building was merely awaiting legal formalities between the owners and the City Administration, before it could be occupied by the Artists' Committee of Action for the Municipal Art Gallery and Center.

MORE DELAY.

Finally, the membership of the Artists' Committee of Action decided to deal directly with the Mayor. A delegation of sixteen artists was formed, reinforced by John Dewey. An appointment was set for the 27th of September. At the last moment, word was received, cancelling the appointment. The Mayor's illness was given as the reason for the cancellation. It was too late, however, to notify the delegation, and the delegates, including Dr. Dewey, arrived at City Hall, only to be told of the absence of the Mayor.

The date of a new appointment was set for the afternoon of October 4th. At mid-day, a messenger of the Mayor arrived, announcing the cancellation of the appointment for the second time. Again the Mayor's illness was given as the reason.

THE ASSEMBLED DELEGATES DECIDED TO SEND THE FOLLOWING LETTER TO MRS. BRECKINRIDGE, AND A CARBON OF THE LETTER TO THE SECRETARY OF THE MAYOR, MR. C. J. RYAN, JR.:

Mr. Ryan has informed us that due to Mayor LaGuardia's illness our appointment was again postponed. We are frankly disappointed.

May we suggest that the new date be set for Monday, October 8th, Wednesday, October 10th, or Thursday, October 11th? On those days Dr. Dewey would be able to come with us.

According to Mr. Ryan it is customary for the Mayor to receive delegations of five.

At a meeting of the Artists' Committee of Action, our membership delegated sixteen artists. Five members of this delegation should confer with the Mayor.

Kindly make our appointment with the Mayor for five, including Dr. Dewey, and communicate with us as soon as possible.

Of the proposed dates, Monday would be the most desirable for us. We would be able to report the results of the conference to the membership which meets that night.

For your information, the combined membership and affiliates of the Artists' Committee of Action numbering over 2,000 have planned a campaign of vigorous protest against the continued uncertainty and delay of our project.

(The above reference to five delegates was made, because Mrs. Breckinridge had formerly made the appointments for only two members of the Executive Board of the Artists' Committee of Action to confer with the Mayor.)

The very next day, the following telegram the secretary of Mrs. Breckinridge was received:

"TELEPHONE ME TONIGHT"

Complying with her wish, over the telephone information was received that not one building was available. An appointment with Mrs. Breckinridge was also set for Monday, October 8th, in time to be able to report to the membership meeting that night.

AT THIS INTERVIEW THE BUILDING LOCATED AT 62 WEST 53rd STREET WAS DISCLOSED AS AVAILABLE FOR THE ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION.

Mrs. Breckinridge informed the delegates that the building had already been approved by the Mayor, for the establishment of the Municipal Art Gallery and Center. And that she had been authorized in

Members
of
the
Artists'
Committee
of
Action
Demonstrate
in
Front
of
City
Hall

May 2,
1934



CAPTURED THE WALLS!

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART EPISODE

Spring of 1932, after two years of jobless Rockefeller Center with its huge wall spaces had been big, as a mural decoration possibility for any artist. They waited the completion of the buildings with impatient expectancy. Then came the news: the walls had been assigned without competition. Feeling ran high, the art pages of the press were filled with indignation and protest. Something had to be done. The architects of the Rockefeller Center issued a statement denying that the contract was assigned.

Upon the heels of this upheaval the Museum of Modern Art, of which Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., is treasurer, invited artists to participate in an exhibition of mural decorations.

"At the present time such an exhibition would be particularly valuable for the information of many interested architects in New York who are in search of competent decorators for buildings proposed or in construction. The exhibition will be hung to display the work of each artist to the best possible advantage before as many architects and as great a public as can be brought together."

A day or two after we delivered our murals, the writer was called to the Museum and told that his use of a horizontal, instead of a vertical panel was contrary to specifications. He agreed to paint a new panel. After this talk, he received the following letter:

"I was thinking, when you are doing over your mural, if it would not be a good idea in a way to do the panel of Lenin instead of the one you did. I think that the large figure of Lenin that you indicated would really be a definite and different aspect of the symbolism of the whole social struggle, and also as there is a single large figure, it might take you less time to do it over. Also, in a way—it is a more monumental design. It was so terribly understanding of you to be willing to paint the panel over and the Museum and myself are really grateful."

Later a telephone call: inquiries, which panel was the writer working on? Shortly afterwards, William Gropper learned that three murals had been rejected: Ben Shahn's "Sacco and Vanzetti," Gropper's "The Writing on the Wall," and Gellert's "Us Fellas Gotta Stick Together"—Al Capone." Then another letter from the Museum.

"I must inform you that (unknown to me) any picture which can be interpreted as an offensive caricature or representation of a contemporary individual, cannot be exhibited. This applies to part of your composition."

The trustees of the Museum held conferences with their attorneys. Ivy Lee was summoned. A. Conger Goodyear, President, Samuel A. Lewisohn, Secretary, Stephen C. Clark, a trustee, were the most violent in denouncing our pictures.

"How can Mr. Hoover come to the opening!" exclaimed Mr. Goodyear, "and how can I face J. P. Morgan if these pictures are hung in the Museum of which I am a trustee!"

Gropper and the writer got in touch with a few of the artists and told them of the rejections. They were indignant. One of them volunteered to organize a group and all would withdraw their pictures from the exhibition. The Museum heard about this and backed down; all the murals were hung.

Young Nelson Rockefeller, chairman of the advisory committee, went to J. P. Morgan to break the news, and he agreed that it was better to hang the pictures than have a lot of unfavorable publicity.

THE VICTORY WAS THE ARTISTS'. THE STRENGTH OF NUMBERS SHOWS WHAT CAN BE DONE IF WE STICK TOGETHER.

HUGO GELLERT.

*Vanderbilt's interview with Al Capone as published in "Liberty."

a letter signed by the Mayor, to ask Commissioner Hodson to provide funds for the remodeling of the building, to adapt it to the purposes of the Artists' Committee of Action.

In answer to a direct question as to the exact relation of the Mayor's Art Committee to the Artists' Committee of Action, Mrs. Breckinridge stated Mayor's Art Committee was of the character of a Public Relations Committee.

REALIZATION OF A PERMANENT MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY AND CENTER, AND THE INITIAL STEPS TOWARD ITS REALIZATION, ARE DUE TO THE ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION.

The support of thousands of New York cultural workers was enlisted, and organizations of artists, such as the Society of Independent Artists, and the Artists' Union, have officially endorsed the Artists' Committee of Action.

The Artists' Committee of Action includes members from all existing art-groups in New York City. The success and effectiveness in organizing the artists is due to the democratic methods exercised in directing the activities of the organization.

SECRETARY OF ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION REFUSES INVITATION FROM "MUNICIPAL ART COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED."

To His Honor, Mayor Fiorello H. LaGuardia, October 7, 1934.
DEAR SIR:

On September 24th I received your invitation to sit in an advisory capacity on the "Municipal Art Committee of One Hundred." I have since taken the matter under advisement with our Executive Committee.

Since September 24th our Committee has been promised an interview with your Honor by the Mayor's Art Committee, which event did not take place. This meeting with you was to have cleared up all doubts existing as to our rights as artists of New York City, and our just demands from the Municipality. We had hoped to gain some information as to the functions of the "Municipal Art Committee of One Hundred," its personnel, its plans and its policies. Neither I nor our committee have yet received any information. Nor has our promised appointment with you been honored.

And having been invited to sit on this "Municipal Art Committee of One Hundred" without any other information but a form-letter, I consider the invitation rather doubtful. This "Municipal Art Committee of One Hundred" appears to be merely a dummy committee without power or authority, and has been selected in an undemocratic fashion.

The principle of our organization is that a Municipal Art Gallery and Center must be administered by and for artists duly elected by all artists. Any other method of selection in regard to committees and administrators of a Municipal Art Gallery and Center cannot meet with the approval of the ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION to whose principles I fully subscribe.

In view of the above stated reasons, I cannot believe that the best interests of art or artists can be justly served by your newly formed "MUNICIPAL ART COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED." I therefore feel it my duty not to accept your invitation to serve on this committee.

Very sincerely yours,

LIONEL S. REISS, Sec'y.

ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION

BETTER LIVING AND WORKING QUARTERS FOR ARTISTS.

The Research and Study Group of the Federation of Architects, Engineers and Technicians, under the able leadership of its Director, Percival Goodman, is preparing a series of architectural studies for a large cultural center for artists and professionals. The project has been formulated and is being sponsored by the Artists' Grievance Committee of the Artists' Committee of Action in co-operation with an advisory committee of writers, actors, musicians and dancers.

The center will include exhibition halls for painters and sculptors, several small theatres, a chamber music hall, as well as living and working quarters for painters, sculptors, actors, writers, architects, musicians, dancers.

The project represents one of the vital issues undertaken in the Summer program of activities of the Artists' Grievance Committee. It is now under way for concrete projection in a form which will insure its practicability as well as its aesthetic appeal.

Mr. Goodman intends to have the project completed by January, 1935, or earlier, for inclusion as the Professional Branch of the Labor Federation for Housing to take place at that time. Any group or individual desiring to co-operate in supporting the project may communicate with the Secretary of the Artists' Grievance Committee, Rosa Pringle, at 111 West 11th Street, New York.

It is an organization of the artists, by the artists, for the artists. And is determined to administer the Municipal Art Gallery and Center for all artists.

THE FUNDAMENTALS GOVERNING THIS ORGANIZATION CAN BE SUMMARIZED THUS: (1) ONLY ARTISTS CAN HOLD EXECUTIVE OFFICES; (2) ALL EXECUTIVES ARE DULY ELECTED BY THE ARTISTS THEMSELVES.

The necessity of making the Municipal Art Gallery and Center an institution administered by artists for artists cannot be emphasized too strongly. The success of that institution depends upon this.

The existence of the Mayor's Art Committee of One Hundred has been recently announced. We welcome advisory co-operation from that or any other committee. Actual control of the Municipal Art Gallery and Center, however, must be retained by the artists themselves.

ON SATURDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 27th, 1,000 NEW YORK ARTISTS WILL CARRY OUR DEMANDS TO CITY HALL: FOR THE MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY AND CENTER ADMINISTERED BY ARTISTS:

ARTIST'S GRIEVANCE EXPOSES MID-TOWN GALLERY. WANAMAKER'S ART EXHIBITION BREAKS FAITH WITH ENTRANTS.

FROM SAUL BERMAN

The Midtown Gallery invited me to join its organization and I signed an agreement for three months to exhibit and to pay \$5 per month. At the end of the third month I stated that I could not afford to pay for exhibiting; that I did not think it fair to pay for the showing of pictures and pay commissions in the event of a sale, especially when there were other places where I could show free.

Mr. Healy urged me to bring my pictures to the gallery and said not to worry: "We will manage it somehow." With this clear understanding, that I was not to pay, I continued to exhibit pictures until the end of last season.

During the summer I received a letter from the Midtown Gallery in which I was informed that a picture of mine was sold to one of their clients for \$175. I was not asked whether I was willing to sell at that price. Enclosed in the letter was a bill for exhibiting, publicity charges and commission, all amounting to \$189, which meant that I still owed the gallery \$14.

I want the artists to take notice of this.

FROM BENJAMIN KOPMAN

When I learned that after being invited to the Wanamaker's exhibition my canvas had been substituted for another picture of mine without my knowledge, I wanted to take out my rusty pen, which made me rather notorious some years ago, and start a bit of desperate shooting.

But when it came to shoot, there was nobody to aim at. You can't shoot a department store. It's a dragon with too many heads, the most hideous of which represents business.

As for the jury—well, mathematicians tell us that when you put together three heads, you get one block-head. They also say that three is a most powerful combination because each will support and uphold the other, no matter how crooked one may be.

In short, there is no one to hold responsible, so I decided to shoot above their heads.

FROM MORDI GASSNER

In the beginning of September, I received an invitation from John Wanamaker's to exhibit one of my pictures. It was clearly stated that as I was an invited artist, my work would not be subject to jury.

I worked a solid month on my painting and delivered it to Wanamaker's. A week before the exhibition, Mr. Ray Hanna, director of the exhibition, requested me to withdraw my painting on account of its subject matter, child birth, and to substitute any other painting I choose.

I said that as I was known for works considered over-intellectual it was important to me to show a work of this emotional nature, in order to balance the critical comprehension of my true range as an artist. Mr. Hanna merely repeated the jury's request. I reminded him that I was an invited artist; the jury had nothing to do with me; to which he replied, "Please to bear in mind this is a store, not an art museum." This makes no difference, I said, since it was a sponsorship of serious fine art upon which Wanamaker's had ventured.

The picture was not hung and my name was absent from the catalog of exhibits and from the published list of invited artists.

The Artists' Grievance Committee of the Artists' Committee of Action meets weekly with the Executive Board. Confidential communications may be sent to Secretary of Grievance Committee, Rosa Pringle, 111 West 11th Street.

FOR JOBS AND ADEQUATE RELIEF FOR ALL ARTISTS.

During the last interview, Mrs. Breckinridge, for the first time, mentioned that "This Building Would Be for All Artists; not merely for one 'Group'."

This implication must be cleared for all time.

THE MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THE ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION IS NOT "JUST ONE GROUP." NOR A FEW GROUPS. BUT IT IS ALL INCLUSIVE.

WE MUST PROVE THIS.

ARTISTS OF NEW YORK CITY, THIS IS YOUR FIGHT: MARCH TO CITY HALL UNDER THE BANNER OF THE ARTISTS' UNION AND THE ARTISTS' COMMITTEE OF ACTION. DEMAND ECONOMIC SECURITY. DEMAND RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHTS OF THE ARTIST.

ALL OUT FOR JOBS, FOR RELIEF, AND THE MUNICIPAL ART GALLERY AND CENTER.

ALL MEET AT 11 WEST 18th STREET AT 9 A. M.