

August 19, 1958

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Mr. Frederick A. Colwell
Leaders and Specialists Division
International Educational Exchange
Service,
Department of State,
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Colwell:

I was pleased to be able to talk with you this morning in regard to the forthcoming Russian trip. I am sure that during the past weeks Mr. Weise has kept you informed in regard to my feelings in this matter. No doubt you have correspondence either directly or indirectly with Watkins, Rhoden and Smith. I have talked with all of them on the phone, and I have been in contact with them through the mails. After my telephone conversation with you this morning, I called Watkins and Smith, since they had raised certain questions with me which I felt needed answering as soon as possible.

It is very evident, from all of the conversations that I have had with these three gentlemen as well as the correspondence that has changed hands between them and this office, that all of us desire to cooperate in every possible way with this program. Frankly, I haven't seen a finer spirit manifested by a group. You know what Watkins said in his letter. And Smith, after saying very much the same thing in his letter, ended up his telephone conversation this morning with the following comment: "I shall be happy to do whatever is expected of us". I know that Rhoden feels the same. Certainly the writer of this letter does. So we have the interest of the program at heart, and I think any differences of opinion relative to carrying examples of our work probably is the result of a lack of clarification rather than a real difference of opinion as it relates to the objective.

As things now stand, this is where we are.

Rhoden: You heard directly from John Rhoden, and evidently -from a letter that I had from John- you had given him instructions to plan to carry some of his own work along.

Smith: Mr. Smith has some examples of his work that he could carry along --examples that he took out as part of his State Department program several years ago. This would more than likely include examples of his watercolors and graphic arts. But he feels just as I do --that the policies should actually be determined in Washington and we should all be in more or less agreement on the best thing to do. In other words, he is willing to carry some of his own work --or not --in accordance with the wishes of the Department. As he stated it, if our government has requested us to take work and if the USSR is expecting it, then he would be more than willing to go to the trouble of assembling a group of things. He did raise the question as to insurance, etc.

Watkins: After several exchanges of letters with Watkins and at least two rather lengthy telephone conversations, it is evident that he could not represent himself in a true light by carrying examples of his work, since practically all of his major work would involve relatively large canvases which could not be transported by plane. He does not feel --and I am in complete agreement with him-- that what sketches he might have would in any way serve the purpose: in fact, they might be misleading. He will be in a position to carry some slides of his own paintings and books on American art carrying reproductions of his work.

As for myself, I am in somewhat of a dilemma. The effort of assembling a group has nothing whatsoever to do with the problem. I can arrange to take some six or eight watercolors similar to some that I took to Europe several years ago under the IES program, and I might even arrange to get a small oil or two to include in the group. Although these would not be pieces that I would be ashamed of, I do not believe that they would adequately represent my own work, much less the work of American artists. I can take with me, without any trouble whatsoever, some excellent 2X2 slides of my paintings covering, if necessary, some twenty-five years of painting; however, if it is the wish of the Department and if any commitments are to be considered, if you will let me know as soon as possible I will make arrangements to get together a few watercolors and have a metal case prepared for their shipment.

As I have pointed out to Wise before, I can take as many as 300 or 400 35mm. slides of American art, from the art of the

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American Indian to the present-day painter, sculptor and designer. These are slides that have been made up under the Carnegie program dealing with a study in American art. People who have seen examples of these slides declare them to be the finest that have ever been produced. When I showed a sampling of this collection to the Advisory Committee on the Arts, when we met in New York last spring, Bob Montgomery was so impressed that he asked to be able to place the first order for the first set for his own personal use. The point is that any of the four going abroad with this group could use these slides. I would be only too happy to make them available to the group. And as I also pointed out, we might even consider taking along a projector if you thought this advisable.

In our telephone conversation this morning, I think I am correct in saying that you said the Department there was not in a position to make a decision on this matter --that it was up to the artists themselves. You went on to mention the fact that there was no commitment to the Russians --that the Russians had suggested that the people take along copies of their work --however, no real thought had been given to this matter either by the Russians or by our own representatives. Although you said there would be no real showing of any work we might carry along, you did have a hunch that the Russians would want us to bring along some samples.

Where does this leave us? Although you have been more than gracious in saying you thought it was a matter for those of us who are going over to decide, I am going to take the opposite viewpoint and say that I think it is a matter that our State Department should decide, in view of any commitment or understandings that may be prevalent. I have pointed out above the exact positions of all four individuals. I have emphasized their interest and determination to do all they can to make this trip a complete success. I have pointed out some of the pros and cons in connection with the artists carrying examples of their work. At this point, I haven't mentioned anything about the mechanics. For example, are provisions being made for excess baggage, insurance, etc. As important as these items are, they are not major considerations; yet they must be faced.

I feel very strongly that the directives should come from those of you who have been closest to this planning during the year,

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and if it is your strong feeling that those of us who can arrange to carry some examples of our work over should do so, we should be informed at the earliest possible moment, because certainly in my case carrying cases would have to be made, and I would have to go to work immediately trying to get even a few examples to carry along.

If you could have overheard the conversations that I have had with each of these three gentlemen, I think you would be more than grateful for the splendid attitudes that they have shown. They have taken this matter very seriously. It is a very important one, as far as they are concerned, and even more important to the artists of this country as well as the artists of Russia and our cultural programs. May we ask you --those of you who are involved in this planning-- to give us a directive at this time?

Sincerely yours,



Lamar Dodd

cc: Mr. Donald Cook
Mr. Robert Weise

P.S. In view of the fact that I had been unofficially requested to contact these three gentlemen relative to this matter, I am taking the liberty of sending to them copies of this letter that I am sending you, because I have attempted to summarize their thinking as well as my own.

cc: Mr. John Rhoden ✓
Mr. William A. Smith
Mr. Franklin Watkins

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