

May 31, 1973
138 Prince St.
New York City 10012

To Whom It May Concern:

When I first saw Charles Simonds' work two years ago, I was particularly impressed because it represented 1) the only formally innovative yet genuine fantasy art I had seen for a long time, and, most important 2) a total departure from the value systems of the art world/gallery scene. Three years of working in the streets for an audience usually deprived of so-called "fine art" seems to have expanded Simonds' art and enriched its basic esthetic and intellectual premises.

These premises depart from a multi-level earth-body-dwellingplace imagery, and from a unique manipulation of real and pictorial space. The vehicle is scale change, or fundamentally micro-macrocosmic relationships (sexual, conceptual, political) between man and land, people and city, etc. Aside from the dwellings in the streets and the park proposal, Simonds has made films of himself being born from the earth (Birth, 1970) and building on his own and on a woman's clay-covered bodies a landscape and dwelling, in the real landscape (1971 and 1972). These share with all his work the ease with which the images can be meaningfully absorbed by people of the most varied backgrounds, combined with an underlying complexity of ideas re-inforced by cross references between all the facets of his art.

"Project Uphill" continues this interplay, drawing the earth back out of the city sidewalks in all of its sensuous reality, I have long been interested in the possibility

of an art freed from artificial and institutional confines, but have found the double barrier of bureaucracy and artistic elitism frequently insurmountable. In the case of this park, an artist has gone into a community, worked there, gotten to know and be known by it, and with its enthusiastic support has been able to initiate the idea, location and design of a park which will also be a sculpture in its own right. Such communication between the real artist and the real world is so rare that I cannot overemphasize the importance of supporting it to the hilt when it does occur, in the hope that such situations will prove exemplary in the future.

Should any more specific information be required on the nature or effect of Mr. Simonds' work, from an art-critical viewpoint, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Lucy R. Lippard
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