

FROM THE EDITOR

It's that time again to wish you all very Happy Holidays and a very good New Year, in fact, a new Millennium if you count the way I do. At any rate, at this writing, we still do not have a new president, so it's fun to speculate on the art policies of the new President. At least, Gore has made his known. Mr. Bush couldn't care less. But so it goes.

It's been a strange month. One of the great radio voices from my youth, Miriam Wolfe, who played such wonderful roles on "Let's Pretend!" the radio program on Saturday mornings that let me stretch my imagination so many years ago (and now I'm almost letting you know how old I am) has passed away. She was one of the highlights of my youth on my favorite radio broadcast.

Another great artist, Harley Warrick, died recently at the age of 76. Certainly not in the art history books, but Warrick was one of a dozen painters who advertised the joys of chewing tobacco on the sides of thousands of Appalachian and Midwestern barns: "Chew Mail Pouch Tobacco, Treat Yourself to the Best." Certainly politically incorrect in the U.S.A. these days, but in those days, two men traveling from town to town like traveling salesmen or hobos, living cheap, doing a sign in maybe a half day—what a life. (He spent 55 years painting and retouching many of about 4,000 Mail Pouch signs, working in 13 states from Michigan and Missouri to NY.) It may be gauche to even talk about tobacco, but painting barns? What a way to make a living—another profession unneeded, like scientific illustrators. Heard that computers have taken over that job too.

So much history has been made since we last spoke that it is hard to list all those historical moments, such as the Fake Ray Johnson Weekend in Columbus, Ohio where a number of mail artists and mail art maven got together and celebrated the life and the art of the infamous Ray Johnson, whose wonderful exhibition opened at the Wexner Gallery at Ohio State University. We had wonderful meetings, conversations, parties, dinners, sessions to make mail art, and a panel discussion at the museum as well. In Columbus, there is a wonderful topiary garden, where Seurat's painting, "A Sunday Afternoon on the Ile de la Grande Jatte" is created as a landscape in the Old Deaf School Park. It is a joy to behold, and the people are all created in topiary with umbrellas too!

And then, there is McArt, the Guggenheim's approach to art franchises around the world—we will not only see one in Manhattan, designed by the great Frank Gehry (with

the blessing of Mayor Giuliani, and you know what he knows about art), but they are even looking at Brazil right now, let alone the clinched deal in Las Vegas—there will be no way to say, "see you at the Guggenheim", because you will have to hand your friend a map to designate which one! I do not know about you, but the politics of art is getting me down. Perhaps we are ready for something new in this new Millennium!

For those of you in the Minneapolis area, the Women of the Book show will be coming 25 March 2001 to the Twin Cities, to be seen at the Jewish Community Center as well as the Minnesota Center for Book Arts. It should be a good run! The catalog for the exhibition should be available sometime in January, and you will hear about it in the next issue.

Just received the biggest and perhaps the most beautiful catalog of a book publisher from Taschen! It is an unbound many-paged broadside, but what photographs and what history of the publishing house! The best advertisement for myself I have seen in years!

And for those of you who are wondering how my sister is doing, she prevails beyond all dire events. She has allowed me to look at life in a very different way, to know that each day is a gift, and we must do the best we can with each of those days.

And so my friends, we continue on the road through books, those friends of ours that also prevail, that endure and come in many formats and many structures, that contain information and aesthetic experiences, that continue to be produced and handmade, and that surprise us even to this day. Happy New Year, Happy Book Year!

Cover: Helene Slavin: *Man with Umbrella #1* (2000) acrylic and encaustic on canvas. The artist is represented by Robert Berman Gallery, Santa Monica, California.

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