

# Artists Need Studios, Too

With pride and some justification, New York claims to be the postwar capital of the art world. But while we add up the profits—in cash and culture—from the booming art business, we make it increasingly hard for the artist to exist here.

To find a place to live and work that is big enough and cheap enough for his needs has always kept the artist one nervous jump ahead of the real estate market. Only his ingenuity and instinct for survival have held him to New York at all. In the process he has done more for the city than is commonly realized. His search for studio space led him to the old houses of Greenwich Village, which, in his appreciative hands, became a restored civic attraction and one so raised in value that he was eventually priced right out of them.

Next he moved on to spacious low-rent lofts in decaying commercial neighborhoods, always to the neighborhood's lively improvement. This genuine, spontaneous kind of urban renewal has now been eliminated by the official brand of redevelopment and private real estate speculation, both of which are destroying so many of the city's old buildings. It is a sad and senseless situation that threatens to make the New York loft, and the New York artist, extinct.

The immediate solution is passage of the bill to amend the Multiple Dwelling Law, introduced into the New York State Legislature by Senator MacNeil Mitchell. This amendment would permit the artists' safe and logical use of now stringently controlled commercial space.

The bill contains a double benefit for the city. It would ease the artists' critical housing situation and save some handsome 19th century commercial structures ideally suited to the purpose. But time is short for action if New York is not to lose the art community that so enriches its esthetic and its business life.