

NO
PROTEST
AND
HOPE



PROTEST AND HOPE

An exhibition of contemporary American art

Wollman Hall
New School Art Center
New York City

October 24 - December 2, 1967

Foreword

Protest and Hope is a commentary on Civil Rights and Vietnam by 43 contemporary American artists represented by 48 pieces of sculpture, painting, drawings and prints. It is a sequel to our exhibition, *The American Conscience*, in our series "Art and Society."

During the last 25 years, artists working in new styles shunned social and political commentary. The abstract expressionists rejected the materialistic aspects of life and withdrew into the most subjective recesses of their individuality. In contrast, Pop glorified industrial civilization and man's world of commodities. Abstract expressionism was an art of passion and despair. Pop was cool and indifferent to the fate of man. Op and electronic art limited the subject matter to the gadgetry of the machine age. The Minimalists restricted art to the cool realm of geometry.

There were, however, some accidental deviations. The "cool" artist looked at the object with an unprejudiced eye. He painted it in its nakedness, bare of any ideological or other overtones. But sometimes this had the unintentional effect of a commentary, for instance, when the object was a flag.

In other cases, it was the passing of time alone that converted an "unengaged" work into a disturbing commentary. A case in point was Rauschenberg's *Buffalo*, which we included in our exhibition "The American Conscience." It is a moving likeness of the late President Kennedy. The portrait was done before the assassination. Yet four months after Dallas when it looked down from our wall, his gesturing hand seemed to point, like in a gruesome and barbarous ceremony, an accusing finger . . .

Social and human commentary was, of course, not really dead. It was only recognized less than the new trends. But Baskin, Frascioni, Jack Levine, Shahn, Saul Steinberg and others have never relaxed their passionate interest in man's lot. They were joined by some practitioners of the new styles. Using the inventions of Pop, Segal has searched the residue of mystery in mass-man; Kienholz and Grooms made potent social weapons out of Pop; Larry Rivers poked fun at our prejudices and superstitions . . .

The terrain was thus not quite unprepared for a revival of human, social, and political commentary.

The first powerful impulse came the day of the great national tragedy. The echoes of the shots fired in Dallas on November 22, 1963 reverberated in the hearts and minds of many artists. It was a call for a new involvement.

But the prejudice about what art should and should not be still blocked the resurgence of social commentary. Should the artist's deepest concern be the arrangement of colors on a flat canvas or the investigation of relationships between geometrical shapes, even in a century of world wars, mass persecutions, torture and gas chambers and a threatening third—atomic—world war?

The emotional chain reaction triggered by the assassination needed another shock. It came with the growing civil rights crisis and with Vietnam.

Last spring while looking for material for this exhibition, I was amazed by the quantity and quality of protest work found in artists' studios. I have always hoped that the time would come again when the artist would not only be a specialist of colors, lines, and shapes, but also the living conscience of society. The

realization of this exhibition is, therefore, a great personal satisfaction to me.

I would like to express my deep felt gratitude to all the lenders to this exhibition, and foremost, to the artists who responded to my call.

PAUL MOCSANYI
Director, Art Center

September 1967

Fourteen of the exhibited works have been done expressly for this show. They are: Leonard Baskin's *Our General*, Charles Cajori's *Pax Americana*, Elaine de Kooning's *Countdown*, Rosalyn Drexler's *Oh Say Can You See . . . ?*, Red Grooms' *Patriots' Parade #1 and #2*, Luise Kaish's *Equation*, Robert Mallary's *Viet Variation #2*, Robert Rauschenberg's *Caller*, Ray Saunders' *Smile*, George Segal's *The Execution*, Ben Shahn's *Goyesca #2*, Van Loen's *The Victim*, and James Wines' *Untitled Poster*. (A grave automobile accident prevented Mr. Wines from completing the ambitious sculpture he had conceived for this exhibition. Instead he did the poster, which he calls a "token contribution", during his convalescence.)

JOHN HULTBERG

b. 1922, Berkeley, Calif.

22. *Nuclear Landscape* 1963
brown and white lithograph 19 x 25¹/₄

Martha Jackson Gallery
Illus. p. 33

ROBERT INDIANA

b. 1928, New Castle, Ind.

23. *Yield Brother* 1963
oil on canvas 60 x 50

Stable Gallery
Illus. p. 35

FRITZ JANSCHKA

b. 1919, Vienna, Austria

24. *Icon for a Fallout Shelter* 1962
oil and collage on wood 28 x 54

Collection of Dr. Kenneth Gordon, Villanova, Pa.

LUISE KAISH

b. 1925, Atlanta, Ga.

25. *Equation* 1967
epoxy and plastic 27 x 12 x 12

Staempfli Gallery
Illus. p. 39

EDWARD KIENHOLZ

b. 1927, Spokane, Wash.

26. *God Really Loves America Best* 1964
mixed media 20³/₄ x 15¹/₂ x 12

Dwan Gallery
Illus. p. 28

JACOB LANDAU

b. 1917, Philadelphia, Pa.

27. *Songs in the Night* 1967
lithograph 22¹/₄ x 29⁷/₈

International Arts Program, National Collection of
Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.
Illus. cover, p. 30

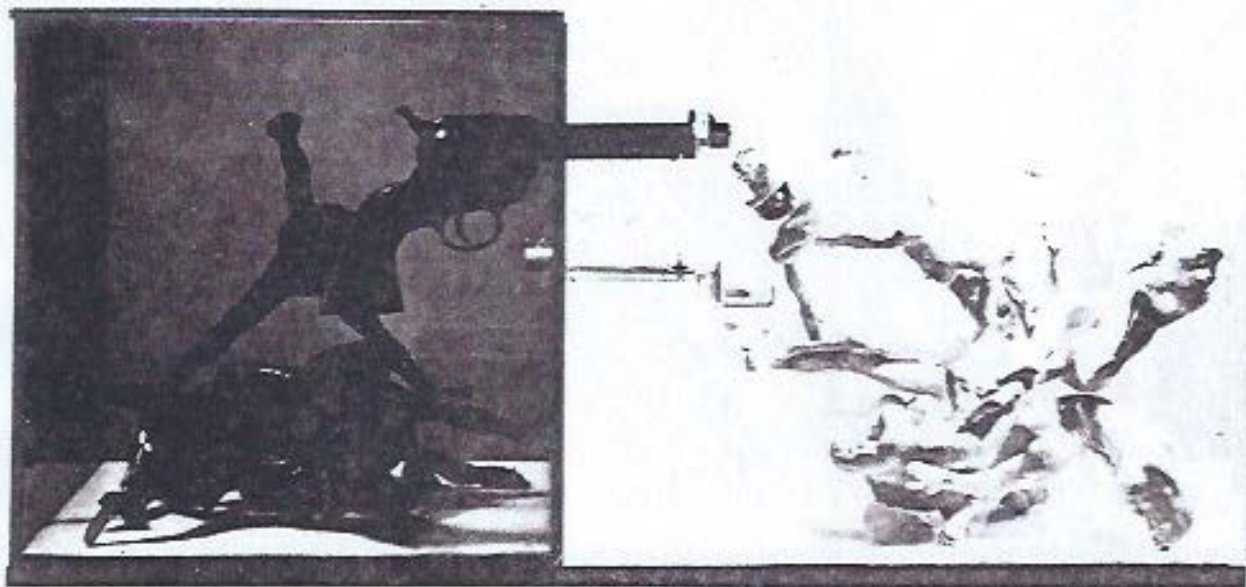
The print is one in a series done about the
holocaust of wars and persecutions in the
20th century.

JACOB LAWRENCE

b. 1917, Atlantic City, N.J.

28. *Soldiers and Students* 1962
watercolor 22 x 30

Collection of Julius Rosenthal Wolf, New York
Illus. p. 38



Luise Kaish: *Equation*