

## GALLEY

"...the individual history of every creative man is always close to the abyss of sickness; he does not, like other men, tend to heal the personal wounds involved in all development by an increased adaptation to the collectivity. His wounds remain open, but his suffering from them is situated in depths from which another curative power arises, and this curative power is the creative process."

Erich Neumann

- "Art and the Creative Unconscious"

It has been a curiosity to me to find so much writing in this past year on the 'hippy' thing from the sociological point of view.. In this past week you could read an article in Life Magazine on "Run-away Kids", and in the recent Quadrille there is the address on the "Hip and the Square" given by President Bloustein to three secondary schools.

Relevant in a different sort of way are the marvelous photographs in the same Nov. 3 Life on the Taj Mahal...this sort of relevance being an affirmation of the visual interests provoked by 'hippydom'.

It is in respect to the potentially creative and visual aspects of the 'hippy' scene that I have had the following thoughts:

In most art schools and art departments there have been, for years, basic courses designed for the two-fold purpose of

- 1) developing a sense of wonder and general interest in the rather silent world of objects and colors, ability to perceive these things as abstract and enticing qualities in the world around us, and
- 2) developing a sense of work, manual dexterity, etc., as an aid to getting to the business of personally stating something relevant

to the degrees of visual awareness that are developed.

What is of some delight to me is that, without any formal guidance, a great many youth, with nothing to speak of in terms of cultural awareness, are out looking around at stuff in a state of awkward and innocent freedom.

What they seem to turn up with in the form of art doesn't seem to get very far, as, unfortunately, their sense of work is ten steps behind their openness. The well-made and colorful Art Nouveau-type poster is basically regressive in form and sets no precedent, and the images in painting of a pronounced surrealist weirdness goes far back to Clidon Redon, Ensor, early Paul Klee, and even some early Mondrian...and somehow has stuck around, generation after generation, in Greenwich Village coffee shops.

This sort of art is group oriented. The sublime nature and higher quality of mature expression is something I have as yet to see come from within this group.

But for now, more than anything else, it's that sense of wonder, the crucial desire for vulnerability, that is a first step in moving toward some form of creative process...a creative process that is all too often assumed to find expression in social action.

The very fact that much of the 'hippy' thing is a dead end in constructive social behaviour suggests to me its aesthetic leanings and its potential value for the creative individual, whether 'hippy' or not, in the visual arts.

It is possible that too quick an embrace of vulnerability, especially if kicked off artificially...or even if it develops slowly...will be too much, and that the individual will fall back to some degree of familiar and gregarious security, which is not, by any means, a bad idea for most. And others fall sick. Both of these possibilities engage the sociological interests, but neither is of great interest to art beyond the admiration of the initial risk taken, and yet art is not all that interested in the mystic, either.

That point at which vulnerability through group stimulation seeks expression visually must be understood as another beginning. The romance has just begun. It is a beginning for a need to see, aided by that openness, the art of the museums, and to measure the quality of one's own peculiar effort of one's own peculiar time with the quality of those past efforts. Ultimately, I can't imagine that if one takes such a commitment, by way of 'hippydom' through maturity to his own expression, that his art would necessarily look 'hippy'. "The longest way 'round is the quickest way home".

Finally, I would like to say that the stimulation by way of a self-conscious group is not to be understood as always necessary for art. It seems that the Impressionists (a much more specifically art/work group) needed some strong closeness for a while. But this would never be an end result, a final expression. It's really a form of inspired learning, in which the dice are thrown as if never before.

November 6

R.C.

[1967]