

Art and Life . . .

The arts in New York supply much of this city's strength and style, as well as a substantial part of its revenue. Its unique cultural resources not only are income-producing—the current figure is put at \$3 billion a year—but must weigh heavily in any future plan to bring the city back to full health.

This fact has been recognized by the city in establishing its first Department of Cultural Affairs—a belated rescue operation from the Parks and Recreation Administration, where the place and importance of the arts in the city were sadly underrated. Now it has been made clear that culture, from the arts to entertainment, is a significant part of the city's capitalization—when many of its other attractions are weakening.

Even more important, this step is an indication of the kind of creative and conceptual administrative reform that New York desperately needs. It is not that the arts are being given some fancy status. What has been recognized is their large and real role in the city's life and economy, and the need for the right administrative machinery to make the most of the special mix of culture and commerce that characterizes New York. It is a resource that deserves astute management.

Much more of this brand of thinking is necessary, beginning with careful studies of the city's strengths and weaknesses, to be followed by constructive reorganization of its priorities and functions. That kind of "planning" lags sadly now, as the city is pushed from crisis to crisis. New York has only begun the process with the understanding that the arts are one of the city's essential life-support systems.