

A Call to Action

In October 1970 some artists and gallery proprietors, in an attempt to break the monopoly of the Cologne Art Market, by an organized protest forced the premature opening of the Kunsthalle. This was the start of a movement to put an end to the dragooning of art patrons and the subjection of the artists to gallery owners who belong to the Association of Progressive German Art Dealers.

The artists' protest struck those to whom it was addressed more as a one-day happening of a few cranky painters than as a reason to change their habits of thought. The further increase in business at the last Art Market was not calculated to encourage the introduction of more democratic procedures among the „Progressives“ and the organizers of other exclusive art markets based on the same principle.

We therefore anticipate that things will continue as before:

- the "Progressive Art Dealers" will remain a closed shop, using repressive means to extend their domination of the market;
- the cities of Cologne and Berlin will continue to favour these cartel-type bodies to the exclusion of all others;
- the artists will become increasingly dependent on them;
- the one-sided interest in increasing the volume of business will destroy the last shreds of artistic honesty;
- this frenzied profit-grabbing will eventually lead via complete sterility to a revolting senility.

We who have put our names to this manifesto are no longer prepared to underpin these monopolistic manoeuvrings which, even under a capitalist system, have a slightly odd look.

So long as the organizers of the Cologne and Berlin art markets and any other similarly structured art markets are not willing to permit free trade, we, as producers, withdraw our support, whether direct or indirect, from all member galleries.

We demand a free art market, able to meet the public demand for full information. We demand that the Cologne Kunsthalle and the Berlin Kunstakademie be made available without charge for a free producers' exhibition.

It is schizophrenic and dishonest for artists, whose products and ideas have always been directed towards a change of conscience and a freer social order, to go on supplying their goods and hence their support to such diehard and repressive institutions as the conservatively structured Cologne and Berlin art markets.

We call upon all producers to recognize this principle and to stop supplying their goods to markets of this kind.

Joseph Beuys

Erwin Heerich

Klaus Staeck

Düsseldorf, 10 February, 1971



I support this appeal and I am prepared to work towards the establishment of a free art market. I place myself at the disposal of the Community for Action which exemplifies the principles of a free art market.

Name

Telephone no.

Address

Date

Signature

After 1st April we shall publish the names of those who support this appeal.

Please detach this portion and return it to one of the three promoters:

Joseph Beuys, 4 Düsseldorf, Staatl. Kunstakademie, Eiskellerstraße 1

Erwin Heerich, 4 Düsseldorf, Staatl. Kunstakademie, Eiskellerstraße 1

Klaus Staeck, 69 Heidelberg 1, Postfach 471, Ingrimstraße 3