

ARTISTS' BOOKS

REVIEWS

Visual Letters by Helmut Löhr (Berlin, Verlag Galerie Horst Dietrich, 1990) is a memorial to his friends and all those who have died from AIDS. The book with black cover has heads in brilliant red silkscreen on one side of the page, and torn text pages in Löhr's inimitable style on the opposite. Directions to use the book as if it were on the desk, as a framed picture of a lover, friend or family member which stands on top of the desk with empty writing paper in front of it. The book serves as a stimulus for much thought, for deep thoughts of your own friends who have left, for all the words you forgot to say when they were alive, for the crisis in which we find ourselves where Cancer and AIDS seem to be assailing a whole universal society.

This exquisite, spiral-bound volume comes in a deluxe volume with an original mask plus a signed print for \$400, and the regular edition comes with an extra signed print for \$120. Both can be ordered from Tony Zwicker, 15 Gramercy Park, New York, NY 10003. Additional charges for shipping.

Echo Project by Vaughan Rachel, an album of photographs and oral interview excerpts from the high-tech world of the hearing impaired, is a highly moving, intensely emotional view of those whose hearing is either completely gone or impaired. Equipped with lip-reading, diverse techniques to listen or hear faintly, or become part of a conversation by gesture or intuition, the hard-of-hearing have been subjugated to a myriad of telephone amplifiers or assistive listening devices. All of these are here, but much more. Since the artist is also hearing-impaired, she has a special task and a special experience to share with her reader/viewers.

According to statistics, it takes the average person 7 years to admit that he or she needs hearing aids. The first five years they're developing the problem, and the next two are spent on deciding what to do. Vaughan Rachel has finally come out of the closet by doing this project, allowing those who meet her now to realize she has a hearing impairment. She interviewed 10 hearing impaired men and women, among whom are volunteers, salespeople, nurses, doctors, inventors, students, entrepreneurs, administrators, writers, homemakers and community activists. Besides all wearing listening devices, many are lipreaders and some use sign language. This is a poignant book, created by copy art, one which carries a message which touches all of us, not only those that are hearing-impaired. Just think about how little we do for the hard of hearing in everyday life. Just think of all the kindnesses we can render if we only took the time. A bit more love of our fellow man and woman, a bit more consideration would make their lives so much more meaningful. \$10.00 from Vaughan Rachel, 1225 Linda Rosa Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90041. Her other titles are also available as a package of 4 for \$35.00. Add 8.25% California Sales Tax, and \$1.00 per book postage and handling.

Carol Barbour has published two books, each different from each other, each with text, drawings, photos, paintings by the artist:

The Wind People has a printed, glossy cover, which opens to an inventive bookwork created on the copy machine. Words, color laser prints, drawings, and overlays combine into a novella in which a group of people, in the midst of a climactic upheaval, take leave of their ordered lives and join in the study of the wind. Included is an actress turned activist, a clinician with a secret passion for poetry, clammy administrators with dubious connections, a housewife gone for investigative journalism and much more. We see a society creating new solutions to the environment, to natural phenomena, to sly commentaries about our own society through the eyes of the Fluvialists and the Ventusitums. A brilliant solution to publishing!

Signed and numbered. \$28.00 (Canadian) plus \$2.00 shipping.

Slips of Nature is a 48-page poetry volume with 13 color plates and line drawings. Handbound with a fabric spine which simulates seeds on grass using small pearls, each book is original in the color, paper and fabric used on the cover. There are pale green parchment paper signatures and rice paper end papers.

Included are poems, fragments and quotations based on such themes as fertility, landscape, garden versus wilderness. Drawing on Emerson's *Nature*, the author has taken cuttings from life and grafted the image to the text. \$28.00 (Canadian) plus \$2.00 shipping. The illustrations are shaped, fitting into drawing frames, creating an artistic environment for the words.

Write to Carol E. Barbour, 902 Eastern Ave., Toronto, Ont., Canada M4L 1A4. These are traditionally conceived, but contemporarily treated bookworks. They bridge poetry and art, combining text and image in an aesthetically remarkable way.

Seed Library by George Gessert reflects a few aspects of our relationships with plants, especially ornamental plants. Ornamental plants become to this artist living beings, emblems of wild nature, as genetically encoded expressions of interactions between plants and people, as commodities, as living kitsch, as living art.

In April 1990, 59 pots of iris hybrids were placed in the open-air courtyard of the University of Oregon Museum of Art. As plants bloomed, selections were made. Plants with conspicuous veining, straight stems, and plain, unruffled petals were hand pollinated. Plants without these characteristics were labelled with wooden stakes marked X, and were given away, sold, or destroyed. Since insect pollinators were largely absent from the courtyard, no plants produced seeds without hand pollination.

Each "page" of this Seed Library is a packet of seeds, five packets plus two inserts, all contained in a larger envelope. Full-color offset and seeds of Pacific Coast native irises, marigolds, milkweeds, hollyhocks, and other plants are included. This "standard edition" is 460.

The deluxe edition of 25 includes everything in the standard edition, plus a handmade packet (Morning glory", and specially selected seeds from irises exhibited in the courtyard of the University of Oregon Museum of Art in 1990. The outside envelope is made of Linorg paper, a French handmade paper made from oatstraw and linen.

Acknowledgements for this "collaborative project" go as far as the plants that were grown, documented, hybridized, and exhibited. Anyone who grows these seeds extends and completes the project. A remarkable ecological contribution to a new phase in bookworks. \$22.00 standard edition, \$60.00 deluxe. Both editions signed by the artist, who recognizes the assistance of book artists David Stairs, Violet Ray, Diane Tarter, Shuang Li, Sandy Tilcock, and Sandra Lopez.

Do-it-yourself Wood Condom Kit by Norman Conquest is a new release from Beuyscout Editions. Limited to 1,000 examples, signed and numbered by the artist, the kit includes wood, dead hare skin and fur, a Scout decal, rubber band, toothpick, button, and instruction card. The warning label announces that this kit contains Artistic Expression which may be objectionable to certain politicians and pressure groups. The kit is signed and numbered by the artist, with 26 examples lettered A-Z having color labels, in a special ribbed condom kit. \$20.00 for the standard kit, and \$45 for the special ribbed kit.

Generic Protest Kit is the latest Scout multiple, containing generic protest button, generic impeachment postcard, and a generic petition. In this election year, this is the perfect antidote for "none of the abovers". It is also noted that the anti-censorship collective known as the Beuyscouts of Amerika has been very active lately since danger looms on the horizon. April 27 has been designated as a March on Washington to "Impeach Him Now." \$10.

Both of the above can be ordered from Beuyscouts of Amerika, 300 East 40th St., New York, NY 10016 or can be ordered from Printed Matter. For all titles in the series, order the complete catalog for \$1.00 from the above address.

Official Beuyscout Brand Felt Condom, manufactured by hand and tested in the field, guaranteed to last a lifetime, featuring **Beuys compatibility, Rugged construction, Color-coordinated, Open-ended base, Hidden-head buffer** (guarding against "headaches". Limited to 100 examples, signed and numbered by Norman Conquest. \$12 from Printed Matter.

Correction, please: Franc Palaia's **The Berlin Wall Coloring Book**, in the signed edition, has an accordion binding with 15 images on recycled card stock. Being a "Connect the Dots" fun activity book as well as a historical document, this coloring book will accept oil and waterbased crayons, colored pencils, watercolors, and waterbased markers.

The book can also stand along and become the Berlin Wall, as a 10-foot sculptural book. Available from Printed Matter, New York; The Print Club, Philadelphia; Jersey City Museum, New Jersey; Artists Book Works, Chicago; Bookworks in Washington, DC and many other places.

The Three Little Ones by Josefa Vaughan is the artist's first book, which she began developing late in 1988 from ideas she had about using texts as integral parts of images. By appropriating images, she has allowed the words to do

more than narrate. Conceived as a tiny memoir, the booklet serves as the self-referential aspect, the **Cries** of a body of work, all paintings, exhibited under the title, "Kinder Signs, Cries, and Incentives."

By layering template forms cut out of colored plumbing tape applied to construction paper, Vaughan made the original mock-up. From this, camera ready copy was created by Julian Teal Graphic Design Studio which Oak Creek Press used in a three-color offset process to print all the pages except for the handmade centerfolds. The images for the centerfolds are linoleum cuts (transposed children's drawings) which she printed using rubberstamp components for the text.

A major portion of this pocket-sized book consists of two simply composed and slightly cliched sentences which bookend two other sentences appropriated from her personal letter files. The "narrative" comes from certain obsessive thoughts she had concerning her siblings and their childhood. She has attempted to distill frustrated recollections and relationships into storymaking composed of unresolved conflict within a wholesome continuum.

The edition is 500, signed and numbered. One half of the edition has centerfolds whose composition required four hand passes, while the other half's "underbelly" (though the design is more complex) required only three hand passes. Each of these original prints has unique qualities due to variations of color combinations or image/text placement.

The booklet is available from DiverseWorks, 1117 East Freeway, Houston, TX 77002.

32 Justifications for War by David Thorne, originally produced as part of an installation for **Art Against the War** held in San Francisco, is an offset edition of 32 pages, black and white in a black sleeve, published by ReDress Press in San Francisco, 1992. On each page is a boxed statement from official statements, DOD dispatches, speeches, press conferences, while the lower statements boxed in black are by the artist. On each page in the center are cropped images from the New York Times, Time and Newsweek, which with memory one can recognize. The pain of the senseless Gulf War is easily recalled. \$7.00 plus \$1.50 handling from David Thorne, 367 Lombard St., San Francisco, CA 94133.

Jump Hope by George Myers Jr. and Dennison W. Griffith (Dublin, OH, Cumberland, 1992, \$10) is written in the form of a woman's diary, recording the dissolution of a relationship, and the narrator and husband's mutual inability to stand up in behalf of a fourth party who appears near the narrative's end.

The diary keeper, a painter, is afraid to lose control; her husband, a beekeeper, is fascinated by control. In the conceit of the book, Griffith's 12 paintings are the woman's creations. Beyond the marriage problem, **Jump Hope** really deals with the creative process, the nature of collaboration, and the difficult balancing act that must occur between individual and society for both to thrive. This work, much like the *Exquisite Corpse*, was conceived as a "call and response".

Oftentimes, Myers uses quotes from other authors, or creates his own alphabet. His eclectic readings incorporate into the diarist's meanderings. The paintings seem to coalesce so very well with the texts--they are haunting. Maybe this book is to be read from beginning to end, but you

can read it anywhere and it is fascinating. I like the short sentences, the deep thoughts, the yearning for love, the fear of not being loved, the reader's mind penetrating each paragraph, let alone each sentence. This is a wonderful book--read it from back to front, if you like. That is all right. Order from 7652 Sawmill Rd., Suite 194, Dublin, OH 43017.

Spatial Geometries by Karen Wirth is a twenty-four page accordion with two die-cut reverse fold windows. A beautiful theme of a Mayan creation myth, in which the Sun pokes out the eye of the Moon to make her less bright, **Spatial Geometries** correlates this story to space exploration and lunar probes of celestial bodies, and earthy issues of gender relationships. The book is bordered with names of Greek goddesses, gods and goddesses of other cultures. Interspersed are 20th century spatial phenomena such as the walk on the moon, astronomy, eclipses. A book that is playful and pithy, mythical and magic. Published under a grant from the Visual Studies Workshop. \$20.00 plus \$2.00 postage and handling to Karen Wirth, c/o MCBA, 24 N. 3rd St., Minneapolis, MN 55401.

Ai: Japan Through John Lennon's Eyes, A Personal Sketchbook by John Lennon, with foreword by Yoko Ono (San Francisco, Cadence Books, \$21.95) is a most personal view of Japan by a major musician, who also loved Japan. As a result, he used an exercise notebook full of playful line drawings he sketched while he was learning the language.

There is a marvelous touch to this book, set in a landscape mode, i.e., horizontal, seemingly approximating the original sketchbook. This is a primer not only in how John Lennon studied the Japanese language, but how he used humor and quiet satire in approaching the language of his wife and a culture which he appreciated. Each word is in kanji, transliterated in English and then translated into English on the left side. On the right side is a sketch done by Lennon to illustrate, comment upon, or gently rib his lifestyle or other cultural asides.

Divided into sections, the book has photographs which mark the changes in chapters. Myself, To Japan, Everyday Life, etc. The book "feels" right--it is comfortable in the hand, deliciously printed, and a tribute to fine bookmaking. This is a book which you want to treasure for yourself, and buy one as a gift to someone who would "know" why you gave it to him or her.

Published by a new house, Cadence Books, located in San Francisco, a subsidiary of Shogakukan Inc. For more information, Publishers Group West will be distributing this book.

Give Me They Hands by Graham Willoughby is a self-published bookwork, with poem from Philip Glass' opera, *Ikharton*. The book, in an edition of 50, includes computerized text which plays on the configuration of letters to spell God Aids Kills. Superimposed on these pages is a unique set of photographic collages in color. This bookwork is available from the artist at 41 Beaufort Rd., Croydon, Vic. 3136, Australia. \$70 (Australian) plus postage.

Art History Lesson by Ann Fessler (Atlanta, Nexus Press, 1992, \$15.00) has had several lives. First inserted into *American Art*, the journal of the National Museum of

American Art, it went to mostly art historians and members of the Smithsonian. With tongue in cheek, its message reached just the right audience, not an artist's book audience. Then a big overrun of the book was done casebound to simulate H.W. Janson's *History of Art*. This is the version reviewed here.

With a text about the highest aim of painting, the illustrations are the "Rape of the Sabine Women" by Poussin. All of this being required reading in Art History 101, 102, and 103. Right? Brilliantly done by this photographer/book-maker, the deception is complete. A brilliant package for a brilliant message! Order from Printed Matter or your local artists' bookshop.

In the Event Anyone Disappears by Bisa Washington (Rochester, Visual Studies Workshop, 1991, \$7.00) is an Artists Against Apartheid Project which uses poetry and collage to communicate Anti-apartheid messages. In 16 pages, Bisa Washington moves the reader through devastating crimes perpetrated in South Africa with drawings and words. The end papers have pictographic symbols, and the message does get across! Available from Printed Matter or BIKa Studio, P.O. Box 20297, Newark, NJ 07101.

Arbeiten by Hans-Peter Feldman (Dusseldorf, Kunstverein Region Heinsberg, 1991, \$20) is a compilation of recent work by the artist, whose books in the 1970s could be purchased for 50 cents to \$1.00 and sometimes an occasional \$5.00. Now he is an established artist, and he begins in this artist's book/catalog with book titles from 1989, time series from 1975, writing on cars 1991, photoseries (1974), a painting series of washing machines, and lots more. Many of the color plates are laser prints tipped in. A very nice book.

The Expressionist Bestiary by Jacques Benoit (London, 1990, \$26) is a bilingual illustrated anthology of popular expressions for the keen user of French and English. Illustrated with 55 papercuts by the artist, which are delightful, uproariously funny, and skillfully done. This little volume, so comfortable in the hand, would make a wonderful gift for anyone, let alone French-speaking or English-speaking readers.

7 Day Kathmandu by David Blamey is a book that has a distinctive smell, not of an Anglo-Saxon country but of somewhere else, and in fact it was printed in Nepal. We get a list of misspelled titles of current movies and a time schedule which either indicates a marathon 7-day movie going or a programming of videotapes on a VCR. The postcard in the back indicates a TV monitor in a bar, which may mean that this 7-day marathon was in fact the programming for the videotapes shown for the seven-day period. \$20.00

Identity (Dissection of a Specimen) by Athena Tacha (Oberlin, OH, 1990-91, \$5) is a continuing autobiographical series begun in the 1970s by this artist, who used to do it on a typewriter, but now does it on a computer. The small vertical accordion-folded booklet, housed in a small plastic envelope, is a part of the autobiography by this well-known art historian turned artist of Greek ancestry. The artist discusses gender identification, body characteristics, the face,

clothes, profession, cultural environment, etc. The intelligence of this discussion reflects the added wisdom of thought of this most perceptive artist. How good to see this series continue!

Durov & His Performing Animals by Colin Sackett (London, White Lies Publications, 1985, \$4) designed by the late Steven Wheatley, is a bilingual (Russian-English) booklet in which the performing animals are photographed, while a statement in both languages asks for opinions of those who wish to send them into Moscow.

A Matter of Conscience: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War (Andover, MA, Addison Gallery of American Art, 1991, \$18) with photographs by William Short and oral histories by Willa Seidenberg and William Short is a poignant photographic essay with portraits of the subjects as they appear with their discharge papers and photographs from the front, or photographs as they appeared then, or some memorabilia in their hands, for the most part. These are conscientious objectors, court-martialed soldiers, some are authors of books about their experiences, most look bitter. These 58 interviews taken over a five-year period represent only a fraction of the stories of GI resistance which have sadly been avoided in the Hollywood films, books, and television documentaries which revisited the war and its aftermath from 1982 on. This book, then, serves to fill that gap.

This artist book is published on the occasion of the Addison Gallery exhibition of the same name. This is a powerful book, one which will get under your skin and make you think about those who write histories and those who do not. The black and white duotones in large size are powerful.

Evidence of Attendants by M.J. Connors is a collection of objects individual documented and interpreted as debris left by angels on their visits to mortals. Along with the documentation are definitions of different types of angels--seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominations, virtues, powers, principalities, archangels and angels. The objects were collected in a one-block section of a south Philadelphia neighborhood where, Connors says, "Catholicism and the mob rule."

The images are housed within the ten pockets that comprise the pages of the book (which are sewn into a concertina binding). Each pocket has a tab so that the reader can pull the image out and examine it. The images were Xeroxed and the book offset printed. The book comes in a translucent thumb-cut envelope. Ed. of 95. \$95.00 from Women's Studio Workshop or from Printed Matter.

Forest Echoes by Mary Ellen Long is a self-published documentation of site installations involving the forest landscape south of Missionary Ridge in the San Juan Mountains of Colorado, where she resides. These sculptural interventions create forms that speak of the slow process of nature--of growth, of decay and of rebirth on the land. The black and white photographs, some long views and others which are close-ups give us insight into a sensitive artist who has felt the spirit of the place and sensed the need to concentrate on becoming one with the land.

Ed. of 1000, available for \$20.00 from Mary Ellen Long, 768 Clearview Rd., Durango, CO 81301.

AUDIOVISUAL BOOKWORK

George Walker has done it again. Not only has he presented his book with a wonderful video that incorporates movement (turning the pages), music (a CD), and visual art. This boxed edition of 50 is a visual and soundscape including pictograms, color and sounds in woodcuts and linocuts with letterpress. There is a new alphabet created from Egyptian and Greek images, along with movement and sound. The compact disk (ed. 300) with a full-color cover includes tone scales of the planets, created by Nicholas Sterling and George Walker, simulating the universe as a choir of pandemonium.

The name of book, **Acrophony**, certainly introduces the reader/listener to the audiovisual experience which is yet to come. What is most interesting is that the funding for the project was provided by the Ontario Arts Council's Dance Office, explaining it was not visual art because it had music, and it was not music because it had visual art, so the Dance Office funded it. Right? Right! \$265 Canadian for the total book with CD, and \$15 Canadian just for the CD. For more information, write to George A. Walker, 73 Berkshire Ave., Toronto, Ont. M4M 2Z6.

POSTER ESSAYS

Public Opinions/Public Secrets is a series of essays brilliantly printed on posters with images. Included are **You thought you were home free**, featuring George Washington; **For a long time you didn't think twice**, featuring George Bush; **One trick for getting away with murder**, featuring Norman Schwarzkopf and others. These five 16 x 23" offset posters, black and white and red with silver and gold texts and images are by David Thorne, from the project "Men in the News", printed 1991 by ReDress Press, 367 Lombard St., San Francisco, CA 94133. Available also at Printed Matter.

PORTMANTEAU PRESS SERIES

Portmanteau Press, located in New York City, has begun a new series bringing together writers and artists from Europe and America who complement and illuminate each other's work. The first in the series is:

Donald Sultan: Appoggiaturas with writings by Philippe Sergeant, who comments on the paradoxes and their resolutions that surface in Sultan's work. One volume of the two-volume boxed set is a portfolio of 109 color and black and white prints produced by the artist. The second volume is the five "appoggiatura" (points of support) about Sultan's work. It will be interesting to see the future titles in this series. Most of the artists will definitely have a strong European following.

Distributed by MIT Press, 1992, \$29.95 softcover, 2 volumes boxed.

Dissolution by Jill MacArthur (New York, 1990, \$15.95) evolved from the documentation of a sculpture project comprised of ten self-contained fountains of St. Francis installed in a parking structure at the corner of 8th Avenue and 53rd Street in New York City. The continually running water and heat from the lighting combined with an unreasonably cold October to transform each piece considerably. The ethereal change was addressed by the artist as a separate work.