'Octave of Prayer'

Exhibition organized by Minor White
Hayden Gallery, October 27 - November 26

A press luncheon was held in conjunction with the opening of Minor White's new photography showing 'Octave of Prayer'. At that luncheon White talked about photography and photography exhibits, and as well as humanities at MIT. Here is some of what he said:

Am I an artist? Other people call me an artist, but that's their business. I make photographs, and put together exhibits. I let others characterize my work and usually assume that they're wrong.

In the Creative Audience course at MIT, we try to teach people how to look at a photograph or painting long enough to see what it really means. It might take as long as a half hour for someone to really understand a picture. But the under-30 generation is a very visually oriented generation. I experiment in this kind of structure. Now they ask for more structure.

Communication in a museum is mostly illusion. It is impossible for the audience to understand precisely... a work can evoke feelings that are close to the original.

[Talking about feedback in the Creative photography gallery] In '68 and '69, we got good communication from students who came to the gallery; worthwhile criticism. Now in 1972, we get comments like "It's too hot in here"...

Students at MIT have changed in the last few years. When I came in 1965 it was all science and technology. During the "revolutionary period" people observed any kind of structure. Now they ask for more structure.

Veneration of me is crazy. I really enjoy teaching a beginning class where the students don't know who I am. I often forget to mention my name for a couple of weeks, and when I do it doesn't make any difference. I enjoy teaching students.

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[When asked how he puts an exhibit together] I work the concept of the show out verbally and send letters out asking for contributions. For this show 400 artists contributed some 2500 photographs... there are about 60 artists and 80 photographs in the show.

[When asked if friends or relatives ask to have their pictures taken] I have no relations and damn few friends.

Also present was Professor Wayne Anderson who contributed to what was characterized by the News Office as the "serious discussion of photography" several interesting highlights. "Painters don't call each other artists," he said, "they call each other painters... Beware of photographers who call themselves artists, they're usually mediocre." He also added: "The word 'artist' should be dropped from the language. Identification by the artist's medium is more realistic.

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