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Professor of Social Theory

February, 1978

To: National Endowment for the Arts  
Washington, D.C. 20506

From: The Ad Hoc Committee for  
Truck - Art

We are writing you about what we are calling "truck - art." America has a huge fleet of trucks that crisscrosses the nation continuously. They are seen by every American of all ages and condition, someplace, sometime. They convey in their presence and appearance the strength and vitality of the economy, and inferentially, of the people. They do not pretend to be artistic, except when they carry a well-designed symbol of their owners or small objects of folk art in their cabs. They do present, in their large sides, blank spaces that invite potentially a new form of mural art. They are envisioned by us as tens of thousands of walls without murals, walls that could carry murals, murals that might convey classical and contemporary art to many millions of people, and engender a lively interest in art on the part of tens of thousands of teamsters - the greatest travelling exhibition of art in the world.

We are interested in pursuing this opportunity for art appreciation and art education on an immense scale. We would wish the project to bring art to the tiniest village, the grimmest neighborhood, the farthest reaches of our land - from Alaska to El Paso, from Los Angeles to New York, from Maine to the Florida Keys.

Therefore we hope to organize a group to prove the feasibility of truck - art on a large scale, and are hopeful of obtaining the cooperation and assistance of the National Endowment for the Arts in this work. We would operate as a corporation not - for - profit, perhaps affiliated with a museum of art.

Briefly, the intent is to arrange for the painting of good classical or contemporary art on the sides of up to fifty interstate trucks based in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Illinois, California, and Texas, in a year's trial, and to discover the best ways of doing so, artistically, economically, and organizationally to evaluate the results; and to project and plan the largest possible extension of truck - art from the end of the first year.

For this purpose we require money to pay the mural artists, and a small negotiating staff, and for various services ( legal, financial, artistic, etc. ) as needed. We think that some method of contributing space may be feasible without direct payment to the owners but require a reserve also in the event that a direct payment is required. A total of 90,000 is sought for the first phase, plus a reserve of 10,000 for possible direct payments.

The project is viewed as voluntary on all sides ( the drivers, the owners, the artists ). An owner - driver for instance, would decide between classical and original contemporary art, and among a variety of possibilities viewed by him in advance. We would set up a committee to prepare the range of offerings and present the artists volunteering their work. At the end of the trial project we would hope to rally all participating trucks, drivers, owners, and artists for a brief display and exchange of views, perhaps at the geographic "center of population" point in the middle of the United States.

We view the nation - wide expansion of this project as involving the support and participation of labor unions, business, industry, government agencies, and art organizations, and will explore the feasibility of utilizing individual state art councils to channel the de-centralized activities of this new public art form.

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Public Policy Scientist

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Art Curator

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Attorney and Educational  
Extension Director

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Financial Consultant

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Wall Muralist

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Union Official