

## The Arts

Artists Boycott  
Brazil Show

The exhibit that was to represent the United States at the 10th Sao Paulo Biennial in Brazil was withdrawn yesterday after nine of the 23 artists who were to contribute to the exhibit refused to participate on political grounds.

The exhibit was to be a "team effort" headed by Gyorgy Kepes, director of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In a statement released yesterday in Boston, Kepes said, "Of the 23 artists who originally agreed to participate in our common enterprise, nine have recently withdrawn, some of them within the last few days before the shipping date to Sao Paulo. Most have chosen to boycott as their way of registering a protest against lack of democratic processes and consequent mistreatment of artists and intellectuals in Brazil."

The remaining 14 artists intended to go on, but "place on record our deep resentment against cultural repression. But, Kepes said, the withdrawals "crippled" "our basic concept to create a community exhibition" and "I do not see justifications for presenting at Brazil an incomplete exhibition. It would be misleading."

Kepes conveyed his decision to the Secretary of the Smithsonian S. Dillon Ripley, since responsibility for the International Art Program falls to the Smithsonian's National Collection of Fine Arts. Ripley issued a statement in reply, saying, "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 exhibition so that the United States can be represented at the Biennial this year."

A spokesman for the Smithsonian said the substitute would have to be found "within about two weeks" in order to be shipped to Sao Paulo on time.

Among the nine artists who withdrew from the project are Hans Haacke, Tom Lloyd, Stephen Antonakos, Jack Burnham, Takis and Harold Tovish. The latter three are fellows at the MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies. Most deplored American support of the Brazilian "dictatorship," and in a letter to Kepes, Antonakos noted: "I cannot in good conscience allow my work to be shown at Sao Paulo as though nothing was wrong. To keep my work out is really the only way I have of objecting to conditions there."

The Sao Paulo Biennial, scheduled for early September, is the largest of the international art fairs. Like the Venice Biennial, with which it alternates, it offers prizes and prestige to competing artists.

But since the present Brazilian regime's crackdown on civil liberties, which included the arrest of 200 artists, intellectuals and political suspects, the Biennial has felt the effects.

Two French delegations have refused to participate and so have the Dutch, the Swedes, a group of Spaniards and many Brazilian expatriates.

The United States entry headed by Kepes was to be the first time that this country would have a collective exhibition as members of a team. Kepes envisioned two parts to the exhibit—one an information center that would employ slides, films and recorded sounds, and a room filled with a "community of objects, environments and events."

—Mary Wiegiers