

# ON THE ROAD WITH JAH

It all happened so quickly I did not realize I would be going to Europe in June, but between the art critics' congress in Vienna and teaching in Bergen, it all seemed to come together and the railroad was my link in the chain of events. Having been invited to teach at the National Academy of Art & Design in Bergen, the trip seemed to fit together, itinerary seemed to work, and the train was my extended hotel. Little did I know how many adventures would transpire on the train, but that is what a Eurail Pass can do for you too! Herein are vignettes of memories, an abbreviated 3 1/2 weeks through a Europe I had never known, many times feeling very foreign.

## Feeling Foreign VIENNA

The International Association of Art Critics was holding a congress, and I was part of it. A visit to Schonbrun Palace showed me the history of the Hapburgs. There was an **Umbrella breakfast room** with blue and white parasols on the walls, wallpaper from China. A Charles-Moore kind of postmodern aviary was on the grounds, and the trees looked like those of Klimt in his paintings. Oh, there was sachertort at Hotel Sacher, *gemutlichkeit* wherever you looked.

But the dollar seemed to feel as though it were worth nothing. To change travellers' checks, you lost \$8.00 in commission right off the bat, no matter how much your changed! Reality reared its ugly head.

A visit to the great Albertina, which happened to have "The Eloquence of the Body" with a subsidiary show of Body Language in the Arts enraptured all of us with Durer to Kollwitz, Rubens to Rembrandt, Baldung Grien to Hogarth covering ideal measurements and proportions, hand and knowledge, hand and action, the body in motion: dance, battle order, grotesque heads and the eloquent body with pictures from the Lavater collection, the famed physiological expert. Yet right outside the Albertina is the Holocaust monument by Hrdlika, an amazing sculptor, who was there to talk to us about his imagery, his monument, the troubled public and its final acceptance. And then a visit to Klimt's Secession building made it all worth while. What an incredible work of art outside--and what a fine venue for contemporary art, this time Dan Graham.

But the highlight of 2 June was the Fluxus concert by the S.E.M. Ensemble, directed by Petr Kotik, with some wonderful Czech young musicians, the ensemble, along with guest Fluxus artist, Ben Patterson. Our new friend, Wolfgang Trager, photographer extraordinaire, was taking pictures of the whole event, since he is one of the "official" unofficial Fluxus photographers in Europe.

And then Vienna slowly unveiled her treasures to us. Between papers at the Congress, we ran around visiting the great Kunsthistorische Museum, with everything you ever read about in your art history books--from Breughel and Mantegna to Donatello, Sofonisba Gentileschi, Tiziano, Rembrandt, Rubens, Klimt. Cloud 9--and each room in such great taste to match the collection on the walls! Only in Vienna.

Tastes of the best strudel ever (except my grandmother's), a great deal of rain, and great food and drink. Great architecture--Wagner, Loos, Hundertwasser. A great show of M. Jetlova and Kiki Smith--an amazing exhibition at the Museum of Applied Arts--just amazing with Kiki Smith's body works, and Jetlova's astounding installation. A walking tour with someone who knows the central city divulged amazing wrought iron collection in a courtyard, a Jesuit church with flamboyant Baroque effects and a men's choir singing, doors, the great St. Stephen's cathedral with its incredible predella. We also saw the Museum of the 20th Century (Ludwig) with the exhibition of Czech, Hungarian and Polish Abstraction.

Memories of many galleries, but especially Galerie Krinzinger with a most exceptional exhibition of Marina Abramovic. It has been five years since I have seen her, and not only is her work with purple and gray quartz amazing, but so is she. This show was much better than her installation at documenta--and I was so happy to see her and the work. It is an interactive exhibition in which if you sit on, lie on, or put your feet in the quartz and meditate, it is transformational. I think so, anyway. Gelato, and then a walk to the American Cafe, designed by Loos, capped a very heavy aesthetic experience!

But of course, the best show in town was the Teddy Bear show at the Natural History Museum--a show which had been planned for several years, in which the history of the Steiff Teddy Bear and its factory was a mere catalyst for a complete spectrum of teddy bear history, from the fetishes of ancient days to the latest version of video advertising using a teddy bear. Through a curtain made up of various sheets with teddy bear designs on them, up a grand staircase to a magic world of teddy bears, anthropomorphic, archeological, artistic, and sometimes out-of-sight--but an amazing exhibition. Inclusions of Sandro Chia and Peter Angermann's paintings of bears as art dealers, Susan Rothenberg, works by Joseph Beuys, Cary Leibowitz, Marc Dion, Andy Warhol so that heroically the teddy bear became a fetish, talisman, symbol, friend, comforter, object, mirror and beast---all together. Charlemagne Palestine's "Bear" which was outside at documenta in 1977 was the bear who greeted you outside the door of the museum. It was a "bearishly" good time, especially when you walked to an adjacent gallery and the stuffed apes looked familiarly like the bears, and the Venus of Willendorf down the hall, the museum's most famous artifact, appeared oddly bearlike, after viewing the Teddy Bear show.

A visit to Hans Hollein's studio to hear about the new project of the Guggenheim in Salzburg was most stimulating and exciting. He is a "bearish" kind of man, charming, perfectly comfortable in English, and most successful. And then our visit to Vienna came to an end.

## BUDAPEST

The train trip to Budapest from Hungary showed us flatland, then vineyards and hills. The color of trains changed to blue, the busses were blue, the money is called florint and is not exchangeable in the international currency market. Life is still cheap, but has leaped upward in the past

3 years. My friends, Gyorgy and Julia Galantai of Artpool met us and took us to my friend's place. It was in the center of the Jewish sector, and we found out that the Jews are returning. 8,000 of them were murdered by their own Hungarian "friends" in one fell swoop. A new monument to the Holocaust was installed in a small public space nearby, dedicated only in 1991. It has only been a little over a year since "freedom" arrived, and you can taste it in the air!

We ate our first dinner that night "unter der linden" literally in a beautiful courtyard, edged with white fencing, under the fragrant linden trees, and I shall never forget that cold sour cherry soup, that great white wine, and the grilled trout. It was a balmy night, and this was Budapest!

Oddly, the next day there were thunderstorms and torrential rain, but on to the market--a wonderful indoor covered market with high glass ceilings supported by sturdy iron supports--typical of most of Europe. Inside one could find an abundance of wonders--all in a very odd language, Hungarian, but some items had other languages on the labels as well.

On the way to the Arts & Crafts Museum, a shimmering white crystal palace, we passed the Old Synagogue, a Byzantine-style huge building, which looked like it was being restored. Next to it was a small sanctuary (new) which was being used for services. In the courtyard were memorial gravestones of those who perished in World War II in Budapest. But on the main boulevard were gorgeous buildings--Italianate, neo-classical, revival architecture, terribly dirty but you could imagine how this city was once called the "Paris of Eastern Europe."

The permanent collection of the Arts & Crafts Museum, a brilliantly white painted interior with crystal cupola, is amazing with room settings from every period and every country in Europe. I found an amazing set of Umbrella chairs made by a furniture maker Vogel, and we took pictures.

#### ARTPOOL ART RESEARCH CENTER

Artpool opened its new doors to the public on 20 March of this year at 10 Liszt Ferenc Square, in the heart of Budapest. Established with a grant from the Budapest City Municipal Council, as a public venue, Artpool has been known for over 10 years as a centre of mail art, art networking and organizational activities. Originally an "unofficial" private institution established by visual artist, Gyorgy Galantai and Julia Klaniczay in 1979, Artpool was an archive of mail art and archives of contemporary art, received through the mail and from Hungarian contemporary artists. But now, Artpool has become an experimental art research center with archives and a library, a workshop for sound and visual poetry, a sound archive, and an up-to-date art magazine through an entirely private effort.

In the accumulation of materials, there is a Collection of Artists' Stampworks, bookworks, visual poetry, artists' periodicals, sound poetry and an almost complete documentation of the Hungarian avant-garde of the 1970s and 1980s. Known for several outstanding exhibitions and significant publications, Artpool literally developed from the home of the Galantais.

But in 1989, the Artpool Foundation was established which provides the financial and legal background for the Center. With the change of regimes and the downfall of the

Communist leadership, the Galantais requested a grant from the city of Budapest to support a space. The City Museum head heard about it and found some money to support Artpool. But then the struggle began with the regime to convince the city of the unique qualities of the visual documentation of the 70s and 80s. Luckily, one of the elected officials (for the record, an ex-party member) gave his space to Artpool, which in turn became the grant from the City. Utilities are paid, but the money did not. (In fact, in Budapest, people are not paying their bills in order to survive; no one is, but Budapest muddles along).

So Artpool opened in March **without** the money from the City. And Galantai made everything himself--the floor, the cabinets, the desk, bookshelves, etc. Moving the archives from their home, they organized the rooms into 1) Stamp Art, 2) Audio, 3) Mail Art from 70s and 80s with the addition of an art critic's personal 60s files. Since the art critic cannot use the materials while he is actively working, he stores them with Artpool, which amplifies their collection. There are drawers for posters, a postcard collection, a video archive. And then they received their money from the city, which allowed them to buy new video equipment (for any VHS system), a copy machine to produce their own announcements, a fax machine (but not a separate line). Two interns work with them in order to catalog the collection.

The bookstore offers their back issues of their magazine, plus magazines from all over the world, reference books, art documentation, and artists' books. It is small, but fascinating.

There is also an moving message display (electronic sign in the Jenny Holzer manner) which gets changed each month with another statement by artists.

#### EXHIBITS

A series of exhibitions are planned, using the material from the archives as well as new Hungarian and international artistic tendencies on the other. The Artistamp Museum of Artpool will be permanent, and there will be continuing shows of artists' books.

The opening exhibitions included a full reconstruction of the exhibition "Mirror", originally organized by Laszlo Beke in 1973 as part of the Chapel Exhibitions in Balatonboglár, the "Fluxus and Other Early Stamp images" of the Artistamp Museum by Artpool and the material from the Symposium, "In the spirit of Marcel Duchamp" which was held in Budapest in 1978 to commemorate Duchamp's 100th anniversary.

The exhibition that was being installed while I was there was the Gayor-Maurer Collection of Concrete Poetry from the early 70s, and 250 Commemorative Stamp Images by 150 Hungarian artists from the World Art Post Collection (1982). There is always a slide show on going, videos available, sound works, and a postcard exhibition, and much more.

**Artpool needs visual documentation from artists who wish to be included.** They wish to fill in their collections. They will dupe slides if you send them to the Galantais or keep the material, as you wish. The Galantais have so much energy and zeal for what they are doing that it is infectious. Artpool is literally a miracle, knowing that Galantai had suffered surveillance by the Communist regime for three years (he could do no studio work), so this very big miracle

is a tribute to the "freedom" that Hungary and the rest of Eastern Europe has assumed. From most points of view, if anyone is doing research in Eastern European contemporary art, they must come to the archives of Artpool to do research! Even with limited financial backing and a small permanent staff, Artpool feels like a grand archive that has been ongoing for a long time. Write to Artpool Art Research Center, H-1277 Budapest 23, Box/Pf. 52, Hungary.

### BUDAPEST AGAIN

On the Buda side of the river, there are such contrasts. In front of a modern glass building sits a piece of the Roman wall, opposite the Institut Francais building which is a shimmering example of postmodern architecture. There is an apartment house, dingy, dirty, encrusted with black dust, while the top apartment, probably purchased recently, was sandblasted on the outside to retain its golden hue. How long will it be to see this total building cleaned and renewed? Only time will tell.

It rained a lot in Europe this summer, and broccabrellas (or umbrella hats) were being sold by a charming young man. Next to him were umbrellas in the shape of football helmets and other devices. Coffeehouses abound, some less expensive than anything in Vienna and twice as good. In addition, there are old mansions and a new city center that shrieks of investment from outside interests--expensive rooms, expensive meals in deluxe accommodations. Yet on the pedestrian mall, there are older women trying to sell their embroidered tablecloths and handicrafts directly to the tourist. The intentions are clear.

The artists in Hungary belong to artists' societies, groups which meet once a month for a party, put on an exhibition in a space given to them for a small rental fee, and they sit the show during the course of the month. According to some of them, the don't "sell" art, they just show it. But it is okay. At least people see it. The whole art business will take time.

There was an amazing array of emerging artists' shows throughout the city, including the Art Academy, which had several women showing copy art and collage, which was terrific! In the course of events, I attended openings of art which was celebrated by the Budapest aficionados. Their art societies (or clubs) are really fine, with cafes, chess rooms, and much more. The tradition governs a scene which is iconoclastic.

### POSTAL & STAMP MUSEUMS, BUDAPEST

The Postal Museum is housed in an elegant floor of a former palace, with chandeliers from Murano, fine silk wallpaper, and an amazing history of postal, telephone and telegraph development in Hungary. As usual, an older woman directs traffic, telling you the story of every display with pride. Postcards and catalogs are available for sale, although there is no cost for entrance.

The Stamp Museum (Belyegmuzeum) is located around the corner from the Central Post Office. As you enter, the concierge has you sign in and gives you coverings for your shoes. As you climb the flight of stairs, you don't know what you're going to confront. Instead, it is a modern, air-conditioned well lit space, enclosed with glass doors. You are greeted by a red-haired middle-aged handsome woman who asks what languages you know--and then proceeds to fade into and out of French and English. With 12 million stamps

from 1840 on from all over the world, artfully housed in pull-out vertical drawers so that you can see stamps on both side of the glass drawers, you know you're in for a magnificent stroll with stampland.

Originally from an Austrian family but born in Budapest, my guide proceeded to intersperse stamp history and her own history. I learned about the Communist regime, the wars, the POpe, bad publicity for this magnificent museum (i.e. no listings in the normal list of museums, no publicity), talk about Hungarians and Austrians, about the first stamp (English) in the collection from 1840, the first postcards from 1869, the first mail with no stamp, then wa seals, etc. The wall cabinetry is a work of art in itself. The whole collection is divided into country codes. Underneath the vertical drawers are horizontal draws which include a forgery stamp collection, a collection of original designs for stamps, Soviet stamps printed on newspaper because of the shortage of paper after the war. People send them stamps, or when the director travels, he picks up stamps for the collection. It was a most enlightening visit, and I now see how Artpool had shown artists' stamps there for a short-lived exhibition. It is a museum to be emulated.

The Olaf Palme House in the park next to the Liget Gallery and next to the Fine Arts Museum is an amazing contemporary space, dedicated to exhibitions of avant-garde art. I saw the cutting edge of Hungarian artists, and loved the daring of these artists. I had seen how Hungary has a long tradition of metal work--their wrought iron fences are works of art--so it was not unusual to find artists who really use steel in their freestanding work. And the most innovative work was by Istvan Czikos, who did wide angel vision stereoscopic photography with sound, which literally blew my mind!

At the Liget Gallery, I volunteered to curate a bookshow of European book artists for their October show of two weeks during the International Handmade Papermaking Congress. Although they have no money for my return, at least I could help them get a show together, and it was a pleasure to help these two people participate in the bookshows in Budapest during the Congress.

In walking around Budapest, I was stunned when I came upon a rubberstamp business, open 10-6 everyday, something unheard of during the Communist regime, where rubberstamps were forbidden, except to government functionaries. Then again, there were busloads of tourists being taken around with signs on the busses saying, "Sightseeing Budapest in 12 languages," or "Sightseeing in Budapest in 8 languages" and you know that the tourist business is serious!

### ORIENT EXPRESS - Feeling Illegal in a Second Class Train

My rolling hotel left Budapest from a railroad station built by Mr. Eiffel of the Tower fame in Paris. It was a magnificent space of glass and steel, while the chain bridge next to it was built by Alex Ward of England, and I had imagined the wondrous days when the real "Orient Express" left Budapest for parts exotic. My train was a bit seedy, and we were warned to tie up our compartments well, just in case someone came in to steal things.

The train was not full at all. My food supply was bought in the market in Budapest to keep expenses down, so I was literally camping out in the train. There were three passport controls within 5 minutes: Czech, Czech and Hungarian. At the border I saw fields of poppies and lavender. And then I found out that my travel agent in Vienna had not told me or made me aware that the Eurail Pass was not valid in Czechoslovakia. I had a money problem, but after an accompanying stop in Slovakia (Bratislava) to see if the bank was open, I made an exchange with the cook, who gave me German money for my travel check, and I paid for the trek through Czechoslovakia (very inexpensive) and was then "legal". As a result of this mishap, I met a neighbor of mine in an adjoining compartment, a woman doctor who was from East Germany but had lived in Hungary for 27 years. We had a wonderful talk, and I found out she was going to Germany to celebrate her 30th school reunion (although she tells everyone it is her 20th, and she looks it). She has three sons, the oldest of whom is a ballet dancer with the Opera, but he makes peanuts. "It is the worst pay for the highest art". And the three photos she showed me were terrific, since he looks like he flies in the air. He has a Roman ballerina girlfriend. She told me that many ballet dancers come to Hungary to study the old Kirov ballet technique, because it is cheaper than Moscow yet it is the highest quality education.

Her family consists of two doctors, herself and her husband, and three sons. She feels her sons are getting a much better education now, using computers, etc. She also told me that being from East Germany, she had problems getting over the border. Her recurrent nightmares stem from the problems of not getting a visa for 10 years because she comes from the GDR, although she was married to a Hungarian doctor and was the mother of 3. Many of her friends also have grave trauma and require psychiatric help because after the wall came down, it was so difficult to get across the border during all those years when the wall was up, and it was hard to fathom that the crossing was easy now.

We talked about my impressions of Hungary, and she thought I really understood how absurd Hungary is. Inflation, unemployment, public vs. private, fear of computers. As a doctor she works for Politechnic Clinic, but it takes a great deal of money to go into private practice (money for a license, equipment, office, etc.). Yet she likes the interaction with patients and the goal of healing people. She does not, however, make a great deal of money. We also discussed the arrogance and the avoidance techniques of women in the service industries. And I told her about my experience with the dark rooms of the museum.

#### **Berlin (East) to Malmo, Sweden:**

I got a coffee and a Herald Tribune in the railroad station while waiting for my connection to Malmo, Sweden. And then off to Malmo. Two students from Dresden were in my compartment on their way to Sweden for an 18-day holiday. First it was dark and rainy outside, but then the poppies and lavender appeared with sweeping landscape which were flat. The girls drank Capri Sun juice out of aluminum containers. As we passed Dresden, they told me that there is a great deal of unemployment, even though I see a great many cranes and a "rebuilding", which has come to a halt there. East Germany is a great deal different from West Germany.

As we approached northern Germany, it was sunny with sweeping winds from the sea, and beautiful. Yes, this was Germany, with the sea ever-present. I noticed several young men in the compartment next to us smoking, and the word "football" was bandied about. Only later did I understand that there were the European championship between England and Denmark. Heavily attended, this event serves as a chauvinistic European event with young people dressed in flags and banners and painting their faces in their team's or country's colors. It proved to be a diversion for me throughout the trip. It almost was a performance piece.

When we reached Sassnitz, I knew we were on the border between Germany and Sweden, only the border was a body of water. The train, preceded by a heavy load of timber, entered the ferry and we proceeded to enjoy the ferry's many conveniences after getting off the train inside the ferry. There were gambling machines, duty free (alcohol at half the price of Sweden's prices), cafe, restaurant, etc. Men were drinking a lot after buying the bottles in the bottle shop, so that when they had taken the sun on the deck or sat and drank, they were inebriated when they got off the train. After four hours on the sea, we went back down to the train car and arrived in Malmo. Passport control and then customs -- where the fellows next door were body searched not only physically but with dogs sniffing out each compartment (obviously for drugs). Then I realized that "football" was a big business and Sweden was doing everything to avoid any problems, violence or drugs in their country, which was a transit point for those going to Denmark for the championship games.

Malmo has a lot of post-modern architecture mimicking the old buildings, and it really works. Each train station in Europe has showers, etc., so that while I was waiting for my connection to Norway, I noticed many men going downstairs to the facilities, and some coming up with costumes and makeup to prepare themselves for the "football" game, although I thought it might be Halloween. That night, the train was held for all the football fans trying to get on the train and all the policemen trying to keep them from storming the train. When the Brits arrived, it was frightening. They looked like skinheads ready to storm the train, cursing and rowdy, but the police controlled the situation quite well. Of course, we left about 30 minutes later than we should, which would make my connection impossible in Oslo, but little did I know that they would call ahead and hold the train in Oslo for a few minutes so that I could run and make it to Bergen. What courtesy, what kindness!

There was a beautiful 3/4 moon, warm water in the faucet, and all of Norway to see, so with little sleep, I saw most of Norway while sitting by the corridor window until we arrived in Oslo. I ran as fast as I could from Track 19 to Track 4, and made it--by the grace of the conductor, who found out that it was I that caused them to wait. But it was worth it--what a trip from Oslo to Bergen on the train. Snow everywhere, the glaciers, the hot sun and the cold snow, snapping someone's picture who had a T-shirt with bananas on it (for Anna Banana), Japanese tourists snapping more pictures. Beautiful, quiet, stunning natural scenery, waterfalls and snow. We received free chocolate before reaching 1300 meters above sea level. It rained at the last stop (5 minutes) before Bergen.

Arriving in Bergen to lecture at the conference called Book 'N Roll 92, the air was heavy and humid and I could not believe it. But in five minutes, it started raining--the first time in 6 weeks in a city known for its rainfall--and everyone thought I had brought the rain because I love umbrellas so much. I met and greeted students and teachers, and was taken to the wonderful ancient house which would be home for a week--and for longer for other teachers.

The rain stopped, the sun shone, and we went out to dinner with the faculty. It was wonderful getting to know everybody. There is a charm and a lightness among Norwegians, yet underneath there is always that seriousness. This time, Timothy and Ruth Ely, Philip and Dorothy Smith, Stephen Roxburgh and I really enjoyed getting to know each other and the faculty too. And what a beautiful town is Bergen, surrounded by hills.

In a most generous way, everything we needed was provided in the house, and the facilities for the conference were in an old people's home which was transformed by glass and steel into a postmodern facility covering the courtyard with glass. The students made lunch each day, there was always coffee and something to drink, the seminars were intense and formal but all in English as a courtesy to us all, and that was incredibly magnanimous. The crowd was large, the room had an automatic curtain closer, (noisy) and screen descender (quieter). Sometimes Norwegian was used with short English summaries, but for the most part English was the language of the conference.

Nights were short and the nights were illuminated with natural light until well after 11 p.m. Across the street from the house we occupied was the oldest stone building in Bergen, Mariakirche, with an organ that would never stop. The organ seemed too large for the building, but they had concerts quite often in the church to celebrate their organ. We talked about librarianship, publishing, book distribution, early Norwegian pictographs and much more during the conference. And that Saturday night they had a party for us with Indian food, Australian wine, and lots of international talk.

Another night we ate at a pizzeria where the owners were Turks who speak Italian with a vicious accent and a smile. There is also an Asian population in Bergen so that Chinese and Vietnamese restaurants are an important choice. Of course, this was in-between hearing about Norway's celebration in 1993 of the first printed book--350 years before. Since Norway is the third highest reading country in the world, books and reading are important to everyone. The National Librarian pointed out the importance of this anniversary and its celebration will be an important event over the period of at least six months in 1993.

That is why the National College of Art & Design in Bergen is so important, since the concentration of this whole school is on the book--from its physical construction to its philosophical postulates. The faculty consists of printmakers, binders, printers, writers and graphic designers. The students get a well-rounded art education, as well as a sensitivity to the book. These students will be invited to do a show of the History of the Printed Book in Oslo, and those students in Bergen will do a show about the Book as the Media of the Future. That is why we were invited to do a series of talks with Norwegian writers, librarians and book people. It all was one of those wonderful times where books

for breakfast, lunch and dinner were not a tiring subject, but one which stimulated discussion and ideas.

What we found out is that visual artists can retire at 49 via a point system and get Social Security, that 11 million kronen are dedicated as grants for artists for projects. 1% must be dedicated to art for every new building. A woman is the Minister of Culture, under which libraries are administered. And that students are mature when they come to the Academy, where graphic design and illustration come under the same rubric.

After teaching about bookworks and sharing my appreciation of artists' books from around the world, I hated to leave, but on to Oslo and other things. I was alone again in the train, and at 2:23 a.m., I saw the moon go down on one side of the train and the sun come up on the other--only 2 days before the summer solstice when day and night are the same in Norway and the rest of Scandinavia. It was beautiful seeing the snow again, the glacier, and arriving in Oslo for a two-day stay. I was staying in a building where Joseph Beuys used to give performances, but now it is a very stylish cooperative. I came to Oslo to visit the Sonja Henie-Onstad Museum in Hovidekken, where I heard the great news that they had raised enough money to build a new wing which would be ready next summer for their 25th anniversary. Then the Fluxus collection would be installed permanently, among other collections. I also spoke to the curator of the Fluxus collection and the librarian about many things, seeing the Fluxus Collection, the artists' book collection and the general collection.

The next day I played tourist and visited the Munch Museum, the Viking Museum and the Folk Museum and ended up at Wiegeland Park, a programmed park with huge human sculptures done by one sculptor. Then returned to the retrospective of an Icelandic artist who lives in Amsterdam, Sigurdur Gudmundsson, and it was spectacularly installed in a 1930 building which was designed for a Kunsthalle with 1932 murals. It also had a cafe-bar, where a beer costs \$4.80!

## ON TO COPENHAGEN

I met 3 Chileans in my compartment in my rolling hotel--the women were going to work in Cologne and the young man was working in New York City. They were great company! Once again, the train went on the ferry and we had breakfast on this beautiful Swedish ship which took only Swedish or Danish money, not Norwegian. Having had a continental breakfast, I felt human again.

Upon arrival in Copenhagen, I changed a little money, went to the marvelous gallery at Charlottenborg to see if the Art & Technology show which was curated by Peter Meyer was still up, but alas, it had already been taken down (in one day--after 2 years of planning), so I waited for the curator to come and talked to him about this wonderful show which I would never get to see. Meyer is editor of *Siski* for Denmark, a Scandinavian artist magazine which is very good and which I had been reading in the past. It took 2 years to finance the show, which was a highly technical exhibition sponsored by high-tech corporations. Since no one wanted to take the show, it did not travel, because it just was too expensive. But with State (free space) and corporate help (Board of Directors of foundation supports exhibitions), the show did go on and was exciting. A full-time technician was

on duty at all times. The catalog, mentioned in the Exhibition Catalog section, was superb with a heat-pressured cover which changed with the heat of your hand. Oddly enough, it was so hot this summer in Pasadena, my hands were too hot to get any reaction at all, until it finally cooled down. But as I write this, it is too hot here again (110 degrees!) The show was called **UNDR: Kunst Videnskab Teknik (Art Science and Technology)** including the work of Eric Andersen, Brian Eno, Fischli & Weiss, Yukio Fujimoto, Nam June Paik, Otto Piene, Fabrizio Plessi, and Stelarc among others.

And then I went to the Royal Museum of Fine Arts, where René Block's Collection was on exhibit--3 hours later, I felt like a kid in a toyshop enjoying every interactive minute with John Cage's turntables or ping pong, or awestruck by the installation of Joseph Beuys' works. How wonderful to experience the joy and excitement that Block must have felt seeing these things in his gallery, and now seeing them in the Museum where they will be permanently part of the collection after their travelling show.

Copenhagen is a wonderful city (at least in summer), where parks are full of people taking the sun in various modes of undress, a National Lampoon monument sits in that park, there are sections where the park is left in its natural state, while others are well groomed. Roses abound, and a bench was sufficient to set up my writing desk and write my notes. Copenhagen is full of people, street performers, musicians, antiquarian bookshops, and great restaurants of all denominations. I found a great Middle-Eastern restaurant where you could eat all you want for a flat sum which was nominal compared to most, and really had a ball eating and meeting a musician from Port Townsend, Washington, David Michael, who that evening after dinner, set up his harp and played so beautifully for passersby.

## KASSEL & DOCUMENTA IX

Taking a fast train (ICE) to Kassel from Hamburg, I felt as though I were flying since it went so fast and a speedometer told me that--it has video and audio potential, adjustable seats, and a wardrobe for your bags, and beautiful washrooms! So that is where Germany is spending their money! Europe will be linked with these fast trains and it won't pay to fly.

Well, everything you have read about **documenta IX** is true. The day I arrived was hot and sticky, the lines were very long, and a press card really didn't mean much except free entrance to the whole shebang, but long lines for everything else. If this were the best of art in the world, I'd have gone home right away, since it was hard seeing it all and who really loves chaos! But some of the work was very inspiring, others were politically correct, and others won't be missed. That afternoon I had the pleasure of bumping into my Chinese friend, a book artist and gunpowder performance artist who lives in Japan, who would be doing a performance a week later in Kassel. Alas, I could not stay, but it was wonderful to see him. In the midst of everything, young docents (mostly German males) were taking large groups of Germans around the whole complex, and the groups were large enough to make viewing certain pieces difficult, e.g., Louise Bourgeois's installation. But you could walk in the park and come upon a Pat Steir scrim or a Garden for the Homeless by Kawamata. But I sensed something was wrong this time,

after so many documentas. Joseph Beuys was not there--and his spirit was missing. Of course, there was Jonathan Borofsky's man walking up to "paradise?" or was it a Sisyphus-like attempt at reaching the moon, and a wonderful sound piece by Max Neuhaus in an insurance building (which is a permanent work of art), but there were so many other things that should have been cited: Vera Frankel's amazing Transit Bar, which incorporated a working bar (after 5 p.m.), a player piano, and video monitors with French, German and English monologues changing languages from paragraph to paragraph, a metaphor for the fragility of human communication and the pain of displacement.--and the Nigerian doctor turned artist in Germany, Mo Edoga, using big yellow rubber gloves, who was building this amazing tower out of driftwood and old canisters, the driftwood collected from all rivers of Europe in the Friedrichsplatz, the amazing spider by David Hammons made of human hair, Ilya Kabakov's "homeless" apartment, Anish Kapoor's magic, Zoe Leonard's surprising photographs of vaginas, Cildo Mireiles' yellow tapemeasure installation with clocks, and the video, which seemed to be the best pieces in the whole documenta.

And of course, Joseph Kosuth, whose two great galleries which he covered with black with white letters or white felt with black letters, containing statements by great men and women in the Neue Galerie, which for me was one of the best works in the show. One of his students from Gent happened to be in the hall as I wrote down statements from some of the coverings such as:

He has only half learned the art of reading who has not added to it the even more refined accomplishments of skipping and skimming.

--A. J. Balfour

A good spectator also creates.

--Swiss proverb

Peace of mind oscillates between sense and nonsense, not between right & wrong.

--C. Jung

If you steal from one another, it's plagiarism; if you steal from many, it's research.

--Wilson Muizner

Reading is a means of thinking with another person's mind; it forces you to stretch your own.

--Lionel Trilling

Never underestimate an editor's intelligence and never overestimate a publisher's morality.

--Edward Sachs

The mode of iconoclasm which is called censorship does not necessarily take the form of direct assault of removal. Its cunning consists in denying its own operation and leaving no scars.

--Leo Steinberg

He told me how Kosuth inspired his students. Living half the year in Gent and half the year in New York makes for a fascinating life. Kosuth has indeed influence.

After I went through the Neue Galerie, I walked out and helped two Dutchmen take a photograph of an "installation" using an umbrella, mind you, near the Neue Galerie! How fortunate to be right there so I took a photograph with my camera, and one with theirs. Then, this being Sunday and much cooler than the day before, I walked toward the Friederichplatz and what to my eyes did I behold but a desk being brought to the middle of the platz, and book objects being handled by people with gloves and without, pulling out drawers and finding other books. I walked toward all of this in amazement, asking the young men standing by the desk what this was about. They told me that they were students at the University of Kassel and that their guest professor from the Hochschule of Berlin decided to let them do a project of artists' books and book objects. I talked with their professor, who was taking still photos, and the student who was documenting with a video camera. I also took photos. It was a sheer coincidence, but I know it was predestined. And that made my day and week and month! And in less than an hour the whole bookshow was gone--how could I have known and wended my way toward the platz! The book goddess must have been with me!

And you should see the onslaught of press release puffery that comes out of Kassel. Not only is this the biggest and the best, but a survey of "important" people showed they really didn't find anything unforgettable.

The most moving installation at documenta were the stones set in the walkway in front of the Friedericianum, which cited the names of those artists who have died of AIDS, including Keith Haring, Philip-Dimitr Galas, Peter Hujar, and so many more.

And not to be outdone, I must tell you a final tale about my stay at documenta. Since 1987, a great many new things appeared--besides the inflated ego of Mr. Hoet. A **Documenta Wax Museum** on the Platz (oh, please, I come from Hollywood, not another Mme. Tussaud or Disneyland), and in one window was Joseph Beuys, the next window had Dr. & Mrs. Arnold Bode, he who founded documenta, and then the door which had a sign on it that said we are closed from 12:30 to 5 (and you know why, because it's too hot for the wax to be exposed), and then in the last window, an anguished face (a la Herb Ritts) of Jan Hoet (pronounced Hoot), the director of this documenta! I took a picture of Joseph, at least to document this strange phenomenon!

Well, when I got back to the States, I developed my rolls of film, and the one I took of the Wax Museum was a mystery. Since all the figures in the windows were recessed, I got on the side of each panel to be sure I did not have much reflection of the glass window in front of each wax figure. Well, Joseph Beuys was not recessed in my photograph. Whatever phenomenon of optics it might be, Joseph Beuys was floating transparent at the front of the window--as if to tell me that his spirit is still there, watching and waiting for the end of documenta or at least a different one.

