

## FROM THE EDITOR

As the season changes, I write to you feeling autumnal in more ways than one. The weather in Southern California has been exquisite after a rather cool yet sunny season. Now as Labor Day weekend comes into focus, the sun is warm, the air is cool, and those blue skies have returned to allow the postcard photographers to go to work to take advantage of the glorious weather.

Everyone is talking about "Survivors" and "real television", but the return to "virtual reality" is a howl. We are returning to a season of more work, where everyone seems busier than ever. I cannot remember a time when I have been so busy just trying to keep my head above water. There is too much information flowing in, too much wasteful information also requiring attention, and not enough time to read quality work, ingest the bombardment of new technology, and yet have quality time for the enjoyment of life. And now they are talking about e-publishing with all that on-demand publishing will involve. Will you read it on the screen? Or pay for downloading the book?

And then I return to the field of artist books with the craftsmanship and handwork that requires planning, hours of technical expertise, and the desire to make something beautiful. And the need to really use one's hands and make something of high quality and of great taste. We need to nourish our spirits and our souls, as well as our bodies and our pocketbooks. And so the lasting quality of a bookwork, the joy of seeing ingenious solutions to problems of presenting text and image, or just images, well, the surprises are still there for me after 35 years of collecting, seeing, touching, appreciating bookworks and artist books from all over the world.

The greatest surprise I had was upon a visit to MASS MoCA in July when I came upon a section of the *Unnatural Science* exhibition in a recessed gallery where an intern, Linda Morin, from Williams had turned out a stellar exhibition of artist books from the collections of Williams College Museum of Art, Clark Art Institute and Williams' Rare Book Room. All of my friends were represented as well as a few new names, but the exhibition was an eye-opener as to the richness of the area in collecting artist books. And we all know that Harvard, the Boston Atheneum, Massachusetts College of Art, and so many other institutions in that state collect, so there is a richness and one can do a small thematic show from the resources available. What a joy!

As for "survivors", Los Angeles weathered the storm of the Democratic National Convention with several arrests, an adamant police force, and typical open-minded demonstrators of all causes. The city's Cultural Arts Department sent everyone home for the week, while others belabored new directions for streets and cut-off thoroughways to get to work each day. But we have survived, and the city seems pleased with itself. Performance Art reigned supreme for the four days, and the best show in town was covered by the Theater Critic on our outstanding NPR station, KCRW-FM; Louis Fantasia covered the streets as if it were a performance, and it was the best reporting of the Convention! While the Shadow Convention produced the best speeches, discussions and issues, with Bill Maher (an intelligent comedian), Gore Vidal, and Arianna Huffington creating a serious, but enlightened Convention. It all proved to be performance art at its best!

My sister, too, is still surviving, but it has been a long grind, and we do not know the prognosis. It certainly has changed my priorities, and if this issue seems late, forgive me, but life has not been easy. I appreciate all your good thoughts and prayers. She really needs them. I think the whole world is praying for my sister, and I hope you send only good vibes toward Malibu where she lives. It's an uphill battle, but she has the grace and the courage, the sense of humor and the attitude that rise above all odds. May it be so!

-jah



**Correction:** The cover last issue from the 1950s was sent to me by Alyssa Salomon with thanks.

**Cover:** Page from Lessmann & Lenser: *It's raining new business: Ferdinand Kramer: Umbrella* (1987)

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