

The Coatpuller

a column by John & Magdalene Sinclair, for once

John Sinclair
Magdalene Sinclair

1966

“any image around which any people concentrate & omit themselves is a usable one just because it is theirs.”

—Charles Olson, *Apollonius of Tyrana*

I am talking to you people who read this paper. Are you there? What then do you want? You have it in your power now to create a vital living situation here in Detroit and make it in your own image—if you have the will & commitment to such a situation. If you don't care if Detroit ever gets to be such a place, it won't. It will stay just as it is now—a burgeoning police state, with isolated groups of people fighting each other and ignoring each other but never working together to make a decent place of this place. And this newspaper, which could be so great and such an important community newspaper, will continue to flounder because its editor gets so little help, and there is so little response to calls for help, aid, participation, etc., that are issued in it. I am thinking particularly of the Artists' Workshop Society, which is part of my own life, and which is about to die out because my wife and her few helpers have received so little support from you while I've been gone these last four and a half months—just when they've needed help most. If you want to have Detroit as a real, alive, worthwhile place to live and work in, you'll have to make it that way yourselves, since the city rulers aren't going to help, they've proved that, and the commercial interests never want to make a place for something new and vital but will capitalize on it when it appears and grows. You dig? What I mean is that we are all going to have to start working with each other on all fronts, help each other out, and take advantage of what are our local possibilities—like this newspaper, like the Artists' Workshop and the West Central Organization, the Concept East Theatre, the Detroit Committee to End the War in Vietnam, the SDS Free University, Kenneth V. Cockrel for state representative, etc., etc. —all of these are manifestations of the same essential concerns, that Detroit be a vital human place for all of us.

What I want to say to you is that there are many things going on here that you are not aware of, that I am not aware of, but that we all could be aware of and use if we started really talking to each other maybe starting in this newspaper. For example, at the Artists' Workshop Press We have tried to make use of the local manifestations of world spirit as much as possible, by publishing magazines and books of work by Detroit poets and other writers. We have tried to present the best music being made in Detroit, and have secured our own facilities as a means to these ends. But there are more people in New York and San Francisco and Chicago, say, who are aware of what is happening at the Artists' Workshop, and who donate money and generally give us support, than there are in Detroit. Do you see what I am talking about? We are soon going to issue a call for support throughout the city of Detroit, and before we do that we want to see who is ready to support us from within our own ranks, so to say. We are willing now, and as far as I'm concerned, we have always been willing, to work with people here in Detroit who are concerned with the present decadence and apathy here. Before any of us can get any real support from “outside, “ e.g. simply put, from people who do not read this newspaper, we are all going to have to get ourselves and our organizations together and present a unified front. Anyone who is interested in responding to this call

to arms can get in touch with my wife at 4825 John Lodge, or through the 5th Estate. Or you can talk to me at the Artists' Workshop on Saturday, August 6th, when I am released from the Detroit House of Correction. Maybe we can do something.

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Since I'm not able to hear things too well from here, my wife has taken on the job of being my eyes and ears for what is happening in Detroit. I'll let her take over now, and maybe next issue I can have some first-hand reports for you on musical and "literary" happenings. Be sure to read the newspapers now tho you can learn the sophisticated art of lying to millions of people at once there. And if you listen to the radio, you're sure to be hip to the fact that Johnny Sea is Andy Warhol in male drag...

John Sinclair  
Detroit House of Correction  
July 4<sup>th</sup> 1966

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One of the most important musical events in Detroit in quite some time was the appearance of the John Coltrane Quintet at the Drome Bar June 17 thru 26th. Anyone who says he "loves jazz" and didn't go and hear Trane should be made to wear stereo earphones and listen to Ascension over and over again! The Quintet consists of John Coltrane who plays tenor saxophone, soprano saxophone, flute, bass clarinet (the same one Eric Dolphy used incidentally), as well as bells, tambourines, sticks, and maraccas; Farell Sanders, tenor saxophone, flute, piccolo, bells, tambourines, etc.; Alice Coltrane (former Alice McLeod from Detroit), piano; Jimmy Garrison, bass; and Rashied Ali, drums. There's really nothing I can say about the music. It would take a writer, or a poet more probably, who is as great a poet as Trane is a musician, to do his music any justice with' words. You know I dug it. I went to hear them 6 nights out of the 10 they were here in Detroit despite the \$2 (and \$3 on weekends) covercharge and me being among some of the poorest people I know. But...

Let me say something about the economies of going to a club like the Drome to hear some music. It is not true, fortunately (and some people used this as an excuse for not going out there) that one has to buy one drink per set at the Drome. What you do is you go in and order something you don't like (like I usually order one beer) so it'll just sit in front of you all night and you don't have to buy another drink. If you are that poor. Then if you get thirsty you can always order a glass of ice water which is free. You'll not be popular with the waitresses, but who cares about them when Trane is up there "blowing up a storm."

Other Events: On Thursday, July 7th, the Detroit Contemporary 4 played at Bakers Keyboard Lounge which was arranged by Betty Chmaj thru the owner, Sol Hartstein. The DC4 also played at the Artists' Workshop on Sunday, July 10. For economic and other reasons, the group split up this summer with Charles Moore, John Dana, and Ronald Johnson going to the west coast for a while and pianist Stanley Cowell going to New York to play with Roland Kirk. The "music scene" around the Detroit Artists' Workshop will be carried on, as it had been in the past, by such musicians as Lyman Woodard, Charles Miles, Jim Semark, Al Pitts, Doug Riggs, Byron Lyles, and Joseph Jarman from Chicago, who'll be at the Workshop thru early August. Concerts and poetry readings at the Artists' Workshop continue every Sunday evening at 7 p.m.

The most important event this summer at the Workshop will be a one-day Festival of the arts on Sunday, August 7th. Featured poets will be John Sinclair, who'll be released from prison on the 5th of August, Jerry Younkins who has just returned from a 7-months "trip" to the west coast, Victor Coleman from Toronto, and many other important poets from Detroit and other places. There will be music by the Lyman Woodard Ensemble, and a band Joseph Jarman and Jim Semark are getting together. Jerry Younkins is getting a rock 'n roll band together now which will play for a big dance/freak-out in the evening. There will also be an exhibition of photographs by many important Detroit photographers co-sponsored by the Artists' Workshop and the *Daily Collegian*. Interested photographers are invited to submit some of their work to either myself or David Welsh of the *Daily Collegian*. For more specific information of the Festival, write to the Workshop (4825-27 John Lodge) or call me (831-2594).

fifth Estate

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