

Journal

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News of The Cultural
Council Foundation
CETA Artists Project

CCF/CETA Budget Cut 24%; Lay-offs Start Dec. 31

By WAYNE KARMOSKY

The Federal Government has drastically cut funding of its CETA (Comprehensive Employment and Training Act) public service jobs programs across the nation, and the effects of these cuts on the Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project are severe.

The cuts in funding here translate to a mandated 24 percent reduction in the operating budget of the Artists Project during fiscal year 1980, which begins on October 1. This amounts to a one million dollar cut in our budget, which results in having to lay off 211 artists between December 31, 1979, and June 30, 1980. These cuts affect the entire CCF Artists Project, including the Association of Hispanic Arts, Black Theatre Alliance and the Foundation for Independent Video and Film.

Since notification of the cuts by the Department of Employment in late June, CCF Project administrators have explored various ways to implement the cuts in order to preserve the Artists Project, allowing it to continue its variety of community and artistic services to the people of New York to the end of the contract year Sept. 4, 1980.

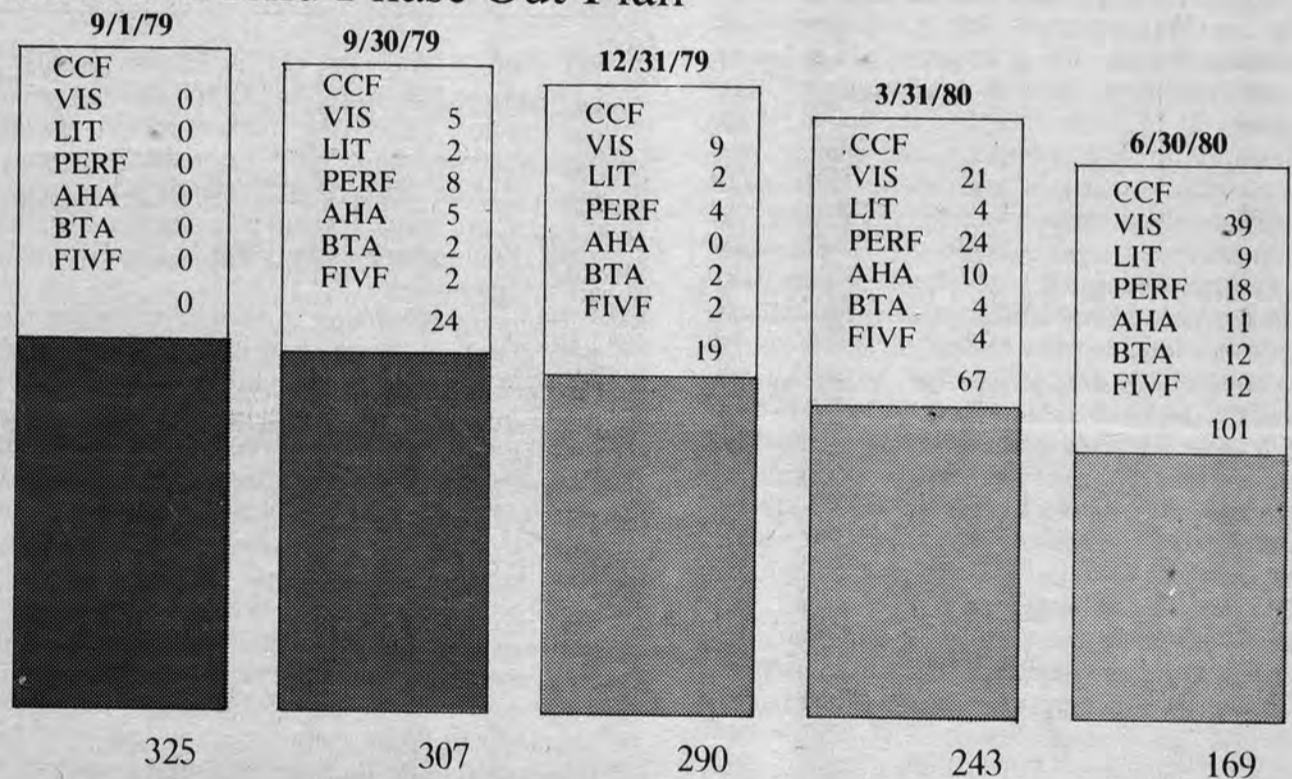
After several months of evaluation and negotiation, CCF worked out a plan which utilizes a gradual phase-out of artists jobs, beginning on December 31. CCF is also developing a Job Development and Counseling plan to assist the artists in finding new unsubsidized jobs.

The phase-out plan affects a total of 211 artists, most of whom have been employed in the Artists Project since the beginning of the program on Jan. 1, 1978. CCF has asked the city of New York to request waivers for these artists to allow them to continue their employment until they reach their pre-determined lay-off date.

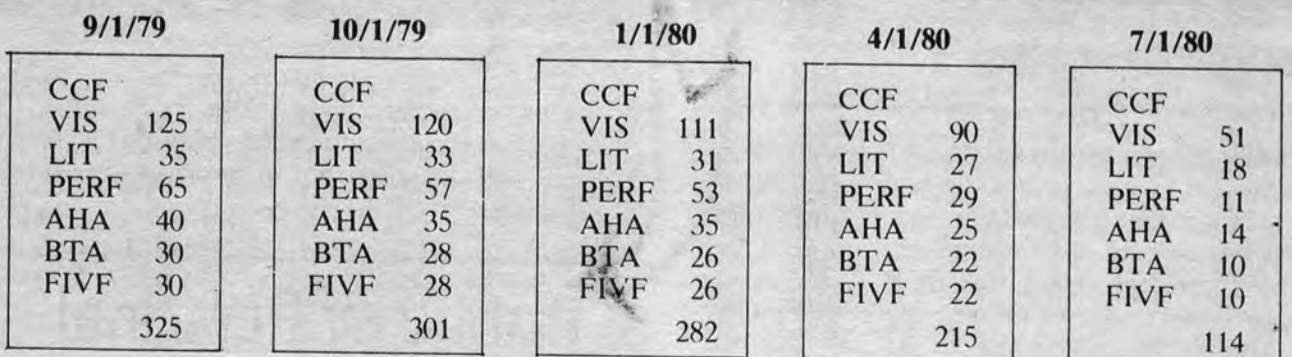
The waivers, which are under consideration in Washington, must be approved for the phase-out plan to work. If the waivers are not approved, the original contingent of artists will be laid off on September 30, 1979.

Assuming they are approved, CCF used a lottery system to determine which artists would be laid off on each of the phase-out dates. The plan calls for the first round of lay-offs to occur on December 31, 1979, when the program will be reduced by 19 artists (see chart for more information). On February 28, 1980 the 15-member Performance Ensemble at Lincoln Center will be eliminated. Further reductions take place on March 31, 1980, when 67 artists leave, and, finally, on June 30, 1980, the largest

Cutbacks And Phase Out Plan



Breakdown of Remaining Participants



group of 101 artists will go. The CCF Artists Project, which currently employs 325 artists and is the largest CETA Artists Project in the country, will be reduced to 114 participants who will continue their employment through September 4, 1980, the end of the contract year.

According to Rochelle Slovin, Artists Project Director, "This is a sound approach to a difficult problem. It keeps more people working longer than any other alternative. The use of the lottery," she explained, "enables the artists to know their fate, thus allowing them to begin planning for new

employment. The plan also gives us time to continue our efforts to restore Congressional support for the Artists Projects and to explore new sources of funding for the future."

In announcing the cutbacks, Ms. Slovin commented, "These cuts come at an especially difficult time for our artists. Unemployment is steadily increasing, and inflation is hitting every pocketbook. I am deeply concerned about putting people who are contributing so much to this City on the unemployment lines again."

To help ease the strain of the lay-offs and to continued on page 2

Budget Cut...

assist the artists in finding new jobs, CCF has proposed the establishment of a Job Development and Counseling Program which, if approved by the city, will be in action early this fall. The Job Development and Counseling Program will employ a staff of job counselors and placement specialists who will help prepare the artists to look for new jobs and assist them in finding those positions. Ms. Slovin added, "We will begin implementing the program as soon as the funds are approved. This is our highest priority."

The Job Development and Counseling Program is designed to apply some of the traditional concepts of job development and counseling to the unique problems faced by artists in the job market.

Ms. Slovin explained, "Since artists tend to shun traditional full-time jobs which leave little time for their work, we feel that our job program must aim to improve income earning potential, rather than look solely to full-time, non-temporary jobs." She went on to say, "In addition to locating opportunities and preparing participants for full-time employment, this program will prepare some participants for successful self-management and self-employment."

The over-all goals of the Job Development and Counseling Program are: 1) To provide participants with information to assist them in making career decisions; 2) Improve the "job readiness" of all participants through counseling and support services; 3) Place artists in jobs wherever possible through identification and location of existing jobs in their preferred areas of interest; 4) Create new jobs for artist through job development activities; and 5) Provide survival and entrepreneurial skills to those artists seeking to be self-employed.

To accomplish this, groups will be set up for each of the discipline areas: Visual, Dance, Literary, Film/Video, Theatre and Arts Administration. These Job Development Units will meet regularly. Artists and staff will work together to find jobs in the private and public sectors, to assist the artists in preparing for their job search, aid in motivation and, to provide encouragement.

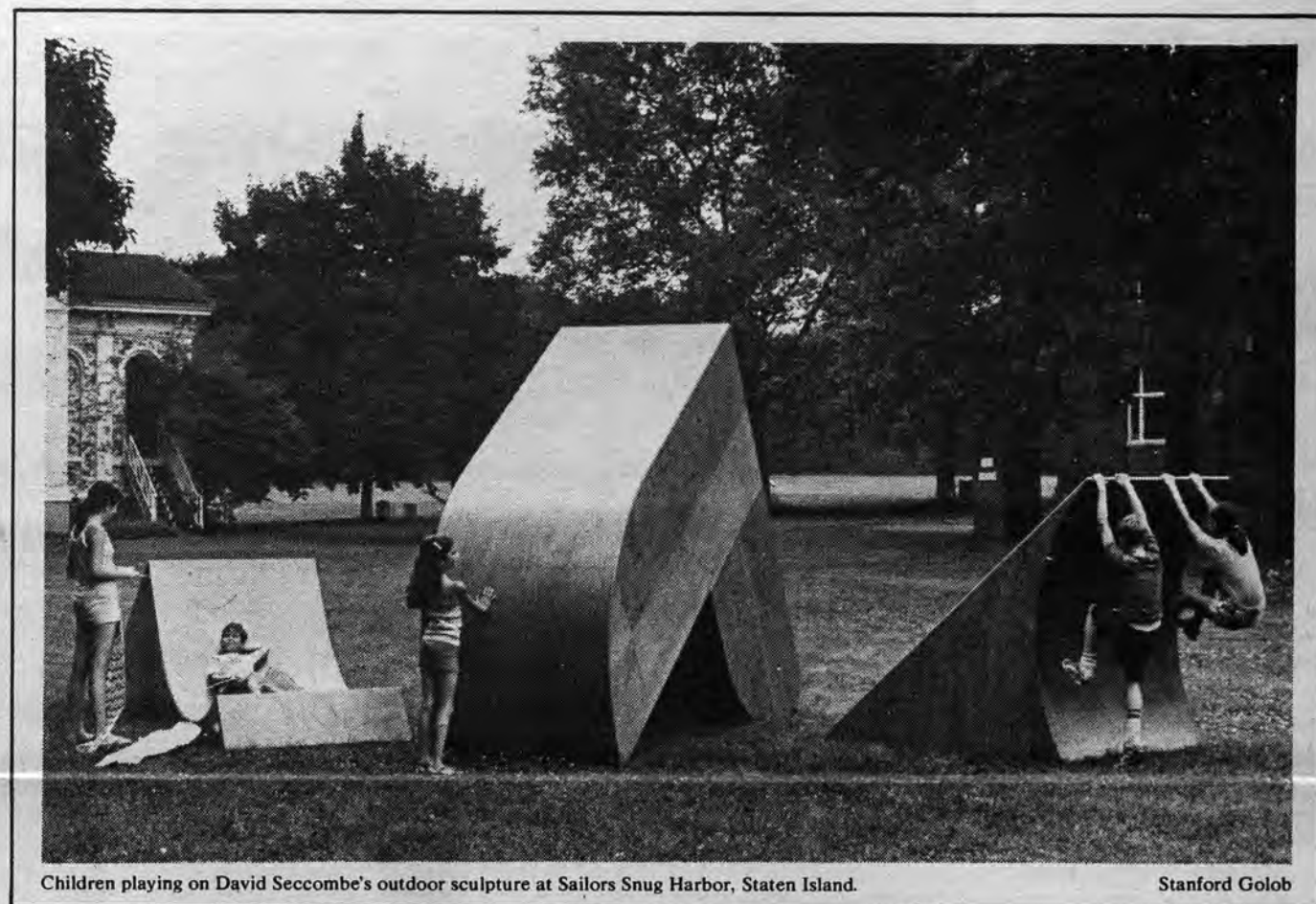
Participation in the program is voluntary but, once an artist has decided to join the program, attendance at all program meetings will be required.

Artists' Committee Expresses Views

During the controversy surrounding the scheduled lay-offs and the use of the lottery system, an artists' committee was formed to try to present the artists' views to the Administration.

The committee, composed of Amy Bergman, Sandra Esteves, Susan Ortega, Nathan Whiting, and Marilyn Worrell, wrote to Rochelle Slovin, project director, requesting a meeting with her. The meeting was held on Aug. 21.

As a result of that meeting, the committee was asked to prepare an alternative to the Administration's lottery plan. The following letter, in part, was the committee's response to the requested alternative. "We all feel the most important thing is a strengthening of the project in such a way as to assure its continuance for as many artists as possible, those who have served and those who might, and to work towards a future goal of permanent and respectable jobs for artists. We also voted to propose a self-help job development plan wherein we would pool our information to bring together the broadest possible support for those seeking work. We hope



Children playing on David Seccombe's outdoor sculpture at Sailors Snug Harbor, Staten Island.

Stanford Golob

the effort to find jobs will include input, advice, and some effort from the Administration, as we feel the time for placing artists in jobs is now, and was or should have been from the beginning a major goal of this project. Certainly we have been doing more than community service. We have been demonstrating the public's need for what artists can provide."

While the committee continued to express concern about the lottery and the exemptions (there were no exemptions made in the Sept. 10 lottery), the Committee went on to state: "While we can identify with the Administration concern for the fate of and repercussions from certain artists for whom the program has been less successful and who might be laid off first, we also are concerned as to what kind of statement the Administration is making about the many artists who have put a great deal of themselves into this project—many of them working every bit as hard and selflessly as the artist coordinators in their effort to make public art powerful. If the Administration and/or we ourselves can't make this statement by recognizing the artists' efforts through an evaluation-lay off procedure, which will recognize their value, we hope the Administration and the community can come up with some other suitable way to recognize these important contributions."

Since a specific alternative plan was not presented by the committee by the Aug. 28 deadline, CCF project officials proceeded with the lottery on Sept. 10—the first step in implementing the lay-off plan.

Public & Personal Art: Issues of Populism vs. Elitism

By GROVER AMEN

As the CETA Artists Project faces the most severe test of its political value and durability, a sense of confusion and divided loyalties reigns, especially among the very artists who are most dedicated both to their own work and to the community service which accounts for four fifths of the artists' 35-hour work week.

Despite all the chaos, one thing seems clear: the CCF/CETA Artists Project has been an overwhelming success in responding to specific community needs at a grass roots level. The program is eclectic, pragmatic, and highly flexible, and its success, along with that of other CETA artists' programs, was recently recognized by such top officials as Assistant Secretary of Labor Ernest Green, Commissioner of the Department of Employment Ronald Gault, and Commissioner of Cultural Affairs Henry Geldzahler. Also speaking on behalf of CETA artists were Rae Moore, CETA/Arts Coordinator, and James Ware, Regional Director, both of the U.S. Department of Labor. While these speakers were lavishing their praise on CETA artists projects at a two-day conference on *Putting the Arts to Work*, CETA artists from community-based organizations throughout the city were picketing outside the Roosevelt Hotel, the site of the conference, for the one-year waiver and to protest the 24 percent cut in CETA funds

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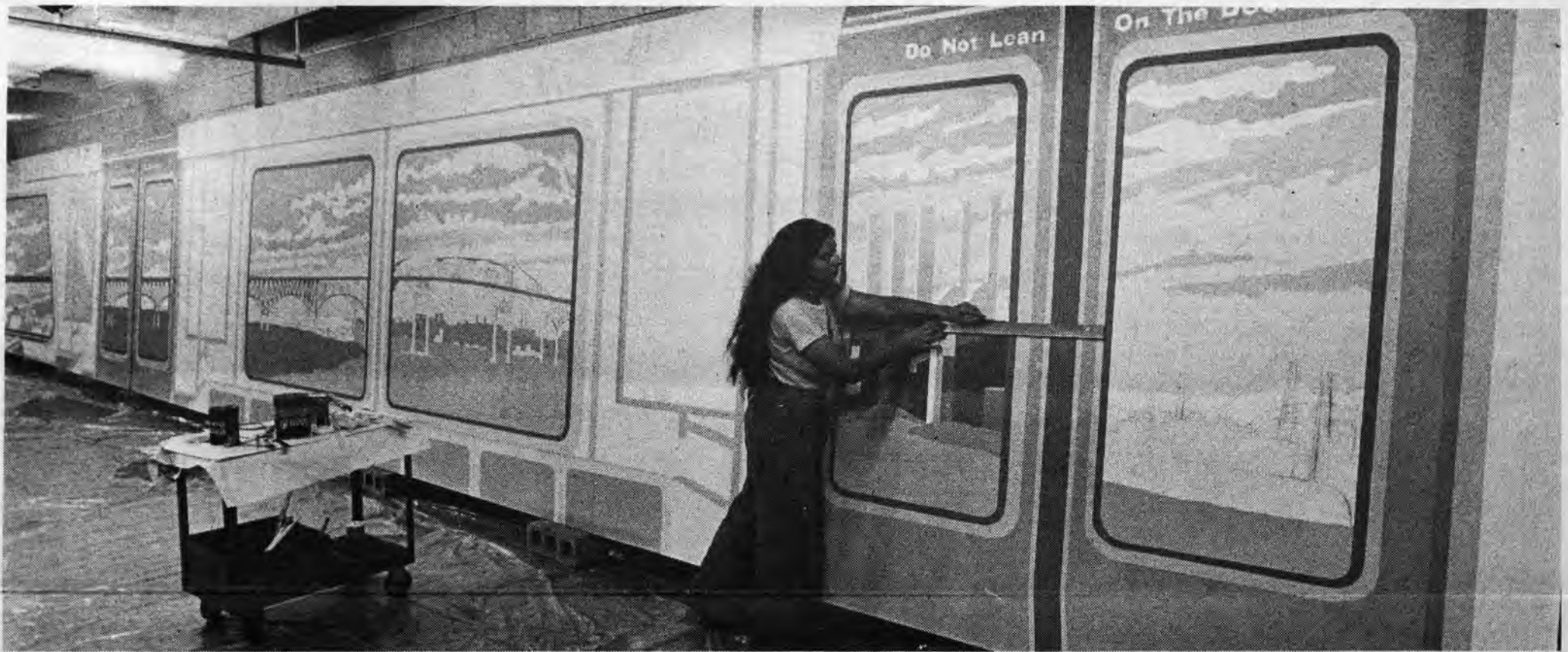
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Published by The Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project: Mrs. Donald B. Straus, CCF President, Sara P. Garretson, CCF Executive Director; and Rochelle Slovin, CCF Artists Project Director.

The Cultural Council Foundation Artists Project places artists in community based residencies throughout the five boroughs of New York City and provides artistic services and products through six specialized teams: Public Art, Exhibitions, Literary Works, Graphic Design, Documentation-Neighborhood Life, & the Performance Ensemble at Lincoln Center. The Association of Hispanic Arts, Black Theatre Alliance, & The Foundation for Independent Video & Film, all CCF subcontractors, provide additional services & performances throughout New York City.

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Cynthia Mailman working on her PATH-sponsored mural for the rotunda of the World Trade Center. The 55 by 8-foot mural depicts the Pulaski Skyway.

Stanford Golob

proposed by Congress. Although this support was welcome and gratifying, it came a little late and might have produced more tangible results had it come at the time Congress was forging the proposed new legislation.

In any event, the success of the program, in fact, the program itself is based on a populist as opposed to an elitist philosophy of art, a distinction provocatively explored in an article entitled *Elitists & Populists*, by Paul Dimaggio, from *Working Papers* and distributed along with a mammoth collection of papers and statistics available at *Putting the Arts to Work*. In the author's view the dichotomy between these attitudes toward art has become a political battleground since the enormous increases in government subsidy of the arts during the last fifteen years and because of the fierce competition for funds this has aroused. (The National Endowment for the Arts, for example, has only been around since 1965.)

The elitist view is fairly obvious and leaves little to the imagination; it is, essentially, the Establishment, as described by Dimaggio:

"Better than pander to the public's atrophied taste, public subsidy should encourage the highest professional levels...without which there are few standards of quality left by which the face of a nation's culture can be estimated or, indeed, displayed."

As for the populist camp, Dimaggio goes on:

"...art connotes creativity, spontaneity, individual expression; the rallying cry is participation, not excellence. Boundaries between amateur and professional levels and between traditional and non-traditional forms are seen as arbitrary or inconsequential; in this view, chamber music and fiddle festivals are equally deserving of support. And programs that attempt to use the arts in such pursuits as education, therapy, even prison reform are accepted as valid and important recipients of government subsidy."

Dimaggio then cites at least three breeds of populism: geographic which pits, for example, the hundreds of small orchestras across the country against the internationally known orchestras of the largest cities; the populism of diversity supporting as legitimate art such activities as Cajun music, street theatre, happenings, or the training of teen-age poets and puppeteers; and finally, the populism of participation rather than spectatorship, which has come to play such a large part in CETA activities. The CETA project, obviously, is

populist by all three definitions.

The worst that can be said of the populist position is that it is essentially educational, inspirational, or therapeutic—a process that does not result in art products of the first order. For instance, it arouses curiosity to hear, at the arts conference, that a Harris pole showed that 93 percent of the people want to have cultural resources available to them. This is a consoling concept to toss around, but what exactly does it mean by "culture"? A baseball team? Old movies on TV? This is not a critical question. Certainly America's culture *should* include athletics and old Hollywood movies on TV. The real problem with the populist view of culture is not what it *includes* but what it *excludes*. It certainly does *not* mean that the people of California want to buy paintings by young and unknown artists for \$500 to \$1,000 when they can buy poster reproductions of the old and modern masters for \$10 to \$20. And it certainly doesn't mean buying the poetry and fiction of new and unknown writers, which brings us to the dilemma of the CETA artist, whatever his or her discipline.

Essentially, the CETA artist is being asked to embrace a public service community work program strictly *temporary* in nature, regardless of extensions or waivers, while knowing that his ultimate success as an artist relies, in the long run, on some form of acceptance by the elite powers. (Every new art movement from Impressionism to Pop Art and Photo-Realism has owed its success, however belatedly, to acceptance by the Establishment.)

There seems no way out of this dilemma, and that the one area in which personal artistic ambition and community service meet is in public art—either murals or similar projects like the prints at the Ninth Street PATH station.

Since much community work is essentially educational, it would help if some kind of philosophy were at work in the CETA projects to make the artists' own work and public service stem from the same root, as in the programs of Constructivism and the Bauhaus. Moholy-Nagy wrote in 1938:

"Although for reasons of convenience a division into terms was retained, the old concept and content of 'school' was discarded, and a community of work established. The powers latent in each individual were to be welded into a free collective body. Also the pattern of a community of students who learn 'not for school but for life'

had to be worked out and converted into a cross-section of full, organic, and adaptable living. Such a society implies practice in actual living. Its individual members have to learn to master not only themselves and their own powers, but also the living and working conditions of the environment. The foundation of the educational program of the Bauhaus, or, more appropriately, its working program, rested upon recognition of this fact."

Perhaps this sort of thing is too much to ask of a group of 325 artists sharing in common only the fact of their unemployment. In fact, the Bauhaus philosophy itself proved too idealistic to prevail. And what would happen if the CETA artists were united in such a cause beyond their modest demand for "the right to work?" Surely that would be something that Congress would take a dim view of, to say the least. Consider, in closing, the case of Walt Whitman who wanted so desperately to be a poet of the people. Alas, it never happened. In fact, he ended up being closer to that anathema of all writers with populist aspirations—a poet's poet.

Pertinent Facts on How the Arts Affect America's Economy

(From *Putting the Arts to Work*)

- It is estimated that CETA has funded, through close to 600 prime sponsors, about 10,000 jobs for artists and supportive personnel with about \$200 million.
- In New York a study revealed that the largest segment of the public favoring expanded stronger cultural opportunities was composed of blue-collar workers (especially non-whites), the high school educated, and those in the \$5,000 to \$15,000 income bracket.
- For every one dollar of funds spent for the arts it has been estimated that four dollars are generated for the city, directly and indirectly.
- Only one third of those for whom the arts is a principle profession manage to work full-time in the arts.

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• The neighborhood is becoming a fundamental unit of urban life. In cities throughout the country, neighborhood arts programs have become a focus of neighborhood identity and pride.

CCF Seeking Director of Program Services

Sara P. Garretson, Executive Director of the Cultural Council Foundation, announces that the position of Director of Program Services is open, and CCF is now recruiting to fill the vacancy.

CCF serves some 200 arts organizations throughout New York City, and the Director of Program Services functions as the liaison between these groups and CCF's fiscal staff. The Director will be responsible for the development of programs which are aimed at helping new arts organizations grow into thriving programs. The position also includes supervising a staff of three persons.

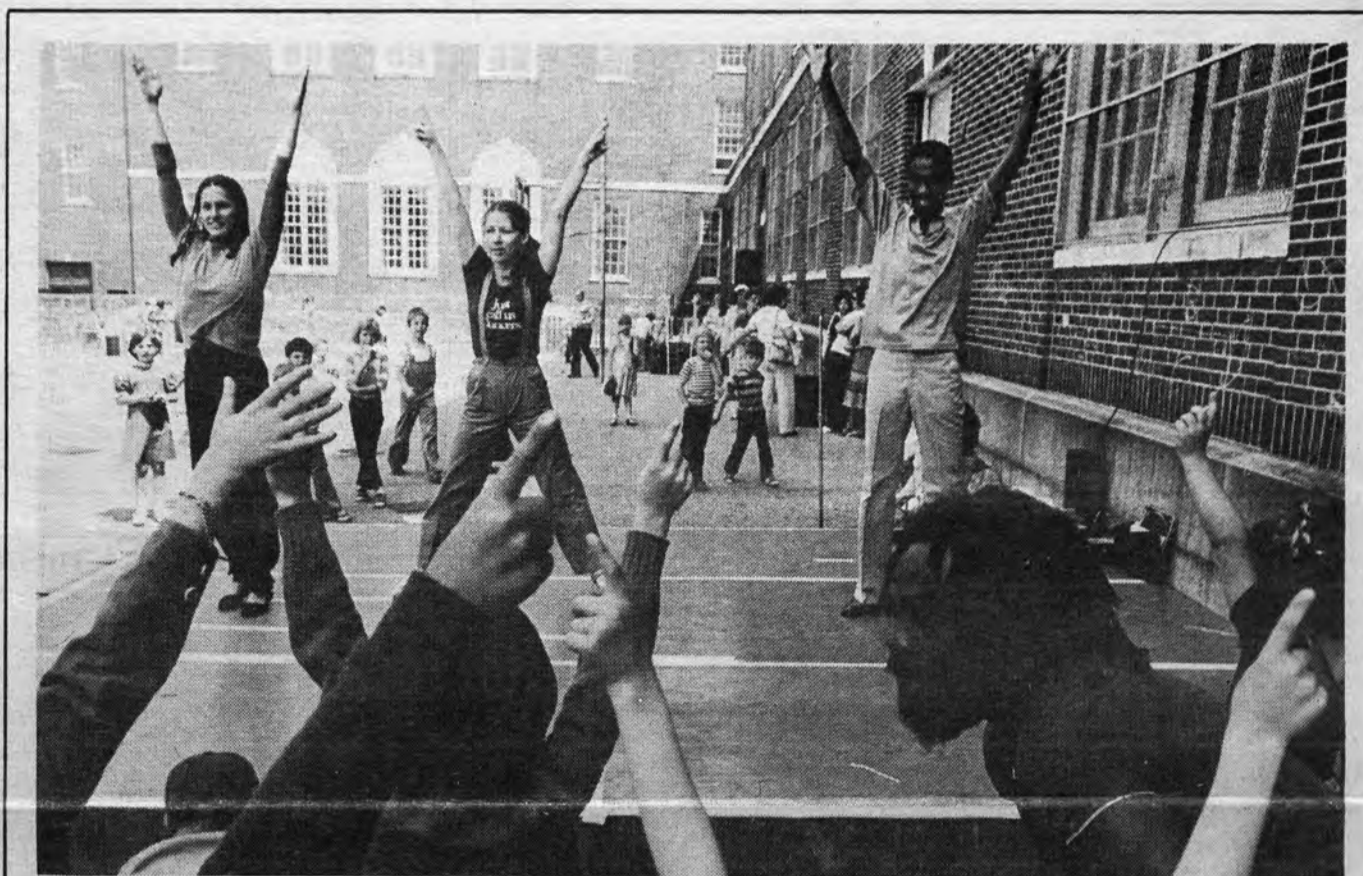
According to Mrs. Garretson, "The position requires strong fiscal management experience and the ability to work directly with a variety of client groups." Qualifications include a B.A. or equivalent experience (M.B.A. or Masters in Arts Administration is preferred) and at least three years experience in non-profit and/or government work. The candidate for the position must have a knowledge and understanding of fiscal and non-profit management.

Those interested in applying for the position should send their letters of interest and resumes to Sara P. Garretson, Executive Director, Cultural Council Foundation, 175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010.

Shows by CCF Artists To Open in October

Two exhibitions of work by CCF/CETA artists will open in October.

One show will consist of proposals artists submitted, in the form of photos and drawings, for art



A performance of CCF dancers in the Artists in the Schools program was held recently for the elementary school students at P.S. 49 on Staten Island. Dancers on the stage (from l to r) are: Deni Bank, Cathryn Williams, and Raymond McKethan. At lower right is dancer Thomas Pinnock. Stanford Golob

in public spaces. It will also include documentation of finished projects, installations, and, if possible, a slide show.

The exhibit will be at the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn Oct. 4 through Oct. 25 Monday through Friday from 9 to 5 p.m. Opening reception will be on Oct. 4 from 4 to 6 p.m. It is curated by Denise Mattia, names of participants to be announced.

The other show, entitled *Plane Frames: Abstract Painting*, will open on Oct. 2 and run through Oct. 19 in the Arthur Houghton Gallery at the Cooper Union School of Art, Third Avenue and Seventh Street.

Curated by Deborah Rosenthal, the show's opening reception will be from 6 to 8 p.m. on Oct. 2. Regular gallery hours are Monday through Friday, 10 to 5 p.m.

Artists included in the show are: Grover Amen, Ellsworth Ausby, Herman Cherry, Barry Feuerstein, Francine Halvorsen, Vered Lieb, Marguerite Munch, Deborah Rosenthal, and Ken Sofer.

Words to Go will be an exhibition of literary and visual collaborations by CCF artists. Poets and writers Rose Lesniak, Madeleine Keller, Nathan Whiting, Roland Legiardi-Laura, Martha Tack, Jeff Wright and Bob Holman match poetry and prose with the photographs, paintings, and constructions of Sarah Wells, Marjorie Portnow, Susan Ortega, Anna Werner and Charles Stanley. The opening is set for Sunday, Sept. 16 at 6 p.m. with the arrival of the **CCF Words to Go** truck of poets and writers performing for the last time this season. The exhibition is located on Eighth Avenue between 53rd and 54th St. at the Municipal Garage Windows. It will be on display through Oct. 20. The exhibition is curated by Rose Lesniak.

The Jamaica Art Center will have an exhibition in its main gallery in mid-October. The exhibit will be selected from work done in neighborhoods throughout New York City by CCF artists in the past 22 months. The exact dates and names of artists will be announced shortly.

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