

**Position Paper #1 on Revolutionary Art
By Emory Douglas, Minister of Culture
1968 (adapted from)**

"Revolutionary Art does not demand any more sacrifice from the revolutionary artist than what is demanded from a traitor (Negro) who draws for the oppressor. Therefore, the creation of revolutionary art is not a tragedy, but an honor and duty that will never be refused." Emory

Revolutionary art begins with the program that Huey P. Newton instituted with the BLACK PANTHER PARTY. REBOLUTIONARY ART, like the Party, is for the whole community and its total problems. It gives the people the correct picture of our struggle, whereas the Revolutionary Ideology gives the people the correct political understanding of our struggle. Before a correct visual interpretation of the struggle can be given, we must recognize that Revolutionary Art is an art that flows from the people. It must be a whole and living part of the people's lives, their daily struggle to survive. To draw about revolutionary things, we must shoot and/or be ready to shoot when the time comes. In order to draw about the people who are shooting, we must capture the true revolution in a pictorial fashion. We must feel what the people feel who throw rocks and bottles at the oppressor so that when we draw about it - we can raise their level of consciousness to hand-grenades and dynamite to be launched at the oppressor. Revolutionary Art gives a physical confrontation with tyrants, and also enlightens the people to continue their vigorous attack by educating the masses through participation and observation.

Through the Revolutionary Artist's observations of the people, we can picture the territory on which we live (as slaves): project maximum damage to the oppressor with minimum damage to the people, and come out victorious.

The Revolutionary Artist's talents are just one of the weapons he uses in the struggle for Black People. His art becomes a tool for liberation. Revolutionary Art can thereby progress as the people progresses because the People are the backbone to the Artist and not the Artist to the People.

To conceive any type of visual interpretations of the struggle, the Revolutionary Artist must constantly be agitating the people, but before one agitates the people as the struggle progresses one must make strong roots among the masses of the people. Then and only then can a Revolutionary Artist renew the visual interpretation of Revolutionary Art indefinitely until liberation. By making these strong roots among the masses of the Black People, the Revolutionary Artist rises above the confusion that the oppressor has brought on the colonized people, because all of us (as slaves) from the Christian to the brother on the block, the college student and the high school drop out, the street walker and the secretary, the pimp and the preacher, the domestic and the gangster: all the elements of the ghetto can understand Revolutionary Art.

The ghetto itself is the gallery for the Revolutionary Artist's drawings. His work is pasted on the walls of the ghetto; in storefront windows, fences, doorways, telephone poles and

booths, passing buses, alleyways, gas stations, barber shops, beauty parlors, laundromats, liquor stores, as well as the huts of the ghetto.

This way the Revolutionary Artist educates the people as they go through their daily routine, from day to day, week to week, and month to month. This way the Revolutionary Artist cuts through the smokescreens of the oppressor and creates brand new images of Revolutionary action - for the total community.

Revolutionary Art is an extension and interpretation to the masses in the most simple and obvious form. Without being a revolutionary and committed to the struggle for liberation, the artist could not express revolution at all. Revolutionary Art is learned in the ghetto from the pig cops on the beat, demagogue politicians and avaricious businessmen. Not in the schools of fine art. The Revolutionary Artist hears the people's screams when they are being attacked by the pigs. They share their curses when they feel like killing the pigs, but are unequipped. He watches and hears the sounds of foot steps of Black People trampling the ghetto streets and translates them into pictures of slow revolts against the slave masters, stomping them in their brains with bullets, that we can have power and freedom to determine the destiny of our community and help to build "our world."

Revolutionary Art is a returning from the blind, whereas we no longer let the oppressor lead us around like watchdogs.