
BOOK REVIEWS

REFERENCE

Beyond Geometry: Experiments in Form, 1940s - 70s, edited by Lynn Zelevansky (Cambridge, MIT Press, with Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 2004, \$49.95 cloth) shows the experiments that artists in Europe, North America, and South America were doing after World War II. Rebellious against mathematical purity of earlier geometric modernism and countering Abstract Expressionism and Art Informel, these artists emphasized three-dimensionality, the repetition of modular elements, the conceptual underpinnings of art, and the performative to engage the viewer in the creative process and achieve broader intellectual, sensual, and emotive range in their work.

Showcasing over 200 works by 139 artists that chart the development of these experiments in form, this volume brings together European and Latin American concrete art, Argentine Arte Madi, Brazilian Neo-Concretism, Kinetic and Op Art, Minimalism, and various forms of post-minimalism including systematic forms of process and conceptual art. An amazing array of artists is discussed by Zelevansky, Ines Katzenstein, Valerie Hillings, Miklos Peternak, Peter Frank, and Brandon LaBelle that place the work in context of its history and the aesthetic and social issues of the time. Peter Frank's essay on "Geometric Literature: From Concrete Poetry to Artists' Books" will be of special interest to readers of *Umbrella*. Includes chronology, index, besides a checklist.

Art, Performance, Media: 31 Interviews, edited by Nicholas Zurbrugg (Univ. of Minnesota Press, 2004, \$25.95 paper, \$77.95 cloth) is a unique opportunity to see what these 31 avant-garde artists think about their work, their lives, and the art world, and even each other. Thanks to the perseverance, dynamic personality, knowledge and understanding, Zurbrugg, the late professor of English and cultural studies, as well as the director of the Centre of Contemporary Arts at De Montfort University in Leicester, England, has given us a mirror of those cutting-edge artists who

emerged from the 1960s onward, who wrote, made videos, performed, danced, made music and so much more, all ephemeral, all fleeting except for people like Zurbrugg who captured their thoughts on paper through conversation. These artists defied tradition, crossed genres, and forever changed how art would be created, performed, and interpreted.

It was a great loss in 2001 when Zurbrugg prematurely left us, for his dynamic curiosity, personality and ingenuity promoted and forever cataloged a record of these leading intermedial artists of the postmodern American art world. His legacy is not only this book, but so many other studies, students and ripples in the pond of intermedial studies. Some of the artists are: Kathy Acker, Laurie Anderson, Robert Ashley, William S. Burroughs, John Cage, Diamanda Galas, John Giorno, Philip Glass, Brion Gysin, Dick Higgins, Robert Lax, Steve Reich, Emmett Williams, Robert Wilson. Short biographies and a bibliography complete this volume, which should be in all contemporary American art collections. This is a must!

A Minimal Future? Art as Object 1958-1968, edited by Ann Goldstein (Cambridge, MIT Press with Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004, \$50 cloth) documents the landmark exhibition which took six years in the making and focused on the Minimal movement over 10 years with 40 artists. The series of essays by art historians and scholars re-examines minimal art's emergency and historical context.

Essays by Goldstein, the curator of the exhibition, Lucy R. Lippard, James Meyer, Jonathan Flatley, Anne Rorimer, Carrie Lambert and Diedrich Diederichsen relates Minimalism to music, performance, conceptual art, East and West Coast, and Donald Judd and Andy Warhol. Yet, what is more important is that Minimalism is placed in the context of the concurrent aesthetics of modernist abstraction, pop art, and the beginning ideas of conceptual art. Minimalism in this exhibition and in this catalog is touted as the catalyst for new strategies of structure, form, material, image

and production of the art object. The viewer now is involved and so is the space in which it is presented.

But this volume also contains ancillary information that becomes crucial to the understanding of this movement and its context: a general bibliography, a chronology of group exhibitions and reviews, artists' selected bibliographies and exhibitions. The catalog has been designed by Lorraine Wild, who, with her associates Robert Ruchlman and Stuart Smith, created an exceptional volume. With 300 illustrations, 200 in color, this is a sizable volume, one that is essential for all contemporary art collections. New chapters in art history have been made by Zelevansky and Goldstein.

GENERAL

Constantin Brancusi: The Essence of Things, edited by Carmen Gimenez and Matthew Gale (New York, Abrams, with the Guggenheim Museum and Tate Modern, 2004, \$40.00 hardback) accompanies his first major exhibition in Britain at Tate Modern, London and his first exhibition in New York in 35 years at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum. This volume focuses on 40 works that represent the essence of Brancusi's art. Essays by Gimenez, Gale, Sanda Miller, Alexandra Parigoris, and Jon Wood draw upon recent scholarship to address Brancusi's early development and his position in the context of his times. With 90 illustrations in full color, the reader will have a greater appreciation of the art of this towering figure in early 20th century art.

The Figurative Sculpture of Magdalena Abakanowicz: Bodies, Environments, and Myths by Joanna Inglot (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, \$45.00 cloth) is an independent and in-depth study of the most widely known Polish artist, Magdalena Abakanowicz. We see how in the midst of a Communist regime and international power struggles, this woman overcame all of that and became one of the most powerful figurative sculptors in the late 20th century. From textile artist to fiber sculptor within her country's postwar struggle, Inglot shows that Abakanowicz is closely tied to her Polish roots, but becomes universal in her compelling forms to outdoor environments in the early 1990s.

Abakanowicz is not only a compelling artist, but a force to be reckoned with in her attitudes and opinions

in Europe and in the USA. Inglot lets us know how the artist transcended the context of her culture and became an international force. 49 black and white photographs, 13 color illustrations, bibliography, index.

Art of the Japanese Postcard: The Leonard A. Lauder Collection at the Museum of Fine Arts with essays by Anne Nishimura Morse, I. Thomas Rimer and Kendall H. Brown (London, Lund Humphries for the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, 2004, \$45.00 cloth) is a magnificent album and discussion of the postcard in Japan, thanks to the collection of Leonard A. Lauder, who recognized that postcards in the Far East were actual works of art designed by prominent artists, which had a visual impact beyond their modest format. What they also depicted was the shift from "East" to "West" at a time when European currents such as Art Nouveau began to show up in Japanese visual productions.

300 full-color examples of these cards are astonishing not only for their beauty and quality of printing, but also for the insight they show into Japanese contemporary artistic practices as well as the interplay between European and Japanese fashions. This is a stunning album, one which one can treasure for years to come! Distributed by d.a.p.

Andy Warhol: 365 Takes, The Andy Warhol Museum Collection by the staff of the Andy Warhol Museum (New York, Abrams, 2004, \$29.95 hardcover) bowls us over with this collection of ephemera and personal memorabilia and Warhol's work, some of which has never been seen before. With almost 400 objects, from paintings to party invitations, this book features quotes from Warhol's own irreverent writings along with insightful commentary by the museum's staff. This book is a kick and indicates to us that there is more in Warhol than Campbell Soup cans—much, much more.

I'll Be Your Mirror: The Collected Andy Warhol Interviews, edited by Kenneth Goldsmith (New York, Carroll & Graf, 2004, \$17.00 paper) is the first ever collection of these interviews—a fascinating selection of the Pop Art pioneer's utterances on everything from the art of fame to dinner with Burroughs to the work of Basquiat to the Last Interview by Paul Taylor.

With a preface by Wayne Kostenbaum and an introduction by Reva Wolf, this volume collates all the interviews into one volume. Since Warhol used the interview as his favorite form of communication, leading to his own magazine *Interview*, each of his interviews has a new twist on that personality, enigmatic, witty, and oftentimes defining. It begins with an enigmatic interview with David Bourdon and then AW turns around and interviews David Bourdon. Goldsmith's search for these interviews is intriguing, and he's still collecting, so this is a volume of selected interviews, the "best" of what's available. Half come from the 1960s, which seem to be the most revealing. Bibliography, notes, index. A must!

Street Logos by Tristan Manco (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2004, \$19.95 paper) documents graffiti artists which are replacing tags with more personal logos, infusing an original language of forms and images with contemporary graphic design and illustration. With 485 illustrations of subverted signs, spontaneous drawings, iconic symbols and curious characters, the 21st century graffiti artist shows the variety from Los Angeles to Barcelona, Stockholm to Tokyo, Melbourne to Milan. Bibliography and websites

Seurat and the Making of La Grande Jatte by Robert L. Herbert with an essay by Neil Harris (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, \$65.00 hardcover, \$34.95 paper) tells the story of how Seurat created the artist's greatest work, one of the most remarkable of the 19th century, which included an extensive landscape peopled with over 40 figures.

The author brought together all known studies and drawings directly related to the painting, providing this volume as a visual and contextual survey of Seurat's working methods and aesthetic priorities, demonstrating the evolutionary process that culminated in this crowning achievement. Included are 55 preparatory works, ranging from rich *conté* crayon drawings to oil sketches on small wood panels to larger studies painted on canvas. The care of this artist harks back to Old Master traditions and methods, rather than those of contemporary peers. He had ambitions for his masterpiece and that is indicated in the essays. Herbert shows Seurat's impact on twentieth-century artists such as Léger and others from the School of Paris.

The painting has been in the possession of the Art Institute of Chicago since 1926, so Neil Harris assesses the painting's iconic status in Chicago and beyond, considering the painting's promotion, presentation, and exhibition. 307 color and 64 black-and-white illustrations. Includes related works, appendices, checklist, selected bibliography, lenders, index and photography credits. An amazing study!

Campbell Kids Alphabet Soup, an ABC Book (New York, Abrams, 2004, \$17.95 hardcover) is a fully-illustrated retrospective of the 100th anniversary of the Campbell Kids, those rose-cheeked, cherub-faced youngsters who in 1904 appeared to advertise a food product. Gebbie Drayton's first sketches exploded into a decade-by-decade series of antics by the Kids over the years. They posed as Rosie the Riveter during World War II and flower children in the 1960s, they promoted the American Red Cross, promoted war bonds, helped conserve electricity, and even promoted children's self-esteem. A joyful ABC of nostalgia.

World Graphic Design: Contemporary Graphics from Africa, the Far East, Latin America and the Middle East by Geoffrey Caban (London, Merrell, 2004, \$49.95 hardback) is the first survey of contemporary graphic design and designers outside the United Kingdom, mainland Europe, North America and Australasia. With some historical context, the emphasis in this study is on contemporary work of posters, book and record covers, packaging and promotion. This is design which is a reflection of its time, place and people, divided into Africa, the Arab world, the Far East and Latin America. For each region, a brief general introduction sets the work in its cultural and political context. Then there are spread-by-spread entries featuring the work of individual designers or studios. There is also a comprehensive list of all the featured designers and studios, with their data. 250 color illustrations

PHOTOGRAPHY

Hector Acebes: Portraits in Africa 1948-1953 by Isolde Brielmaier and Ed Marquand (Seattle, Marquand Books, 2004, \$40.00 hardback) finally gives this 82-year-old Columbian photographer and traveler his fair due. With an early flair for photography,

training in engineering, and a yen to travel, Acebes' long and productive career as a documentary and industrial filmmaker led him to Africa and South America in the late 1940s and early 1950s. These newly rediscovered images attest to his great gift of targeting individuals, families and communities set among busy markets, monumental architecture, and broad landscapes. These large format portraits in black and white say it all, making each of his subjects iconic and glorifying the Africa and South America which some of us will never see except in these amazingly beautiful photographs.

Marquand, the director of the Acebes Archive, writes a short biography and Brielmaier puts the photographer into context of other photographers working at the time, but also discusses the aesthetics of these magnificent prints. A remarkable contribution. Here we have the female body as spectacle, the beauty of people of color in these two continents, and the care of the prints that this intuitive and distinguished photographer has taken.

John Vachon's America: Photographs and Letters from the Depression to World War II by John Vachon, edited by Miles Orvell (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, \$49.95 hardback) is, believe it or not, the first collection to feature Vachon's work, although he has been known as one of the most sensitive FSA photographers, who traveled throughout the U.S. photographing the land and the people from the Depression to World War II. This writer worked with those photographs at the Library of Congress and Vachon was always one of my favorite documentary photographers, because he always had poetry in his images.

Now I find out that he always had a yen to be a writer, and the letters he wrote from the field to his wife back home reflect vividly the American conditions on movies and jazz, on landscape, and on his job fulfilling the directives from Washington to capture the heart of America. These wonderfully long letters kept him from being homesick, allowed him to review each day, and helped those at home realize what he was doing for the government and for America. Instead of short e-mails, these journals kept his family and himself linked, and instead of sending photographs, he created photographs with words.

Orvell's insightful introduction and essay show that his association with Vachon's daughter, Ann, allowed him to see the journals, letters and writings which amplify and introduce us to both a gifted photographer and a complex man in the midst of difficult times. The world should know these photographs and this man, and this book is a good beginning.

Water Rites by Lucinda Devlin, edited by Susanne Breidenbach and text by Michael Mackenzie (Gottingen, Steidl, 2003, \$30.00 hardcover) is Devlin's discovery of unexpected symbolic levels in the architecture of the German spa. Her camera creates the context for the human body although the bodies are missing from the images. But German attributes seem to be revealed by this photos: cleanliness, order, severity, technical sophistication. Devlin's choice of German spas involves distinctive architecture, curative regimens, and their historical connection to European culture. The absence of human bodies emphasizes the pain and affliction which plague those bodies.

In contrast, spas in the U.S. add relaxation and pleasure to the mix. But these images are beautiful, clear and indicative of a very acute and sensitive eye to architecture and culture through the camera. Dist. by d.a.p.

Tina Modotti & Edward Weston: The Mexico Years by Sarah M. Lowe (London, Merrell, 2004, \$49.95 hardcover) is the catalog to an exhibition at the Barbican Art Galleries in London. The couple traveled to Mexico in 1923 shortly after the Mexican Revolution and at the start of a period that became known as "Mexican Renaissance". This is the beginning of Modernist photographic aesthetics where photography saw itself as "modern".

With 150 duotone illustrations of Modotti and Weston, published together here for the first time, we have a record of these two artists' responses to a time and place that led to extraordinary artistic creativity. In addition to Modotti and Weston are the photographs of Manuel Alvarez Bravo and Mariana Yampolsky, two Mexican photographers whose work was influenced by these two foreigners. This is a stunning collection and an insightful discussion of the relationship of these two photographers.

Photographers of Genius at the Getty by Weston Naef (Los Angeles, Getty Museum, 2004, \$60.00 hardcover, \$35.00 paper) celebrates twenty years of collecting photographs highlighting 38 photographers. Beginning in the early 19th century through the mid-twentieth century, there are three outstanding images along with Naef's single-page commentary for each photographer. Images range from daguerreotypes to cyanotypes, glass stereographs, salt prints and silver prints.

Among the artists in this volume are Julia Margaret Cameron, Eugène Atget, Alfred Stieglitz, August Sander, Kértész, Man Ray, Edward Weston, Cartier-Bresson, Bravo, Walker Evans, Dorothea Lange, Weegee, and Diane Arbus. 60 color and 54 duotone illustrations complete this sumptuous volume. Selected publications of the Getty on photographers, index.

Meetings by Paul Shambroom (London, Chris Boot, 2004, \$49.95 hardcover) is full-color documentation of the artist's attending hundreds of town council meetings across the United States over a period of four years. Using a large format panoramic camera, he photographed the participants and the rituals of civic power as staged tableaux, so that these dramatic pictures resemble epic history paintings, describing the humble practice of democratic local government on a grand scale. The all-too-mythic demonstration of democracy at work in the characteristic small town American ambience perhaps eludes the big-city shenanigans of the democratic system dysfunctional, but this time the artist accompanies these photographs at the back of the book with full minutes of each meeting (some 40,000 words in total). Not a smile appears in any of these meeting photographs. Alexis de Toqueville's comments on township democracy from his *Democracy in America* (1835) is quoted at length as an introductory essay. The participants are serious, very serious. It's a keener lesson in democracy than the textbooks. In this most crucial of political years, this book and its accompanying exhibition at Julie Saul Gallery in New York City on 21 October reflects the crisis of democracy, a democracy at stake, in the November elections for president. Includes 40 color photographs.

EXHIBITION CATALOGS

Hannah Wilke: Selected Work 1960-1992 documents the work of the artist at a recent exhibition at SolwayJones Gallery in Los Angeles. With a long relationship of the Solway family to Wilke's work, it is not unusual that her sister connected with the gallery in this posthumous exhibition which is part biography, part reminiscence of a spirit and a talent now gone, but not forgotten. With an essay by her sister, Marsie Scharlatt, about Hannah in California, and allusions to her writing, her life and her art in every page, this is a memorable catalog, with a major essay by Arlene Raven, who places Wilke's work in context and shows how much of a forerunner she was with materials and content. Includes 15 color and 4 black and white photographs, a chronology and a checklist. Available for \$20.00 plus \$3.85 priority mail from SolwayJones, 5377 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90036.

Global Village: The 60s, edited by Stéphane Aquin (Montreal, Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, 2003, \$53.00 hardcover) is based on a quotation from Marshall McLuhan in his 1962 book, *The Gutenberg Galaxy*: "The new electronic interdependence recreates the world in the image of a global village." No longer were borders dividing humanity, but with satellites and the web of electromagnetic waves, every corner of the globe could be connected, and this different world without rigid constraints reflected Bob Dylan's chant, "The times were a-changin'".

This exhibit is divided into Space, Media, Disorder and Change. Space is reflected in the cold war, fashion, architecture and interior design. Media deals with the way in which television's phenomenal expansion transformed culture with Pop Art, pop idols and popular culture. Disorder reflected the multitude of conflicts which rocked the foundation of Western society and created new moral and philosophical crises. And Change ended the decade with the environmental movement, virtual realities, the counter-culture with drug-altered states of consciousness.

Using the interview format as a typical 1960s form as exemplified in *Playboy* magazine in the 1960s, and citing the fact that many of the subjects in the exhibition were still alive, this volume covers interviews with Ettore Sottsass, Arthur Danto, Agnès Varda, Okwui Enwezor, Carolee Schneemann, and Yoko Ono, among others. There is a chronology, a checklist, and a selected bibliography. It is a highly colorful catalog with 271 illustrations which are strikingly vivid designed by American graphic artist Susan Marsh. Distributed by d.a.p.