# Crime Stories

This series of comic-book spreads tells a collection of true stories gathered from the New York art scene in the 1990s. The work analyzes the mutability of value of a commodity—art—that moves through a commercial system where the scales of use-value that characterize other commodities do not apply. An artwork's ambiguous use-value leaves it open to unstructured speculation as it moves from the studio to the gallery to the collection. These ambiguous zones of the market make up the terrain of the *Crime Stories*.

Documentation: *Assistance, Competition, The Critic, The Gallery, Benefits*

**Crime Stories**

Terence Gower, 1996

Eight photomechanical transfers on PMT paper in cloth-bound portfolio

45 x 60 cm each

Printed by Matthew Engers, Brooklyn

**Assistance**

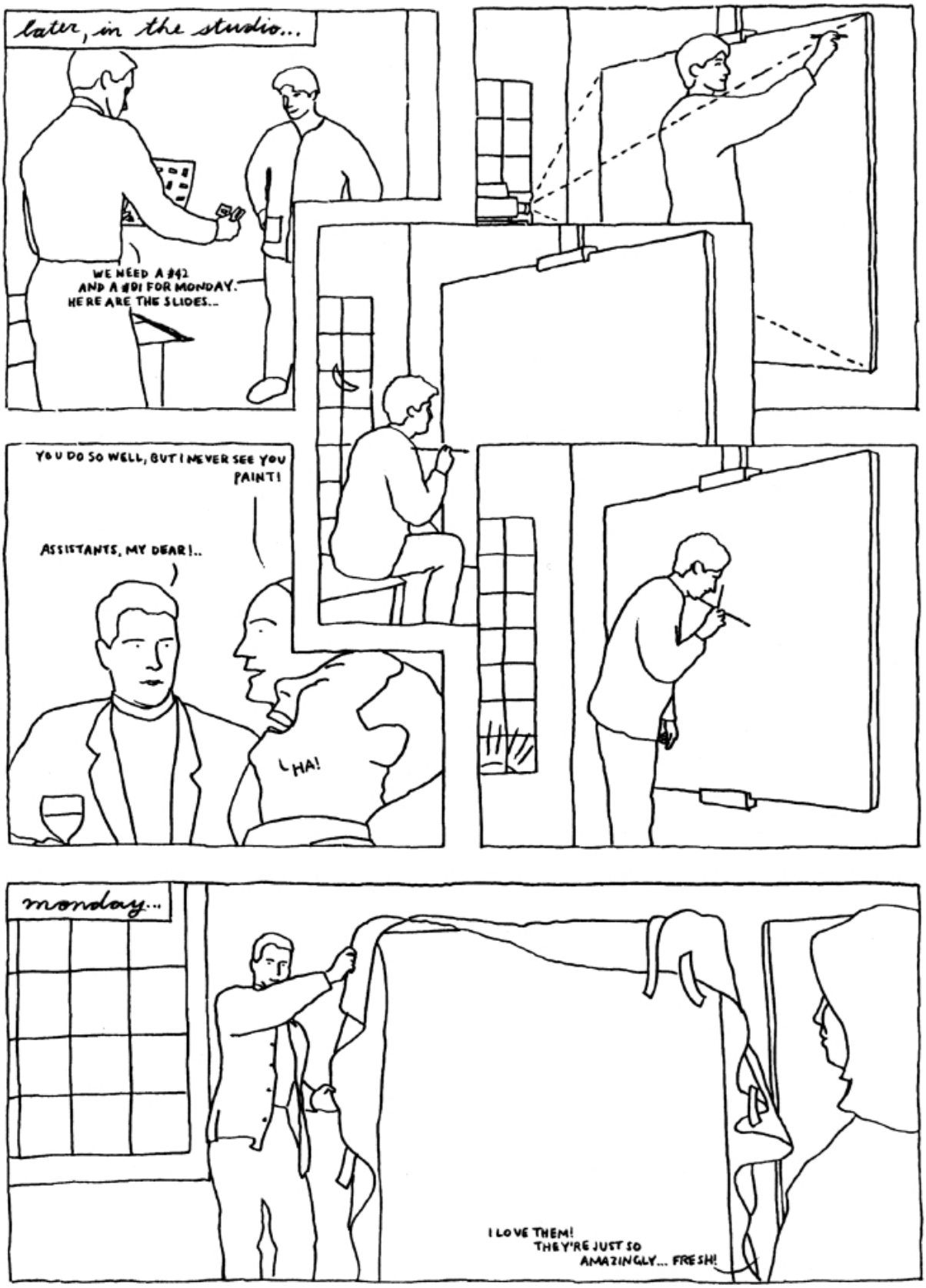
Terence Gower, 1996

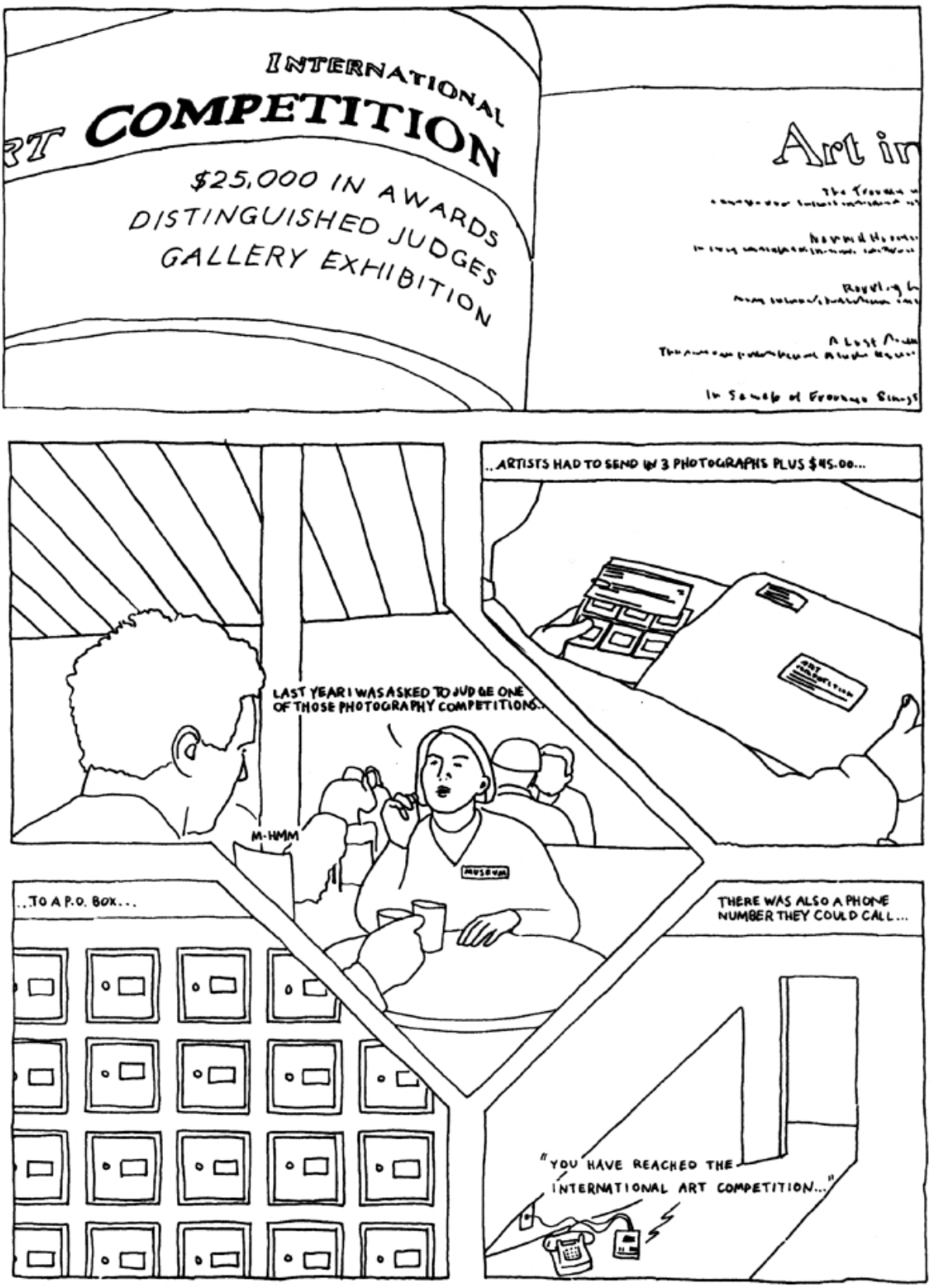
Adhesive vinyl

7 x 6 M overall

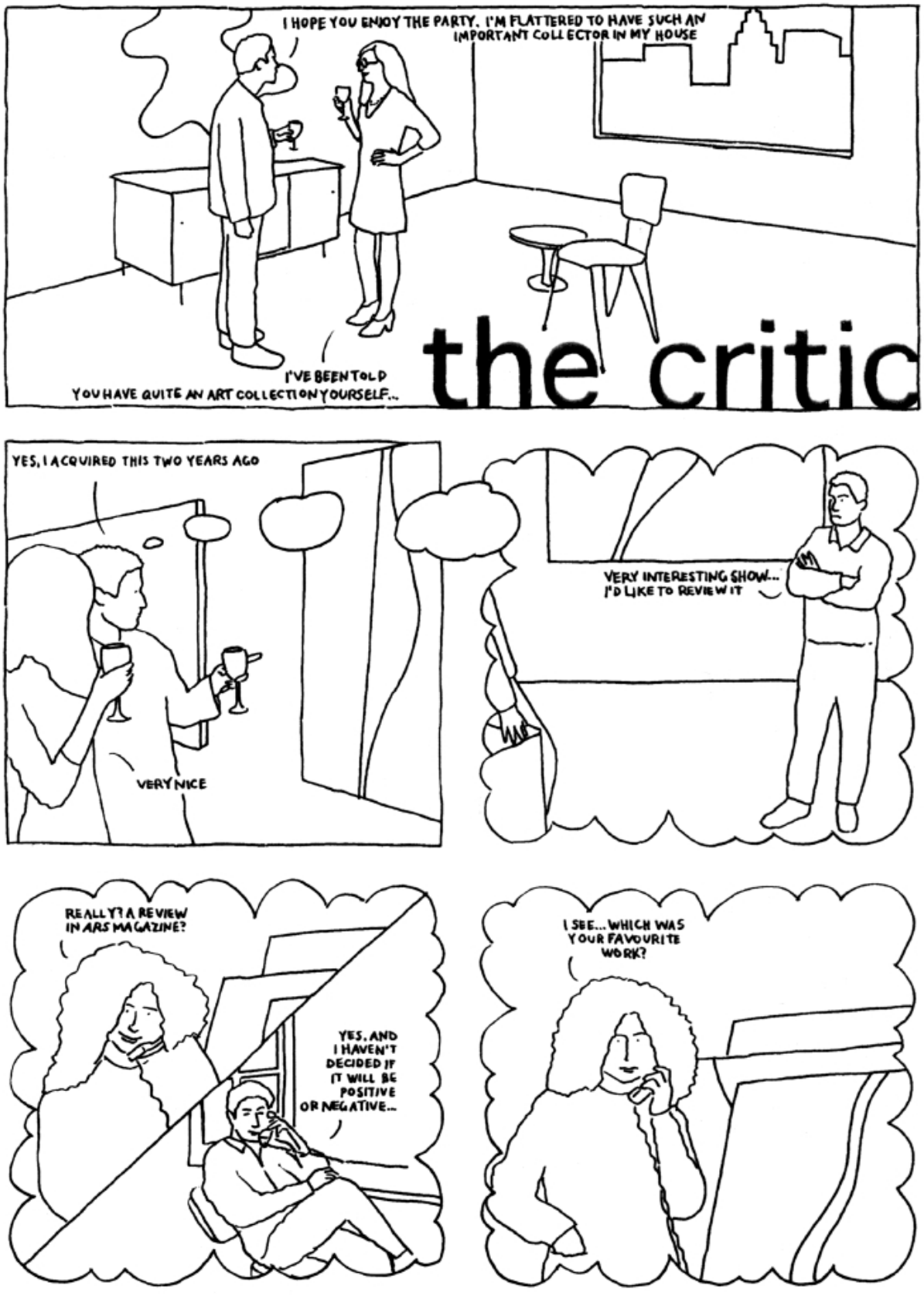
Installation at Silverstein Gallery, New York

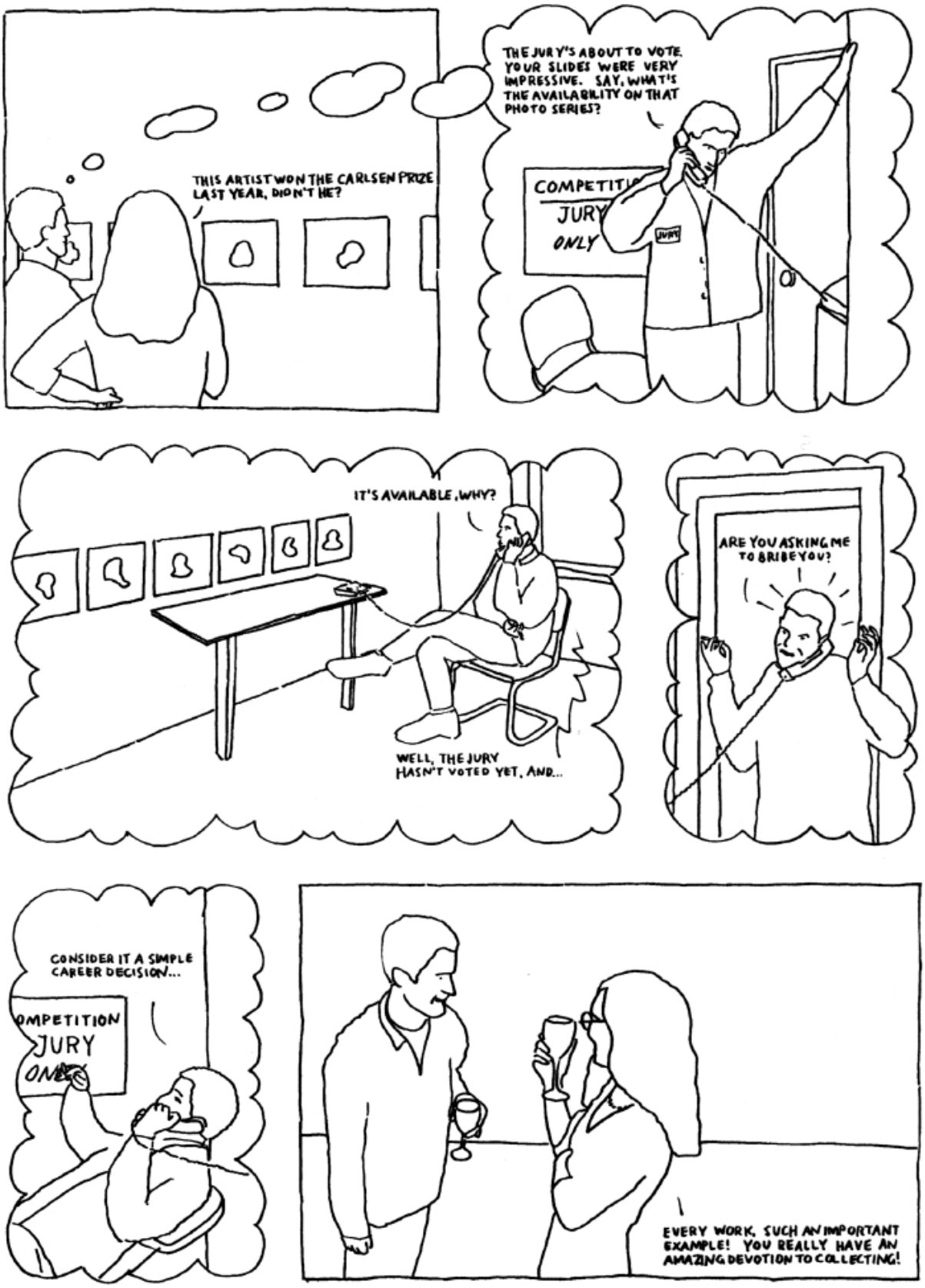
ASSISTANCE
ARE YOU AN ARTIST?
CAN I LOOK?
YES, OF COURSE...
...
VERY INTERESTING... TELL ME, HAVE THESE TWO BEEN SOLD?
UM, ER... AS A MATTER OF FACT, NO!
WONDERFUL! THESE WILL LOOK GREAT IN MY NEW OFFICE!
ARRIVALS
SEE YOU AT YOUR STUDIO, MONDAY

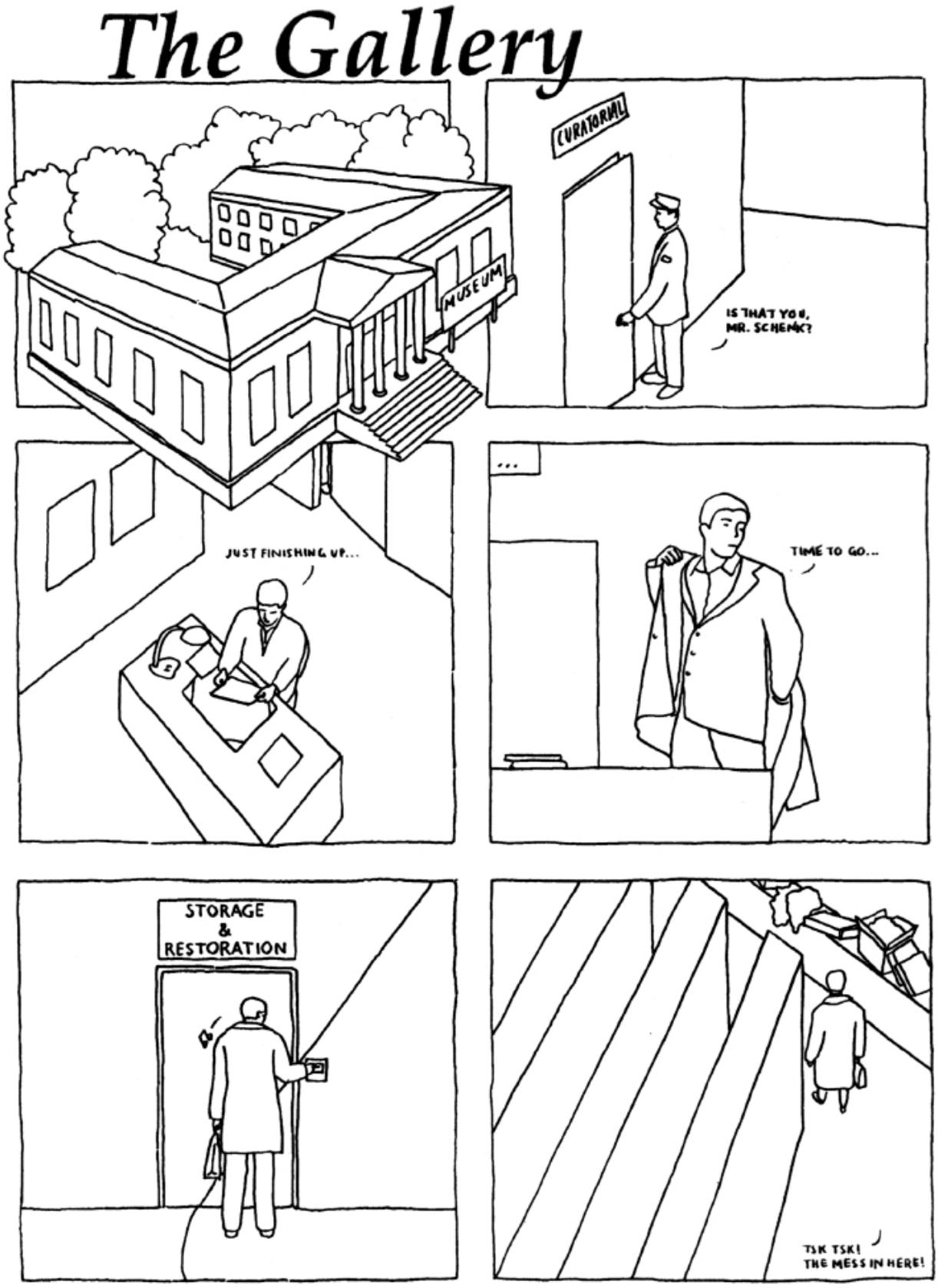

later, in the studio...
WE NEED A #42 AND A #81 FOR MONDAY. HERE ARE THE SLIDES...
YOU DO SO WELL, BUT I NEVER SEE YOU PAINT!
ASSISTANTS, MY DEAR!..
HA!
monday...
I LOVE THEM! THEY'RE JUST SO AMAZINGLY... FRESH!


INTERNATIONAL
COMPETITION
$25,000 IN AWARDS
DISTINGUISHED JUDGES
GALLERY EXHIBITION
Art in
..ARTISTS HAD TO SEND IN 3 PHOTOGRAPHS PLUS $45.00...
LAST YEAR I WAS ASKED TO JUDGE ONE OF THOSE PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITIONS...
M-HMM
MUSEUM
..TO A P.O. BOX...
THERE WAS ALSO A PHONE NUMBER THEY COULD CALL...
"YOU HAVE REACHED THE INTERNATIONAL ART COMPETITION..."

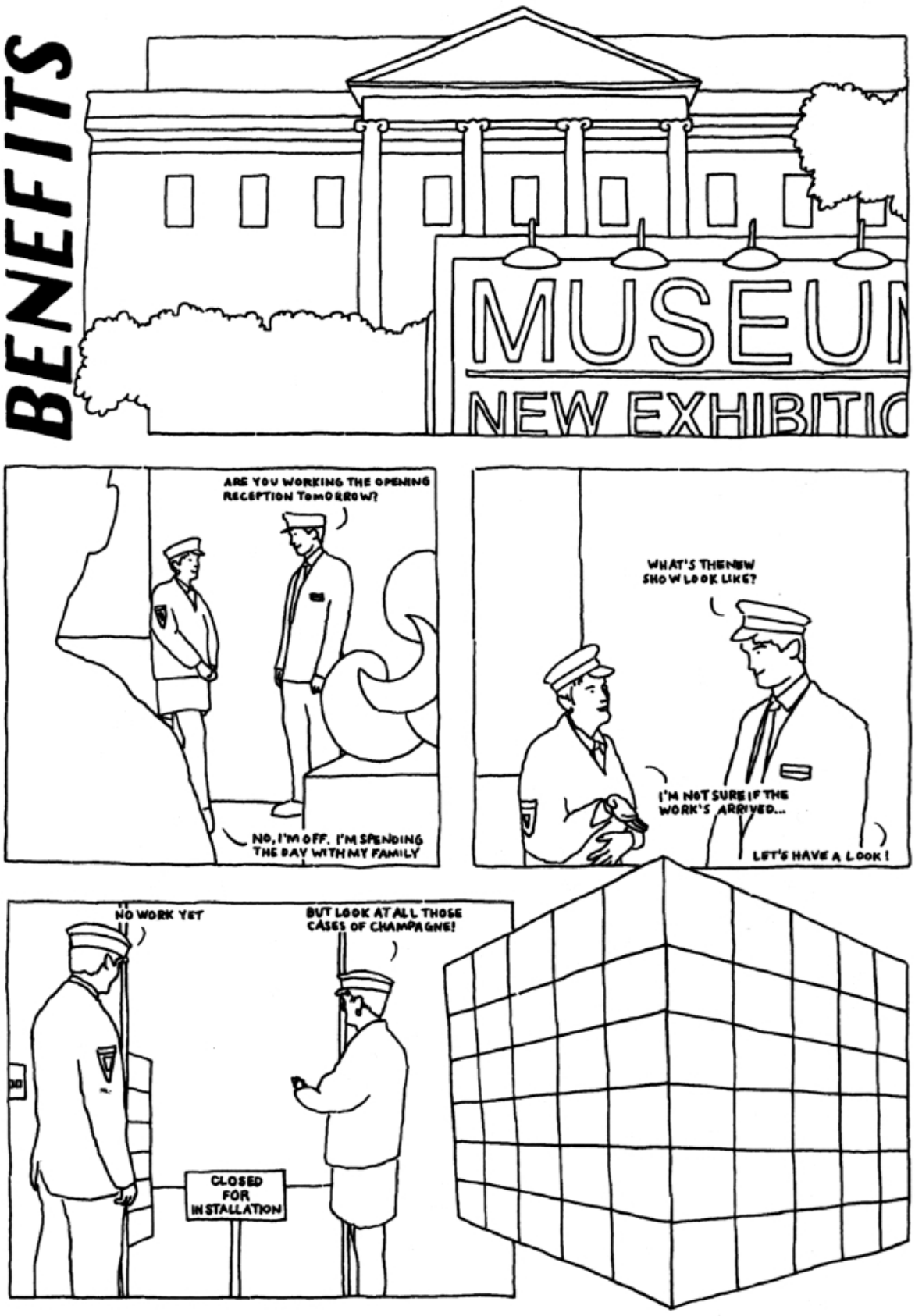
I GOT PAID FOR JUDGING THE COMPETITION...
...BUT APPARENTLY PRIZES WERE NEVER AWARDED AND THE SHOW NEVER WENT UP...
..IN FACT, THE GALLERY WAS NON-EXISTENT...
$45.00 X 3000 ARTISTS... WHEW!
"THE NUMBER YOU HAVE CALLED HAS BEEN DISCONNECTED..."
meanwhile, in the nation's capital...
IT IS WONDERFUL TO SEE THE PROLIFERATION OF PRIVATE ART COMPETITIONS IN RECENT YEARS. THE PRIVATE SECTOR HAS AT LAST STARTED TO TAKE ON SOME OF THE BURDEN AS A GRANTING BODY. THIS IS TRULY IN THE SPIRIT OF COMPETITION!
ARTS CONVENTION
HON. JOHN REED

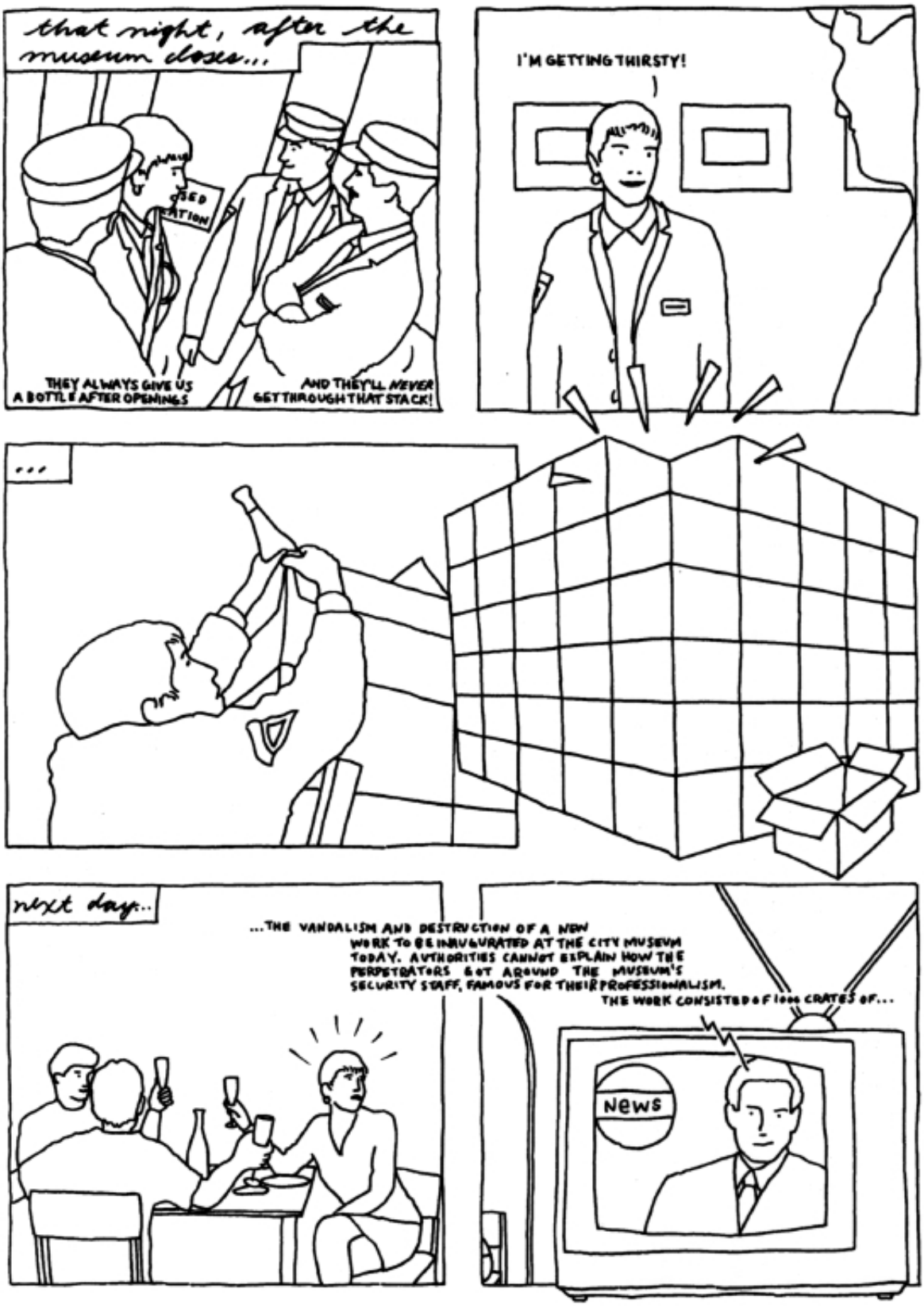

I HOPE YOU ENJOY THE PARTY. I'M FLATTERED TO HAVE SUCH AN IMPORTANT COLLECTOR IN MY HOUSE
I'VE BEEN TOLD YOU HAVE QUITE AN ART COLLECTION YOURSELF...
the critic
YES, I ACQUIRED THIS TWO YEARS AGO
VERY NICE
VERY INTERESTING SHOW... I'D LIKE TO REVIEW IT
REALLY? A REVIEW IN ARS MAGAZINE?
YES, AND I HAVEN'T DECIDED IF IT WILL BE POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE...
I SEE... WHICH WAS YOUR FAVOURITE WORK?


THIS ARTIST WON THE CARLSEN PRIZE LAST YEAR, DIDN'T HE?
THE JURY'S ABOUT TO VOTE. YOUR SLIDES WERE VERY IMPRESSIVE. SAY, WHAT'S THE AVAILABILITY ON THAT PHOTO SERIES?
COMPETITION
JURY ONLY
JURY
IT'S AVAILABLE, WHY?
WELL, THE JURY HASN'T VOTED YET, AND...
ARE YOU ASKING ME TO BRIBE YOU?
CONSIDER IT A SIMPLE CAREER DECISION...
OMPETITION
JURY
ONLY
EVERY WORK, SUCH AN IMPORTANT EXAMPLE! YOU REALLY HAVE AN AMAZING DEVOTION TO COLLECTING!


The Gallery
MUSEUM
CURATORIAL
IS THAT YOU, MR. SCHENK?
JUST FINISHING UP...
...
TIME TO GO...
STORAGE & RESTORATION
TSK TSK! THE MESS IN HERE!

BUDGET CUTS!
WELL, THINGS JUST GET MISPLACED SOMETIMES...
ZPP!
later, in another city
ART INSTITUTE
IT IS SUCH A PLEASURE TO SEE YOU AGAIN, MR. SCHENK!
YES, I THINK I HAVE SOMETHING THAT MIGHT PLEASE YOU
SCHENK GALLER
.. IN HONOUR OF ONE OF OUR MOST IMPORTANT BENEFACTORS, I WOULD LIKE TO PRONOUNCE THE SCHENK GALLERY OFFICIALLY OPEN!
ART INSTITUTE


BENEFITS
MUSEUM
NEW EXHIBITIO
ARE YOU WORKING THE OPENING RECEPTION TOMORROW?
NO, I'M OFF. I'M SPENDING THE DAY WITH MY FAMILY
WHAT'S THE NEW SHOW LOOK LIKE?
I'M NOT SURE IF THE WORK'S ARRIVED...
LET'S HAVE A LOOK!
NO WORK YET
BUT LOOK AT ALL THOSE CASES OF CHAMPAGNE!
CLOSED FOR INSTALLATION


that night, after the museum closes...
THEY ALWAYS GIVE US A BOTTLE AFTER OPENINGS
AND THEY'LL NEVER GET THROUGH THAT STACK!
I'M GETTING THIRSTY!
...
next day...
...THE VANDALISM AND DESTRUCTION OF A NEW WORK TO BE INAUGURATED AT THE CITY MUSEUM TODAY. AUTHORITIES CANNOT EXPLAIN HOW THE PERPETRATORS GOT AROUND THE MUSEUM'S SECURITY STAFF, FAMOUS FOR THEIR PROFESSIONALISM.
THE WORK CONSISTED OF 1000 CRATES OF...
news