DISTENSION AND DISSENSION: ARTFORUM AND THE SEVENTIES

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines a segment of the art press in New York City during the early to mid 1970s, paying special attention to Artforum, The Fox, and October. In analyzing the editorial contents of these journals during this period, I have sought to elaborate several themes, including the breakdown of consensus in the artistic community, the shift in values from a notion of quality to democratic social values, the emergence of the individual as a discreet interest from the larger community, the relationship between art and commerce, and the crisis in artistic development. In elaborating these themes, I have sought to position them in the larger contexts of the civil rights movement, the Vietnam War, feminism, Watergate, and the financial crisis of New York City. I have drawn on Pierre Bourdieu's theories found in The Field of Cultural Production to understand the interests of various agents in the art world. The notions of disinterestedness and intellectual autonomy are central concerns of the art world and are often in competition with notions of heteronomy and theatricality. My contention is that as the social and political crises of the period exacerbated the contradictions between artistic ideals and the larger social and political structures that art is founded upon, the responses of various agents in the art world were motivated by notions of moral and intellectual purism. Some of the analyses include Artforum's response to "Art and Technology," Artforum's 10th anniversary, Robert Morris's and Lynda Benglis' exhibition advertisements and the Artforum editors' response to Benglis' advertisement of November 1974.
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To my mom and dad, who always encouraged me to think independently, to my sister Sarah because I love her, and to Lynette, for being a constant source of love and inspiration.
INTRODUCTION

Ode To An Artist

He who travels to New York
Is probably just a starter,
But the thing he'll surely learn
Is to put on his avant-garder.

Looking high and low for fame,
Waiting for the bid,
Transform one's work into the "same"
Letting thoughts go rancid.

Pick me, pick me,
I am he.
Pay the fee
And I'll set you free

CHORUS:
New York, New York, New York, New York,
New York, New York, New York,
New York, New York, New York, New York,
New York, New York, New York.

Anonymous, The Fox #2, Fall 1975

The problems felt to be most acute on this occasion are social rather than esthetic, however. The impasses acknowledged and analyzed in these essays are likewise social and intellectual. A sense of breakdown is everywhere apparent in these essays—a sense of anxiety and dissatisfaction over the ways in which art has lately been thought about and written about and experienced.

Hilton Kramer, New York Times, September 17, 1972

Philip Leider, Arforum's founding editor, would resign from the magazine during the summer of 1971, having chosen John Coplans, another founder, to replace him as editor. John Coplans, a former senior curator of the Pasadena Museum of Art (1967-1970) would serve as the magazine's editor from September 1971 until February 1977, a period
that loosely coincides with the aftermath of the '60s (including the initial period of conceptual art) until the dominant trends of the eighties emerged with the postmodernist discourse around October magazine in 1976 and the "Pictures" artists of the late '70s.¹

The primary object of my research will be the art press of the '70s, especially Artforum during Coplans' editorship, although special attention will also be paid to The Fox, a radical left-wing art journal that published three issues between the spring of 1975 and the spring of 1976, and October, which began publishing in the spring of 1976. I have chosen to examine this period of contemporary art history because it is often neglected in accounts of contemporary art history. Gill Perry and Paul Wood's recent survey, entitled Themes in Contemporary Art, is an example of this neglect, since it moves from a discussion of the "watershed" years of the late '60s to the discourses around postmodernism beginning in the later '70s without discussing many of the important developments of the intervening years.² It is a familiar cliche that "nothing happened in the seventies". This assumption is usually tied to the generational view that holds the accomplishments of the sixties in immortal esteem. In 1984, British artist and intellectual Victor Burgin stated that he believes something has been "repressed in the almost universal tendency, in the art world of the 1980s, to 'lose' an entire decade—the 1970s—as a period in which 'nothing happened'."³ My decision to focus on the art press stems partly from the availability of good primary research materials, but also the fact that the art press has historically served as an interface between artists, critics, dealers, and their audiences. Thomas Crow remarked on the 30th anniversary of Artforum in 1992:

Historical understanding of recent art will not begin to be satisfactory until the role of the art press is fully taken into account. Magazines and journals have been the vehicles for more than the musings of critics and opinions on new work; they have equally been responsible for disseminating basic information to artists about
what their colleagues and competitors are doing. The work of art-world journalists has been, in an almost classically Enlightenment sense, to create and hold together a community of shared cognitive interests.4

By examining this limited portion of the art press based in New York City during the early to middle '70s, I seek to elaborate several themes, including the breakdown of the community and loss of consensus regarding a shared set of interests, the shift in values from the modernist notion of "quality" to democratic social values, the emergence of the individual as a discreet interest in relation to or in opposition to a larger community, the relationship between art and the market, and the crisis in artistic development, or avant-garde "innovation" in the years after the initial period of conceptual art. In elaborating these themes in relation to several key events in the art press of the period, I will argue that a latent and pervasive "purism" motivated responses to various events which challenged the status quo of critical and artistic autonomy in the early to middle '70s.

In June of 1967, approximately 15,000 subscribers received their copies of Los Angeles-based Artforum magazine, one of the nation's leading art journals.5 That particular issue contained Michael Fried's essay, "Art and Objecthood,"6 which is often taken to have defined the decisive issue for advanced art during the 1960s. Fried's essay was a defence of a notion of modernist art and criticism inherited from Clement Greenberg, which privileged abstract painting as the only true high art. Fried's essay was also a declaration of war against the forces of "theatricality" in art, representational or literalist forces which threatened, in Fried's mind, to corrupt the purity of modernism. Nothing less than the definition of art was at stake. Fried argued that "modernist painting has come to find it imperative that it defeat or suspend its own objecthood, and that the crucial factor in this undertaking is shape, but shape which must belong to painting—it
must be pictorial, not merely literal." This imperative, argued Fried, "is at bottom the imperative that [modernist painting] defeat or suspend theater. And this means that there is a war going on between theater and modernist painting, between the theatrical and the pictorial". Fried added that "This essay will be read as an attack on certain artists (and critics) and a defense of others." In the context of Fried's essay, artists such as John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg, and others including the minimal artists Donald Judd and Robert Morris, were positioned as the representatives of the theatrical or "literal" in art, which Fried argued did not satisfy the requirements of modernist high art. The modernist definition of art was staked upon the ability of a work to achieve formal autonomy. This notion of autonomy was explicitly referred to as a matter of "purity" in Greenberg's 1960 essay "Modernist Painting":

The task of self-criticism became to eliminate from the specific effects of each art any and every effect that might conceivably be borrowed from or by the medium of any other art. Thus would each art be rendered 'pure,' and in its 'purity' find the guarantee of its standards of quality as well as of its independence. 'Purity' meant self-definition, and the enterprise of self-criticism in the arts became one of self-definition with a vengeance.

Many artists of the younger generations felt that Greenbergian formal abstraction was severely limited in its ability to engage with contemporary aesthetic, social and political issues, and that the modernist insistence on quality and autonomy precluded democratic social values which were by nature heteronomous. Among the many responses Fried's essay received was a letter from artist Robert Smithson which appeared in Artforum in October 1967. In his letter, which dramatically criticized Fried's purism, Smithson compared Fried's manner to that "of the most fanatical puritan". Referring to a well-known passage of "Art and Objecthood" in which Fried discusses the aesthetic
experience of Tony Smith's evening drive on the unfinished New Jersey Turnpike,

Smithson wrote:

Fried, the orthodox modernist, the keeper of the gospel of Clement Greenberg has been 'struck by Tony Smith,' the agent of endlessness. Fried has declared his sacred duty to modernism [...] Corrupt appearances of endlessness worse than any known Evil. 

Smithson's letter portrayed a common perception among the younger generation of artists that Greenbergian modernism was a restrictive, highly conservative, even religious affiliation. In the 1996 introduction to Smithson's collected writings, Jack Flan observed that "This 'purist' attitude Smithson associated with the formalism of Greenberg and his disciples, which he felt was overly self-contained and self-centered, and also politically inadequate, since it supported prevailing power structures." In effect, Smithson was arguing for theatricality, for a kind of heteronomy against Fried's autonomous position. It would be through theatrical and heteronomous positions that artists would engage with and participate in contemporary social and political events and debates, which were being rapidly reproduced in the media.

Fried's essay appeared as the last generation of modernist painters and sculptors flourished, and were succeeded by younger artists, including Smithson, who would reject "quality" and venture beyond the dictates of modernist art and criticism. As intellectual disagreements around late modernism escalated, they came to represent the breakdown of the sense of community and shared interests in the New York art world since the '40s and '50s. Yet many segments of the modernist community remained active in the art world, including Greenberg's protégés: post-graduate art history students Michael Fried, Rosalind Krauss, and Jane Harrison Cone. These figures remained active in the art world as agents of the notion of autonomous art, which would remain in competition with the
notion of theatrical or heteronomous art throughout the '70s. Barbara Reise, an expatriate American critic working in London, was the first to discuss Greenberg's rise to power in the art world in an article appearing in Studio International in May 1968. In terms of the breakdown of an art world monopolized by Greenbergian values, Reise queried: "Who is this man, why has he become so important, how true are his pronouncements?" Reise pointed out that "Greenberg's failure to predict and inability to discuss—or even 'see'—[Johns, Rauschenberg, Happenings, and Pop artists] seriously threatened his established position as prophet of Future Trends."16

From the perspective of the emerging generation, the social and political crises of the period served to exacerbate the contradictions between modern art and its necessary foundation in the marketplace. Modern art has always relied on the marketplace for production and distribution, but as crises emerged in industrial society, art's relationship with ideological structures beyond the marketplace had to be questioned. The engagement of artists with the relationship between art and larger social structures and political events can be witnessed in the explicit responses of artists to the war in Vietnam, civil rights, and feminism. The artists who engaged with these issues were seen by Fried as theatrical and therefore irrelevant to advanced art. Fried, who by the late '60s was teaching at Harvard, was seen by the emerging generation as being affiliated with the eastern liberal establishment politically controlled by liberals, the same political interests who were waging the war in Vietnam. Writing of the political climate of the late '60s, critic and Artforum contributing editor Max Kozloff stated that "Harvard professors were industriously planning strategy that would inaugurate ten years of mayhem in
Vietnam." For many artists and intellectuals, being against Michael Fried and Harvard was a way of being against the war in Vietnam.

Fried declared his war against theatricality as the Lyndon B. Johnson administration escalated American involvement in Vietnam. President Johnson, who had succeeded President John F. Kennedy after his assassination in 1963, supported and advanced the war. During the Tet Offensive of January 1968, communist commandoes blasted a hole in the protective wall surrounding the U.S. embassy in Saigon, the most visible symbol of the American presence in South Vietnam. For six hours, nineteen guerrillas fired mortars into the building. The audacious raid, captured by television cameras, formed only a tiny part of a simultaneous assault on every major region in South Vietnam. Enemy forces took the Americans by surprise, seized the city of Hue, and struck at more than one hundred targets throughout Vietnam. U.S. troops eventually beat back the offensive, recapturing the cities, inflicting horrific casualties on the Vietcong, and maintaining the South Vietnamese government's precarious hold on the country.18

The battle was widely captured and broadcast on American domestic television. Historian Bruce Schulman explained in *The Seventies*:

Support for the war drained away instantly; Tet vividly demonstrated that U.S. strategy had failed. Immediately before the offensive despite years of anti-war protests, only 28 percent of Americans opposed the war effort. Twice as many, 56 percent, told Gallup pollsters that they supported it. One month later, hawks and doves each tallied 40 percent. Tet had changed millions of minds.19

Schulman pointed out that the events of the Tet Offensive were a major factor in the shifting of public support for the war. This widespread change in public opinion amounted to a vote of non-confidence for the Johnson administration. After Johnson announced he would not run again, Richard Nixon ran on a platform of "peace in Vietnam."20 Americans elected Nixon by a narrow margin in December 1968.

During the summer of 1967, after Fried's essay was published, *Artforum* left its Los Angeles offices and moved to New York City, which had become, in the post-war
years, the center of the international art world. It was only appropriate that the house
organ of advanced art in America be based there. As emerging segments of the art world
on both coasts of the United States during the '60s including participants in Happenings,
Pop, earth art, performance art, minimal art and conceptual art spurned Greenbergian
modernism, they participated in all manner of highly representational art forms, and often
carried those activities over into public events such as demonstrations and displays of
politically explicit art. The war in Vietnam, civil rights, and feminism were the central
issues for artists in the late '60s. As the younger generation of artists and critics sought to
engage with current social and political issues, the politics of art became the politics of
how art should relate to larger social, political, and economic structures.

In order to briefly survey some of the instances of artists' responses to the social
and political crises of the period, I have drawn on a variety of sources, including critic
Therese Schwartz's four-part series of articles published in Art in America between 1971
and 1973 entitled "The Politicalization of the Avant-Garde." The appearance of these
articles in a magazine which didn't have a reputation for being central to contemporary
issues can be seen as part of an attempt to become more relevant in the art press. Among
the earliest instances of political art that Schwartz reported was the California Peace
tower of 1966. According to Schwartz, the Los Angeles Artists Protest Committee raised
approximately $10,000 to rent an empty lot on "The Strip" between Hollywood and Los
Angeles and planned a permanent steel Peace Tower, the central message of which was
"Stop War in Vietnam." Schwartz also recounted the events of "Angry Arts Week,"
which took place between January 29 and February 5, 1967, at the Loeb Student Center
at New York University. The center-piece of this protest was a "Collage of Indignation"
which consisted of a giant wall of two-dimensional work where "writers, painters, poets, 
dancers, musicians, actors and film makers took part in a weeklong protest against 
American policy in Vietnam." Interestingly, Schwartz pointed out that 

a remarkable aspect of these protests was that they were exclusively directed 
toward the war in Southeast Asia. Nothing was heard of the artists' own problems 
and difficulties closer to home—scarcity of jobs and lofts, the corruption of the art 
market, the oppressive dealer-gallery-museum-collector system. 

These issues would all be raised in coming years. The events of "Angry Arts Week" 
caught the attention of Max Kozloff, a long-time contributing editor at Artforum. Kozloff 
was a protégé of critic Harold Rosenberg who, since the '40s had been one of Clement 
Greenberg's primary critical opponents. Rosenberg disagreed with Greenberg's increasing 
focus on internal formal issues as he continued to explore wider experiential concerns. 
Both men had intellectual links with circles of political leftism in the '30s, especially the 
Marxism of Leon Trotsky. By the '50s Greenberg had begun to dissociate himself and his 
criticism from these strands of overt political thought. According to art historian Serge 
Guilbaut, Greenberg suggested in his 1939 article "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" that "it was 
impossible to attempt action in both political and cultural spheres at the same time. The 
house might be in danger, but by fighting to protect Western culture, at least the furniture 
might be saved." Speaking of the shift in the politics of Greenberg's criticism, Guilbaut 
has pointed out that 

The delicate balance between art and politics that Trotsky, Breton, and Schapiro 
had tried to maintain was generally missing from Greenberg's articles. Although 
he continued to use certain elements of Marxist analysis and clung to a Marxist 
vocabulary, Greenberg was in fact laying the theoretical foundations for an 
'elitist' modernist position. 

In Art, Politics, and Dissent, art historian Francis Frascina further discussed the history of 
cultural dissent in America. He discussed the McCarthyism of the '50s with its
attacks on Communists, Marxists, and socialists. It was also characterized by an aggressive economic, ideological and military involvement by the United States globally. For many members of the 'Old Left', the possibility of sustaining their beliefs and projects from the 1930s not only became practically difficult but also several shifted their views on 'culture and politics'. The latter meant privileging high culture and autonomous art as the last defensible enclaves of political dissent—revolutionary aspirations having been bracketed by McCarthyism, a consumer boom and Cold War imperialism.

In an article Max Kozloff wrote for *The Nation* in 1967 called "A Collage of Indignation", the critic pointed out that "Never in the last hundred years, has a serious, avant-garde art been so caught up with the confounding issues and pressures of its society". He remarked that "To write of art and politics in the United States in 1967 is surely to court futility in a context of provocation." He remarked:

> It is the predicament of trying to resolve divergent obligations—intellectual and moral—which public life in this country is always prying further apart, with stupefying results. There is nothing like a national crisis—and the war in Vietnam is a crisis raised to the pitch of horror—to make aesthetic pursuits look pitifully insignificant. But there is also nothing like such a crisis to cause some of us to rethink the nature of our role as men involved or concerned with creativity.

Kozloff then asked, "And how can artists who have all this time been hyper-defensive about their autonomy as creators, strive consciously to reach this population, and still view themselves as artists?" Kozloff’s remarks emphasize the contradiction of late modernism’s inability to engage with political issues without compromising its aesthetic and critical autonomy. Autonomy would remain a critical issue in the art community during the coming years as artists and intellectuals focused their attention on issues surrounding the function of the art market. In *Art, Politics, and Dissent*, Frascina juxtaposed the modernist position of Michael Fried in "Art and Objecthood" with Kozloff’s position in "A Collage of Indignation". He wrote:

> The editor, Philip Leider, was both a participant in anti-war activities and a cultural elitist. From an Old Left perspective, cultural elitism was inconsistent
with social and political protest or dissent, the struggle for equality. However, transformations in the 1940s and 1950s led many members of the political left to value the specialist products of high culture as a separable sphere of human activity. For such intellectuals no inconsistency was identified in being a cultural elitist while supporting the rights of workers and the marginalized and oppressed in society.  

The formation of the Art Workers' Coalition (AWC) in January 1969, would be another important instance of art world politicizing. According to Lucy Lippard, the AWC was born when Greek sculptor Vassilakis Takis, who had lived in Paris during the student occupation of May 1968, removed one of his sculptures from an exhibit in the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York. According to Therese Schwartz, the group held two meetings in the coming weeks and presented a list of 13 demands to officials at MoMA with the threat of occupation. The first demand read "The Museum should hold a public hearing during February on the topic "The Museum's Relationship to Artists and to Society." Among the other demands were the establishment of a wing directed by and exhibiting exclusively African-American artists. On April 10 1969, the AWC held a "speak-out" in the amphitheater at The School for Visual Arts in New York called "Open Public Hearing on the subject: What Should Be the Program of The Art Workers Regarding Museum Reform, and to Establish the Program of an Open Art Workers' Coalition". According to an article entitled "The Art Workers' Coalition: not a history" by Lippard, "The most controversial aspect of the AWC among artists and establishment has been its so-called 'politicization of art' term, a term usually used to cover the Black and women's programmes as well as demands that museums speak out against racism, war and repression." Lippard also pointed out that conflicts of interest among the museum's trustees was a key issue at the hearing. Gregory Batcock reportedly asked "Do you realize that it is those art-loving, culturally committed trustees of the Metropolitan
Lippard observed that the artists' dilemma was "Is this the kind of society I can make art in? What use is art in this or any society? Should it have no use, even morally?" Lippard also reported that

A list of questions circulated by an artworker and glued to doors throughout the city in June 1969, enraged almost everyone by demanding 'Does money manipulate art? Does money manipulate galleries? Do galleries manipulate artists? Do artists manipulate art? Is as a career (career-'highway, a running from or to, carting, carrying')? Is a career carousing? Are galleries pimps for carousing artists cruising immortality?'

This was a sign that artists were beginning to engage with political and economic issues within the art world as well. Therese Schwartz observed that none of the sixteen women who made statements at the hearing spoke exclusively on the problems of women artists. Schwartz reported that Ian Whitecross was the only speaker who mentioned women in a separate group, stating:

...in our society artists have no power because they are divided against themselves...Like women, like black people, we are fed with a careful fiction as to the nature of our wishes...how many times have women been told that to do something well, or even seriously, will preclude a happy relationship with a man? Anything, that is, that falls outside the conventional role of women..."

Although the second wave of women's liberation was rapidly becoming organized and gaining momentum during the '60s, feminist issues were often marginalized in the context of racial and political radicalism. The feminist challenge to the art world would persist and become more visible in the '70s, especially after Linda Nochlin's January 1971 article "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?" Yet even before Nochlin's article, feminism was an issue in the art world. In 1968, Valerie Solanas, an artist involved in Andy Warhol's factory, published "Scum Manifesto". Hilary Robinson, editor of the anthology *Feminism-Art-Theory*, pointed out that the manifesto is "a funny and trenchant tract on gender roles and cultural production. Solanas turns masculine and
Solanas went on to state, "The True artist is every self-confident, healthy female, and in a female society the only Art, the only Culture, will be conceited, kookie, funkie females grooving on each other and on everything else in the universe." This manifesto provides an example of artists' playfulness with social gender roles, an enquiry which would be further explored by many artists during the '70s. Solanas would take her criticism to an extreme when in 1968 she shot Andy Warhol.

The liberalization of sex in American culture during the post-war period at once provided fuel and a foil to the women's movement. Historian David Allyn pointed out that

In 1954 Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin decried the 'sex revolution' he saw taking place in American society and bemoaned the rising divorce rate, the shrinking family size, the growing popularity of jazz, the spread of ever more 'expressive gyrations and contortions called dancing,' and the new phenomenon he labeled 'sex addiction.'

Allyn also pointed out that the term "sexual revolution" was being used to explain the "showing of hard-core sex films in first-run theaters, not to mention the opening of private clubs for group sex." Allyn stated that "Sex education courses in schools and colleges were radically redesigned to replace euphemism and scare tactics with explicit
Allyn stated:

because this was when white middle-class Americans first really began to accept the idea of young women having premarital sex. It ends in the late seventies, when opponents on both ends of the political spectrum waged a largely successful campaign against sexual permissiveness.

Assessing the wider historical impact of the social and political developments of the late '60s, Bruce Schulman observed:

The Sixties appeared as a historical divide, a decade of turmoil with the future hanging in the balance. But the era, and its climactic twelve months [1968], have also been recalled, as 'the Year the Dream Died'—the year when for so many, the dream of a nobler, optimistic America died, and the reality of a skeptical conservative America began to fill the void.

During President Nixon's first term in office, he announced in April 1970 that he had expanded the war into Cambodia. This announcement enraged a large segment of the American public who had elected Nixon on the platform of "peace in Vietnam."

According to historian Stephanie A. Slocum-Schaffer, "The anti-war movement grew in numbers and in ferocity with each passing day, and the response to the expansion of the war was an eruption of more campus protests and riots." Slocum-Schaffer reported that Campus opposition finally resulted in the tragedy at Kent State: one thousand students rallied at noon on May 4 to protest the widening of the war, and National Guardsmen who sought to clear an area of rock-throwing demonstrators opened fire on both protesters and bystanders without warning. When the guns had stilled, eleven people were wounded and four were killed, including two women. [...] Less than two weeks later, two more students were killed at Jackson State College in Mississippi.

The massacres at Kent State and Jackson State pushed the protest movement to a fevered pitch. There was still a sense in the early '70s that direct political action could ultimately affect results, and heightened social tensions were signs that the time was ripe for radical political change. The art community was at odds with itself, and its conflicts were often
drawn around generational lines. Shortly after the Kent and Jackson State massacres, *Artforum*, under the direction of founding editor Philip Leider, sent out a symposium question asking artists to discuss their individual positions regarding political matters.

The question was:

A growing number of artists have begun to feel the need to respond to the deepening political crisis in America. Among these artists, however, there are serious differences concerning their relations to direct political actions. Many feel that the political implications of their work constitute the most profound political actions they can take. Others, not denying this, continue to feel the need for an immediate, direct political commitment. Still others feel that their work is devoid of political meaning and that their political lives are unrelated to their art. What is your position regarding the kinds of political action that should be taken by artists?54

The formulation of the question in individual terms gives a sense of how divergent the responses could be expected to be. Some of the responses were published in September 1970 under the title, "The Artist and Politics: A Symposium". Carl Andre claimed "Life is the link between politics and art."55 Jo Baer stated: "the time for political action by artists is now and I believe action should be taken in the art world and in the world at large. Political action need not inhibit art-making; the two activities are dissimilar, not incompatible."56 Billy Al Bengston maintained "KEEP MONEY IN FOREIGN CURRENCY AND PASSPORT CURRENT."57 Donald Judd stated: "I've always thought that my work had political implications, had attitudes that would permit, limit or prohibit some kinds of political behavior and some institutions. Also, I've thought that the situation was pretty bad and that my work was all I could do."58 Ed Ruscha suggested: "I don't think an artist can do much for any cause by using his art as a weapon."59 Robert Smithson declared:

The artist does not have to will a response to the 'deepening political crisis in America.' Sooner or later the artist is implicated or devoured by politics without
even trying. My 'position' is one of sinking into an awareness of global squalor and futility. The rat of politics always gnaws at the cheese of art. [emphasis in original]⁶⁰

And Lawrence Weiner remarked: "Art as it becomes useful, even to the extent of entering the culture, becomes for me no longer Art but History. History being perhaps the most viable tool of Politics. All Art as it becomes known becomes Political regardless of the intent of the Artist."⁶¹ The California Peace Tower, Angry Arts Week, the Art Workers' Coalition, and the responses in "The Artist and Politics: A Symposium" give ample evidence of the breakdown in consensus in the art community, especially through disagreements around notions of autonomy, the emergence of democratic social and political values in the wake of aesthetic quality and the emergence of attention to the roles of the individual vis-à-vis the larger community. As the era of optimistic protest waned and a frustrated cynicism set in, these themes would continue to unfold in various ways during the coming decade.

In analyzing certain developments which took place during these years, I have found it useful to consult the theoretical writings of French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. I have drawn on Bourdieu's writings to conceptualize a theoretical framework which brings into focus some of the functions of what Bourdieu calls "the field of cultural production". In an essay first published in 1971 entitled "The Market of Symbolic Goods", Bourdieu opened with an epigraph which illustrates the dialectic of competing values and ideas: "Theories and schools, like microbes and globules, devour each other and, through their struggle, ensure the continuity of life."⁶² The essay is divided into several subsections, including "The Logic of the Process of Autonomization", "The Structure and Functioning of the Field of Restricted Production", "The Field of Instances of Reproduction and
Consecration", "Relations Between The Field of Restricted Production and the Field of Large-Scale Production", and finally "Positions and Position takings". The first section, on the autonomization of the art world, gives a clear historical trajectory of the formation of the self-regulating art world, which produced the idea of autonomous art, or "art for art's sake". In which the various forms of legitimation are perhaps the most vital functions. It is worth quoting Bourdieu's concise text at length:

Dominated by external sources of legitimacy throughout the middle ages, part of the Renaissance and, in the case of French court life, throughout the classical age, intellectual and artistic life has progressively freed itself from aristocratic and ecclesiastical tutelage as well as from its aesthetic and ethical demands. This process is correlated with the constant growth of a public of potential consumers, of increasing social diversity, which guarantee the producers of symbolic goods minimal conditions of economic independence and, also, a competing principle of legitimacy. It is also correlated with the constitution of an ever-growing, ever-more diversified corps of producers and merchants of symbolic goods, who tend to reject all constraints apart from technical imperatives and credentials. Finally, it is correlated with the multiplication and diversification of agencies of consecration placed in a situation of competition for cultural legitimacy: not only academies and salons, but also institutions for diffusion, such as publishers and theatrical impresarios, whose selective operations are invested with a truly cultural legitimacy even if they are subordinated to economic and social constraints.63

Bourdieu argues that art production has become increasingly professionalized and therefore only inclined to recognize expectations or conventions that have been passed down within the professional sphere, such as how an artist may conduct their role in relation to the audience/market. Bourdieu points out that this process has been accompanied by the growth of various markets for art, which in turn have produced various competing "agencies of consecration", such as critics and museums, whose inclusions, exclusions, and pronouncements often have direct repercussions in the market. Bourdieu goes on to point out that "Symbolic goods are a two-faced reality, a commodity and a symbolic object. Their specifically cultural value and their commercial value
remain relatively independent, although the economic sanction may come to reinforce their cultural consecration. 64 The two-facedness of artworks would prove to offer many challenges to the art community of the '70s, especially in terms of art's relationship with the market and other social and political structures. By continuing to draw on Bourdieu's theory during the forthcoming analysis, the responses of various artists and intellectuals to the "two-faced" condition of artworks can be understood in a larger structural context.

In this context we will now turn our attention to John Coplans, when he entered the offices of Artforum at 667 Madison Avenue at 60th Street in New York City to take his position as editor of the magazine in September, 1971. As Coplans took a new position in the field of cultural production, he would interact with the magazine's publisher and contributing editors, as well as artists, dealers and curators, each of whom have competing interests, and all of whom would participate in various acts of reproduction and consecration during the '70s.

7 Ibid, 61.
8 Ibid., 65.
9 Fried, 68.
12 Ibid.


Max Kozloff, "American Painting During the Cold War," Artforum 12, May 1973, 43.


Stephanie A. Slocum-Schaffer, America in the Seventies, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 1.


58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 38
60 Ibid., 39.
61 Ibid.
62 M. Proust, *Sodom and Gomorrah*.
63 Bourdieu, 112.
64 Ibid., 113.
Enter: John Coplans

One of the first editorial decisions John Coplans took was to invite Lawrence Alloway (who had gained a reputation as a critical supporter of Pop art during the '60s) to join Artforum as a contributing editor, joining Jack Burnham, Michael Fried, Max Kozloff, Rosalind E. Krauss, Jerrold Lanes, Annette Michelson, Robert Pincus-Witten, Peter Plagens, and Barbara Rose. The format of the magazine has become a classic in its own right: a perfect 10.5 inch square. The square is the ideal emblem for Artforum, because it is a symbol of what Artforum had come to represent since the early '60s: the ideal modernist form, the primary structure, the specific object, autonomous art. The square is the most abstract shape because it resists orientation. A rectangle is always either horizontal or vertical, alternately recalling landscape and portrait modes; whereas the square, not so. The square stubbornly refuses its surroundings.

During Coplans' editorship, each issue typically hovered around 100 pages including covers, and was typeset in the modern face of Optima. Color reproductions were very rare and typically appeared on about 5% of the pages. Notoriously, gallery advertisements comprised then, as today, a considerable portion of Artforum's pages. In this aspect, the magazine is a two-faced object in that it is symbolic of cultural discourse, yet it is bound together by gallery commerce. In the September 1971 issue there were five pages of advertisements between the cover and the masthead and table of contents. The
letters column came next, presenting three pages of letters and responses from readers, editors, artists or other often highly visible members of the art community. The following 21 pages consisted solely of advertisements, which were followed by the feature articles beginning on page 32. The feature articles ran uninterrupted and contiguously for their full length. After the sequence of articles in the middle of the magazine which spanned 59 pages and comprised 13 articles ranging in length from one to seven pages in September 1971, there appeared several pages of reviews, although the first New York gallery reviews to be published during Coplans' editorship would not appear for several months. The remainder of the September 1971 issue consisted of six more pages of advertisements, including the back cover.

The advertisements are mostly for commercial galleries. In the October 1971 issue, there are 68 advertisements for commercial galleries, two for art schools, one for a university gallery, and one for a frame maker. Eleven of the gallery advertisements are full-page and advertise artists showing in New York, including Kenneth Noland at Andre Emmerich on 57th Street, Frank Stella at Lawrence Rubin also on 57th Street, and an advertisement for Leo Castelli's three New York locations, including 57th Street (uptown), 420 West Broadway (downtown) and a print/graphics gallery (midtown). The remainder of the advertisements are half, quarter and eighth page sizes. Occasionally throughout the period, a legally required facsimile of the magazine's "Statement of Ownership, Management and Circulation" was published amidst the advertisements in the back pages. There is one such facsimile in the November 1971 issue on page 88. Its miniscule, barely legible type states that the magazine's net print run averaged 16, 400 over the previous 12
months. The magazine had 12,465 mail subscriptions and sold 2,651 copies through retail outlets. The rest were office copies, promotional copies, archival copies, and extras.

The first reviews of New York gallery exhibitions to appear during Coplans' editorship arrived in December 1971. Typically beginning near the back of the codex, each reviewer would discuss several or more exhibits in his or her entry. Among the artists discussed by Robert Pincus-Witten in the "lead" entry of December 1971 is Lynda Benglis, a recognized postminimal sculptor. Pincus-Witten opened his review with a statement that unknowingly foreshadowed later events: "More and more Lynda Benglis strives for theatrical effect."¹ This statement positioned Benglis's work in relation to the contemporary discourse around late modernism by its use of the term "theatrical" which in 1971 had unmistakably anti-Friedian overtones. After describing the work (which consisted of polyurethane foam sculptures cast over inflated plastic bags), Pincus-Witten suggested that it marked "a general slackening of theory in Benglis' work", and that "what seems threatened is not only the stature of a highly gifted artist who made some of the most energetic and difficult early steps in favor of post-Minimalism, but the viability of post-Minimalism as a style in itself."² Pincus-Witten made a grand claim by staking the future of postminimalism on Lynda Benglis. By doing so, he not only made a claim for Benglis's legitimacy, but also for his own legitimacy as the critic who had the power to confer such legitimacy. As Pierre Bourdieu observed in 1971:

These relations, e.g. between author and publisher, publisher and critic, author and critic, are revealed as the ensemble of relations attendant on the 'publication' of the work, that is, its becoming a public object. In each of these relations, each of these agents engages not only his own image of other factors in the relationship (consecrated or exorcised author, avant-garde or traditional publisher, etc.) which depends on his relative position within the field, but also his image of the other factor's image of himself, i.e. of the social definition of his objective position in the field.³
Another editorial occurrence which took place early in Coplans' editorship was the decision to publish not one but two very negative articles in response to an exhibition mounted by the Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) entitled "Art and Technology". The appearance of these two polemics in October 1971 can also be understood to represent *Artforum's* editorial position. The exhibition was the culmination of a four year project which began in 1967 and which was organized by Maurice Tuchman, LACMA's Curator of Modern Art, in which two hundred artists, mostly from New York, worked with 37 corporations, mostly based in Southern California, to produce a collaborative exhibition.\(^4\)

The first article, entitled "Corporate Art" by contributing editor Jack Burnham opened with the question: "at what point does the working relationship between the artist and sophisticated technology preclude the synthesis of art?"\(^5\) His question suggests that the interference of industrial technology reduces art's necessary autonomy. Burnham gave an example from the "Art and Technology" opening:

I remember being served cocktails as banks of helium balloons, each trailing a red plastic A or T, floated over-head, while outside Rockne Krebs' lasers pulsed through the dark. I'm sure the last was meant to be art and the other, opening night decoration, but in the heady atmosphere of Los Angeles that evening, both blended as a predictable background for corporation bigwigs, local socialites, art freaks, and sundry museum members. It really didn't make any difference.\(^6\)

"Art and Technology" proposed a relationship between two distinct and self-regulating professional spheres. Their collaboration was bound to provoke negative responses that each sphere's autonomy had been compromised by external interests. In terms of the links between technology, industry, and American political interests, Burnham pointed out that
Tuchman acknowledged the political implications of the project in his catalogue essay.

Tuchman wrote:

I suspect that if Art and Technology were beginning now instead of in 1967, in a climate of increased polarization and organized determination to protest against the policies supported by so many American business interests and so violently opposed by much of the art community, many of the same artists would not have participated.7

The reader will be aware that the "policies supported by so many American business interests" Tuchman refers to are, of course, the escalation of the Vietnam War. The American government was spending highly in the California aerospace industry in order to support the military campaign in Vietnam. Many of the companies supplying ordnance to the American government were also participating in "Art and Technology". The role of the marketplace in all this was as an interface between various—often diametrically opposed—political interests. Burnham wrote:

In reality the notion of the artist as a symbol of political avant-gardism and independence is tenuous. By its nature, art depends upon social compliance and cooperation. Whether an artist uses the local museum or I.B.M., he is equally in the hands of the financial establishment—how far he becomes enmeshed is just a matter of conscience and practicality.8

The acknowledgement of art's relationship with the marketplace comes with the suggestion that "practical" (commercial) concerns can be balanced with artistic concerns (moral "conscience"), recalling the two-faces of symbolic goods. Burnham goes on to caricature the art world's interests in economic disinterestedness: "Whether out of political conviction or paranoia, elements in the Art World tend to see latent fascist aesthetics in any liaison with giant industries; it is permissible to have your fabrication done by a local sheet-metal shop, but not by Hewlett-Packard."9 Burnham's use of sarcasm suggests that the moral purism of various segments of the art world were in some
cases latent rather than wholly explicit. In the conclusion of his article, Burnham remarked more explicitly:

I hope the business moguls who supported this exhibition get the message, because what the artists are saying is simply this: no one believes that American corporate interests, controlling the overwhelming portion of our technology, have any real sense of social responsibility or direction.10

This statement underlines the conflict between the holier-than-thou disinterestedness of artists and intellectuals towards the corporate pursuit of pure economic interest, and it affirms the importance for artists and intellectuals of the value of "social responsibility". Furthermore, Burnham’s discussion highlights the increasing attention to structural relations within the art world, specifically the relationship of art to the market.

The second article reporting on the same exhibition was written by Max Kozloff and entitled "The Multimillion Dollar Art Boondoggle". Kozloff’s response focused more closely on the exhibition catalogue, which was produced in the format of a shareholder’s report and titled A Report on the Art and Technology Program of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.11 Kozloff observed of the report, "It purveys 64 photographs of participants—artists and engineers or managers, equally divided. Even the most casual viewer would have no difficulty distinguishing, on the basis of shaggy versus close-cropped, who was who."12 Kozloff went on to discuss the project, suggesting "How novel for a museum to have dispensed with the gallery system, the erstwhile cohort that had for so long acted as a storage depot and screening agency for new art." Kozloff alluded to the convention in the art world of galleries being a testing ground for new artists, the successful ones (legitimized by critics or by the audience) being accepted to cross the threshold of the museum, a tradition which Kozloff is accusing Tuchman of circumventing by showing new artists in the museum. Tuchman’s circumvention
represents a challenge to the existing structure of legitimization. This challenge is deemed all the more threatening because it is facilitated by sources of power external to art, namely, the California aerospace industry. Kozloff accused the artists of a certain moral weakness in the face of the rich corporations, citing

the weakening of the radical morale as well as formal conscience of an artistic avant-garde that was becoming enticed by a reckless experimentalism. Despite the war protests and the peace auctions, the decrepitude of its social alienation was acute. Many artists did not understand that they had grown to be licentious at the cost of their independence.

Independence, elsewhere figured as autonomy, continued to serve as a central value—the disinterestedness of art depended on it. Kozloff drew attention to the conflict of interest in artists working with Lockheed Norris and RAND Corporation by pointing out that "During the term of the project, there occurred the My Lai massacre, the Chicago Democratic Convention riots, the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy, the invasion of Cambodia, and the student killings at Kent and Jackson State", suggesting that these atrocities had been enacted by political interests which were often in accord with those of the very corporations artists were collaborating with in Los Angeles.

Assessing the defeat of passing artistic ideals, and the crisis in avant-garde artistic development, Kozloff remarked that "The show unfolds a bankruptcy of character which time, if nothing else, had inflicted on '60s art" and that "it went further in unconscious celebration of the demise of the avant-garde tradition." These remarks are evidence of an increasing anxiety in the art world regarding the prospects for the continuation of avant-garde innovation in the '70s. After the reductive minimalizing and dematerializing of the '60s, advanced art appeared to be nearing the end of a certain logic of development. Along with the rapid succession of modes of art making which emerged in the '60s,
claims of an impending end to art also surfaced. If certain strands of artistic development were coming to an end, it would also mean new openings for others.

In conclusion, Kozloff compared the exhibition catalogue to "The Pentagon Papers." "The Pentagon Papers" consisted of four thousand pages of classified documents which detailed "the origins and conduct of the Vietnam War, including an account of how President Johnson had misused his power and misled Congress and the public" 17, which were released by Daniel Elsberg, a former RAND and Pentagon analyst. Excerpts of "The Pentagon Papers" were published in the New York Times beginning in June 1971. 18

Kozloff remarked:

Ultimately, the Report seems to me like a microcosmic analogue of these recent disclosures about American foreign policy in the Vietnam war—the Pentagon Papers. Both documents offer a candid history of bad faith and mutual deceit, of deepening mistakes and misunderstandings, and, above all, a collision of cultures. [...] In them is shown how men lose sight of a rational link between means and ends, and how they substituted for it a grandiose, self-serving vision which moved towards a failure of credibility, gratuitous waste, the abuse of power, and the collapse of the original effort itself, under the weight of its own misconception. 19

Kozloff’s bleak conclusion underlines the contradictions and frustrations surrounding art’s role in a deeply problematic contemporary society, which included threats to art’s autonomy and its internal legitimizing function.

Larger political events were invoked symbolically and metaphorically, rather than directly, to give political meaning to various acts of position-taking within the art world, as the politics of art remained how art should relate to larger political structures.

Burnham’s "Corporate Art" and Kozloff’s "The Multimillion Dollar Art Boondoggle" also reflected an editorial position that was developing at Artforum since "The Artist and Politics: A Symposium" and John Coplans’ arrival as editor. Although vestiges of
formalist criticism still regularly appeared in the magazine, a new editorial orientation towards social, political, and economic issues surrounding modern art was emerging at *Artforum* and in the art world.

Modern art's liaisons with the marketplace would also feature, albeit on a smaller scale, in the '60s and '70s. In November 1971, an advertisement appeared from a business venture called "Multiples" which offered, in an edition of 1200 at $100 each, a 13 x 13 x 13 inch box containing 19 books, objects and prints by an emerging generation of contemporary artists including Mel Bochner, Jan Dibbets, Dan Graham, Douglas Huebler, Allan Kaprow, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Bruce Nauman, Ed Ruscha, Robert Smithson, Andy Warhol, and others.\(^{20}\) A mail-order form was made available on the same page. Another example of emerging art entrepreneurialism is exemplified by Gregory Battcock's publishing activities. Battcock is known for having published numerous anthologies on recent trends in art at the peak of their popularity, including *The New Art: A Critical Anthology* in 1965 and revised in 1973, *Minimal Art: A Critical Anthology* in 1968, *Idea Art: A Critical Anthology* in 1973, and *Super Realism: A Critical Anthology* in 1975. In each of these cases, Battcock capitalized on the current popularity of a certain trend by publishing anthologies of recently inked critical writing. Battcock's publishing venture prefigured that of the early '80s of which Hal Foster's *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* and Brian Wallis's *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* are often taken to represent a qualitatively new publishing venture in their anthologizing of recent art writing. From merchandising to publishing, artists were becoming more entrepreneurial.
The September 1972 issue marked *Artforum's* 10th anniversary. This was a significant milestone for the magazine, because it can be seen as raising questions about *Artforum's* development: Would the magazine continue to pursue the modernist criticism that it became known for under Philip Leider, or would John Coplans pursue a new editorial position? The reviews of "Art and Technology" in the previous season gave a hint of what was to come. The cover of the anniversary issue presented a photograph of the interior of the *Artforum* offices, in which back issues mounted on the wall form a mosaic above two cluttered, unoccupied desks. Several key articles would appear in this issue, including Rosalind Krauss's "A View of Modernism", Lawrence Alloway's "Network: The Art World Described as a System", and Max Kozloff's "The Trouble With Art-As-Idea". In "A View of Modernism", Krauss, who had been dedicated to Greenbergian modernism since the early 60s, faced the limitations of this declining mode of criticism and staked out the prospects for a new methodology. Alloway's article represented an analysis of the art world based on systems-theory, and Kozloff's article provided a sweeping criticism of conceptual art's limitations and what this meant for artistic development. The essays furthered the conflicts between modernist purity and its relation to social and political contexts, the competing interests operating in the art world, and the crisis in artistic progress. The contents of this issue would also provoke a response from Hilton Kramer, the art critic at the *New York Times*. 
Kozloff's "The Trouble With Art-As-Idea" is a critique of conceptual art, and is part of an early '70s discourse in which the prospects for the continuation of avant-garde art were seriously under question. Extending certain concerns raised in "The Multimillion Dollar Art Boondoggle," Kozloff diagnosed conceptual art as a kind of paralysis in artistic development. In using words such as "puritanical", "haunted by obsolescence", "nihilism", "hermetic", and "deadlock" to characterize conceptual art, Kozloff suggested that "the problem of avant-garde continuity was thought to be solved by the refusal to transform the art subject." In this context of production, Kozloff observed, "our commerce with art may go on nominally as it had before, but so weakened, precious, and attenuated as to make it almost a matter of indifference." Kozloff suspected that conceptual art was "the result of a demoralization that cannot acknowledge itself" and that "very few hints are taken from many works that are themselves overt scenarios of impasse and paralysis." Kozloff's bleak outlook is explicitly a response to a scenario in which he deems artistic development as nearly impossible. For Kozloff, in conceptual art "we are barraged with data overloads, inertial lists, that are not communicative, and that are not even intelligible except by reference to a sullied faith in art." In conclusion, Kozloff stated: "My guess, however, is that it is not the work, but the play ethic that is exhausted, at least as represented in Conceptual Art." Kozloff's pessimism towards conceptual art was shared by many in the art world as the difficulty of the problem of avant-garde continuity was becoming more and more overt. That this message comes on the 10th anniversary of Artforum was not an encouraging sign from the nation's leading art magazine.
The primary method of theorizing found in Lawrence Alloway's "Network: The Art World Described as a System" was drawn from American systems theory. Many of the articles Alloway drew on were published in Scientific American and in anthologies such as "Organization Theory" and "Systems Thinking". This is in contrast to Pierre Bourdieu's methodology, which drew on European post-analytic social theory and modern sociology. Alloway's main thesis is that the art world is a "network", not a "hierarchy", because in a "multiple goal coalition" such as the art world, "it is improbable that any single influence will affect all of them." Lawrence Alloway began his long article by describing the process by which new art is legitimized in the art world, beginning with the "first exhibition" in the artist's studio, which is usually followed by a gallery exhibition in which the art "is seen by a larger but still specialized public." Finally, according to Alloway, a work is privately collected, traveled, or acquired by a museum.

Explaining a conventional process alluded to by Max Kozloff above, Alloway described the screening process by which museums usually only select artists who have proven successful on the gallery circuit. Teasing out deeper inter-relations, Alloway went on to explain that such activity connects intimately with private galleries, whose profits can be affected by museum shows of their artists. The Alan Solomon-Leo Castelli collaboration at the Jewish Museum in the early sixties, the Rauschenberg and Johns retrospectives, at the ages of 38 and 34 respectively, is a remarkable example of the convergence of intellectual interest and high profits.

Alloway raised the issue of artists' need to respond to the social and political inter-relations of the period by pointing out that Reassessment by the artists of their role in society parallels their audience's doubt about art's centrality. The market or exchange value of art has been discussed.
since 1960, not as a source of prestige but as the taint of corruption. Art is a commodity in a part of the system but not all of it.\textsuperscript{33}

Alloway's statement, which recalls Bourdieu's notion of the two-faced symbolic good, underscored the centrality of discussions around contemporary art's relation to larger social and political structures, especially to that of the marketplace, and further emphasized the high-minded "purist" morality that accompanied the criticism of the art market in the early '70s. Alluding to the notion of art world consensus, Alloway pointed out that a number of monographs on major contemporary artists of the '60s had been written by some of the most visible critics of the day including books on Jasper Johns by Max Kozloff, Claes Oldenberg by Barbara Rose, Frank Stella by William Rubin, Andy Warhol by John Coplans, and Helen Frankenthaler by Barbara Rose.\textsuperscript{34} Alloway suggested that "The support system of the knowledge industry was firmly lined up behind the artists."\textsuperscript{35} This evidence of cohesiveness in the art community is also a sign of increased autonomy as opposed to heteronomy in the art world. Bourdieu has suggested:

\begin{quote}
It is significant that the progress of the field of restricted production towards autonomy is marked by an increasingly distinct tendency of criticism to devote itself to the task, not of producing the instruments of appropriation—the more imperatively demanded by a work the further it separates itself from the public—but of providing a 'creative' interpretation for the benefit of the 'creators'. And so, tiny 'mutual admiration societies' grew up, closed in upon their own esotericism, as, simultaneously, signs of a new solidarity between artist and critic emerged.\textsuperscript{36}
\end{quote}

Alloway then proceeded to link this cohesiveness to the current problems facing the continuity of the avant-garde. Alloway remarks, "It is the promptness of the coverage that is one of the reasons for the corrosion of the concept of the avant-garde. A group's lead-time in new ideas is of almost negligible duration now."\textsuperscript{37} Furthermore, during the '60s:

\begin{quote}
There was a willingness to pay high prices for new art, subject to elaborately negotiated discount: [Collectors] Harry Abrams, Leon Kraushaar, John Powers, Scull were among those who attached the principle of conspicuous consumption
\end{quote}
to the newest art. By the end of the sixties, however, the cluster of social injustice, Vietnam, and inflation had destroyed the favorable situation, for the art world as for other sub-groups.38

Here, Alloway underlined the link between advanced art and the market by echoing the point that after the unbridled optimism of the '60s, the art world responded to various social and structural issues. As the sense of community broke down around differing notions of how art should relate to larger social and economic structures, new tensions surrounding the individual's relationship to the community also emerged. Alloway wrote:

The confidence produced by the simultaneous success of two generations of American artists, the delayed recognition of the older and the accelerated recognition of the younger generations coming together, promoted a sense of common identity. At first this amounted to little more than a loose agreement to being part of a professional group in a situation sufficiently stable not to demand continual, conscious participation. By the late sixties, however, artists had developed a sharper sense of themselves as a permanent interest.39

The tendency toward more individualized perspectives was exemplified in 1970 by "The Artist and Politics: A Symposium", when the magazine deferred to individual artists to make independent statements rather than claiming to represent a consensus position. Speaking to the emerging issue of how artistic ideals might be reconciled with the art market, Alloway stated:

Typical of a new intransigence and desire to modify the form of distribution of art were the Art Workers Coalition and the short-lived Emergency Cultural Government, both of which presumed the need for reform of the market and institutions of the art world. Another sign is the move to protect the artist's power of copyright by the Artist's Reserve Rights Transfer and Sale Agreement, a contract that a number of artists require their collectors to sign. (It provides for future remuneration if a work is resold at a higher price.)40

In the end, Alloway diagnosed a crisis in the confidence of artists in the distribution system. Alloway repeatedly used the term "distribution system" while the term "market" scarcely appears in his analysis. "In conclusion we must ask what is likely to follow from..."
the crisis of confidence that artists (some artists) feel in the distribution system. His answer is that for any change to occur during the '70s, either the desire that art be "translatable" or that "public access to new art is desirable" would have to change. Alloway suggested that a change in distribution cannot reasonably be expected to originate in either the galleries, or the museums, and therefore Alloway's conclusion is that no real change in art's relationship with the market is likely to take place.

Rosalind Krauss, who has become one of the most well-known art historians of the late twentieth century, played a less visible but by no means less influential role at Artforum during the early '70s. Among the editors there were certain loyalties and animosities that shaped the magazine's editorial activities. Krauss remained very close with her colleague Annette Michelson throughout the period. They each held academic posts. Krauss and Michelson were not overtly engaged with politics or feminism. They focused their critical energies on articulating an interdisciplinary modernist criticism of film and photography. On the other side of a palpable divide, John Coplans, Max Kozloff, and Lawrence Alloway, none of whom held academic posts at the time, and who were all actively engaged with political matters would be more visible in the primary debates and activities at the magazine. In "A View of Modernism", Krauss admitted her age as 31 at the time of writing, and that she had been writing art criticism for eight years. She explained that many people knew her only through her writings, and that Philip Leider was one of these. "I met him shortly after Artforum's offices moved from the West Coast to New York. His reaction to me was typical. "You're Rosalind Krauss?" he said. "I had expected that you'd be at least 40."

This anecdote introduced a line of thinking in which Krauss reconsidered her generational affiliations.
"A View of Modernism" was Krauss's personal manifesto and stock taking in the state of modernism in 1972. Coming from a figure who had been a dedicated Greenbergian modernist, the discourse that *Artforum* had staked its identity on, "A View of Modernism" represented a shift in relevance of that mode of criticism. Signaling her rejection of that earlier doctrine, most recently articulated by Michael Fried in "Art and Objecthood", Krauss spoke of her personal history, recalling a Donald Judd essay in which Judd disparagingly referred to Michael Fried and Rosalind Krauss as "Greenbers". Of the essay, Krauss said, "Beyond its wit, Judd's remark implied the danger of self-objectification inherent in our position, mine and the others, in espousing a doctrine, the doctrine to which we were committed which was 'modernism'." She went on to characterize the sensibility of which she partook:

We saw the aching beauty of those works in the constant invention of formats that collapsed into one instantly perceived chord the sounds of all those doors to the past closing at once, managing in the space that was left to lodge powerful evidence of the feeling of their makers.

This description vividly illustrates the logic of linear progression at the core of Greenbergian modernism. Krauss pointed out that

I never doubted the absoluteness of that history. It was out there, manifest in a whole progression of works of art, an objective fact to be analyzed. It had nothing to do with belief, or privately held fantasies about the past. Insofar as modernism was tied to the objective datum of that history, it had, I thought, nothing to do with 'sensibility.' Obviously modernism is a sensibility—

At this point Krauss acknowledged certain flaws in the modernist method: "What this whole business about series and perspective adds up to is a set of anomalies which does not fit, and cannot comfortably be explained by the modernist critical theory."

Admitting the limitations of modernism, Krauss goes on to point out that modernist criticism's "inability to deal with Richard Serra, or Michael Heizer, or Keith Sonnier, or
Robert Smithson is anomalous in the extreme. The artists listed were among the emerging generation of contemporary artists who were staking their claims to legitimacy on ruptures with the requirements of modernism, especially the doctrine of flatness and instantaneous optical experience. Emerging contemporary artists in the '70s would embrace theatricality and temporal art forms in their rejection of the passing notion of optically perceived aesthetic quality. Krauss's statements in "A View of Modernism" amount to a significant change in position of the young critic, having more affinities with Smithson's response to Fried's "Art and Objecthood" than with Fried's own remarks. The re-tooling of modernism is a further repercussion of the breakdown of community in the art world of the early '70s.

The diagnosis of a crisis in artistic development, the attention to the structure of the art world, and the rejection of an earlier mode of modernism on the 10th anniversary of Artforum is representative of a shifting editorial position in the context of a changing artistic and political landscape. The 10th anniversary issue provoked a response from Hilton Kramer in the New York Times on September 17, 1972. Kramer's article, "Does Advanced Art Have Content?" opened by describing the purpose of the issue so as to "give a sense of the problems and impasses currently dominating certain sectors of the art world." Kramer wrote:

The problems felt to be most acute on this occasion are social rather than esthetic, however. The impasses acknowledged and analyzed in these essays are likewise social and intellectual. A sense of breakdown is everywhere apparent in these essays—a sense of anxiety and dissatisfaction over the ways in which art has lately been thought about and written about and experienced.

Kramer explained that "Artforum established the conviction that a proper appreciation of a work of art was dependent upon a prior mastery of a complex body of theoretical
Kramer qualified these remarks by stating "even if we sometimes objected to the arrogant tone of their delivery and the awful snobbery," and observed:

But at the heart of this elevation of ideas to a position of priority over the works of art they were ostensibly intended to explain, there was always an unacknowledged paradox. For the principle burden of these ideas was nothing less than to persuade us that the new art was not—and should not be expected to be—anything but itself. The door was firmly closed on "interpretation," on "content," and all such non-formal considerations.

Kramer commented that Krauss's new willingness to engage with an idea of "content" that is not only coterminous with quality, and Kozloff's criticism of conceptual art as unable to "come to terms with what can be said of experience" signal a shift in Artforum's values from formalism to social issues. Kramer pointed out that one must note "the extent to which the problems—again, they are largely social problems—of the art world have now become more compelling than the art itself." He concluded, "Many of the established 'formalist' orthodoxies of 'advanced' art are thrown into question in this issue, and one is curious to see what the magazine's editors and writers have in mind as replacements for these ideas they have hitherto served so faithfully."

Pressurizing

Nixon's campaign for re-election was in full swing during Coplans' first season as editor of Artforum. Democratic challenger George McGovern suffered nothing but campaign troubles after having to switch running mates. Bruce Schulman observed that in August 1971, "Nixon reversed field on economic policies. He adopted wage and price controls to cool inflation, a series of tax cuts to stimulate the economy in time for the
When the Presidential elections arrived in November 1972, Nixon's tax cuts and price controls to reduce inflation had been put into action. Schulman wrote:

Nixon's strategy paid rich dividends in November 1972. He won re-election by a landslide over Democratic challenger George McGovern, in the process assembling the new majority of his fondest political dreams. Both organized labor and the white South went heavily for Nixon in 1972.  

On December 18, 1972, less than three months after *Artforum*’s 10th anniversary, in what became known as the Christmas bombing, American B-52s began a "twelve-day, round-the-clock bombing of North Vietnam in which the United States dropped more tons of bombs than had been dropped in the entire 1969-71 period." According to Slocum-Shaffer, "As the bombs showered on the North, Nixon sweetened the pot for the South", giving it an additional billion dollars in military aid while promising that the United States would "save" the South from a Communist takeover. On January 23, 1973, an Agreement on Ending the War and Restoring Peace in Vietnam was initialed by Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho in Paris (for which they shared the Nobel Peace Prize). Combat would continue in the region for many months until American personnel were fully withdrawn in April 1975.  

In March 1973, several months after the Christmas bombing, a half page advertisement for an exhibition of video tapes by Lynda Benglis at Paula Cooper Gallery appeared in *Artforum*. The advertisement was inconspicuous, composed exclusively of text presenting the usual information. Two months later, in May 1973, another conventional advertisement, this time full page, appeared for exhibitions of paintings and video tapes by Lynda Benglis at Hanson Fuller Gallery in San Francisco and Paula Cooper Gallery in New York. In the same issue, Benglis was reviewed again, this time by modernist critic Bruce Boice. The review consisted of little more than a baffled sounding
description of the video work, which apparently consisted of a lot of static and distortion. Boice suggested that "What Benglis seems to be after, and gets, is some sort of grasp on or presentation of the contingency and sheer ungraspable nature of reality." The May 1973 issue also contained Max Kozloff's well-known article "American Painting During the Cold War." The appearance of this article is accepted by many to be one of the most notable examples of Artforum's increased politicizing under John Coplans' editorship. In "American Painting During the Cold War," Max Kozloff carried out an analysis of the convergence of American international political interests and Abstract Expressionist painting in the context of the Cold War. Kozloff cites Irving Sandler's book, The Triumph of American Painting, and Henry Geldzahler's exhibition at the Metropolitan, "New York School 1940-1970", as instances of high artistic consecration and seeks to analyze in whose interests this consecration has taken place. Identifying a highly "seductive" social "allure" having been attached to the work of post war American artists, Kozloff argued:

I am convinced that this allure stems from an equivocal yet profound glorifying of American civilization. We are not so careless as to assume that such an ideal was consciously articulated by artists, or, always directly perceived by their audiences. Still, that the art in question has been eloquent in surmising our most cherished public myths and values would be hard, on examination, to deny.

Kozloff went on to state: "How fresh in memory even now is the belief that American art is the sole trustee of the avant-garde 'spirit,' a belief so reminiscent of the U.S. government's notion of itself as the lone guarantor of capitalist liberty." Kozloff spoke to the sense of shared prerogatives amongst the art community, suggesting American artists of the post-war generation "felt united on two issues. They knew what they had to reject in terms of past idioms and mentality. At the same time, they were aware that
achievement depended on a new and pervasive creative principle. Writing of the underlying role of American liberalism in politics and art during the Cold War, Kozloff stated: "Meanwhile, Harvard professors were industriously planning strategy that would inaugurate ten years of mayhem in Vietnam." Serge Guilbaut would expand on the relationship between Abstract Expressionism and American political interests in his 1983 book *How New York Stole the Idea of Modern Art*. In this work, Guilbaut pointed out that Kozloff's (and later Eva Cockroft's) articles were important in that they viewed art in a political context and acknowledged "the fact that abstract expressionism was used as a propaganda weapon during the Cold War. Because of avant-garde art's self-proclaimed neutrality, it was soon enlisted by government agencies and private organizations in the fight against Soviet cultural expansion."71

Eva Cockroft's article, "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War", arrived in June 1974 and followed Kozloff's lead. Cockroft opened with a key question: "To understand why a particular art movement becomes successful under a given set of historical circumstances requires an examination of the specifics of patronage and the ideological needs of the powerful."72 Cockroft discussed the convergence of MoMA, the CIA, the Rockefellers, and American foreign policy during the Cold War. Cockroft asserted that the "CIA sought to influence the foreign intellectual community and to present a strong propaganda image of the United States as a 'free' society as opposed to the 'regimented' communist bloc."73 She went on to point out that "In the world of art, Abstract Expressionism constituted the ideal style for these propaganda activities." It was the perfect contrast to "the regimented, traditional, and narrow" nature of "socialist realism." "It was new, fresh, and creative."74 Cockroft concluded that Nelson Rockefeller,
through Alfred H. Barr and other directors at the museum his mother founded and the family controlled, "consciously used Abstract Expressionism, 'the symbol of political freedom,' for political ends." Kozloff's and Cockroft's articles represented a historical facet of the increasingly pervasive New Left political consciousness emerging in the art world since the late '60s, although it also had a longer history dating back to the '30s, when many New York-based, mostly Jewish intellectuals now associated with the old left drew on various forms of Marxism to devise critiques of modern industrial society. The political critique that Kozloff and Cockroft carried out on the post-war generation of American artists would be applied by other commentators to the contemporary generation in the coming years.

In February 1974, Lynda Benglis's exhibition at The Clocktower was reviewed in *Artforum* by Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe. The work in this exhibition consisted primarily of postminimal knot-forms. Gilbert-Rolfe picked up on a link from Benglis to Jackson Pollock that Pincus-Witten had suggested in his December 1971 review, and suggested that Benglis' "'physiological' presence in her work seems, at some level, reminiscent of the inevitable references to Pollock's arm that his paintings of the 1947-1951 period contain." The discourse around Benglis in the years to come would continue to elaborate on links between Benglis and Pollock, especially after the series of promotional images the artist began to produce during the coming spring, many of which appeared in various magazines and recalled Pollock's 1949 appearance in *Life* magazine.

In April 1974 a full page advertisement appeared for an exhibition of Lynda Benglis's metallized knots at Paula Cooper Gallery. Instead of the text-only format, Benglis now presented a large black and white photograph of herself in the advertisement.
(Figure 1.). The photograph depicted Benglis leaning casually against a Volkswagen. The artist's hair was slicked back and she was wearing aviator sunglasses. The photograph was obviously posed, and appears to be a parody of a tradition in which typically male painters would use a self-portrait photograph on their exhibition announcement.
In the Volkswagen advertisement, Benglis appeared very masculine and emphasized the machismo of that tradition. At the same moment, perhaps even in the weeks before Benglis's April 1974 advertisement, Benglis's peer Robert Morris had distributed an exhibition poster for a solo show at Castelli-Sonnabend gallery at 420 West Broadway, one of the most powerful commercial galleries of the period (Figure 2.). The photograph on the poster was also a pose by the artist. It depicted Morris, cropped at the waist, apparently naked, wearing what is usually identified as a 'Nazi helmet' with giant chains draped around his body and shackles clamped around his wrists and neck. These accoutrements are usually identified as sado-masochistic costume wear. He is also wearing aviator sunglasses, possibly the same sunglasses used by Benglis in her advertisement. Robert Morris's advertisement participated in the self-parodic role-playing that Benglis was engaged in. Morris's poster represented himself as tough, powerful, and eminently masculine, but also in chains, as bound by the laws of the art world. It can be interpreted as a comment on the role of the artist in the contemporary art world, as an individual acting in self-interest in the face of increasingly hostile competition from other individual-minded artists, but also as the artists' lack of independence and bondage to the art market. Perhaps Morris wore his chains of bandage as a badge of honor, emphasizing the complicity and heteronomy of his position as opposed to purity and autonomy from commercial interests?
An important pre-cursor to the Benglis and Morris advertisements of 1974 were two advertisements produced by Judy Chicago (previously Judy Gerowitz) in *Artforum* in 1970 (Figures 3 and 4.) In an advertisement of October 1970, Chicago announced, "Judy Gerowitz hereby devests herself of all names imposed upon her through male social dominance and freely chooses her own name: Judy Chicago". The statement is accompanied by a photograph depicting Chicago with close-cropped, slicked back hair tied under a headband and wearing hippie sunglasses. Chicago appears to be rejecting a
feminine appearance but also could also be seen as becoming masculinized with her confrontational poker face expression, perhaps an attempt to co-opt some of the power of the dominant male image. In another ad, of December 1970, Chicago depicted herself as a boxer, in the corner of a ring, with her manager (dealer John Glen) behind her. Chicago appears willing and ready to take on any comers, aggressively flaunting her confidence to fight. These advertisements form an important pre-cursor to Benglis' and Morris' advertisements in that Chicago has used the form of the advertisement to make various artistic statements about art world roles including gender, power, and publicity.

Figure 3. Judy Chicago, advertisement in *Artforum*, October 1970.
As a next step, Benglis raised the stakes. In May 1974, one month after the Volkswagon advertisement, Benglis released an exhibition announcement that depicted a photograph of her imitating the famous pin-up image of Hollywood actress Betty Grable, who had died in July 1973. (Figures 5 and 6.). Betty Grable's bathing suit photograph was one of the most popular pin-ups of the World War II era. Benglis's image was slightly more crass, imitating Grable's from-behind pose, but having dropped her jeans to her ankles, exposing her bare behind which was positioned in the center of the image. The pose was a coy offer of sexual availability.
In response to Morris's macho sado-masochistic advertisement, Benglis's Grable advertisement reversed the gender roles and made a sly statement about the position of the female artist, tackling issues raised by the women's movement from a different angle. Both Morris' and Benglis' advertisements of this period revealed an increasingly open acknowledgement of the role of promotion and publicity in the marketing of a successful art career. In each case, the notion of the individual artist has emerged as a distinct interest in contradistinction to a larger community interest, although the sense of being entwined with the market is also present. A willingness to openly engage with art's
relationship to the market through promotion is also more evidence of the increasing social and political awareness in the art world, and if these advertisements are taken to be works of art, they are examples of new forms of art making in response to the frustrations of late modernism. But Lynda Benglis's explorations of promotion and publicity were not over yet.

In the mid '70s, the City of New York was entering a financial downward spiral. The city had been spending and borrowing more than it was collecting in revenues.\textsuperscript{79} According to Slocum-Shaffer, the city's operating budget was increasing by an average of 12% per year since 1965 while revenues increased by less than 5% per year. "To meet its bills, New York had borrowed millions of dollars in the tax-free municipal bond market."\textsuperscript{80} Sometime during the spring of 1974, Peter Plagens, the West Coast Editor of
Artforum, sometime painter and metaphysical gonzo art journalist would venture into Manhattan to survey the scene. Plagens would publish his observations at the end of the 1973-1974 season in June under the title "Peter and the Pressure Cooker". Arriving in New York, Plagens bleakly described the Artforum office as barely more commodious than an elevator shaft. 13,000 subscribers out there envision it emerging monthly through the cool glass doors of the World Trade Center because Optima and a square format belie its manger. Heady talk of 'locuses of energy,' clique politics, competing field theories—people acting like textbooks. Listening to somebody's opinion of this writer's interpretation of that critic's opinion of this artist's influence on that artist's early work. New York is overpopulated to the extent that there's a critics' scene frosted over the art scene(s). Art is all history, issues, power struggles, field theories, and very little art. 81

Reporting on the gallery scene, Plagens remarked that "Marlborough, however, is the epitome of the hostile white place; everything looks like money, lying in state." 82 Plagens went on, "Fact: art in modern art history books comes from gallery art, which comes from commercially pushed art, which comes from artists making connections with dealers like [Ivan] Karp." 83 Returning to his hotel one evening, Plagens recounted:

Coming home, we see the remnants of a fistfight between sixteen-year-olds. The black kid is taller, but he's beaten—a bloody mouth and a cut eye. I feel for the black kid, although the white escorts a date and appears the accosted party. The white kid says, 'Try it again and I'll kill ya, ya motherfucker, and I'm not bullshittin' ya.' If I weren't in the art biz, I wouldn't come here, the worst sumphole in the world. 84

Plagens' observations illustrate the degradation of the streets on New York and a vignette of racial tension. Plagens' remarks about Marlborough gallery allegedly cost Artforum Marlborough's advertising contract for the remainder of the year, indicating the mounting pressures in the art world between artists, critics and dealers. 85 The events of the coming autumn of 1974 would push these tensions to a heightened pitch.
Figure 7. Downtown Manhattan looking south on West Broadway, reproduced in *Artforum*, June 1974.

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2 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid., 66-67. The "local sheet metal shop" is a reference to Donald Judd's production methods.
10 Ibid., 71.
12 Ibid., 74.
13 Ibid., 76. Kozloff lists some of the corporations involved in "Art and Technology": "The Garret Corporation ("has been designing high-performance jet engines for military aircraft"); General Electric (has its own think tank, called TEMPO, which runs seminars on nuclear weapons"); Hewlett-Packard Company ("radar, guided-missile control"); Jet Propulsion Laboratory; Littleton Industries ("builds submarines, amphibious assault ships, and advanced guidance and fire control systems"); Lockheed Norris Industries
("a major ordnance manufacturer since World War II"); North American Rockwell, and the RAND Corporation."

14 Ibid., 72.
15 Ibid., 76.
16 Ibid.
17 Stephanie A. Slocum-Schaffer, America in the Seventies (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 16-17.
18 Ibid.
19 Kozloff, "The Multimillion Dollar Art Boondoggle," 76.
22 Ibid.
23 Ibid.
24 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Ibid., 37.
30 Ibid., 3.
31 Ibid.
32 Ibid., 4.
33 Ibid., 5.
34 Ibid., 10.
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 116.
37 Ibid., 11.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid., 11-12.
40 Ibid., 12.
41 Ibid., 13.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid., 13-14.
45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 49.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid., 49-50.
50 Ibid., 50
51 Ibid.
53 Ibid.
54 Ibid.
55 Ibid.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid.
60 Slocum-Schaffer, 23.
62 Schulman, 41.
63 Slocum-Schaffer, 104.
64 Ibid.
65 Ibid.
67 Max Kozloff, "American Painting During the Cold War," *Artforum* 12, May 1973, 43.
68 Ibid., 44.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., 52
73 Ibid., 40.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., 41.
79 Slocum-Schaffer, 48.
80 Ibid., 49.
82 Plagens, "Peter and the Pressure Cooker," 29.
83 Ibid., 30.
84 Ibid., 28.
85 Amy Newman, *Challenging Art: Artforum 1962-1974* (New York: Soho Press, 2000), 379. Max Kozloff remarked about Plagens' article, "He said the works there looked like they were lying in homely state within a money vault. Perfectly right-on remark. And the director of Marlborough canceled the revenue—the ads—right then and there for the whole year."
CHAPTER 2
1974-1976

Distension and Dissension

The Watergate scandal was among the worst betrayals of public trust ever to mar the office of the President. "Watergate", as Bruce Schulman explained, "the covert agencies Nixon established in the White House and the wide range of illegal and subversive activities they conducted", ¹ which included

a bungled attempt to break into the Democratic National Committee Headquarters in the Watergate apartment and office complex and bug the telephones of Democratic National chairman Lawrence O'Brien, [...] —was but the most obvious of Nixon's efforts to narrow the space for political organizing and public action in American life. [...] Nixon was trying to undermine the liberal establishment and to build a new conservative majority by foul means and fouler ones.²

Washington Post reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein, "by following the money trail (the money on the burglars, much of it in consecutive serial numbers), [...] tied the burglary to the Campaign to Re-Elect the President; they also exposed the campaign committee's money-laundering operation."³ In Woodward and Bernstein's series of articles, their anonymous informant was given the pseudonym "Deep Throat", after the 1972 pornographic film of the same name starring Linda Lovelace. Coy Betty Grable had given way to hard core pornography on 42nd Street in New York, where Deep Throat became one of the nation's most popular films, making over $25 million.⁴ The pseudonym cast Woodward and Bernstein's inside source as the porn star, suggesting complicity with multiple interests and willingness to take a "big" risk, to go in "deep". In
July 1974, the House Judiciary Committee agreed and voted articles of impeachment against the President, including obstruction of justice, abuse of power, and contempt of congress.⁵ "On the evening of August 8, 1974, President Richard M. Nixon announced to that betrayed public in a brief television address that he would resign the presidency."⁶

Gerald R. Ford was sworn in as President the following day:

A month later, the new president, Gerald R. Ford, issued a blanket pardon of Nixon. Ford's unprecedented action—usually presidents award executive clemency after a criminal has been tried and convicted—ended the affair without even a statement of contrition from the unindicted co-conspirator.⁷

Schulman wrote:

Watergate added fuel to a widespread cynicism about politics, politicians, and government itself as an instrument of the collective good. Already weakened by Nixon's divisive politics, Watergate piled the last straw on the political system. It confirmed the man on the street's [...] growing distrust of American institutions and American leaders. A few years later, President Jimmy Carter would refer to this cynicism as a national 'crisis in confidence'.⁸

The crisis in confidence and the loss of trust in politicians became major themes of public life in the United States during the '70s, themes that professional artists were aware of and responded to in different ways.

The following month, in the September 1974 issue of Artforum, an arrogant letter from artist Dan Flavin appeared in the letters column. Flavin's letter was addressed to "Angela" (Angela Westwater, the magazine's managing editor), concerning remarks critic Lawrence Alloway had made about Flavin's work in a recent article. Flavin's decision to address Westwater rather than Alloway directly (who actually responded to the letter) reflects an arrogant flaunting of his connections with the magazine's senior administration. Flavin accused Alloway of "putting down" the conditions of sale of his exhibition at Leo Castelli's uptown gallery. Flavin gave a sample of Alloway's remarks: "Thus there is the
big work, accompanied by small saleable items, an understandable though not a salutary mix." Flavin remarked,

What an astonishing summary recognition by the tireless veteran reviewer who has just had to put up with such gallery conduct before and now, once more. Of course, if Leo and I didn't get together this way once again, advertise it variously, then, Alloway couldn't show up to file another review after all for yet another paycheck really drawn off the publicity provided two of us through you all back at *Artforum.* [...] Once again, I can only understand that, as an artist of fluorescent light, I've enjoyed the better part. All Alloway can do is to wait to 'critick' it however. I remember Mike Nichols' quote. Anyhow, to paraphrase it, a critic is like a eunuch at a 'gang bang.' I don't wish that I had said that but there's another paltry 'pop' for you, Lawrence Alloway. Oh, by the way, Angela, as I've told you already, contrary to the continuing advertising in your magazine, Gian Enzo Sperone, however charming a lad he is, does definitely not represent me exclusively in Italy. Angela, by now, I've just gone on and given you a few grievous moments toward another hard day at the office. I ought to owe you lunch—right? —Dan

Flavin's letter oozes with a holier-than-thou arrogance directed at Lawrence Alloway's discussion of Flavin's marketing practices. Flavin's accusation that "a critic is like a eunuch at a gang bang" suggests that the critic is a failed or somehow inferior artist, the "gang bang" being at the source of artistic consecration, the legitimizing function of the art world, in which critics confer legitimacy and power upon works and artists. That this legitimizing function is sexualized in Flavin's letter is a similar tactic used in Benglis's recent exhibition advertisements. Flavin's comments reveal the economic complicities (including publicity) between artists, dealers, and publishers. From the position of the artist, Flavin defends his marketing practices against Alloway's apparent insinuation that said practices were perhaps becoming overt, citing the necessity of such economic inter-relations.

The September 1974 issue also contained an article by Jeremy Gilbert-Rolfe entitled "Robert Morris: The Complication of Exhaustion" in which the sado-masochistic
Gilbert-Rolfe's comments suggested that Morris's self-critical parody purified Morris' careerist maneuvering by functioning as a disinterested critique of his own self-interested positioning. The act of "self-criticism" serves to maintain autonomy by representing complimentary voices, not quite opposites, but a form of self-reflexivity that neutralizes any particular voice and creates an image of objectivity or disinterestedness.

In the November 1974 issue of *Artforum*, a feature article on Lynda Benglis written by Robert Pincus-Witten, who had last reviewed Benglis' work in December 1971, appeared. Within the article, Pincus-Witten reproduced the Betty Grable image Benglis had produced the previous spring. When the feature article and the magazine's cover were initially been offered to Benglis by Pincus-Witten, Benglis decided to use the opportunity to create a "piece" for the magazine which consisted of a pornographic centerfold-type image to be included with the feature article. According to the editors, Benglis had offered to pay the expenses for color reproduction, but Pincus-Witten had deferred to Coplans, who refused to sell the editorial space of the magazine. Benglis then chose to
take out advertising space to publish the image. When Benglis moved to make
arrangements for the advertisement, the offer of the cover was retracted.

In the front pages of the November 1974 issue, Lynda Benglis took critical self-
parody to an extreme in the form of an explosive full-page, full-color photographic
advertisement. In the image, the 33-year-old artist was completely naked except for a pair
of white plastic-rimmed sunglasses, her hair slicked back, lips parted, skin oiled, and
holding a large sex-toy in front of her crotch like a pornographic center-fold model
(figure 6.), Benglis posed provocatively with her back arched, her shoulder cocked, and
her free hand perched on her hip. The only text, in tiny white letters on a black expanse,
read "© Lynda Benglis courtesy Paula Cooper Gallery."

Figure 8. Lynda Benglis, advertisement in *Artforum*, November 1974.

The image is apparently an advertisement, although no exhibition is announced.
Although many were aware of Benglis' and Morris' advertisements of the previous spring,
this advertisement must have been doubly shocking for audiences who only knew Benglis
as a postminimal sculptor. The image still retains its impact today, especially in the
context of a magazine that had few color reproductions. Pincus-Witten's feature article, appearing some 50 pages after the advertisement was entitled "The Frozen Gesture". The article opened with the statement, "Lynda Benglis contributes new options in American art—my reluctance to admit this is tied to her extravagance." The advertisement is a clear example of Benglis' extravagance. In terms of Benglis' willingness to engage on multiple fronts, including painting, sculpture, video and "media exploitation", Pincus-Witten points out that "Benglis stands in striking contrast to many of the major Minimalists of the '60s, who built their careers on one idea as an intense and committed demonstration of the continuing validity of a single option." By the late '60s, as the continuing validity of minimal art and conceptual art became increasingly challenged, if not impossible. Artists like Benglis sought new ways to move forward. Pincus-Witten reaffirmed his earlier claim that Benglis was the first to realize a postminimalist stance by "answering the fusion of painting and sculpture that had taken place in the mid-'60s."

As was evident in Pincus-Witten's earlier review and in Gilbert-Rolfe's review, the discourse around Benglis' work often sought to position the artist's work in relation to the development of Pollockian performativity. The photographs of Pollock at work, flinging paint onto canvas laid out on the floor have become important precursors to Benglis' poured paint floor sculptures. As Benglis engaged with various forms of media exploitation, observers like Pincus-Witten were quick to make the link with Pollock's appearance in *Life*.

Benglis explored vulgarity in more ways than just the sexual vulgarity of her advertisement images. Pincus-Witten pointed out that Benglis' taking pleasure in vulgarity "which is central to Pop" is one of a couple of issues which "stand clear in
As Benglis began to engage with new materials, such as polyurethane foam, she also became interested in day-glo pigments. Pincus-Witten observed that "Day-glo, tawdry and neonlike, tends to celebrate the commercial and the commonplace, and this seeming vulgarity fascinates Benglis." Quoting from an interview with Benglis, Pincus-Witten observed that "She wishes to 'question what vulgarity is. Taste is context.'" Extending the grand claim for Benglis' importance made in the earlier review, Pincus-Witten makes a further lofty comparison: "As glamour is Warhol's message and the star his icon, and the square, circle and triangle are the existential characters in the dramas of minimalism, so is the frozen gesture—the excised, congealed, colored stroke—Benglis' prime fascination and essential icon." If anything, the sex-toy advertisement has become Benglis' essential icon. Pincus-Witten's nomination of Benglis for such high consecration is also a bid for his own consecration as the critic who supported her.

Pincus-Witten finally discussed Benglis' advertisements towards the end of his article. Interestingly, that discussion emerged out of attention to her engagement with video. Pincus-Witten quoted Benglis as saying "I got involved with video. I saw it was a big macho game, a big, heroic, Abstract Expressionist, macho sexist game. It's all about territory. How big?" With these words, Benglis could have been speaking directly about the sex-toy advertisement. From this statement, it would appear that Benglis's sex-toy advertisement was a response to her experiences working with video in the early '70s.

The video work is also related to exploring the functions of the media, which would also be carried out in a number of ways by Benglis. Commenting on Benglis' Grable advertisement, which is reproduced in his article, Pincus-Witten effectively purified the 'cheesecake' image by comparing it to canonical works including Odilon Redon's *Birth of*
Venus. He calls her "pornographic Polaroids" "parodies of Mannerist and Hellenistic postures. Il Rosso Fiorentino and ithyphallic kraters, a Leda without a swan."\(^{22}\) In conclusion, Pincus-Witten wrote:

Both the explicit and disguised sexual orientation of Benglis' media exploitation remains a function of the frozen gesture. It has become the big risk. In Benglis' work, the new medium is now 'the media.' What is fascinating is the degree to which the artist, so sharply conscious of risks and stakes, perhaps remains unsure of the jackpot. I suspect she sees it as part of the mythical payoff that was Andy Warhol's by the end of the '60s. But to insist on this interpretation alone is to render base an equivocal activity which, though hardly neutral, is nonetheless disinterested in the way that all art is—however hard that may be to believe of the new erotic work. The problem with Benglis is not one of her creative blockage, but rather of the inadequacies of criticism to keep perspective without falling into mere reportage.\(^{23}\)

Pincus-Witten underscored his comparison of Benglis with Warhol, and pointed out that even Benglis' sexualized imagery is in the end disinterested. Pincus-Witten accurately identified the challenge Benglis's work would pose to its critical reception. He suggested that contemporary criticism itself would be inadequate to engage with the full implications of the Benglis advertisement.

In a context where modernist criticism was in decline due to its inability to engage with emerging art forms and socio-political matters, Benglis's advertisement pushed further at the limitations of contemporary art making and criticism by dramatizing the conflicts between artistic and commercial values.

The ad has come to be inseparable from the written response it garnered from five of the magazine's contributing editors, excluding Pincus-Witten: a veritable Benglisgate emerged when their response appeared in the following issue (December 1974):

To the Editor: For the first time in the 13 years of Artforum's existence, a group of associate editors feel compelled to dissociate themselves publicly from a portion of the magazine's content, specifically the copyrighted advertisement of Lynda Benglis.\(^{24}\)
The letter listed the reasons for the editors' objection:

1. In the specific context of this journal it exists as an object of extreme vulgarity. Although we realize that it is by no means the first instance of vulgarity to appear in the magazine, it represents a qualitative leap in that genre, brutalizing ourselves and, we think, our readers. 2. *Artforum* has, over the past few years, made conscious efforts to support the movement for women's liberation, and it is therefore doubly shocking to encounter in its pages this gesture that reads as a shabby mockery of the aims of that movement. 3. Ms. Benglis's advertisement insinuates two interconnected definitions of art-world roles that are seriously open to question. One is that the artist is free to be exploitative in his or her relation to a general public and to that community of writers and readers who make *Artforum*. The other is that *Artforum* should be a natural accomplice to that exploitation, for the advertisement has pictured the journal's role as devoted to the self-promotion of artists in the most debased sense of that term. We are aware of the economic interdependencies which govern the entire chain of artistic production and distribution. Nonetheless, the credibility of our work demands that we be always on guard against such complicity, implied by the publication of this advertisement. To our great regret, we find ourselves compromised in this manner and we owe our readers an acknowledgement of that compromise. This incident is deeply symptomatic of conditions that call for critical analysis. As long as they infect the reality around us, these conditions shall have to be treated in our future work as writers and as editors. Lawrence Alloway, Max Kozloff, Rosalind Krauss, Joseph Mashek, Annette Michelson, New York, N.Y. 25

The letter raised several issues. By rejecting the advertisement based on its vulgarity, the editors refused to recognize an obviously reasoned, intentionally vulgar gesture from a respected artist. Secondly, the editors claimed to have "made conscious efforts to support the movement for women's liberation." This claim was an exaggeration, because there was little trace of explicit support for the political struggles of the women's movement in *Artforum*, except for a concise bibliography entitled "Feminism in the Arts, an Interim Bibliography" in June 1972. 26 The editors' perception that the advertisement was contrary to the aims of the women's movement is understandable given the context of the movement in 1974, which sought to attack pornography and the sexual objectification of women. Historian Barbara Ryan recounted the events of the New York Radical Women's
The radical feminists' protest of this event can be interpreted as a rejection of images of women which embody a certain notion of objective beauty and can be seen as counter to Benglis' tactics. Yet there were also many rifts among various feminist factions. Ryan wrote that one of the few areas of agreement among broadly defined radical groups was their efforts the distance themselves from NOW [the Betty Friedan-led liberal reformist group National Organization of Women]. Nevertheless, sharp divisions arose over the question of what a radical feminist was or, if a woman was a radical, was she radical enough?  

The last question appears similar to the kind of question raised by Benglis's pose, which was as if to say, "Am I radical enough? I can be this radical," emphasizing the machismo and the competition for legitimacy in the New York art community. Thirty years later, in 2004, art historian Richard Meyer wrote about the events of autumn 1974. He pointed out that "In 1974, Robin Morgan, (editor of women's-lib bestseller Sisterhood is Powerful) coined the influential phrase 'pornography is the theory, and rape the practice'." Meyer went on to point out that "The following year Susan Brownmiller described pornography in Against Our Will as 'the undiluted essence of anti-female propaganda'. Within this context, the dildo ad was more likely to be seen as an attack on feminism than a manifestation of it."

The third issue the editors raised was in regards to the advertisement's implications for "art-world roles" which they suggested were "open to question". The first is that "the artist is free to be exploitative in his or her relation to a general public and to that community of writers and readers who make Artforum." The editors are suggesting that artists are not free to be "exploitative" of their relation to a general public. "Exploitative", for the editors, carried strong connotations of moral corruption. They
rejected what appeared on the surface to be a bold publicity stunt unrelated to Benglis' art practice. The other part of this issue is that the editors saw the ad as suggesting that "Artforum should be a natural accomplice to that exploitation, for the advertisement has pictured the journal's role as devoted to the self-promotion of artists in the most debased sense of the term." Artforum's autonomy was coming into conflict with its own two-facedness as a symbolic object and as a commodity. The editors felt that the advertisement implied that the magazine was a vehicle for promotion and publicity, values that the editors found vulgar and undermining of its critical integrity. Publicity and promotion were seen as corrupting the disinterestedness of art and representing the taint of cash, a "complicity" with the market against which the editors must "be always on guard". Yet Richard Meyer pointed out:

But who, precisely, was Benglis manipulating and to what end? In contrast to virtually every other ad in the magazine, her spread did not announce a current or upcoming gallery show. Instead, it announced the space of advertising—the front pages of the issue just before the table of contents—as a site of pornographic exposure. In doing so, the ad implicated not only Artforum but the broader network of art marketing and publicity of which the magazine, as well as the artist herself, was part.\(^{31}\)

Meyer also pointed out that when he visits the November 1974 issue in public libraries,

More often than not, the page I'm looking for has been ripped out. [...] When the ad is torn away, what is revealed is the next page in the magazine, which happens to be the masthead and the table of contents. [...] the torn page exposes the connection between advertising and editorial content. It reveals the intimate proximity of commerce and criticism within the pages of Artforum.\(^{32}\)

The November 1974 advertisement is a provocative statement about what it meant to be an artist, especially a female artist, in New York during the '70s. It is as if to say "even though I am a female artist, I can be as tough and macho and aggressive as I need to be in order to be successful, and I have a big dick to prove it." The phallus remained a potent
symbol of power during the intense years of second-wave feminism. David Allyn observed that in some cases of streaking, ("the practice of running nude through a setting where nudity was not the norm") it was "a way for male students, responding to coeducation and the rise of feminism, to reassert their power and authority through an overt display of male unity and virility."\(^{33}\) Perhaps Benglis was attempting to co-opt the sense of power and authority attached to the display of the phallus.

In some ways, Benglis' ad also carried out a similar inversion of gender roles that Valerie Solanas had described in her "Scum Manifesto" of 1968. That Benglis' gesture sexualized the act of self-promotion and publicity, it was all the more offensive to the editors, because it compared the roles of artists and intellectuals to prostitutes who can be bought and sold on the market. The porn-star is the prostitute of the media, but, as Richard Meyer pointed out, "Benglis also measures some distance from mainstream porn through her defiant, hand-on-hip gesture, her short cropped hair, her natural (and by *Penthouse* standards, modest) breasts, and above all, by the way in which she wields her dildo as a cock."\(^{34}\) In an interview with Lynda Benglis by Lucy Lippard, published in the feminist *Ms.* magazine in October 1975, Benglis described her controversial advertisement as "the ultimate mockery of the pinup and the *macho*."\(^{35}\) The appearance of the advertisement in *Artforum* was to suggest that the magazine was a vehicle for forms critical promotion which, by the nature of the art world, necessarily have an economic effect on the artist. If the critics are concerned with promoting art above the taint of cash, the advertisement threw economic contamination in their faces, underlining the fact that their intellectual autonomy was compromised. Was the ad a muckraking critique or was it just charlatanism? If it is to be understood as a critique, it is a complicit critique of the
commerce in art, rather than an outright rejection. According to Lynda Benglis in a recent interview, the white sunglasses she wore in the ad were meant to be a reference to Martha Mitchell, the wife of Attorney General John Mitchell (figure 9.) "In 1974 everything about Watergate was coming out, and Martha was doing a lot of the talking. They couldn't shut her up, so she became sort of a role model for me."36

Figure 9. Martha Mitchell, with husband Attorney General John Mitchell, 1970.

The sex-toy advertisement marked the climax and conclusion of Benglis' public exchanges with Robert Morris. Peter Plagens would also send a letter to the editor in response to the appearance of the Benglis ad. Plagens' letter appeared in the same column as the letter from the other editors. Plagens opened:

To the Editor: I am shocked. For some years now I have depended on Artforum as consistently, patently inoffensive family reading, a publication filled only with photographs of Minimal, Process, and Conceptual art devoid of even a trace of sensuality, which I could place on my coffee table next to Reader's Digest, Family Circle, and Art & Language, and have it blend in nicely.37
His humorous rant eventually suggested "covering the offensive anatomy with a small Don Judd inset". Plagens' characteristic sense of humor effectively crystallized some of the key issues around the appearance of the advertisements in _Artforum_, especially the sense of a purist and 'holier-than-thou' attitude that emanated from the editors at _Artforum_. Competing notions of autonomy and heteronomy were explicitly at issue in the Benglis conflict.

_The Fox_

On April 23, 1975, President Ford gave a speech announcing the end of American aid to the South Vietnamese regime. The subsequent evacuation of U.S. personnel from Southeast Asia was the largest helicopter evacuation in history. As over 100,000 People's Liberation Armed Forces (commonly referred to as Vietcong) encircled Saigon and began shelling the airport, utter confusion and chaos reigned. According to Slocum-Schaffer, "With the Communists advancing on the city, thousands of Vietnamese stormed the embassy, screaming to be taken along. As Americans watched from their living rooms, embassy personnel used clubs and fists to beat away people from the helicopters." North Vietnam would eventually unify South Vietnam on July 2, 1975. Also during April 1975, the City of New York's financial crisis was rapidly approaching a breaking point. New York had been borrowing millions of dollars in the tax-free municipal bond market just to make its bills. According to Slocum-Schaffer,

By the time Ford took office, however, the city did not have the money to meet its obligations on the bonds. By April 1975 its credit rating was so bad that several banks told the city that it could no longer borrow in the market, and the city was
threatened with default. It was facing the fact that it might have to shut down many of its necessary services for lack of funds. The April 1975 issue of *Artforum* carried an article entitled "The Art Market: Affluence and Degradation" by Ian Burn. Burn was known as a conceptual artist and political radical in New York. His article offered a scathing analysis of the economic relations of contemporary art and its connections to the broader troubled economy of the '70s. A heading read: "While we've been admiring our navels we have been capitalized and marketed but through realizing our socialization might we be able to transform our reality?" Burn's article came at a time when there were still hopes that political action could be effective. He began by referring to the looming economic troubles: "Impending economic crisis has forced many deeply lurking problems into the open. Art sales are declining and there is an air of pessimism. The sense of opulence of the '60s has gone to dust." From Burn's perspective, the commodity life of art objects was taking over, and the relations of the market were becoming so pervasive as to be virtually out of control. Burn remarked, "Simply, this is the realization that if the arts were really democratized, we as producers of an elite art would no longer have any means of functioning—wanting to abolish elitism in modern art is tantamount to wanting to abolish modern art itself." In this statement Burn emphasized that democratic values were emerging in the art community in response to the waning modernist value of quality.

Next, Burn made the interesting observation that artists were actually functioning at an earlier stage of capitalism than the rest of the market. He argued that artists' labor, including time and materials, had not been commodified and that only their artistic products were. Burn argued that this scenario represented a lower or "atomistic" stage of capitalism in a context where the norm had become the full commodification of workers'
labor power. Although Burn agreed that there was nothing inherently wrong with this scenario, he pointed out that it meant artists were vulnerable to exploitation from larger marketing structures. Burn went on to ask "to what extent have the modern market relations permeated my atomistic production—that is, what are the changes this has brought about, and what are the consequences in my life? An answer to this may be pointed up in the actual functioning of a work of art in the market." He pointed out that the market value if a work of art is distinct from the cost of production, meaning labor and materials, and asked, "But why should an equilibrium market be inconceivable to me?" Based on Bourdieu's analysis of the two-faced symbolic good, equilibrium in exchange value based solely on labor and materials would neglect the other face of the work of art, which is its artistic or symbolic value. Burn argued that the art market was once a more "personal" matter for artists, but that the expansion and pervasiveness of economic concerns in art world social relations has caused the market to become impersonal and in many ways increasingly coercive towards artistic activity. Burn wrote: "We have all been enticed by the prospect of endless market expansion which seems, oddly enough, we have internalized in the idea of an endlessly innovative avant-gardist growth." It is relevant that Burn made this link between the machinations of the market and the idea of "endless avant-garde innovation", which reached a fever pitch in the 1960s with the rapid succession of modes, and which would ultimately produce a crisis in continued development. Burn argued that these developments "are a set of empty gestures which threaten none of the market requirements and end up being a sheer celebration of the new individuality, arrogantly and, finally, stupidly set against the idea of sociality." Burn is criticizing an emergent notion of individualism in the art world, a value which
Burn argues runs contrary to democratic social values. Burn's anger is palpable. "So where does that leave me? Like a lot of others, I'm revolted by the torpidity of the status quo on the one hand—and on the other, any desperate reactions to escape that status are celebrated as part of the "innovative logic" of the system!"  

It could be speculated that the editorial decision to publish Burn's essay in *Artforum* was a move to redress the Benglis incident. In fact it is possible that Burn took his cue to write his essay directly from the December 1974 letter from the editors, the last paragraph of which read: "This incident [the appearance of the Benglis ad] is deeply symptomatic of conditions which call for critical analysis." Or perhaps Burn took his cue from Max Kozloff's "American Painting During the Cold War" and Eva Cockroft's "Abstract Expressionism: Weapon of the Cold War", doing for contemporary art of the '70s what the former did for Abstract Expressionism of the post-war period. Burn argued that "The emergence of the international art market along its present lines has been incontestably an arm of a necessary expansion of the whole U.S. neocapitalistic system and consolidation of marketing areas after the Second World War." He went on to link U.S. capitalism to art-for-art's-sake and to formalism, which disclaims any direct social critique. Burn criticized the way industrial society has supported modern art:  

with its unrelenting emphasis on an 'art-for-art's-sake' ideology, we become conscious of the ever-increasing role played by a neutered formalism—at the expense of our possibility of content [...] These ideological fetters have conclusively eradicated every possibility of a social practice in relation to art, even the thought of it—the expression of modern art has become the rejection of society and our social beings.  

Burn criticized the scenario in which the political interests of the powerful are reinforced by a superficially neutral or apolitical art, because the condition of art-for-art's-sake, or autonomous art, forecloses the possibility of articulating alternative political values.
Turning to the subject of alienation, Burn extends his discussion of how impersonal the market had become: "Myself-as-an-artist has become a stranger to me, a figure over whom I have little power or control." In Burn's view, the expansion of the market has resulted in a loss of control on the part of the artists. In terms of a possible political role for art and artists, Burn was equally frustrated. He extended his criticism of the limitations of modernism by arguing that modern art has come to be defined by political neutrality, "hence it's continuing great value as propaganda for an imperious culture." The role of modern art in industrial society had been defined by purity and autonomy from economic and political concerns, yet its critical success had been supported by very specific political interests. Therefore, modern artistic achievement was defined by political neutrality which nonetheless represented very specific political values, namely American post-war liberalism. This paradox was excruciating to artists like Burn who saw through this propagandistic image and wanted to engage directly with political matters but were limited in a professional artistic context dominated by notions of artistic purity and political autonomy.

In conclusion, Burn ended on a more positive note. He suggested, "In the progressive history of capitalism, the concentration of labor always creates conditions for the socialization of labor." For Burn, this meant the artists' community of SoHo. "I doubt there has ever been such a concentrated community of artists in contrast to a community of people of mixed occupations and interests." This community, according to Burn, "creates uniquely different social conditions for that community and in turn may lead to social and political awareness of the power of the community." This was ultimately Burn's central argument. "It cannot be stressed enough that a community, no
matter how small, is *unavoidably and importantly a political instrument*, and a potentially aggressive one at that—*finally perhaps the only one left to us*. If we don't take advantage of that we might be able to do absolutely nothing." A hope for the renewal of the idea of community is what resonates in Burn's essay. He spurns the arrogant individualism of the '60s, an individualism that was embodied in Chicago, Benglis, and Morris' exhibition advertisements. Considering the historical moment, the notion of community was a passing ideal. The arrival of more and more competing communities marked the emerging landscape. Attention to individual careers would become an increased priority, thus more and more communities began to form around special interests.

Figure 10. Advertisement for *The Fox* in *Artforum*, April 1975.

In the back pages of the same issue of *Artforum* where Burn's article appeared, there was an advertisement for a new journal called *The Fox*, with which Ian Burn was involved, and which was due to be published by mid-April (figure 8.). The advertisement stated that "The content of volume 1 number 1 concentrates on a revaluation of art practice. It includes writing and reviews on the chances for learning and cultural responsibilities of
art in the post-modernist period." It went on to state that the topics of this first issue would include, among other things, "the failure of conceptual art...doubts about protest art." and "The decay of the local group: Is the loss of the sense of reality of community the legacy of modernism? The search for alternatives: Do these lie with unionization, art-groups, communities, communes?" The simultaneous appearance of an advertisement for a magazine and an article by a writer involved in that magazine in the same issue of *Artforum* is an example of various agents collaborating to make different contributions: *Artforum* offering its larger readership, Ian Burn, care of *The Fox*, offering an urgent critical voice. In the June 1975 issue of *Artforum*, nestled amongst the advertisements in the back pages, there appeared an unusual editorial statement printed in white block capitals on a black background which read "*Artforum* urges its audience the read *The Fox*" (figure 9.) This gesture meant that a leading mainstream art magazine, explicitly directed its readers to a small, independent, radical, left-wing art journal. What was their motivation to do so? There was clearly no economic competition between the two journals. It would seem that *Artforum* was acknowledging that for the sake of critical, disinterested debate, it was in its audience's best interest to read *The Fox*. While not wholly implying that *Artforum* was unable to keep up with critical debate, this gesture amounted to an acknowledgement from *Artforum* that its content at least needed to be supplemented. Although this was an unobtrusive statement, *Artforum's* critical energies would decrease during the coming 1975-1976 season.
The Fox #1 was an 8.5 x 11" journal printed on newsprint and consisted almost entirely of text (figure 10.). It was 143 pages. There was no colour. The only photographs were a sequence of small black and white images of a man sneezing, perhaps a metaphor for the journal itself as an allergic reaction to the conditions of contemporary art. The journal took its name from liberal theorist Isaiah Berlin's 1953 essay "The Hedgehog and the Fox." There were no commercial gallery advertisements in The Fox and almost no reviews. An editorial statement read:

It is the purpose of our journal to try to establish some kind of community practice. Those who are interested, curious, or have something to add (be it pro or con) to the editorial thrust...The revaluation of ideology...of this first issue are encouraged, even urged, to contribute to following issues. All other correspondences are welcome.67

On the masthead, the editors' names were given as Sarah Charlesworth, Michael Corris, Preston Heller, Joseph Kosuth, Andrew Menard, and Mel Ramsden, all of whom were practicing artists based in New York. Although Ian Burn wasn't given as an editor, he is
listed on the masthead as the "review consultant" and he contributed an essay to the first issue entitled "Pricing Works of Art" which elaborates on some of the ideas raised in "Affluence and Degradation". *The Fox* was an artist-run publication, in contrast to *Artforum*, which was published by an established publisher and professional critics.

Artist-run culture rapidly increased in the early '70s in the form of collectives like artist-run galleries, theaters, and small-scale publishing ventures such as *The Fox*.

The first essay in *The Fox* #1 was by Sarah Charlesworth and was entitled "A Declaration of Dependence". An epigraph stated:

We are living in a period of unprecedented destruction of languages and cultures, of nations, under the assault of highly bureaucratic states. These exert, both
internally and externally, a steady pressure, reducing culture to a series of technical functions. Put another way, culture, the creation of shared meanings, symbolic interaction, is dissolving into a mere mechanism guided by signals.

- Stanley Diamond

Stanley Diamond is a contemporary anthropologist, whose statement affirmed a crisis in culture due to compromises by the mechanisms of the bureaucratic state. Charlesworth began by emphasizing the importance of a contextual understanding of works of art:

When we discuss a work of art or an art tradition, we are discussing a phenomenon which exists in an integral relationship with the entire complex of human social and historical forces defining the development of that work or tradition. This same complex of social and historical forces in turn inevitably defines the context in which that work or tradition claims significance, and ultimately functions as a force or agent in the ongoing evolution of that culture. Thus we are at once the products and the producers of the culture in which we participate.

This kind of contextual criticism contrasted with the formalist modernism that *Artforum* was once known for. In *The Fox*, the lines blurred between artists and critics as social and political contexts remained ever-present. Thus the title of Charlesworth’s essay refers to the sense of interdependence between artists and writers and larger social and political structures. She went on:

in attempting to redefine, alter or redirect the social definition or function of art [...] we are encountering a firmly entrenched and highly developed institutional order [...] on every level [...] [including] the most blatant sociological fact that cultural power is clearly allied with economic power, and that to a large extent the internalizations of the dictates of the productive system regarding patterns of legitimation and consumption are the very means by which individuals surrender their critical faculties to that system.

Charlesworth made clear her radical intentions, underscoring the entwining of symbolic and economic forms of capital, accusing the system of legitimation with reducing possibilities for criticism. She went on to criticize the value of quality which she perceives as still prevalent value. "Hence the artist, as well as his product and the abstract
sphere of his influence, are assumed 'transcendent', that is, somehow responsive to and
effective of abstract psychic and social conditions somewhat removed from the mundane
conditions of 'everyday life'."71 Charlesworth stated:

> There can be no method of escape, no science, no dialectic, no objective criteria
> which are not in turn subjectively assumed. The issue then becomes not so much a
> question of how we can achieve a value-free or objective model or theory of
> art practice as it is a question of what values and conditions of learning we in fact
> promote and provide through our practice of art.72

She went on to point out that "None of us, neither artist, critic, dealer, curator, nor 'patron
of the arts,' can be said to be free of conflict of interest when it comes to the making of
the cultural phenomena 'art'."73

In part II of the essay, Charlesworth engaged with the contradictions in the notion
of autonomy. Charlesworth argued that "It is a curious and romantic notion that somehow
by ignoring that which is repugnant within the existing order, we might quite logically be
immune to its effect."74 Charlesworth's frustrations with formally pure art stem from her
frustrations with the existing social and political order and the inability to contribute in
some way to positive change within the limitations of the dominant notion of autonomous
modern art. Charlesworth questioned the value of autonomy that would be so
aggressively fought over during this period by asking,

> is it not true that in forwarding an ideal self-image of autonomy (both in our
> concept of discreet self-contained art works and art values in general—in the face
> of all manner of evidence to the contrary), we are in effect now perpetuating those
> same bourgeois values such self-confinement was originally deemed to escape?
Even the question of bourgeois values is growing increasingly moot. *There is a
great deal more to be frightened of at this point than the taint of an impure
art.*75

Turning her attention to the failures of conceptual art, Charlesworth observed that new
forms in recent art still function in the market and the art world similarly to more
"morphologically" oriented work. "'Art as idea' was once a good idea," she writes, "but art as idea as art product, alas, moves in the world of commodity-products and hardly the realm of 'idea'." Finally, Charlesworth concluded, "We have lost touch—not only with ourselves and with each other but with the culture of which we are a part. It is only by confronting the problem of our alienation, making this the subject of our work, that our ideals take on new meaning." Charlesworth echoed the sense of alienation articulated by Burn, but Charlesworth suggested that contemporary forms of alienation might become the subject of a critical art. It is only by exploring this condition in more depth, Charlesworth suggested, that the pervasiveness of the economic and social order underlying modern art be grasped.

In the "Commentary and Reviews" section of The Fox #1 there appeared a column by artist Karl Beveridge entitled "A Forum on Artforum". The column consists of observations by Beveridge concerning a public roundtable between the editors of Artforum and the art community which was held at Artists' Space, a co-operative gallery in SoHo, on October 15, 1974, two weeks before the November 1974 issue featuring the Benglis advertisement was published. Beveridge's observations were very critical towards the magazine that would "urge" its audience to read The Fox two months after his article in June 1975. Perhaps it is more striking that Artforum would in fact direct its audience to The Fox after these remarks were published. Beveridge opened by stating that "the Editors, through their unassailable indifference, brought to the proceedings an air charged with intimidation. They were unbelievably arrogant in the self-sufficiency of their opinions (passive observations), led off by John Coplans' statement that 'Artforum goes where the action is'." Beveridge sarcastically observed, "the artists complied with
their own role marvelously, asking, for the most part, such penetrating questions as 'how are artists selected for a review' and 'why don't West-Coast artists get equal space'—to which the editors replied with enthusiastic superiority."79 Beveridge wrote:

As artists, we are forced to submit to the politics of the 'market place,' bargaining for a position within the bureaucratic structure of the contemporary art world. *It is not by accident* that the art magazines, especially *Artforum*, have now developed an increasing interest in the politics of art. It was through the pages of this magazine that we recently witnessed the most 'sophisticated' use of philosophical terminology in the most authoritarian way (Pincus-Witten *et al.*); it is, therefore, *consistent* that it develop the language of institutionalized art 'politics.' 80

Beveridge describes the condition of contemporary art as a self-regulating bureaucratic structure which has become more powerful than the artists who participate in it. The art politics of the moment, being art's relationship to the market and social and political structures beyond, are characterized by Beveridge as self-serving and "authoritarian", alluding to modern art's image of neutrality. Beveridge went on to state that "Our experience, framed in the language of 'objective' rationalism and liberal 'reform,' reinforces that *language*, not our experience."81

Beveridge argued that *Artforum*'s recent politicization is only the assimilation of an authoritarian language of art politics and not a form of actual political agency. He spoke explicitly of the political contradictions facing modern artists:

The dilemma which then occurs is that we are now forced to deal with a politics (talk concerning the market), but have internalized the notion that any political content in art is impossible. The only thing we have left to talk about cannot be a part of our art. Realizing the politics of the market place to be absurd, we are unable, however, to formulate a radical political content into our activity and work. We are now blatantly confronted with our own impotence, our activity suspended in a dilemma which negates action.82

Faced with an impasse, Beveridge echoed Ian Burn in suggesting that through the reformation of a community might artists gain some form of agency and transform the
status quo. Beveridge acknowledged various limitations of community-forming such as alienation of the community as a whole from a wider world, but he maintained that a community still seems the only means by which we can overcome our vacant subjectivity, and begin to deal with the larger world. Such communities, based initially on professional groupings, could form the basis for the destructuring of the present artworld; its institutions and authorities [...] eventually to form the basis for the definition of a radical community on which a broad revolution could be built.83

Beveridge's socialist leanings are apparent in his argument that the formation of community could present a challenge to the status quo. For Beveridge, a community is a democratic inter-personal structure in which greater potential in the role of the individual might be achieved due to the foundation of democratic values and less alienated social relations. The statements of Beveridge, Charlesworth, and others in the first issue of The Fox signaled the emergence of a critical voice in the mainstream of modern American art. Artforum's increased attention to political matters and explicit support of The Fox were evidence of the decline in modernist art and criticism and the emergence of a contextual understanding of art in industrial society.

After the City of New York was rejected for federal aid to assist in its financial woes, the State of New York advanced more than $300 million to the city over the summer of 1975.84 "Even this amount," Slocum-Schaffer recounted, "could not save the city, and by October the threat of default was imminent. Still President Ford refused to support any federal aid to the city."85 On October 30, 1975, the headline in the New York Daily News read: "Ford to City: Drop Dead." Although a last minute arrangement with Washington allowed New York to avoid bankruptcy, the financial crisis hit the city hard, as Peter Plagens had suggested in June 1974. During the '70s, the streets became meaner as public infrastructure fell into disrepair. Homeless shelters and asylums were closed.
and poor on poor crime increased. Hundreds of thousands of middle-class whites fled to
the suburbs, resulting in an overall population decrease in New York of approximately
one million during the decade.

The September 1975 issue of *Artforum* carried a letter from Karl Beveridge in
response to Lawrence Alloway's June 1975 article "The Great Curatorial Dim-Out." In
that article, Alloway extended the analysis put forth in "Network: The Art World
Described as a System" to focus exclusively on the roles of curators, dealers, galleries,
and museums. Alloway suggested that the roles of museums and universities were
concerned with "training our investigative capacity and increasing our self-knowledge"
and that therefore art dealers should not be permitted to gain a dominant role in their
contributions to these institutions. Alloway's remarks reveal the pervasive view that
museums and universities are sanctuaries of disinterested knowledge and that dealers are
commercially interested agents with the potential to corrupt the purity and autonomy of
the educational system. Alloway went on to acknowledge the double-life of art objects as
commodities and symbolic objects and finally stated that curators are positioned between
the competing interests of disinterested knowledge and commercial gain. The thrust of
Alloway's article is a criticism of recent curatorial practice being pushed to far towards
the interests of dealers.86

Karl Beveridge's letter in response to Alloway's article highlighted certain glaring
omissions, such as the role of the critic, and blamed this on Alloway's lack of awareness
of his own role in the legitimization process.87 Beveridge argued that Alloway "never
questions the function of a museum in its attempt to keep pace with the private galleries
as arbiters of contemporary taste and ideology". Regarding critics and curators, Beveridge pointed out:

Both roles contribute to the preservation of the present alienating power structure, in their capacity as mediators of consumption in the marketplace of the art world. [...] [The] problem, rather than the failure of curatorial courage, should be the question of a museum's relation to the art market.

In the end, Beveridge argued, "There is an indisputable need for articles which question the function of our institutions, but not ones that argue for their increased autonomy and reification." The debates around autonomy crossed between the pages of *Artforum* and *The Fox*, and circled the roles of almost every participant in the art world, from artists to dealers, curators and critics. The question of stakes became heightened as artists and intellectuals became increasingly engaged with the implications of their position-takings in the art world.

The 1974-1975 art season was a period of heightened critical activity in the art world which began with the appearance of the Benglis ad, witnessed the arrival of *The Fox*, and concluded with *Artforum*'s "urging" its audience to read *The Fox*. When *Artforum* returned in the autumn of 1975, there was a palpable drop in the intensity of the magazine's critical energy. Perhaps *Artforum* had turned its urgency over to *The Fox*. One of the few sparks of energy in *Artforum*’s output during the 1975-1976 season arrived in December 1975. In that issue, Max Kozloff organized a special issue devoted to political issues around art criticism which included Carol Duncan's "Neutralizing 'The Age of Revolution'". In an editorial which appeared below the table of contents, Kozloff explained:

The articles in this issue imply that certain aspects of authoritarian art are broader in scope and more effective in impact than has been supposed. Our writers here
point out a chronic flaw in perception: the failure to understand the significance of most world art's alignment with the interests of the powerful.  

This editorial provoked a response from Hilton Kramer at the *New York Times* entitled "Muddled Marxism Replaces Criticism At *Artforum". Kramer gave a glib history of political radicalism in the art world since the '60s and then remarked,

Mistakenly, perhaps, one expected this rash of radical chic—for such is what it was at the time—to pass without trace once the more benign political atmosphere of the 1970s removed most of its ostensible warrants. It has proved to be a more durable impulse than one imagined, however, and in one notable instance, at least, it has now been fully institutionalized at the same time it has grown more raucous, ambitious and vulgar. I speak of the new editorial regime at *Artforum* magazine, in the pages of which a muddled and strident Marxism, insistent upon a tendentious sociopolitical analysis of all artistic events and deeply suspicious of all esthetic claims, has now rooted all but the last traces of the formalist criticism that was once a house specialty in that journal.

Kramer went on to say, prophetically, "it will be interesting to see how long the magazine's bourgeois advertisers—mainly art dealers, plying a trade the magazine now seems to regard as a crime against humanity—will support its new line."

*October*

During the spring of 1976, several events took place which significantly altered the landscape of the contemporary art world. Rosalind Krauss, Joseph Mashek, and Annette Michelson had all resigned from *Artforum* in December 1975, and Peter Plagens and Robert Pincus-Witten withdrew from active participation in March and April 1976 respectively, leaving Lawrence Alloway as the only remaining contributing editor. *The Fox*, too, would collapse, publishing its third and final issue during the spring of 1976. The loss of *Artforum's* editors dealt a major blow to the critical content of the magazine at
the same moment that *The Fox* collapsed. But a new voice emerged from the ruins of the art press in the spring of 1976, titled *October* (figure 11). *October* was founded by ex-*Artforum* editors Rosalind Krauss and Annette Michelson. *October* differed considerably in format from *Artforum*. *October*’s format was that of an academic journal with minimal reproductions and no gallery advertising, in contrast to *Artforum*’s glossy high-color mainstream format. The first issue was accompanied by an editorial statement announcing *October*’s purpose. The editors began by referring to the Bolshevik revolution of October 1917:

We have named this journal in celebration of that moment in our century when revolutionary practice, theoretical inquiry and artistic innovation were joined in a manner exemplary and unique. For the artists of that time and place, literature, painting, architecture, film required and generated their own October, radical departures articulating the historical movement which enclosed them, sustaining it through civil war, factional dissension and economic crisis.94

Referring to a historical context which affected multiple disciplines in parallel ways, the events of October 1917 could be said to resemble contemporary crises more than a little. The editors of *October* went on to describe how American art of the ’60s was transformed in ways that affected the relationships between several major art forms and pointed out that no journal had yet sought to engage with interdisciplinary criticism. They stated the purpose of *October*:

*October* is planned as a quarterly that will be more than merely interdisciplinary: one that articulates with maximum directness the structural and social interrelationships of artistic practice in this country.95

Interdisciplinary criticism would become a hallmark of postmodernist criticism in the ’80s, and *October* would be a leading voice in those debates. In one of the most interesting passages of the editorial, the editors explained their reasoning behind choosing
a format for the journal based on an academic model (as opposed to a commercial one), without reviews or gallery advertisements. They stated:

October will be plain of aspect, its illustrations determined by considerations of textual clarity. These decisions follow from a fundamental choice as to the primacy of text and the writer's freedom of discourse. Long working experience with major art journals has convinced us of the need to restore to the criticism of painting and sculpture, as to that of other arts, an intellectual autonomy seriously undermined by emphasis on extensive reviewing and lavish illustration.96

The editors' repudiation of reviews and illustrations reflected their experiences at Artforum, where criticism was always entwined with commerce. Their decision to excise the workings of art commerce from the critical forum of October reflected their defense of autonomy and response to the taint of cash.

The developments of the spring of 1976 would effectively spell the end to a specific period of heightened activity in the art world. Artforum enjoyed a burst of energy in the early '70s stemming from its arrival in New York and the fresh perspective of its new editor, but internal conflicts and political tensions in the community lead to the dissolution of its energies. The Fox emerged and staked out a position alternative to that of Artforum, but only lasted for three issues before it was consumed by leftist factionalism. In the long run, October would prove to be the most stable, although it only appeared once the critical group at Artforum under John Coplans had dispersed. Some critics of this period wondered if artists' collaboration with aerospace corporations was a conflict of interest. In "The Problem With Art-As-Idea", Max Kozloff articulated an emerging crisis surrounding the possibilities for the continuation of artistic development. He concluded his essay stating that "At this point, play becomes desperate. Unrefreshing in itself, the contrast between the frivolity of the premises and the puritanism of the statement in art-as-idea is also unilluminating. It is a weird deadlock." In "A View of
Modernism", Rosalind Krauss rejected an earlier, more limited notion of modernism and staked out a re-tooled notion of modernism which was capable of accounting for certain contemporary developments. This shift exemplified the breaking up of modernist hegemony in the art world and the shift of attention from the notion of quality to the social experience of art. Robert Morris and Lynda Benglis' parodic advertisements variously represented the emergence of the individual artist as a discreet interest in the context of the breakdown of the larger community, and simultaneously represented the economic interdependency of artists and critics in the art market. These ambiguous statements raised issues surrounding the role of publicity and promotion in art's relationship to the market, and the possibility of new artistic beginnings at the resolution of certain strands of artistic practice. In "Affluence and Degradation", Ian Burn and his colleagues at The Fox carried out a highly critical analysis of the economics of contemporary art and discussed how art's relationship with the market affected artistic production. As conflicts of interest emerged and art's disinterestedness was challenged, artists and intellectuals would overwhelmingly respond with holier-than-thou moral superiority and various gestures of purity and purification.
Figure 13. *October* #1, Spring 1976.

2 Ibid., 44.
3 Ibid., 45-46.
6 Ibid., 30.
7 Schulman, 47.
8 Ibid., 48.
10 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 59
17 Ibid.
18 Ibid., 55.
19 Ibid.
20 Ibid., 57.
21 Ibid., 58.
22 Ibid., 59
23 Ibid.
25 Ibid.
26 Alexis Rafael Krasilovsky, "Feminism in the Arts: An Interim Bibliography," *Artforum* 10, June 1972, 72-75.
27 Allyn, 105.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid., 74.
32 Ibid., 249.
33 Allyn, 196.
34 Meyer, 73.
38 Ibid.
39 Slocum-Schaffer, 105.
40 Ibid.
41 Ibid.
42 Ibid.
43 Ibid.
44 Ibid., 48.
46 Ibid.
47 Ibid.
48 Ibid.
49 Ibid.
50 Ibid.
51 Ibid.
52 Ibid., 35
53 Ibid.
55 Burn, 35.
56 Ibid., 36.
57 Ibid.
58 Ibid.
59 Ibid., 37.
60 Ibid.
61 Ibid.
62 Ibid.
64 Ibid.
65 Advertisement, *Artforum* 14, June 1975, 82.
67 Editorial, *The Fox* 1, April 1975, 4.
68 Sarah Charlesworth, "A Declaration of Dependence," *The Fox* 1, April 1975, 1.
69 Ibid.
70 Ibid., 2.
71 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 3.
74 Ibid., 4.
75 Ibid., 5.
76 Ibid.
77 Ibid.,
79 Ibid.
80 Ibid.
81 Ibid., 139.
82 Ibid.
83 Ibid., 140.
84 Ibid.
85 Ibid.
86 Lawrence Alloway, "The Great Curatorial Dim-Out," in Network, 158. This article was originally published in Artforum 14, May 1975.
88 Ibid.
89 Ibid.
90 Ibid.
93 Ibid.
94 "About October," October 1, Spring 1976, 3.
95 Ibid.
96 Ibid., 5.
CONCLUSION

In February 1976, 15 months after Benglis' two-page spread appeared, an exhibition by the artist was negatively reviewed in Artforum by Ann Sergeant-Wooster. The review began, "There is a bit of an air of a used-car showroom when confronting Lynda Benglis's recent show."¹ The review gave the distinct impression that Benglis's critical star had faded, although Sergeant-Wooster mentions that the artist was driving a Porsche. Sergeant-Wooster used terms such as "turdlike", "ugly", and "gaudy" to describe Benglis' recent works.² The reviewer also observed that "In a showcase such as those reserved for the display of costly national treasures like the Hope Diamond, are casts of that famous double-ended phallus which caused such a furor. Making casts of it always seemed to have a certain Hollywood, souvenir-of-the-stars quality rather than any other real value."³ Sergeant-Wooster's review could also be interpreted as a riposte against Benglis after her advertisement upset the editorial department of the magazine.

In January 1977, John Coplans was dismissed as editor of Artforum by the publisher Charles Cowles. Max Kozloff subsequently resigned. When the February 1977 issue of Artforum hit the newsstands, the art community discovered that John Coplans and Max Kozloff were no longer the editors. March 1977 was Joseph Mashek's first issue as the new editor appointed by Cowles. That month, a letter protesting Coplans' dismissal which was signed by 108 members of the art community appeared in the letters column. The letter stated:

The removal of editors of Artforum is of great concern to the art community. The dismissal and/or provoked resignation of John Coplans and Max Kozloff is a clear case of the creative autonomy of editors being abrogated by an owner-publisher acting under the influence of political and commercial pressures.⁴
The letter was a clear example of the conflict between art's autonomy and the commercial pressures which surround it. The letter pointed out that the socially and politically explicit criticism that increasingly appeared in *Artforum* during Coplans' editorship was being opposed by those with an interest staked on the economic face of art. The letter expressed concern that those outside interests, including gallery commerce with larger social and political structures behind it, were crossing into art's own self-regulated sphere of influence. The letter also stated:

> Editorial autonomy in serious publishing is equivalent to academic freedom in education and creative freedom in the arts. We object to any act which infringes on this freedom.\(^5\)

The letter was signed by Vito Acconci, Ian Burn, Sarah Charlesworth, Carol Duncan, Hans Haacke, Robert Hughes, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Lucy Lippard, Linda Nochlin, Martha Rosler, Alan Sekula, Keith Sonnier, and many others. In 2000, Coplans is quoted in *Challenging Art* as saying "Later, when I was at the Met one night at an opening, Leo Castelli told me it was he who had me fired from *Artforum*. It was he who had me fired from *Artforum* because I wasn't serving his purpose well enough, by my politicizing the magazine."\(^6\) This is a clear example of a major dealer striking at the heart of the magazine's autonomy.

The end of Coplans' editorship also coincided with the end of Gerald Ford's presidency. The public chose to oust the Republican Party which had dragged the nation through Vietnam and Watergate. Jimmy Carter entered the White House in January 1977. Lynda Benglis would continue to explore the postminimal sculptural mode she first engaged with in the late '60s until the present day. In 2006 she is re-exhibiting her video works from the '70s. Benglis' short-lived experiments in publicity and promotion would
end with the advertisement of November 1974, although for many those advertisements are what she is best known for. Her persistence with postminimal sculpture in 2006 is evidence of Benglis’ integrity as an artist through her devotion to specific sculptural problems, which interestingly contradicts the image of the artist in Benglis’ advertisement works which flew in the face of a notion of integrity.

On the thirtieth anniversary of *Artforum* in 1992, Thomas Crow contributed an essay entitled "Art Criticism in the Age of Incommensurate Values: On the Thirtieth Anniversary of *Artforum*". The phrase, "Incommensurate Values" alludes to the intellectual disagreements and breakdown of consensus that had taken place in the pages of *Artforum*. Crow described the critical debates of the period as a "continual ricochet of commentary and disagreement."\(^7\) In his survey of the key debates of the period, Crow never mentions the controversy surrounding the Benglis advertisement. In describing how the economy of art has changed in the ensuing decades, Crow described the magazine of the early years as "an essentially local community linked by open cognitive interests."\(^8\) Crow observed the sense of there being a clearly shared set of interests, which can be seen as facilitating the heightened level of discourse. He went on to say that this community "was no match for an emerging global service economy in the luxury sector laying claim to the name of Art."\(^9\) Describing the early '70s, Crow recounted how left-wing factionalism became heightened and commended Coplans and Kozloff for having attempted to explicitly navigate the fissures between the opposing political interests of the period. Crow concluded that Coplans’ departure represented the end of "the magazine’s last personal link to its Californian origins and to its early history of fostering the climate for advanced art in America."\(^10\) Crow characterized *October’s* response to the
period as presenting a diagnosis of "the impasse that had defeated the old Artforum", which was that "serious art writing could go on as before if it could call in sufficient reinforcements."  

October's interdisciplinary mode of criticism would draw heavily on French theoretical developments. Crow pointed out that "Paris, for some time secondary in the practice of art, would come to the rescue on the plane of theory, the amalgam of semiotics, psychoanalysis, and deconstructive skepticism that went under the name of poststructuralism." Crow emphasized the purism inherent in October's position by describing the journal's editorial announcement of its non-commercial format as "Quaker-like." He stated: "On a more polemical level (in rhetoric one would say forensic), visual austerity stood as an indictment of the complicity of the mainstream art magazine with the corrupting commerce in art objects, the irredeemable enemy of 'intellectual autonomy.' Crow argued that the elimination of advertisements, reviews, and color reproductions eliminated the possibility for the textual and the visual to "function on anything like equal terms." Crow acknowledged that balancing these aspects might "entail an infringement on the freedom of writing when non-cognitive values of publicity and display govern editorial decisions," but suggested that a compromise might not be completely undesirable. In fact, Crow stated in conclusion that

The critical force of the old Artforum was never anything but a lived contradiction between thought and commerce. We have passed through a period when commerce has displayed the superior intelligence and outrun the theoreticians: simply getting back to a state of effective contradiction is the task of the moment.

In 2002, October published its 100th issue. October 100 was a special issue devoted to the notion of "obsolescence". The editors, including Rosalind Krauss, provided an introduction, in which they stated:
As *October* approached its 100th issue, one editorial reflex was potentially more morose than triumphant, contemplating the possible obsolescence of any critical project at the present time.\(^{17}\)

This position is taken at a historical moment when the "emerging global service economy" Crow spoke of had continued to multiply for nearly three decades since 1976. The historical condition of the discourse or critical project to which *October* was committed in 1976, postmodernism, was the real subject of the issue. The editors describe the voices of opposition towards postmodernism as representing the status quo, which meant a neutral multiplicity of voices:

> Postmodernism, we are told, is obsolete, a message emanating from every reactionary corner of the art world, not to open up new avenues of work and thought, but in order to return us to politics as usual and to a pluralism that has been de rigueur since modernism was in fact declared obsolete.\(^{18}\)

The editors concluded by reversing the value of "obsolescence" by arguing that the site of obsolescence could also be seen as a site of resistance to the forces of "consumption" (the globalizing marketplace), and thereby ended on a tentatively optimistic note:

> It is a special issue offered with the hope and belief that the condition of obsolescence functions in relation to the totalizing presumptions of technology in a manner more radical than how consumption has been positioned (within cultural studies) in relation to spectacle, i.e., as a site of resistance.\(^{19}\)

Krauss and the other editors of *October* fought to maintain a position of autonomy and disinterestedness for intellectual debates around artistic practice, even though that position had to be one of resistance rather than active opposition.

Debates around the definition of artistic modernism have always been concerned with the issue of autonomy, as in what separates artistic practice from other forms of activity in the world. The development of modern art is linked to the notion of art for art's sake, or the notion that art is a self-regulating sphere and not instrumental in the interests
of any external factors, such as politics or economics. Yet at the same time, modern art has always relied on the marketplace for the production and distribution of works. The mechanics of the market constitute a potential challenge or compromise to the notion of artistic autonomy. But as Pierre Bourdieu has observed, art objects are two-faced goods in that they are art objects and commodities at once. This condition has provided an enduring dilemma to artists and intellectuals. What form artistic autonomy should be staked on and just how autonomous competing notions really are has been a constant source of debate.

During the '60s, Clement Greenberg and his followers supported a notion of artistic autonomy that was based on the autonomy of the art object achieved through a continuing logic of formal abstraction. Greenberg and his followers argued that through formal abstraction art could entrench itself as a distinct form of activity. Yet the American abstract expressionist painters that Greenberg supported were also supported by the American liberal establishment and often promoted as representing a certain notion of American political freedom. The support of these political interests came to be seen by the emerging generation of artists as a contradiction in Greenberg's notion of purity. As larger political currents such as the civil rights movement, feminism and the Vietnam War escalated, artists felt increasingly uneasy about the relationship between modernist art, which aspired to purity, and the political crises of the period. Artists asked: What really is art's role in this society? Is modernism really autonomous, or is it implicated in a structure of political power? If it is, how can I deal with these issues in my work yet retain the distinction of art? During the course of the late '60s to the end of John Coplans' editorship of Artforum in 1976, the New York art community witnessed a
transition from a Greenbergian modernist notion of aesthetic autonomy to a notion of the autonomy of the art community as a self-regulating sphere. For perhaps the first time since the '30s, artists and intellectuals took a serious look at the politics and economics of contemporary art. The discussion in this thesis of larger political currents often sits uneasily with the discussion of events in the artistic community, but it is this uneasiness which compelled artists and intellectuals of the period to attempt to deal with the relationship between artistic practice and larger social and political issues in American society. The autonomy of nearly every agent in the art world was hotly contested during the '70s as the emerging generation of artists and intellectuals focused its attention on the heteronomy of art, or, the inter-relations between the art world and larger social and political structures in modern society. *Artforum* magazine played a role as an interface between a community of individual critics, artists, dealers, and other cultural intellectuals, representing their activities and position-takings. The generation of Greenbergian modernists and their inheritors mostly remained committed to an autonomous notion of art's formal and aesthetic quality, while the emerging generation of artists in the late '60s and early to mid '70s openly, literally, and directly engaged with art's heteronomous character.

You try so hard to be avant-garde
Only to end up racy
As a senior citizen playing cards
And working nights at Macys.

I hear you scream "Oh critic!
Your ass oh let me lick,"
You irresponsible little brat
Leaving everything up to the bureaucrat.
Ian Burn, what's the score?
I hear your name no more.
Everyone's either disappeared
Or is playing the role of the whore.

CHORUS:
New York, New York, New York, New York,
New York, New York, New York.
New York, New York, New York, New York,
New York, New York, New York.

-Anonymous, The Fox #2, Fall 1975

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
16 Ibid., 93.
18 Ibid., 3.
19 Ibid., 5.
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