

# MIT pulls out of Brazil art show

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Staff Writer

Prof. Gyorgy Kepes, director of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at M.I.T., announced last night that it has withdrawn the exhibit it organized as the official United States section of the 10th San Paulo Bienal.

Brazil's current military regime is the reason.

Planned for the international art world's largest show, opening next Fall, was a trend-setting, highly technological U.S. entry planned as a "team" environment by the Tech's Visual Arts Center under the aegis of the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

"Of the 23 artists who originally agreed to participate in our common enterprise, nine have recently withdrawn, some of them within the last few days before the shipping date to Sao Paulo," Kepes explained.

"Most have chosen to boycott as their way of registering protest against the lack of democratic processes and consequent mistreatment of artists and intellectuals in Brazil.

"We feel as deeply concerned at the lack of creative and democratic liberties as those who have withdrawn, and the intention of the 14 of us had been to participate in the exhibition and place on record our deep resentment against cultural suppression.

To our great disappointment we have to conclude that our basic concept to create a community exhibition has been crippled by the withdrawal of nine participants of the community.

"It is therefore with the greatest regret that I announce that the aim of the exhibition as originally conceived cannot now be realized due to the withdrawals, and that I do not see justification for its presentation at the Bienal in a misleadingly incomplete form."

Kepes, internationally known artist-author-educator, had planned an exhibit in two parts. It was budgeted at \$90,000.

The first section was to have had what he called "a

community, or society of objects" and the second a sort of "information center" using a wide range of simultaneous techniques — films, slides, video tapes — to show various aspects of the American scene. It was to have been a real blend of art and technology.

"Our aim was to realize an exhibition as a totality and not merely an anthology of independent artistic statements, however rich they might be. But circumstances outside our control have kept us from accomplishing our aim," Kepes said.

Among the artists who withdrew because of repressive tactics in Brazil limiting creative freedom on the artistic front were Harold Tovish of Brookline, Takis and Jack Burnham, all working Fellows at the Center, plus three other contributors,

Hans Haacke, Tom Lloyd and Stephen Antonakos.

Many European artists are also boycotting the big show, which customarily offers the work of more than 70 nations.

Will the U.S. attempt to find a replacement for the M.I.T. organized entry? No one seems to know at this point.

S. Dillon Ripley, secretary of the Smithsonian Institution, which sponsors official U.S. entries in foreign exhibits, said:

"Prof. Kepes has informed me that the withdrawal of nine of the 23 participating artists has made it impossible for him to proceed with plans for the U.S. Exhibition at the 10th Sao Paulo Bienal.

"Because of the lateness of this decision it now becomes necessary to explore the desirability and feasibility of

attempting at this juncture to substitute another exhibit so that the United States can be represented at the Bienal this year.

"I am struck by the fact that the number of participating artists who have chosen to withdraw is so nearly the same as the number who wished to go ahead as planned.

"This indicates the difficulty that confronts men of good will and artistic integrity when they are placed in the position of deciding between gestures of political protest on the one hand and maintenance of international artistic communication on the other.

"Speaking for myself and the Smithsonian, I deeply regret that the people of Brazil, of Latin America and other parts of the world will be deprived of the opportunity to see the novel and exciting exhibition that Prof. Kepes and his colleagues had been preparing."