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E 61 N.D.S.E.2

Part 1

NEW DELHI 49

2 Jan. 1970

Dear friend,

You are perhaps aware that a massive protest against the Lalit Kala Akademi and the 2nd. Triennale India is being organised has developed in the country. Almost two thirds of the direct invitees are not participating and artists from all over the country have joined the protest.

I am sending you the resolutions passed in an all India meeting of artists held in New Delhi on Dec. 20 1970.

We hope that you will join with us in the protest and boycott the triennale.

With warm regards

Yours sincerely

Vivan Sundaram

Vivan Sundaram

Secretary

All India Protest Committee

E 61 N.D.S.E.

Part 1  
N. Delhi 49

Dear Raza,

2 Jan 1971

You might remember we met a few months ago in Paris at Dalips place.

As you can see I have got involved in this quite impressive movement against the Lalit Kala. A lot of us have put our personal differences ~~as~~ aside, to once & for all change things. I believe as never before have so many artists come together. Each day we receive more letters.

Whichever way you decide, please send us the information or any comments.

My regards to your wife -

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely  
Kiran Sundaram.

# BOYCOTT AKADEMI

OPEN LETTER TO ALL ARTIST FRIENDS

Dear friend,

You are perhaps aware by now of the protest move by artists launched against the misdoings of the Lalit Kala Akademi during the last fifteen years and the high handed manner in which it is organising the second triennale, India. The least that one expected from the Akademi after the furore over the last triennale was that it would take the artist community into confidence before proceeding with the preparations for the second triennale. Not only was no artist's conference held by the Akademi for this purpose; the callousness of the Akademi can be seen from the fact that the list of participants in the Indian section is still to be finalised.

The Akademi could appoint its triennale committee of 8 members only a few months before the scheduled date of the triennale, obviously because of the intense faction-fights which goes on in its general council to the detriment of the artist community in general. Even the composition of the triennale committee clearly reveals the utter unresponsiveness of the Akademi towards present day realities. The triennale committee consists of 8 members, 3 of whom are government representatives, one the chairman of the Akademi and 4 artists. All the four are luminaries from the late 'forties and early 'fifties. They have been at the forefront of all the faction-fights in the Akademi and are known to treat the Akademi as their private preserve. You will easily agree with us that these 'old masters' are hardly fit to assess the contemporary situation in Indian Art.

The composition of the selection committee and the regional representatives is even more interesting. Of the 3-man selection committee only one can lay claim to be an artist even if of a bygone age. The regional representatives are again factional leaders now provided with an opportunity to wreak vengeance on all working artists who did not see eye to eye with their self-seeking ways over the years. The method of selection is again



typical of the Akademi's perfidy; while a number of artists have been issued direct invitations, others are expected to send their slides for approval and selection. While this casteism may be in line with social orthodoxy it is aimed at keeping the artist community divided. The list of direct invitees is said to be made of all national award winners over the years and those who have participated in exhibitions of Indian Art abroad sent by the Akademi. You will agree that this is a strange way of compiling the Indian section for the triennale in the year 1971.

Everybody knows about the severe criticisms to which the selections and the awards for the national exhibitions have been subjected year after year. Without meaning to cast any reflection on the award winners we would like to point out that the Akademi bosses have sought this 'safe' way out of the dilemma because they have neither the courage nor the conviction for choosing the best of contemporary effort. But even from this list they have axed such award winners against whom one or the other committee member has a grouse. The protest has developed spontaneously and simultaneously in different places. A large number of active working artists from Madras have risen in revolt against the factional working of the regional representative of that area. The Baroda artists have now been running a campaign of protest for some months. Almost all the artists of Ahmedabad are for boycotting the triennale. Many artists from Bombay, individually and collectively are boycotting the triennale. More than 20 working artists of Delhi are for the boycott. Artists from Lucknow and Varanasi have expressed their protest. Somnath Hore from Shanti Niketan has written to the Secretary of the Akademi refusing the invitation for participation, the reason being "the very obscure manner of selecting the participants." Calcutta artists had written to the Akademi sometime back protesting against the appointment of the regional representative for their area.

The protest that had spontaneously developed against the manner the triennale is being organised has now grown into a movement for the complete reconstitution of the Akademi itself. A statement initially signed by a large number of artists in Delhi for the complete boycott of the Akademi till it is fundamentally re-constituted has now been signed by a large number of working artists from all over the country. This is understandable as most of us are conversant with the bleak balance sheet of the Akademi's functioning during the last fifteen years. To take but a look on the receipt and disbursement statement of the Akademi for the year 1968-69: Out of a government grant of 8 lakhs and 60 thousand rupees about 3 lakhs has gone to salaries and establishment, about 53 thousand to furniture and equipments, about 40 thousand as T.A. & D.A. to General Council members, 11 thousand on sales promotion, 2 lakhs as rent for the Lalit Kala wing of the Rabindra Bhawan and 77 thousand as Sundries. This makes a total of about 7 lakhs out of a grant of 8 lakhs and 60 thousand rupees spent on the Akademi and its members. What about the Artists? No wonder the tumble-down Afghan hunting lodge which the Akademi proudly flaunts in the name of studio facilities for the Artists of India has no electricity or water arrangement and can house only 4 artists at a time!

With regard to the composition of the General Council of the Akademi, its totally unrepresentative character will be evident from the fact that only 14 out of its 56 members are representatives of art organisations and institutions "recognised" by the Akademi. Nine are "Eminent" artists chosen by the Akademi. The remaining 33 are Government nominees, State Government representatives and what not.

We are addressing this open letter to you because when for the first time a cogent movement of protest is developing all over the country any co-operation by individuals or any section of artists with the Akademi will be harming the cause of the artist community as such. We are aware of the serious differences in outlook with regard to art among artists and we feel that such differences are healthy and welcome for the flowering of art in general in our country. We are also aware of differences and suspicions of a personal nature among artists. These differences however have to be set aside if the welfare of the community in general is to be achieved. This is the reason why many of us who are signatories to this letter have come together despite our known differences. An All-India meeting of artist representatives from various regions has been called in New Delhi on Sunday, December 20, 1970 at 10.30 A.M. at the Rabindra Bhawan lawns for the formation of a Committee of Protest. This meeting will also consider the formation of an Arts Council of India for looking after the interests of working artists and furthering the cause of art.

You are welcome to join the meeting as a participant if you agree with us or as an observer if you have still not made up your mind. We appeal to you to join with us in this worthwhile endeavour.

Yours sincerely

AMBADAS  
ERIC BOWEN  
NASREEN MOHAMADI  
SMANTI DAVE  
R. BROGTA  
NARENDRA DIXIT  
S.S. VOHRA

NAND KATYAL  
ERUCH HAKIM  
TYEB MEHTA  
NAREEN NATH  
VIKO SONI  
ANAND DEV  
BAL CHABRA

J. SWAMINATHAN  
S.R. BHUSHAN  
JIWAN ADALJA  
JAI  
KRISHEE KHANNA  
RAJESH MEHRA

The following is an incomplete list of protesting artists from various regions :

#### DELHI

- |                     |                    |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 1. AMBADAS          | 17. NARENDRA DIXIT |
| 2. NAND KATYAL      | 18. YANGO          |
| 3. J. SWAMINATHAN   | 19. JOLLY ROHTAGI  |
| 4. ERIC BOWEN       | 20. ANAND DEV      |
| 5. ERUCH HAKIM      | 21. RAJESH MEHRA   |
| 6. S.R. BHUSHAN     | 22. S.S. VOHRA     |
| 7. NASREEN MOHAMEDI | 23. SIRIPAT RAI    |
| 8. TYEB MEHTA       | 24. DIDDI MANOJ    |
| 9. JIVAN ADALJA     | 25. R.K. BHATNAGAR |
| 10. SHANTI DAVE     | 26. BAL CHABDA     |
| 11. KANWAL KRISHNA  | 27. SUDHA ARORA    |
| 12. NAREEN NATH     |                    |
| 13. JAI             |                    |
| 14. R. BROOTA       |                    |
| 15. VIKO SONI       |                    |
| 16. KRISHAN KHANNA  |                    |



## AHMEDABAD

1. MANSING CHHARA
2. ASHWIN MODI
3. B.N. PARMAR
4. MUKUND SHROFF
5. BALKRISHNA PATEL
6. RAMANIK BHAVASAR
7. HIMMAT SHAH
8. JANAK PATEL
9. BHANU SHAH
10. RASHMI KANT
11. AMRUT PATEL
12. BABUJI SORAI
13. ATMARAM
14. NAGAJI BHAI CHAWHAN
15. VINOD PARUL
16. MAHENDRA PATEL
17. GIRISH KHATRI
18. SHARAD SHETH
19. AMIT AMBALAL
20. KISHAN KAMLE

## LUCKNOW

1. JAI KRISHNA
2. A.S. PANWAR
3. P.C. LITTLE
4. N.N. ROY
5. S.G. SRIKHANDE
6. Mrs. PANWAR

## BENARAS

1. ASFAR
2. S. PATEL
3. T.J. RAFAI
4. S.G. NIKAM
5. VASANT GHODKE
6. B.K. SHAH
7. S.P. KARCHOUDHARY

## MADRAS

1. R. KRISHNA RAO
2. R. B. BHASKARAN
3. ALPHANSO
4. T.R.P. MOOKIAH
5. C. DAKSHINAMOORTHY
6. L. MUNUSWAMY
7. R. VARADARAJAN
8. S. KANNIAPPAN
9. A.P. SANTHANA RAJ
10. P.B. SURENDRANATH
11. K.M. ADIMOOLAM
12. S.K. RAJAVELU
13. K.S. RAO
14. S. MURUGESAN
15. T. VISVANATHAN
16. C.J. ANTHONY DOSS

## KASHMIR

1. BANSI PARIMOO

**Telegram from Ghulam Mohd. Sheikh, Baroda :**  
**Protest List too Long will bring it personally on 20th.**