

ARTIST BOOK REVIEWS

Most of these books can be ordered directly from Printed Matter, 77 Wooster St., New York, NY 10012.

REFERENCE

Libri d'artista in Italia 1960-1998 by Liliana DeMatteis and Giorgio Maffei is a new regional series called *Catalogar arte*, of which this is the first publication. The province of Piedmont (or Piemonte) in Italy is sponsoring this series with regard to conservation, evaluation and promotion of its cultural resources and a desire to reinforce the dissemination and promotion, exhibition of its patrimony. Quite a task, and this first volume in both Italian and in English allows one to see the great contribution of Italy to the world of artists' books. This is a kind of who's who in artists' books in Italy, those who made a name for themselves and for the field through the medium of book! Names such as Giuseppe Chiari, Bruno Munari, Maurizio Nannucci, Luca Maria Patella, Eugenio Miccini, Luigi Ontani, who try to "define" the artist book, while others just make them, hundreds of them, many of which are illustrated in this rich volume (687 in fact!) There are 2,928 cataloged artist books in this volume!

What can one say? This catalog of artist books is amazing, with a chronological bibliography, an index of publishers, a critical contextual essay, and it is in English and in Italian! If you have a collection in an institution, you must have this book! If you are a collector, you must have this book! If you are a scholar in the field, you must have this book! 70,000 lire, 36 Euro, or \$40.00 US to Libri d'artista, Via Principe Amedeo 29, 10123 Torino, Italy. Postage will be charged at cost.

The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists' Books by Renée Riese Hubert & Judd D. Hubert (New York, Granary Books, 1999, \$55.00) is a tribute to the new literature of artists' books, which has increased tenfold in such a way that this is the skilled "reading" of some 40 artists' books from a critical point of view with the care and precision that the Huberts are known for. This is a major contribution to the literature of the once marginalized but now valued medium called "book" which visual artists have utilized for decades. This book is a great read, but perhaps not all at once. The artists who have been chosen by the Huberts are well known to a small group of connoisseurs or not even known before the revelations cited in this volume.

What is more revealing are the chapter titles which reveal the flow of the book: from Visual departures to Perturbations in our Reading Habits; from Altering Books to Variations on the Accordion; from The Book, the Museum, and Public Art to Satire, The Metamorphosis of Childhood Games, ending with the Crystallizations of Memory. One can imagine the

authors combing through these bookworks, discussing together all the elements, and then attacking the blank page with critical analyses and deep perceptions that are new to any and all readers. This book is a class act, an act of scholars who have donned the cloak of "critic" and have served their reading public well. There is a care, a concern, and insights that are truly new, and it is a tribute to Steven Clay's Granary Books that has exemplified not only an initiator of publishing editions of artist books, but a library of reference tools to appreciate the medium. There is a generosity of spirit which has allowed these two scholars to open up their minds, hands and hearts and shared with us their insights, their perceptions, and their joy at "reading" these works of art. A bibliography and index complete this volume, which should take the reader into new worlds and perhaps allow them to find these books and enjoy them for years to come. Distributed by D.A.P.

Edward Ruscha: Editions 1959-1999, a slip-cased, two volume publication (Minneapolis, Walker Art Center, 1999, dist. by D.A.P., \$85.00) is a comprehensive catalog of the print projects, editions, and artist books of Edward Ruscha. Often grouped with the Pop and Conceptual artists, Ruscha is more aptly placed in a category that bridges both movements, and this Catalogue Raisonné certainly marks the artist as a most important graphic artist, besides his influence on contemporary painting.

Volume 1 includes some 400 images, marking a complete Catalogue Raisonné of Ruscha's editioned print work. But each of the artist books, for instance, are completed photographed flat page by page. The photographs are basically identification photos, but sufficient to be read.

Volume 2 includes an illustrated essay by curator Siri Engberg and a remarkable reading of Ruscha's bookworks by Clive Phillpot, a key to the catalogue, the complete text entries, a bibliography and exhibition history, as well as Ruscha's now famous *The Information Man*.

Phillpot's take on Ruscha's book in this new reading is detailed, reasoned and carefully researched. It is an eye-opener for those who have not known and seen these books in sequence, for their evolution reveals Ruscha as a visual poet and his intentions in making each bookwork make one realize how astute, and yet humorous, he is.

This is a valuable addition to any research collection on artist books, on Ed Ruscha, on contemporary prints and editioned work of a California artist who has a universal appeal. The bookworks are definitely a reflection of an Ed Ruscha who is closer to his medium and perhaps more personal than in any other editioned work he has created. And because the books are so personal, they are a key to understanding many of the graphic works, as well as the paintings.

The only criticism there is is the unnecessary and perhaps most ephemeral part of this important Catalogue Raisonné, namely a ridiculous paper jacket that wraps the two hardbound volumes in their box. The reader does not know what to do with such a slipjacket, nor will it endure, for these two volumes I am sure will be used for years to come as a basic research tool, with or without the slipjacket!

The Visual Poetry of Mirella Bentivoglio (Roma, Edizioni De Luca, 1999, \$21.95 paper) is a joint publication of the National Museum of Women in the Art and the Italian Cultural Institute located in Washington, DC where Bentivoglio had joint exhibitions in the spring of 1999. This exhibition catalog is a reflection of the poetic, philosophical, and activist nature of the artist, who has influenced a few generations of artists to create visual and concrete poetry. Accompanied by an interview with the artist by the librarian of the National Museum of Women in the Art, Krystyna Wasserman, as well as a major essay by Frances K. Pohl, entitled: "The Art of Alternatives: The Work of Mirella Bentivoglio", in which books, words, and images have been part of the artist's life from birth. Progressing from concrete poetry to visual poetry, the book and the egg have become the natural symbols of Mirella Bentivoglio's art. With 25 color plates, many black and white illustrations, as well as a bibliography, chronology, critical commentaries and checklist, this is a stunning contribution to the life of artist books, concrete and visual poetry and a great artist. Order from National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1250 New York Ave., N.W., Washington, DC.

RESOURCES

Susan Kapuscinski Gaylord has begun a new publishing venture to get the material she has developed teaching bookmaking in the schools to a wider audience:

Sounds and Letters: Making Books for Beginning Readers contains 6 bookmaking projects including an alphabet book, a book of beginning sounds, ending sounds, short vowels, rhymes, and a sequence book. The illustrations are clear, the text is simple and direct, and anyone who wishes to teach young people would benefit from these instructional tools. \$5.95

Shapes and Colors: Making Books for Kindergarten is another in this series, which contains a list of materials and tools and at least 6 projects in each booklet. This is for pre-K to K.

Patterns and Numbers: Making Books for Beginning Math (Grades K to 1) and **Festivals of Light** (for pre-K to 6) are all 32 pages long, priced at \$5.95 plus shipping and handling, to be ordered by mail from Seastreet Press, Box 852, Newburyport, MA 01950.

Sherrill Cuning has been publishing books about bookmaking and structures for many years. Some of the titles available are:

The World's Greatest Glue Guide; A Rubber Stamper's Treasure Chest; Exploring the Concertina Spine: Book and Card Forms; Dioramas; Enchanting Turnabouts; A Guide to Watercolor Wonders are just a few of her publications which are in second and third editions. Write to Sherrill Cuning, 1610 Jeffrey Avenue, Escondido, CA 92027 for more information and how to acquire these titles. They are spiral-bound, have illustrations for each structure and idea, and are paperbound. The books are more like manuals, rather than finished books of pictures.

REVIEWS

Lost & Found Characters by Alan Butella is a masterpiece, not just of this artist's oeuvre, but a masterpiece of creativity using type as a medium. Butella has been an experimenter with type, but time he has taken delicate letters and type and made them into dancers on the page. This exquisite presentation divulges the artistry of an experimenter of type who has pushed all the buttons and painted with an artistry of typographical invention. Each page of vellum with characteristic dancing type is interspersed with a page holding a central emblem which is also made of type. The book leaves you breathless and you want to look at each page at length. It is a treasure, full of surprises and enough to delight the eye for years to come. This is a book like no other! Edition of 250. Chicago, 1997, \$65)

Sarah Sze (Chicago, MCA, 1999, \$12, 41a WhiteWalls) is a catalog/bookwork that documents a magical installation at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. Here, she made installations out of domestic odds and ends commonplace objects, toolboxes, briefcases, etc. The detritus of our culture becomes the material for her installations. Her installations require both a physical and a psychological reaction from the viewer, first to scrutinize the parts, then to take in the composite. Using ephemera, she creates ephemeral looking installations that have a magic and mystery combined. If you don't know her name, remember it, for you will read about her for years to come!

Magnetic Map by Lenore Malen (New York, Warm Gun Press, 1999, \$10) is the product of an exhibition at Art in General in New York City from 17 April - 26 June, involving a treasure hunt based on the mingling of the improbable and the mundane. Instructions include locating the sites on the map on the frontispiece and the buildings where 10 magnets have been sighted. Then one must find the buildings in lower Manhattan, removing only one of the

magnets attached to each site, assembling all ten magnets in a row, and rearranging them until their crude inscriptions spell an incantation. The one who mailed the phrase along with name and address to Art in General would be eligible for a prize and prizes would be given to all winners. A real gold prize would be given to the first two correct entries received by 26 June. The book stands by itself as a guide for lower Manhattan, and the game may still be played, however without prizes.

Alphagami 2 by Louise Odes Neaderland (Brooklyn, Bone Hollow Arts, 1999, \$15) is a playful structure which unfolds showing additional folded pages which fan out into an endless star within a star format with pages printed with many large black and white letters. This visual poem, somewhat fleeting but always flowing, is a joy to read, handle and discover. Origami 2 is 6 origami bird bases (diamonds) with back and front flaps folded over. Each flap is overlapped and lightly glued (3 dots of tacky low moisture glue) except for the final flaps of nos. 1 and 6 which are reverse folded on themselves to form the front and back covers. The artist then inserted a piece of chip board in each of these to give the covers a little more body. Fascinating!

Flux Flow by Tom Bonaud (San Francisco, 1999, \$25) is a gorgeously produced offset full-color bookwork which demonstrates the artist's design skills and speaks without words of the artist's design skills, his printing techniques (offset as a medium, rather than a tool), and how images need no words. In our visual culture, this universal language speaks volumes. It is beautifully housed in its own offset envelope.

Cities on the Move: 2727 kilometers Bottari Truck by Kim Soo-Ja (Korea, 1998, \$20) is the documentation of a global project. This performance took place over 11 days from 4 - 14 November 1997 in most of the cities and villages in Korea that were related to the artist's life. The e-mail interview with Hans-Ulrich Obrist was held from 16 April 1998 through 5 May 1998, citing the fact that the project took place as a real time event (the truck was loaded with piles of colored fabrics consisting of used clothes and bed covers and tied with black rope, as videos, as a sound installation, as an exhibition on airplanes, as a book. The exhibition at Secession in Vienna in late 1997 and at the Bordeaux Contemporary Art Museum in the summer of 1998, traveled to P.S. 1 in New York in late 1998. Ms. Kim also inserted an exhibition of her work in *Asiana Airlines* magazine, adding to the Cities on the Move project. The "bottari" or bundles represent time and memory and people. The truck is on exhibition at the Venice Biennale in the Arsenale, seemingly lifeless, but the artist has given the

truck steam and mobility with this beautiful book. Contains chronology and bibliography.

Diseases of Consciousness by Critical Art Ensemble (ed. of 70) is a cloth bound vertical book bound by ribbon with conceptual diseases illustrated by exquisite drawings, diseases such as irritable brain syndrome, dysfunctional reality lobe, hardening of the categories, premature conceptual secretions—and the illustrations are in the tradition of Dickens or French disease manuals—and the names of the diseases are printed in red. And how about *Cancer of the Will*? What a delicious book that makes commentary on social mores of our day and any day. \$40.00

Non-Identifying Social, Genetic Report by David Schulz (Brooklyn, NY, Hammer Productions, 1999, \$15) in a limited edition (100 copies) is an artist's portrayal of an ever-ending sociological phenomenon in the past decade of adopted children looking for their birth parents. As a result, there are photos taken by the artist, his comments in his own handwriting, and typewritten captions from the report of the Lutheran Social Services report analyzing the character of the birth mother and reporting on the story behind the adoption for the mother of the artist. This is a most moving book, one which reflects a visual person's reaction to a very serious problem in our culture. This particular birth mother did not want to see her son. Even the cost of the report is cited on the back cover. The wisdom of this young man is reflected in his comments. A significant social issue reflected in a visual interpretation.

What is to be Done? by D. Thorne (New York, Hot Water Publications, 1999, \$6.00) is a booklet of found political photographs with commentary by The Capitalists as captions for the photos and a plea at the end to destroy the very authors. Thorne has made a case for the problems of globalization, a tongue-in-cheek exposé of some of the major political problems of our time.

He's Got a Gun! by D. Thorne (New York, 1999, \$10) is a small spiral-bound book with a huge explosive subject of those who have been shot dead by police in various U.S. cities. The photographs on each page on the left show a gun or a document belonging to the dead person juxtaposed with other loaded photographs and text to accompany political photographs that demonstrate another social commentary. This book was made for the Volumes Project coordinated by Susan Johanknecht and Katherine Meynell in London, England.

Teach your Child to Tell Time by Dave Hornor (Brooklyn, 246 Press, 1999, \$15.00) consists of cuttings from the *New*

York Times of advertisements of expensive watches, which are assigned in red rubber stamps (large size) the price for the items, which range from \$75 to \$18,000! A time-consuming effort! But what it really is about is the world in which we are raising our children and our responsibility to them. Each morning, Hornor looks at the *New York Times*, especially the first section with the international news and the watch ads. Today on page 2 there's an ad for an \$18,600 gold and diamond Cartier watch. Beside it, in the News Summary, there's a grim report from Kosovo followed by another from China about its nuclear warheads. Expensive watches in a troubled world.

Die Toten 1967-1993 by Hans-Peter Feldmann (Düsseldorf, Feldmann Verlag, 1998, \$19.50) is a collection of black and white photos of dead persons from the student riots, the RAF, the Baader-Meinhof gang, and others, one person to a page with full name and date of death. These deaths were the result of terrorism, and Feldmann documents the more than 100 people that have died during the 26 years.

1000 Frauen: Die Sammlung Hansen (Düsseldorf, Feldmann Verlag, 1998, \$19.50) is a collection of 1000 photographs of women taken from a private collection of 6000. The text (one page) is in German which would probably explain the reason for these photo albums, but the collection shows women in all phases of life—from the beach to the mountains, from work to play, from travel to military service, with more emphasis on leisure than work.

What it is, and how it is done by Crispin Hellion Glover (Los Angeles, Volcanic Eruptions, 2d ed., 1998, \$25) is another in the production of this actor-artist who subtitles this book "A Man's life in reverse, as disclosed in three parts: elderly, middle age, and youth. These parts are variously disclosed in first, second, and third person. This book further contains a preface, an introduction to part two, and a table of contents." Using found photos, film stills, and a found book, *A Son of Mother*, this seems like a "horror story" but really is something more. If you can take some of the photos, you can get through the "youthing" process rather than the "aging" process. This is a hard bound bookwork.

Do you know Mr. Chauvin? By Edwin Janssen (Buenos Aires, Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes, 1997, \$15) was published on the occasion of this Dutch artist's exhibition at the Museum in Buenos Aires. More than likely, the artist asked these 11 people to answer certain questions, such as "Does nationality mean anything to you? If yes, what? If no, why not?" or "Who is your national hero or who are your national heroes?" and the answers are published interspersed

with news photographs and other photographs that illustrate national heritage, etc. The book is beautifully designed with black and white and many color photographs. The survey continues, with the bulk of the book in English. At the back, the texts are translated into Dutch and Spanish, including a list of illustrations. A most revealing survey.

Letter to a Friend by Allen Ruppertsberg (Frankfurt am Main, Portikus, 1998, \$10) is the result of an installation by Ruppertsberg created especially for the space at Portikus Gallery in Frankfurt. Four elements define this installation, a distinctive floor covering similar to a checkerboard form as a foil for black and white letters and numbers which make up the words and dates. The letter contains a list of the names of nine famous personalities from the arts such as de Kooning, Lichtenstein, Byars, Huebler and Kippenberger, all dead, and the writers Burroughs and Ginsberg, the actor Robert Mitchum, and the architect Aldo Rossi. All of these people affected the life and career of Ruppertsberg, all of whom represent avant-garde artists in their respective fields. The second element is a series of vertical, rectangular drawings, framed in black and hung one above the other, representing obituaries of each of the dead artists, although incomplete because cut off by the frame. Then there are Poster Objects leaning on the wall as a third element, initially printed on paper with bright neon colors and block letters on paper and fixed on metal or glass carriers. The statements such as "What should I do?" confront the viewer. And the fourth element is the exhibition poster, which depicts a famous painting by Nicolas Poussin, *Les bergers d'Arcadie*, a landscape of classical, heroic conception. The two essays by Angelika Nollert and Wolfgang Zumnick are in English and in German and are profoundly significant for the reader, and in fact, for the artist, whose own persona is never defined in this exhibition, but whose art herein is a quiet homage to the dead and to death. The letter, by the way, is "written" to friend Terry Allen, the "T" in the salutation. Selected bibliography, but the bookwork/catalog is significant.

Never Enough of You by Daniele Buetti (Valencia, Cimal Arte Internacional, 1998, \$25) celebrates the installation that the artist created for the Kunstverein Ulm and "Be my guide Poppy, Poppy Star" at the Damasquine Art Gallery in Brussels. The titles and the language in the installations is in English, while the essays are in German and in French. The installations consist of videos, the paradoxical relations of the media and the public, a reflection of our social times, where self-inflicted tattoos, beauty, and seduction. In full color, this is a stunning publication, one that reveals the social consciousness and unassuming presence of the artist in all that he does.

Viaje a la Luna by Frederic Amat (Barcelona, Ediciones de l'Eixample, 1998, \$22.40) with texts by Amat and Federico Garcia Lorca is a beautifully printed spiral-bound double spread bookwork which takes the reader on a visual voyage to another world of tattoos, meetings, artwork, photo stills, which celebrates the silent film which reflects the poetry and the images of Lorca when he was living in New York. This book combines the poem called *Poet in New York* along with the theater work, *El Publico*. So the book serves as combination of poetry, theater, film and artworks which penetrate the influences and echoes of this profound influence by the poet. The film was adapted and directed by Frederic Amat. A stunning presentation which is printed in glorious color!

Dance by Keith Haring (New York, Bulfinch Press, Little/Brown, 1999, \$12.95 hardback) includes 40 of Haring's most compelling images of dance in all its various expressions. Beside each image which is printed in hot oranges, yellows and blues are entries from Haring's journal revealing his thoughts on life, dance, and especially art. His philosophy permeates all the drawings as well.

Love by Keith Haring (New York, Bulfinch Press, Little/Brown, 1999, \$12.95 hardback) is a series of energetic drawings by Haring in red, pink, black and white which are accompanied by a love poem Haring wrote when he was a teenager, called "From Me to You." It is a wonderful gift.

100 Boots by Eleanor Antin (Philadelphia, Running Press, 1999, \$14.95 hardcover) commemorates a mail art event begun in 1971 by one of America's first performance artists, Eleanor Antin. **100Boots** consists of 51 black-and-white postcard images of 100 black rubber boots, sent by Antin through the U.S. Postal Service to more than 1,000 people over a period of three years. Included were many artists such as Sol LeWitt and Andy Warhol, William Wegman, John Cage, Judy Chicago, Jasper Johns and celebrities such as Betty Friedan, George Plimpton, Leonard Bernstein, Phil Glass and Alan Ginsberg.

As is the custom, many U.S. postal clerks participated in the event by hand-canceling the postcards and strategically positioning the cancellation marks. Each postcard is an installation in a picaresque novel, with the hero of the story collectively the 100 Books. In the beginning the boots engage in everyday suburban life, going to the market, church, and drive-in movies. Later, disillusioned, they trespass on private property and engage in the antiwar movement. Unable to avoid the draft, the 100 boots go to war. By the time they arrive in New York City, they have become cultural icons, representatives of the new American experience.

Kaddish by Christian Boltanski (Munich, Gina Kehayoff Verlag, 1998, \$65) is a publication on the occasion of the artist's exhibition at the Musée de la Ville de Paris in 1998. It is a book without words, in Boltanski's inimitable style, which portrays full face frontal portraits. The subtitle is: human, material, local and mortal. And here there are photos of individuals, young and old in full face, as well as interrelationships portrayed, young, old, many soldiers with their family and loved ones, objects of clothing, objects, locales, and the dead. The book is so beautifully printed that each sheet, so thin but strong, holding the image so well on either side that they do not have the transparency that they seemingly portray, largely because of the full page photographs with no borders or gutters. It is a journey through human lives which come from museums in Darmstadt, Vienna, Madrid, Aachen and from Walther König Verlag in Cologne. But it is not the source that counts in these photographs, but in their juxtapositions, and in their individual power. *Kaddish* is the prayer for the dead in Hebrew but it is not a mournful prayer, but one that elevates the glory of the Lord. It has a positive sense to it, rather than a saddened negativity. This book may also elevate your sensitivity and your memory of World War II. It haunts me even as I write these words. An amazing volume. (Dist. by Te Neues, New York).

Flatnessisgod, art + design + process + picture plane theory + x,y by Ryan McGinness (New York, Soft Skull Press and Razorfish Studios, 1999, \$24.50 paper), cutting edge commercial graphic designer, but also a New York artist, contains studies, experiments, logo developments, layouts, paintings, New York City graffiti, art haiku and mistranslated text from Japanese candy, *flatnessisgod*. He starts with Picture Plane Theory and divides the book into 11 chapters: Base, Image, Reduction, Space, Language, Identity, Dominance, Pars, Artifact and Mirror. He moves from line, dot and shape studies into constructing a picture plane to exploring the variations and questions that exist within image/language systems. The book is a text in visual literacy and the tools of visual literacy, but it also exposes the behind-the-scenes world of design.

There are many visual codes and signifiers which subvert the very systems in which he operates. Of course, this designer/bookmaker is also a performance artist and renegade artist who likes to exhibit his work in unique environments, such as the Manhattan Athletic Club with a show called *No Sweat*. But he also makes strong social commentary on iconography, language, and historical contemporary symbolism. Even if you are not a graphic designer, this book is fascinating for art theorists, advertising pros, or just book lovers. Beautifully designed, of course, but executed in black and white to catch the eye

and the mind. A special edition for \$30 comes with and limited edition CD-Rom. At your local bookshop.

fLaming eRust: Visual Poems & Cut-Ups by Ficus *strangulensis* (Columbus, OH, Luna Bisonte Prods, 1999, \$7.00) comes from found texts pieced together against images that are also found. Xeroxed in black and white with a distinctive color cover.

EMPTY BOOKS

Notizen by Olaf Nicolai (Rome, Germany Academy, 1998, \$30) is a diary printed in blue and white with empty pages followed by blue-lined pages and an elastic closing!

LITTLE BOOKS

Diplomatic Passport by Anne Patricia Martens (1996, \$10) is the story of the artist/author who was brought up in a family in which her father represented the U.S. as a diplomat in Indonesia, where the artist was brought up. Stamps of Indonesia, Thailand and Hongkong, Burma, Nepal appear in the pasport with indications that foreign service employees get travel allowances. Interspersed with the worldly wisdom gained by living abroad, the artist has also inserted photographs of her family, including herself, as well as pithy remarks about the cultures in which she lived. She also remarks about protocol and dealing with the regulations of foreign service. Then the family moved to Bucharest, then to Istanbul. Trips to Greece, Italy and Sweden are also documented with quotes from the foreign service manual. A splendid voyage in the guise of an official diplomatic passport.

Holiday Inn by Tracey Emin (Bremen, Gesellschaft fur Aktuelle Kunst, 1998, \$10) is a little book supposedly written on Holiday Inn paper tracing a night of longing and erotic visions as if written to the partner. Images and writing in blue on hotel "stationery".

You Can't Read This by Chris George (1998, ed. of 200, \$35) is a cloth bound little red book with notes and scribbles made on sheets of paper that are then photographed and printed by the artist. The book serves as both a warning and a fact: the reader is almost a "voyeur" allowing a glance at a person's journal, while the frustration is that one cannot actually read it. You really cannot read most of it, even if you have a handwriting that is known like mine to match any doctor's, yet occasionally I get a glimmer into the text with "I feel my every day with thoughts of you..." or "The art of fastening sheets of paper (vellum, cloth, papyrus, etc.) Together to make into portable form a written or printed treatise..." All of this is written on scraps of the New York Times, on advertisements, on to "Your laughter makes life

worth living" and snatches like that. And "there is a line down the center" repeated three times. And there is a cut-page fold-out. The book is accompanied by a large sheet of printed handwritten notes, as well as five stickers. If books are to communicate, well, this is a private reading. The back of the book reads "You will Read this." And I have.

The Little Book of Jews: 10 Jews in Natural Color is a small spiral-bound album of photographs by Marc Alan Jacobs (Chicago, 1995, \$6.00) with portraits of Jews in all walks of life throughout the world. Why is this book different from all other books? Because it is a small album of 10 Jews.

The little **untitled** book by Ben Cain (Maastricht, 1998, \$11) is a silver-printed book of photos of the commonplace, probably taken at the Jan van Eyck Academy in Maastricht where light plays a predominant role in every one of the prints. A little jewel.

Nonsens auf Makulatortur by M. Bresele (Oberpfalz, Exix-Art Produktion, 1995, \$12) is a small book of many pages from a press which uses color offset with great skill and discretion. The pages are cut to size and the artist has overprinted some texts and other offset. Each set of pages are of different papers, and I would assume that in the edition of 1000, each one is unique, yet signed and numbered. Great example of superb offset printing.

Walking Artist: The Separation of Subject and Medium by Hamish Fulton (Edinburgh, Morning Star, 1999, \$17.50) is a beautifully produced bookwork in black and red type, "only art resulting from the experience of individual walks" and is a finely wrought conversation with himself to expound on the virtue of using walking as an artform, and the texts are enlightening, illuminating and profoundly sincere. This bookwork also includes proposals for future exhibitions as well as a final "There are no words in Nature." Hamish Fulton has made walking an artform, and the books a medium to appreciate this kind of art.

What are Thoughts? (81 Variations) by Matthew Keough (ed. of 150, 1999, \$50.00) is a conceptual bookwork which involves 81 variations of 5 circles containing "words, names, things, objects, thoughts" which are varied as well as a four letter designation for each variation, in which black and red circles are printed on a gridded yellow page. The variations include the red circle for "thoughts" which moves through the concentric circles. A plastic cover protects the book which is "bound" by two screws.

Illustrated History No. 12 by Mariona Barkus (Los Angeles, Litkus Press, 1999, \$9.00) is another in the series chronicling some modern social and political surrealities. As usual, the artist uses true stories, but typesets them as if they were right out of the newspaper. The artist uses her distinctive Xerox-photo-collage-painting process to create illustrations for each "news" items. From cellulite to hypnosis, you'll recognize the society in which you live at the end of the Millennium, but do we need help? You bet. Eight cards in a portfolio. Available from Litkus Press, P.O. box 34785, Los Angeles, CA 90034.

For Eva by André Thomkins (Munich, Gina Kehayoff/Paris, Centre Culturel Suisse, 1998, 24.95 cloth) is a stunning small book with an introduction by Daniel Jeannet, who is director of the Centre Culturel Suisse in Paris and who never knew André Thomkins, but who knew his parents. These 28 previously unpublished drawings were done in haste to present to his wife as a birthday present. Most of them were "on time" with a few added within a few days of the birthday in 1957. Others were finished in 1958 and 1959. The book certainly reflects a dynamic intuitive art, nurtured by a love for this woman, his partner. (Dist. by te Neues, New York).

James Castle, Remembered: The Julia Poems by Tom Trusky (Boise, ID, Painted Smiles, 1999, \$40) introduces a true American original, the self-taught Idaho artist/bookmaker James Castle (1899-1977), who sharpened twigs and sticks for pens, concocted ink from stove soot and saliva, scavenged paper, than proceeded to teach himself how to draw. For well over 50 years, he devoted his life to art, creating strange and evocative sketches, remarkable books and constructions, works now prized by collectors and curators.

In this book, Castle's only surviving sibling recalls her famous brother and their family in found poems drawn from three taped interviews. This is all the more revelatory, since Castle refused to speak, sign or write about himself, whether because he was unwilling or unable, although he did communicate through his art. Presented verbatim, in chronological order, the 65 poems, plus duotones of rare historical and family photographs and Castle's drawings—most never seen before—provide an unforgettable and inspirational portrait

The book, though small, is a limited edition offset printed, Smythe-sewn artist book with displayed spine binding, cased in and numbered by hand. Available for \$40.00 plus \$3.00 postage and handling from Painted Smiles, P.O. Box 6414, Boise, ID 83707. A wonderful concept, a beautiful book.

Amanda Barrow had the good fortune of going to India and printing books there in January 1999.

Josephine's Quilt is based on traditional American quilt designs, where the reader journeys through blue lines and defined cut-out shapes, as an homage to the artist's mother in the form of a book. What is fascinating that one page layers over another, in its double fold, the designs growing larger and then growing smaller and smaller. The labor intensive hand cutting allows for a one-of-a-kind feeling to an offset book on handmade paper. Edition 180 copies. \$75.00 postpaid

Tasara Picture Book is dedicated to the family and friends at Tasara Centre for Creative Weaving in tropical South India. Barrow has described to us through her pictorial journal, silkscreened on handmade paper, certain reminiscences of life in Tasara, beginning with a flute in early morning. She describes coconut trees with their spin leaves, describing scents in April, a drink called Rasam, a weaving shuttle, and with wonderful symbols in color which appear almost Tantric in designation. There are other trees, a weaving shuttle, and even the sound of a horn as described by the artist. There are two tables of contents, one in English and one in Indian. This is a beautiful book in a protective cotton fabric sleeve. \$55.00 postpaid to Amanda Barrow, 15 Cotton St., Boston, MA 02131-1609. You can also visit the artist at <http://www2.thecita.net/users/barrow>.

Faye and Janice, a series of conversations between Faye Hirsch and Janice Krasnow at various hotel bars in New York City, will be available in November. Published by Krasnow, an artist who uses language, and Hirsch, an art critic, writer and editor, the authors engaged in conversations at famous New York City landmark bars—El Quijote at the Chelsea Hotel, the Westin Hotel (formerly the Ritz Carlton), and the Grand Bar at the SoHo Grand Hotel.

Structured in the style of a theatrical script, the dialogue is humorous, affectionate, and personal, with topics ranging from the look of dead lobster to a voyeuristic neighbor, an obsessive musing on the correct flavor of Gimlets to the New York art world. The emphasis is on the use of language to communicate consciously, subconsciously, and unconsciously. The exchange is loose and uninhibited and reflects the cultural, social and linguistic habits of people living in New York City at the end of the millennium. A book launch will take place on 15 November from 6 - 8 at the Steffany Martz Gallery, 529 W. 20th St., 6th flr in New York City. Price unknown.

Waterworks of Art created by William Harroff adds humor and play to rather difficult contemporary issues represented in these beautifully produced digital prints, which involve the artist's award-winning snowglobes, which involve political, religious or social concerns. The snowglobes reflect the artist's interest in words, which liberated from the

printed page and control of the order is shifted away from the creator and is, instead, subject to the physical manipulations of the viewer. The floating words are captured in these prints, as well as the humor and playfulness which have been the media of choice of this artist who loves books and loves art. Combined in these prints are commentaries on our social mores, our cultural habits, and our manipulation of the freedoms we have been offered.

But this artist, who is also a librarian, is interested in more than books and snowglobes; he's also interested in the book arts, mail art, Cinderella postage stamp commemoratives, digital or contemporary art as well, so you can imagine how all these interests can be combined in these stunning prints which make you laugh before you begin to think of the issues at hand, from birth control to patriotism. The signed, limited edition prints are displayed within their own handsome, portable, viewing portfolio along with one sheet of original, hand-perforated and glued, postage stamp designs.

Of course, if one could see the original snowglobes and have them as well as the prints, what a playful world you could make for yourself. The designs are stunning, the ideas are sometimes shattering, but these works of art have both humor and content! What an original concept these days. The full edition costs \$450, or one can buy individual unsigned prints at \$50.00 each. Write to William Harroff's Waterworks of Art, 453 Cass Ave., Edwardsville, IL 62025, (618)656-5743 or e-mail: wharroff@rocketmail.com



Hôtel des Bains Editions in France has an interesting catalog of small conceptual books which are modest in length but pack a wallop in ideas! Aav Viguier has created bookworks of photocopies such as:

Do It Yourself has a tome in English and in French about the art and the object. 50 F

Variations (1996)

In the Relation between an Unrelational Object and an Empty Space

A Book Showing a Colour-Panel

Real Time Timelessness

Anybody's Panel, Anybody's Book Working In the Relation Between an Unrelational Object and an Empty Space

and much more from Editions du Spec. Write for a catalog to Aux éditions Hotel des Bains, 28 rue du Pont percé, 27130 Verneuil sur Avre, France. Fax: (01)4251-1051.

FLUXUS

A 22 Year Old Manuscript Found in Attic of Artist's New York Residence (New York, Money for Food Press, 1999, \$5.00) is in fact a found interview conducted by Dick Higgins on 14 April 1977 with Geoffrey Hendricks. This found manuscript interview is now published in memory of Dick Higgins, who died five weeks after Higgins and Hendricks last performed together with other members of the Fluxus group during a recent exhibition of collages by the late Al Hansen. 5 weeks later, Dick Higgins died of a heart attack in Quebec, Canada. This publication celebrates the exhibition of *Sky Notes: 1-22* at the Emily Harvey Gallery in early 1999. The publication is interspersed with photographs of Hendricks, portraits and performance documentation, as well as an early 70s photo of Dick Higgins. An important addition to Fluxus literature.

PERIODICALS

Irregulomadaire #1 is an oversize two color French publication issued in 1990, this issue devoted to the "beach" in all its 7 scenarios. The double spreads capture the umbrellas, dolls, sand, beauty of the activities of the beach. The texts are interspersed among these painterly pages with small cartoons, photographs, paintings and text meshed as one. The last vignette gives instructions how to make a pyramid. From Port-Said to the Suez, from Panama to the beach, the evocation of the beach for those in the city is manifest in this numbered edition. \$7.00

Ohio #6, the periodical out of Dusseldorf, Germany with editors: Stefan Schneider, Uschi Huber, Hans-Peter Feldmann and Jorg Paul Janka, includes a 45 rpm record, "Songs for Ohio" by the Red Krayola. This issue is a photo album of complete portraits and torn photos, as if these all were found photos from passports, identification cards, and found photos discovered in trash cans and on the streets.

Art-Land, vol. 5, no. 1 (Double Full Color Issue) has as its theme "Dreams" as well as awakening, ecstasy and true responsibility, through an appropriate mix of essays, confessions, personal letters, interviews, poetry and art. This Danish periodical in English covers articles on "Distortions of Reality" in art. Included is "The Airman's Alphabet" by W.H. Auden, an interview with Jim Shaw by

Peder Jansson entitled "His Dream came True." In addition, an article on holographic warfare, the long heritage of artists preparing food as part of their creative practice, as well as an exclusive interview with Maurizio Cattelan, well recognized in the 47th Venice Biennale in 1997.

Casper is a new publication out of Mexico which includes art criticism, literary essays, manifestoes (such as the advances of the Agrarian Reform Movements, as well as reviews, graphic work and more organized by Daniel Guzman, Gabriel Kuri, Damian Oretaga and Luis Felipe Ortega. Included are textual fragments from Eduardo Abaroa, review of the art of David Medalla, cartoons, typewriter art, inserts, and some issues dedicated to themes, such as no. 10 which is devoted to sound and music. Each issue is housed in an envelope which has a silkscreened image on the front. This is a fascinating collaborative effort which is quite effect. In Spanish and sometimes in English. \$4.00 for each issue!

Loose Watch: A Lost and Found Anthology (London, Invisible Books, 1999, \$20) commemorates more than 20 years of *Lost & Found Times*, a publication which began as a conceptual stunt and a mail art event, which has turned into a cultural phenomenon. There are "LAFT cultists" all over the world, who dote on John Bennett and his publications. This anthology presents a representative sampling of what the publication has meant over the years. Eccentric, stimulating, the poems, artwork and international contributions of 170 people from North and South America, Europe and the former Soviet Union reflect the vital culture of texts and graphics which have created a community, a collaborative effort by many of the contributors, and an evolution from mail art to the edges of language, providing a form for those marginalized cultural workers who have created a network of activity for themselves. A true celebration!

The highlights of this anthology are John M. Bennett and Al Ackerman (who also has a slew of other names), but there are also people like Sheila E. Murphy, Jake Berry, S. Gustav Hagglund, Susan Smith Nash, and Jim Leftwich. Having begun as a mail art piece with fake lost and found notices, the kind that are stuck under your windshield wipers in the parking lot of Graceland Shopping Center, near where Bennett lived. Available from Small Press Distribution in Berkeley, California (\$20 ppd) or from Invisible Books, B.M. Invisible, London WC1N 3XX, England.

Whitewall of Sound 21 (Spring/ Summer 1999) is an anthology of avantgarde poetics, experimental photography, visual poetry, with contributions from Tom Beckett, John M. Bennett, John Byrum, Jim Clinefelter (who is also editor),

Antonio Gomez, Jessica Grim, Ezra Mark and Elissa Rashkin, among others. A small envelope of wonderful things such as the *Pas de Chance Index* from Toronto, which is a catalog of "books" for giving and getting. There is a beautiful postcard-photograph by Christopher Rauschenberg, another by Antonio Gomez of Merida, Spain, another postcard by Mark Keffer. \$10.00

Zwirn 4B (Summer 1999) is a Rorschach Visualization of the Sounds of the Greatest Prominence in Most Syllables, edited by Jim Clinefelter (Portland, OR, Whitewall of Sound, 1999) is a beautiful book of visual interpretations of the vowels, including *y*. Order from Jim Clinefelter, 411 NE 22nd #21, Portland, OR 97232.

MAIL ART

A Ray Johnson Miscellany by The Fake Picabia Bros. (San Francisco, Snowman Publications, 1999, \$30) is the celebration of Ray Johnson on the occasion of the first major retrospective of the artist at the Whitney Museum of American Art in early 1999. This "miscellany" is a series of writings written at various times to honor the artist, with no intention of ever being submitted to an edition in memory of the artist or to celebrate Johnson's mail art activities so that they would be given equal weight at the Whitney exhibition. Included is "The New York Correspondence School Spit for Dadaland," "The Rubber Stamps of Ray Johnson" by John Held Jr., "Dropped" by FaGaGa, and "Ray Johnson & the Mail Art Show" which was prepared expressly for the Whitney exhibition to promote his mail art activities. The cover has a "rubber" stamp embedded on the cover, which says "Dear Whitney Museum, I hate you. Love, Ray Johnson". This spiral-bound bookwork is a document that memorializes a mail art hero.

Geographia Poetica by Carol Stetser (Sedona, Arizona, 1999, \$25) is a copy art bookwork on skytone natural text looseleaf in blue linen paper folder. It is a visual poetic examination of language and maps in historical perspective, consisting of 25 prints generated by the copy machine. The artist has written a short essay examining language from a visually poetic viewpoint, and includes maps in historical perspective printed on a beautiful natural text paper simulating vellum. The artist has penetrated the historical material with verbal and visual additions which create a flowing visual poem. This is an exquisitely created Homage to the map and to language and writing. The artist has given us information about Elamite script, hieroglyphic writing, Mayan glyphs, Chinese ideographs and so much more. The role of language as a unifying force is emphasized by this statement of 20th-century linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf who said that the language we learn profoundly shapes the universe we can imagine. Stetser

allows us to dream new worlds with this exquisite bookwork. \$25.00 from Carol Stetser, P.O. Box 20081, Sedona, AZ 86341 USA.

Family Mini-Series by Yvonne Puffer (New York, D.A.P., 1999, \$19.95 paper) is a kind of "family album" of ghost-like and ephemeral memories, filled with a haunting sense of dislocation. Composed of pencil drawings on intimately scaled blocks of wood and filled with charged moments of human interaction which hint at relationships simultaneously inexplicit yet entirely familiar. Perhaps based on actual snapshots of the 50s taken of her family and later taken from friends, the effect however is not strict portraiture, but in fact emotionally charged impressions that allow the viewer to generate his or her own personal, autobiographical memories. The artist in the interview included in this book tells us some of the artists who inspired her such as Vija Celmins, Ida Applebroog, Alice Neel, Louise Bourgeois. But the book has mnemonic resonance that is indeed haunting, haunting to each and every reader in a different manner.

CALENDAR

The Askin Man, Dog, Bone! Artists' Calendar for the Year 2000 with the Birthdates of Many Artists! Walter Askin, a long-time resident of Pasadena, California and a renowned artist full of whimsy and humor, has illustrated this calendar in black and white hilarious illustrations, with each date denoting the birthdays of many artists living and dead. This calendar is a howl! And included is a Man, Dog, Bone Tattoo all for \$19.95 which includes shipping and handling. Send to Floating Rock Enterprises, P.O. Box E, South Pasadena, CA 91031 USA.

CHILDREN'S BOOKS

Award-winning Cinco Puntos Press has demonstrated its courage and its power to print, because on 9 March 1999 the National Endowment for the Arts informed the Press that it was revoking funding for *The Story of Colors/La Historia de los Colores*, a bilingual folktale retold by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos of Mexico's Zapatista Army of National Liberation. Funding for the storybook had been approved by the NEA in November 1998. After reviewing a copy of the manuscript and a biography of the author, the NEA budgeted \$7,500 for the publication of *The Story of Colors*. But after a call from New York Times reporter Julia Preston—who was simply gathering information for a story about the book—on 8 March, NEA chairman William Ivey personally canceled the part of the grant that supported the publication of the book.

The NEA has been involved in a series of funding battles with Congress, generally over issues of sexuality and

obscurity. Ivey's cancellation of the grant represents the first time that the NEA has censored an art project dealing with cultural diversity. He said to Bobby Byrd, the publisher, that it was not a censorship issue. But Byrd's comment is that his decision speaks to all persons and organization writing a grant to the Endowment. And when the media and friends learned of all of this, the Lannan Foundation stepped in and saved the day, and the book was printed. As a result, Cinco Puntos Press sold more copies of the book than they had printed in the first edition and had to reprint and they received a great deal of publicity. But as Bobby Byrd, head of the press which won the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation on 1 May, the Foundation said, "A narrow view strictly to the mainstream ignores all the tributaries that feed it. From those who have been here for thousands of years to those newest immigrants, we are all contributing to American culture. We are all being translated into a new language. By now, nearly everyone knows that Columbus did not "discover" America. We are all still discovering America. And we must continue to do so." And as Vicente Huidobro has said, "Words should fly like airplanes over customs offices and international borders and should land in all the fields."

The Story of Colors/La Historia de los Colores by Subcomandante Marcos (El Paso, TX, Cinco Puntos Press, \$15.95) is a folktale from the jungles of Chiapas where the black and white world with a little gray in-between became insufficient for the gods, who wanted to make the people happy so they invented one color at a time beginning with the red of blood, then green and all the others to brighten the world for the people. This intense story is illustrated by Domitila Dominguez, or Domi, one of the most important indigenous artists in Mexico, who has used wit and wisdom in her art based on her own Mazatecan culture. This is a book for all ages, for all artists, for all cultures. Buy it out of love, buy it out of protest!

Grandma Fina and Her Wonderful Umbrellas (*La Abuelita Fina y sus sombrillas maravillosas*) by Benjamin Alire Sáenz, illustrated by Geronimo Garcia (El Paso, TX, Cinco Puntos Press, 1999, \$15.95) tells the story of Grandma Fina walking down the cozy streets of her neighborhood and shading herself from the warm sun with her yellow umbrella. She loves her yellow umbrella. And everyone knows Grandma Fina, who greets all her relatives and neighbors as she goes along. Although she loves that yellow umbrella, it is torn and ragged and really needs to be replaced, so everyone decides that they will get her a special umbrella or her birthday. You will find out what Grandma Fina does with her nine new umbrellas! A delightful story and one dear to the heart of the editor and publisher of this newsletter.