

ARGUS de la PRESSE

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21, Bd Montmartre - PARIS 2°

N° de débit _____

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Simple things make most effect at Biennale

From Guy Brett
Art Critic

PARIS, OCT. 1

Of all kinds of art exhibition the Biennale has the most peculiar structure. At Venice things are usually fairly clear, because each country has its own pavilion which it prepares as it wants, and these individual parts fit loosely into the whole. But the Paris Biennale des Jeunes Artistes (they have to be under 35) which struggled into existence on Saturday seems to experience near-fatal conflicts between the parts and the whole, which is ironical since it is the most centralized in organization.

To begin with it is all in one unwieldy building (the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris). Countries have sections to themselves, but there are usually last-minute squabbles over space (on the press-view day I watched the Italian Gianni Colombo putting up an interesting-looking environmental construction, but the next day he withdrew it altogether because apparently he could not get the conditions he had asked for in advance). The Biennale authorities invite contributions to various sections whose arrangement they are responsible for, in that the works are grouped together according to theme rather than country. One is for the prize-winners of two years ago, another for group projects, and they initiated three more sections this year: for architecture, photography and stage-design. All were pretty shabbily presented. At the opening TV cameras were busy filming a parade of rather bored-looking girls dressed in fluorescent plastic emanating from the French section while these installations were still unfinished.

All in all it would be difficult for a journalist who dutifully attended the press view (two days before the exhibition opens to the public) or even the vernissage on the next day, to feel confident he had seen enough of the Biennale to write about it.

These spleenish remarks may be due partly to such a brief, harassed view. But it is always difficult to see things in this kind of exhibition. Its whole structure seems to damage the artist-spectator relationship. The young Brazilian sculptor Helio Oiticica, for example, sent some "clothes" to be worn, imaginative constructions incorporating slogans

and different materials, including one which referred to hunger and had pockets full of seeds and other dry foods. These were hung up out of reach without explanation and their point was completely missed.

But no longer view or better presentation could disguise the derivativeness of most of the work on show. And this ranges right from the unthinking repetition of outmoded styles (from countries which are unaware of, or disapprove of, newer developments) to the contributions of artists who know all the fashionable mannerisms, take their choice, and then inflate them unnecessarily. The Biennale can hardly have gone farther before in this direction than it has this year with the extraordinarily pretentious maquettes for "visionary" architecture in the French section.

It may be that the confused character of the occasion favours the simplest kinds of statement. It is a relief to pass into the American section and see Craig Kauffman's firm bright perspex plaques, John Mac Cracken's long fibre-glass boards leaning against the wall, and Edward Ruscha's canvases painted

with single words: "Space", "Electric" &c. (though all these seem rather dandified gestures; the artists are from the West Coast, incidentally).

The English contribution has clarity, too, though the section itself is not as unified as it was for the last Paris Biennale, especially as there are six artists showing in a clumsy space. Some of the "minor" entries are unexpectedly good. There is a sensitively-programmed light display made by three students at Goldsmith's College, and Derek Jarman's stage-design is perhaps the best thing in its section. As well as showing reliefs, Mark Boyle is giving performances of his slide-projections with the music of the "Soft Machine" on two nights this week, and of course films and special events are a side of the Biennale that has yet to be seen.

Whether a Biennale is good or bad as a whole seems to me essentially a matter of accident, and it is no real indication of the "state of art". There may be some good work by individuals in this huge exhibition, but most of its great resources seem to go for nothing.

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Die Presse, Wien
2 Okt. 1967

ser Biennale

er luftgefüllte, aus Plaster
Frauenfiguren, mit Silber
strichen und so schwer
ob sie in Agonie verfall
haben bei der am 29.
eröffneten Fünften Pari
die größte Aufmerk
Publikums gefunden.
von 800 jungen Künst
Staaten sind im Pariser
Moderne Kunst zu be-

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Stüddeutsche Zeitung, München
2. Okt. 1967

30 deutsche Künstler zur ARGUS Biennale von Paris

Eine ungewöhnlich starke Delegation von 30 jungen deutschen Künstlern wird sich an der Biennale von Paris beteiligen, die am Freitag im Museum für moderne Kunst eröffnet wurde. Fünf Maler, drei Graphiker, vier Bildhauer, vier Theaterdekorateure, vier Architekten, vier Photographen, drei Komponisten und drei Schriftsteller aus der Bundesrepublik sind beim größten internationalen Treffpunkt junger Kunst in Paris vertreten. Insgesamt beteiligen sich an der Biennale von Paris 858 Künstler unter 35 Jahren aus 54 Ländern. Die besten Leistungen werden am 6. Oktober von einer internationalen Jury ausgezeichnet und mit Geldpreisen und Stipendien belohnt.

(dpa)