

LARGE-SCALE EXHIBITION OF ART ABOUT CONTEMPORARY ISSUES OPENS  
AT THE NEW MUSEUM

"In doing anything -- creating a work of art, writing a book, or just living -- every human being has a purpose that responds to an ideology. Ideology is a way of seeing things, reacting to things, in fact, a way of seeing the world."\*

-- Nilda Peraza

The New Museum of Contemporary Art will present Art & Ideology, a major survey of recent art of political significance, from February 4 to March 18, 1984. Five renowned art historians and critics -- Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Donald B. Kuspit, Lucy R. Lippard, Nilda Peraza and Lowery Sims -- were asked each to select two artists whose work conveys direct references to the problems and issues of today's society. Artists chosen by the guest curators include, respectively, Allan Sekula and Fred Lonidier, Nancy Spero and Francesc Torres, Suzanne Lacy and Jerry Kearns, Alfredo Jaar and Ismael Frigerio, and Hannah Wilke and Kaylynn Sullivan.

The ten artists selected from both the United States and Latin America work in a variety of media, often incorporating performance, to create what Ms. Lippard describes as an "activist" art, with an awareness of the audience and indicating a strong belief in social change. The artists have consciously chosen to struggle through their art with the same issues -- social, political, economic or emotional -- that govern all our lives.

The exhibition will consist of over eighty works, including painting,



photography, mixed-media installations, text and photodocumentation of performance events and videotapes. In these works several themes emerge: the oppression and isolation of Latin American peoples by North Americans (Frigerio and Jaar); the victimization and self-recognition of women (Lacy, Spero, Sullivan and Wilke); and fear, violence and survival (Kearns, Torres and others). In the work of Lonidier and Sekula, the placement of their art in such public arenas as union halls and community colleges -- not museums and galleries -- is significant in terms of the different audiences they intend to reach. In all of the work, there is a dialog about the nature of humanity, freedom and justice and how such ideals are reflected in society.

Marcia Tucker, Director of The New Museum, writes in the preface to the exhibition catalog,\* "Art & Ideology was originally conceived in response to the growing numbers of artists whose work is politically, rather than formally, motivated. It is clear, over the past few years, that a concern with the political ideas and activities which so profoundly affect the world we live in is having an increasing impact on the arts." In this exhibition, the Museum aims to reaffirm its policy of focusing on issues which encompass a wide variety of concerns in addition to the strictly aesthetic. To this end, the Museum will continue to provide an open forum for a dialog in the visual arts prompted by different and often opposing points of view.

The presentation has been funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, The New York State Council on the Arts and the Department of Cultural Affairs, City of New York.

In conjunction with the exhibition, The New Museum of Contemporary Art and The Studio Museum in Harlem will jointly present a panel discussion,



entitled ART & IDEOLOGY: 1960-1984, on Thursday, March 1, at 7 p.m., in The New Museum auditorium. The panel, made possible through the generosity of the Alverlist Lecture Fund, will include speakers Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, critic and instructor of art history at SUNY, Westbury; Jayne Cortez, poet and writer; moderator Lucy R. Lippard, art historian and critic; Nancy Spero, artist; and Dr. James Turner, Director of Africana Studies and Research Center at Cornell University. Admission is \$4 and \$2.50 for members of The New Museum or The Studio Museum. Tickets are available at the door or in advance at the admissions desks of both Museums.

On Wednesdays, February 8 and 15, 6 - 8 p.m. (when the Museum is open free to the public), and on Saturdays and Sundays, February 11, 12, 18 and 19, 3 - 5 p.m., artist Kaylynn Sullivan will give a performance in connection with her installation piece, Diminished Capacity. The installation and performance are concerned with the crimes of Charles Starkweather and Caril Fugate in Nebraska (1959) and Dan White in California (1978). There will be no admission fee for the performances.

(30)

\*Catalog: Art & Ideology. Preface by Marcia Tucker, Director of The New Museum. Essays by Lowery Sims, Associate Curator of Twentieth-Century Art at the Metropolitan Museum; Donald B. Kuspit, Professor of Art History at SUNY, Stony Brook; Lucy R. Lippard, art historian and critic; Nilda Peraza, Director of The Cayman Gallery, New York; and Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, critic and instructor of art history at SUNY, Westbury. 72 pages with 50 b/w illustrations. Published by The New Museum of Contemporary Art. \$10.50.

January 16, 1984

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Jessica Schwartz or Pamela Freund (212) 219-1222