

# THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Journal of Politics and the Arts—November 24, 1973, 50 cents

## Counterattack

**Kenneth  
Evelt  
on art**

### Back to WPA

Now that abstract art is drifting toward an iconographic dead end, the once secure doctrines that sustained it are being supplanted by wildly proliferating heresies. In this late-hellenistic state of affairs, any form of action, with or without historic precedent, from wallowing in sheeps' entrails, to painting like Van Dyke, to making marks on the walls of caves with pigments ground in bison fat, may be called art. This condition may not be reassuring but it is open.

The one great contemporary visual comment on this society, Norman Daly's unprecedented creation—*The Civilization of Llhuros*—has no polemic intent, but this imaginary archeological civilization is a revelation of the obsessions and psychic condition of our times, offered in the form of an artful and seductive array of sights, words and sounds.

In the present cultural context, all such attempts to intensify and expand the iconographic range of contemporary art become radical moves against the boring limits of minimal cool and the frivolous japes of Warholian fun and games. While I hope we will be spared the pious pronouncements and heavy visual exhortations of the WPA, a revived interest in the social force of art could now lead to a strong new manifestation of the age-old exchange between art and life.

**Back to WPA—*Kenneth Evelt***