

## "THE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OF THE ARTIST"

An International Conference held by the UNITED KINGDOM NATIONAL COMMITTEE of the INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION of ART at the Botany Lecture Theatre of University College, London, from the 8th to the 14th June, 1965.

### PREFACE

**M**ANY factors combined to make this Conference unique. It was the first gathering in England of artists from all over the world—Asia, Africa, North and South America, and Europe—and it provided the first opportunity for teachers from art schools in the different countries to meet and discuss their professional problems.

Artists, being by nature individualists, are often thought to be unwilling or unable to co-operate. Their very willingness to hold this Conference and the enthusiastic support which they gave to it have effectively proved the contrary.

The delegates, with very few exceptions, came to London on behalf of National Committees in their countries, these Committees being composed of artists or of representatives of art societies.

The National Committees, at present numbering fifty-seven, constitute the *International Association of Art* which is affiliated to Unesco in Paris in a consultative and associate capacity and it co-operates closely with Unesco in tackling its various tasks connected with the visual arts and for the benefit of the professional artist.

*The International Association of Art* has been in existence since 1954. The decision to establish it was made two years earlier at a conference of artists convened in Venice at the request of Unesco. The association adopted a wide programme of activities and its general assemblies have been held every three years, on the invitation of National Committees, in Venice, Dubrovnik, Vienna, New York and Tokyo, the sixth being planned for 1969, in Amsterdam.

This international conference on the training of the artist was essentially an experiment, since the Association had not previously ventured to bring together such a large gathering of artists to discuss a single theme. Would artists be willing to come from distant countries—Japan, Korea, India, Brazil, for example—and give up a week or more of their time for discussion of one particular subject? Evidently, yes. They clearly welcomed the opportunity, when the subject was, like this one, a matter of vital interest to them—the training of future generations of their own profession.

The United Kingdom National Committee was determined to meet this challenge and accept the Association's request, made in 1963, to organise such a Conference in London and to act as host. The Committee felt confident that the project would rouse widespread interest, because art teaching has been undergoing far-reaching changes in its methods and objectives, and such developments are nowhere more manifest or significant than in the British Isles.

It was essential, as a first step, to seek the support of the Department of Education and Science, (the Ministry responsible for education in Great Britain); and the support which it willingly granted proved extremely helpful in seeking funds for the conference. The next step was to approach the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation (Lisbon) which responded by offering a very substantial grant, without which the conference could not have been attempted. There followed generous grants from the Inner London Education Authority, the British Council, the Arts Council of