

FROM THE EDITOR

It has been a long time between issues, but as you may know, I have had a tragedy. On 14 March, I was burglarized in my home, and my computer, scanner, monitor, keyboard, backups and even the backup for this issue of *Umbrella*, which would have been in press five days later, was taken. I was devastated, and the police only found glove prints and no fingerprints. Of course, there is only one person responsible for such a crime, but there is no proof. The party in question, a neighbor and drug dealer, has a long rap sheet, but covers his tracks very well. I, in fact, was talking to Susan King, the book artist, for quite a long time that morning, while I was watching my neighbor and two men waiting out in the street. Obviously, they were waiting for me to leave--and I finally did go to the Post Office. After doing errands, I returned and noticed my front door was unlocked. When the phone rang and the party asked me for an address and phone number, I went upstairs--and discovered the crime. I was numb with a dead feeling inside. I could not eat, drink or think straight for several days. And the only thing I could retrieve was my email address book. So we sent a message to those people about what happened to me and that *Umbrella* would be late, so please spread the word.

When you lose 10 years of correspondence, all your mailing lists, all your networks, your resumes, your lists of archives, your connections to the world--well, you stop and either do something drastic, or helped by a support system, you get your computer gurus to go with you and buy a new system (we did get a very good upgrade and deal--with CD Rom and Audio, speakers, etc.) so with that sacrifice, I have a better system. And then you begin at square one--and go to work. My only intention was to get the issue out to you all, so I tried to reconstruct my subscription list from all the paperwork--there is some missing--so if you know people who did not receive this issue, then tell them to write to me.

Luckily, the mail art listings I had printed out for a friend of mine--so she returned them. My friend in New Zealand had my latest c.v. and was coming to the States, so she brought that with her. The history of my subscribers is lost now, and never to be reconstructed. But I am making progress, only I know how much has been lost. The culprit then poured oil on my door and into my mailbox four days later--and on Voting Day, he poured tomato paste on my door. If I had done something to him, then I could have understood--but anger

misplaced is hard to understand. Before he moved out, he popped the lock on my mailbox. If you want to know what fear and terror are, or what it feels to be violated, go through what I went through. And the police could do nothing, because there was no proof.

I am healing now, thanks to so many of you who have sent good thoughts, helped by the donations of money to help pay for the new computer (I live on the edge, and expenses of this sort are too much to handle), and thanks to friends and strangers, the computer as of this writing is almost paid for by donations! Now I need money for a zip drive and perhaps a restraining order, although I still don't know how much good that will do. The party in question was sentenced to three years in jail in February and was released after two weeks for "good behavior"--since there is no room in our jails for such people.

I have done the best I can with this issue, since I really want you to have it. I also want you to know that there is a retrospective of *Umbrella* from 3 - 31 May at Provinciaal Centrum voor Kunsten Begijnhof in Hasselt, Belgium, thanks to Guy Bleus.

I also want to tell you that I am of sound mind and body--and very fortunate that only the computer was taken--although it is my right and left hand. I do have old floppies that will retrieve old material, thanks to their being put in diskette containers--and the thieves weren't interested in them. Now I find out that my printer keeps backups for all or any of his clients in the vault--so I shall be keeping backups off campus.

Thanks to the Internet and the Grapevine and the Network of Mail Artists and the generosity of friends here, I have been able to open mail from all over the world and know that people are thinking of me. Sending good thoughts has helped a great deal. I cannot thank you all--the list is long--but know that my heart is full of joy. I am so rich with friends around the world--and a support system that really is there when I need you. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

I have tried to include enough information to let you know what is going on for the summer in courses, exhibitions, exceptional events. But this has been written in haste and in the hopes that it reaches you in early May. Have a great summer!

—jah

Umbrella is published by Umbrella Associates, and the editor is Judith A. Hoffberg, P.O. Box 3640, Santa Monica, CA 90408. Phone: (310)399-1146. fax: (310)399-5070. email address is: umbrella@ix.netcom.com. Subscriptions are available for calendar year only, payable in American currency. ©1996 by Umbrella Associates.

A friend of mine died recently. I never knew him, but I listened to him frequently on the radio, on NPR. He was a professor at Florida State University and he was profound. Then one day he shared his diagnosis with us, his examinations, and his fears. He had cancer--but got better. And then he wasn't on NPR anymore. This March he passed away but not before speaking reams about culture and about things on his mind: This nostalgic piece came about when he saw row after row of computers at his school and thought about The Future of the Book:

Books will be replaced by electronic libraries, talking videos, interactive computers, CD-Roms with 100s of volumes, gigabytes of memory dancing on pixillated screens at which we will bleerily stare into eternity, and so I Sing the Song of the Book:

Nothing more voluptuous do I know than sitting with bright pictures upon my lap and turning glossy pages of giraffes and Gauguins penguins and pyramids

I love wide atlases, delineating the rise and fall of empires, the trade routes from Kashkar to Samarkand

I love heavy dictionaries, their tiny pictures, complicated columns, minute definitions of incarnitive, and lanuary, hagboat and fopdoodle

I love the texture of pages, the high gloss slickness of magazines as slippery as oiled eels

the soft nubble of old books, delicate India paper so thin that my hands tremble trying to turn the fluttering dry leaves and the yellow coarse cheap paper of mystery novels so gripping that I don't care if the plane circles Atlanta forever, because it is a full moon and I am stalking in the Arizona desert a malevolent shaped shifter

I love the feel of ink on paper, the shiny varnishes, the silky lacquers, the satiny mattes

I love the press of letters in thick paper, the roughness sizzles my fingers with centuries of craft embedded in pulped old rags

My hands caress the leather of old bindings crumbling like ancient gentlemen

I sing these pleasures of white paper and black ink of the small jab of the hard cover corner at the edge of my diaphragm, of the look of type, of the flip of a page, of the sinful abandon of the turned down corner, the reckless possessiveness of my marginal scrawl

The cover picture as much a part of the book as the contents itself--like Holden Caulfield in his red cap turned backwards staring away from us at what we all thought we should become

I also love those great fat bibles evangelists wave like otter pelts, the long graying sets of unreadable authors, the tall books of boyhood enthusiastically crayoned, the embossed covers of adolescents, the tiny poetry anthologies you could slip in your pocket

And the yellowing cookbooks of recipes for *glacé blanche dupont* and Argentine mocha toast, their stains and spots souvenirs of long evenings full of love and arguments and the talk like as not of books, books, books...

I wish I had known Jerry Sterns in person. I wrote him to thank him for such inspiration, and a few months later he passed on.

Reactions to The Dinner Party, 1979, now reinstalled at the Hammer Gallery, UCLA, Los Angeles in 1996:

**Taken from the Umbrella Archives:
Vol. 2, no. 4 (July 1979)**

Repercussions from The Dinner Party

In San Francisco, Maria Manhattan served up The Box Lunch at The South of Market Cultural Center on 13, 14, and 15 of July, honoring 39 women of dubious distinction, such as Rosemary Woods, Lucy Ricardo, Henny Youngman's wife, Minnie Mouse, and many more. An extensive documentation of the trials and sacrifices of Maria Manhattan and staff was exhibited. There also was a special section depicting famous box lunches, and a video piece featuring interviews with Maria Manhattan and a few of the thousands of peons who helped her put this show together. All tax deductible donations in the amount of 39 cents, \$3.90 or more were made out to Les Nickettes, a feminist performance group in the Bay Area.

Graffiti taken from the Women's Restroom at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art in 1979:

Think about it. J. Chicago does a show of 39 clit plates--the same as 39 dick plates to me! Poor taste! They both taste good to me! While dicks might feel better, you must admit, clits look better. That's not where it's at.

Dear Judy: Why does a woman's identity have to be through her vagina? A man's identity is not through his cock. You think not? Ask a man sometime.

Don't talke J.C. seriously. We know that women are still and always will be the greatest factor.

On this china throne has sat many an unsung heroine.



WANTED: Cover Art for Umbrella for forthcoming issues. Please send work to P.O. Box 3640, Santa Monica, CA 90408.

COVER: IRENE SULLIVAN, Montclair, New Jersey