

Financial Times Friday October 24 1980

Autumn in Paris

Showing potential

The Biennale of Paris, according to its director, Georges Boudaille, is devoted to youth rather than art. "Our mission is to collect anything from young people that has a meaning for the future. We are looking for potential rather than achievement." There is, however, much evidence of achievement and of mature talent among the 300 artists from 43 countries who have contributed to this celebration of the plastic and performance arts, with video and experimental cinema added for good measure.

Youth in the Biennale definition, ends at 35, or 40 in the case of the architects featuring in the show for the first time with models and plans displayed at the Pompidou Centre. The event is regarded by the authorities as an attempt to recall, if not recapture, the former standing of Paris in the art world.

"Artists go where there is freedom and money," said M. Boudaille. "Now we have freedom but no money." Financial problems associated with the 1977 Biennale, comparatively poorly attended, forced the postponement of the 11th Biennale until this year.

There has therefore been a conscious effort to expand the scope and appeal of this Biennale, although this aim has been frustrated by a shortage of space which is blamed for the underrepresentation of Third World and Communist countries. The main exhibition, at the Musée d'Art Moderne, Ave. President Wilson, until Nov 3, is inevitably a heady mixture of styles and abilities, stimulating, provocative and sometimes irksome. It is a shop-window for the artists. Critics, dealers and art gallery owners will be among the 55,000 visitors expected this year and many of the exhibits are likely to appear elsewhere carrying a price tag. **Next week; Photographs of 130 years.**