

Art and the Business of Art

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In appointing Henry Geldzahler as New York City's Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, Mr. Koch has selected a man in the city's creative mainstream for a job that is central to both its economic and cultural life. As curator of 20th-century art at the Metropolitan Museum, Mr. Geldzahler's credentials as a professional in the visual arts are incontestable. He further assures us that he is not a "mono-culture" person; his interests are wide-ranging. Comparing his job as manager of culture here to being "commissioner of wheat in Kansas," he promises a sophisticated, lively approach. If nothing else, he is going to be quotable, but the city can expect a great deal more.

It will, of course, need a great deal more, because as head of the Department of Cultural Affairs, Mr. Geldzahler must be primarily an administrator and financier. That job has been done well by the city's first Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, Claude Shostal, who set up the new department for the Beame administration. Mr. Shostal's accomplishments in coordinating the financing of the city's cultural institutions and arts programs deserve grateful recognition.

Mr. Geldzahler's first responsibility will be to continue that work. But he will also need to establish a

permanent relationship with the Office of Economic Development so that cultural activities are recognized as a primary economic resource for the city. At present that connection is spotty. Other priorities are the marshaling of corporate, foundation and government funds to support institutions and programs responsible for New York City's cultural pre-eminence. Mr. Geldzahler will have ample opportunity to utilize his broad grasp of today's most vital trends. The art and business of art will be his business.



While the Department of Cultural Affairs is a city agency, the Commission for Cultural Affairs is an advisory body that draws from all parts of the arts community. It is most regrettable that the chairman of the commission, Martin Segal, the man most directly responsible for the new office and programs, has felt it necessary to resign. The commission was meant to be, and should continue to be, an apolitical body transcending changes in administration, with an overview of cultural priorities. Mr. Segal ideally filled that role. Mr. Koch needs a chairman even more broadly based than Mr. Geldzahler to provide liaison among all the arts, official agencies and the business community.

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