

FROM: The Guerrilla Art Action Group

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUBJECT: G.A.A.G.'s participation in the 11th Annual New York
Avant-Garde Festival on November 16, 1974.

CALL: Jon Hendricks
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PRESS RELEASE

"U.S. GOVERNMENT XEROXES RUSSIA'S USE OF PSYCHIATRIC EXAMINATION TO PUNISH AND SILENCE DISSIDENTS", SAYS THE GUERRILLA ART ACTION GROUP, WHICH WILL PRESENT AN INFORMATION BOOTH AT THE AVANT-GARDE FESTIVAL:

"UNITED STATES OF AMERICA vs. ARTIST JEAN TOCHE"

Artist Jean Toche, who was arrested on March 31, 1974, for allegedly sending to various museums, newspapers and individuals in this city 30 handbills, which strongly criticized various policies of those museums, has been ordered by Federal Judge Kevin Duffy, at the request of the U.S. Government, to undergo a psychiatric examination (Opinion N° 41284, of October 8, 1974).

Toche was charged with allegedly sending a so-called "kidnap threat" through the mails. The government alleges that on the basis of that act, and because Toche picketed the Metropolitan and other major museums in "an attempt to disrupt the normal course of business", and because he is accused by the Metropolitan of having allegedly "released cockroaches onto the dinner table during a banquet" at that museum, that Toche is suffering from mental disorder.

Attorneys for the defendant, Margaret Ratner, joined by Michael Ratner, William Kunstler of the Center for Constitutional Rights, and Eve Carey of the New York Civil Liberties Union, are at a loss to find any criminality, based on the expression of constitutionally-protected rights, and see the danger of a government-imposed psychiatric examination as a grave threat to the Bill of Rights.

Artist Jean Toche has not been indicted. He has been denied DE FACTO a preliminary hearing where he could disprove all charges against him, but Judge Duffy has accepted at face value all the accusations of the government and of the Metropolitan Museum, and on the basis of those charges, has ordered a psychiatric examination. This examination is not only a threat to all of us, creating a chilling effect on future dissent against museums, but will imprint for life a stigma on Toche's reputation, both as an artist and as human being (police records, jobs, credit rating...). Attorneys for the defendant are appealing the judge's decision.

Artist Jean Toche and the Guerriilla Art Action Group will be at the information booth from noon to 4:00PM, on November 16, to answer questions and invite public participation and discussion on the issues involved.

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GUERRILLA ART ACTION GROUP
No 1 White Street
New York, N.Y. 10013

OPEN LETTER:

November 16, 1974.

Dr. John Spiegel, President,
American Psychiatric Association.
1700 18th Street N.W.
Washington D.C. 20009.

Check it out. Where you at?
The inheritors of nazi medical experimentation?
The standard bearers of nations' mental health?
The protectors of governments' insanity?
Dr. Pokorny, Professor Hirt, B.F. Skinner, W. Shockley,
Dachau, Buchenwald, Auschwitz,
Soledad, Rikers Island, Bellevue....
Xeroxers of psychology today in Russia.
Dissident sane thrown into mental asylums,
Socially discredited and gagged.
The people are the losers.
WHERE YOU AT, AMERICA?

Qualified U.S. psychiatrists, we accuse you of being:

- agents for the suppression of dissident thought,
 - architects for the standardization of thought,
 - programmers of "acceptable behavior",
 - arbitrators of "community moral standards",
 - enforcers of productivity of the mind for society's "useful purposes",
 - vomiters on women's rights,
 - finks who finger rebellious children for mind slavery,
 - lobotomizers of inmates' rights,
 - engineers of sensory deprivation rooms in prison and elsewhere,
 - judges and juries within the "realm of sane behavior"
- of what an artist can do and cannot do,
thereby reinforcing the popular myth that "artists are crazy".

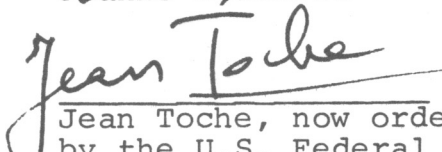
PIMPS. For a mere \$150.00 from the U.S. government,
You are willing to question and "determine" the sanity of dissidents,
thereby stigmatizing for life those who disagree.

NO GOOD.


Jon Hendricks


Virginia Toche


Joanne Stamerra


Jean Toche, now ordered
by the U.S. Federal Court
to undergo psychiatric examination
for being a dissident artist.
(Opinion number 41284, Judge K. Duffy,
Southern District of New York).