

NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR
1964-1965



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STATEMENT BY
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PRESIDENT
OF THE
NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR
1964-1965 CORPORATION
REGARDING
NEW YORK TIMES
STORIES ON ART
AT THE FAIR

COME TO THE FAIR!
APRIL 22, 1964



The New York Times certainly spread itself on art at the Fair. About 90% of the assertions are without foundation.

1. I had nothing to do with the concept or execution of the mural in the Terrace Club referred to, and did not see it until it was finished and in place. I guess it was my friend Bob Gardiner's idea. I thought it amusing. The implication that the Fair paid for it is absolutely false. The various frescoes and decorations in the Terrace Club and Top of the Fair Restaurant were approved by a committee of Port Authority and Fair executives, of which I was not a member. The only works of art for which I claim any credit are Mr. Chicore's splendid Spanish bottles and Rube Goldberg's incomparable cartoons. For these I will go down the Times' artistic drain.

2. The Hirshhorn story is fiction. Mr. Gimbel introduced me to Mr. Hirshhorn. We begged him to come into the Fair on a temporary basis, or preferably in a permanent endowed building to be provided by him in the Queens Botanical cultural area in the Kissena Corridor. We pointed out that this is the exact geographical and population center of the City. Mr. Hirshhorn talked of Fifth Avenue. There was a lot of correspondence on this subject. At no time was Mr. Hirshhorn asked to scatter his works, nor was there any controversy with him. Our relations could not have been more cordial. The slightest reference to Mr. Hirshhorn and Mr. Gimbel will establish the facts which did not interest the Times *until* the night of publication when a staff member sent some garbled, threatening messages to me, giving me an opportunity to refute what I had not seen. I am sure the Fair will be glad to have Mr. Hirshhorn print the entire correspondence between him and the Fair on this subject.

3. As to an American art building or exhibit of contemporary modern art, this subject was under discussion for three years. Every effort was

made by the Fair to obtain a separate building or space in another building. We repeatedly asked the federal authorities for space. On every occasion representatives of art groups demanded Fair money which we did not have. They were unable to raise money themselves even on the basis of an entrance charge. Mr. Heckscher knows this story. So does Mr. Winston, the U.S. Commissioner, and scores of others. The various Foundations were approached a dozen times but refused to contribute. The Times' allegation of Fair antagonism to modern art and design is manifestly ridiculous. Fair officials may have their individual tastes, but these don't enter into the determination of the Fair to give every possible encouragement to every school, period, academy and fashion. Here again the Fair is quite willing to let those involved print the entire correspondence on this subject or, if there is genuine, disinterested demand, the Fair will do so.

We have repeatedly recorded efforts to provide nearby cultural exhibits in permanent institutions which we could not hope to equal at Flushing Meadow. Our policy has been to avoid duplication, overlapping, rivalry and competition with these established institutions. Specifically, we have called attention again and again to our formal agreements with the Lincoln Square Performing Arts and our careful arrangements with all the Museums in New York to induce visitors to the Fair to include these Museums and their special Fair exhibits in their itineraries.

4. I suppose that under the head of news fit to print there is an excuse for a wholesale claim, skillfully attributed to critics, that the Fair is interested in nothing but bookkeeping, business and balances. This will indeed be news to foreign countries, states, religious organizations and others widely, dramatically and ingeniously represented in the Fair, but such sensational stuff does the City no good.