

BOOK REVIEWS

REFERENCE

Buddha Mind in Contemporary Art, edited by Jacqueline Baas and Mary Jane Jacob (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2004, \$45.00 hardcover) has 121 color and 15 black and white photographs and is the outgrowth of the growing presence of Buddhist perspectives in contemporary culture. In the arts especially, there is an increasing change in process over product, and thus a profound change in the relationship between audience and artist. While artists have been keen to interpret Buddhism in the west, the art historians and art critics have been slow to realize the impact of Buddhist concepts. As a result, over two years, the artists and critics have gathered to gather interviews with some of the most influential artists of our time, elucidating the common ground between the creative mind, the perceiving mind, and the meditative mind. Essays are by Mark Epstein, Eleanor Rosch, Arthur C. Danto, Kay Larson, Marcia Tucker, Carol Becker, Suzanne Lacy, Laurie Anderson, Tosi Lee, Stephen Batchelor and Linda V. Bamber. The artists interviews by Jacob include Rirkrit Tiravanija, Ann Hamilton, Marina Abramovic, Ernesto Pujol, Sanford Biggers, Kimsooja, Michael Rotondi, Lee Mingwei, Ann Carlson, Zhan Huan, Bill Viola and Mariko Mori. A glossary, brief biographies, list of illustrations and index complete this important volume.

Having Been Said: Writings & Interviews of Lawrence Weiner 1968-2003, edited by Gerti Fietzek & Gregor Stemmerich (Ostfildern-Ruit, Germany, Hatje Cantz, 2004, \$60.00 paper) documents the written and verbal expression to questions concerning the work of Lawrence Weiner and its context. These utterances—statements, interviews, lectures, and conference contributions—have been collected together in this publication for the first time, and ordered chronologically. Taken as a whole they afford an insight both into a complex individual biography and into the wider development of art and culture and the challenge that this entails. Important for any research into contemporary art, including artist books.

GENERAL

ABZ: More Alphabets and Other Signs, edited by Julian Rothenstein and Mel Gooding (San Francisco,

Chronicle Books, 2005, \$24.95 softbound) is a magical book of typography, graphics, emblems, and logos reproduced here for the first time since their original publication in long-lost avant-garde modernist publications. The letter developed from the pictogram, the simple drawing that accompanied speech into the making of the first human culture.

A is the roof, the arch; D is the human back; C is the crescent moon; L is the leg and foot; S is a serpent; and on and on. The alphabet is indeed magical, for it has to do with its infinite capacity to change shape and style, to be formal and informal, elegant and ugly, delicate and robust. Every alphabet presents a kind of score of the letters to the eye and is a systematic optical abstract—a visual matrix out of which any number of possible messages might be composed. This book includes fascinating ephemera, wonderful eye charts, and a constructivist visual ballet of a woman demonstrating each letter. This book is recommended for all contemporary and modern collections, and is especially significant for designers and artists. Ben Shahn would have loved this book, for his love of letters is embedded in this album.

Communicate: Independent British Graphic Design since the Sixties, edited by Rick Poynor (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2005, \$39.95 paper) includes essays by David Crowley, Nico Macdonald, John O'Reilly, and Rick Poynor. Illustrated in full color with 350 images that range from classic designs of the sixties to the work of today's emerging design teams, this fascinating book looks at how popular music and culture have influenced the evolution of British design.

Featured are record album covers for groups including The Chemical Brothers, Coldplay, The Beatles, Led Zeppelin, and Stereo Lab; political protest posters; psychedelic concert posters; typeface projects and signage; and designs for books, magazines, and film. The book focuses on small, independent studios where creativity, rather than the bottom line, is paramount, including projects by such outstanding designers as Dreke Birdsall, Richard Hollis, Why Not Associates, Neville Brody and Scott King. There are interviews with 10 key designers, providing unique insider views of the design world. Bibliography and biographies of contributors.

Jennifer Pastor: The Perfect Right by Jan Tumlir, with an introduction by Debra Singer (New York, Whitney Museum of Art, 2004, \$ 18.95 hardcover) explores Pastor's installation, which comprises a large sculpture inspired by the Hoover Dam; a sculptural

rendering of the human ear; and a line-drawn animation of a cowboy on a bucking bull. Pastor's work because of its painstaking craftsmanship and meticulous research flits between the physical and the surreal world. Tumlr sheds light on this intriguing young artist.

Duane Hanson: Portraits from the Heartland, ed. by Rusty Freeman with essays by Erika Doss, Wesla Hanson and Tin Ly (Moorhead, MN, New Rivers Press, 2004, \$29.95 paper) offers new perspectives to consider both Hanson (1925-1996) and his work. This book is more than an exhibition catalog, but is also part biography and part personal insight.

Harking back to Hanson's midwestern roots, raised in the farming community of Parkers Prairie, the essays describe the influence of the artist's roots on his work. Hanson was interested in exploring myths about ordinary Americans and what is "good" in American art. In a way, the book is a photo album of Hanson's life offered by his widow, Wesla Hanson, from the personal collection of family and artist archives. Then Tin Ly, Hanson's assistant for over 10 years, reveals Hanson as a practicing artist, showing how Hanson selected his subjects and his processes.

Happy: Cities and Public Happiness in Post-War Europe, edited by Cor Wagenaar, with essays by Aaron Betsky, Ronald Brouwer, Helma Hellinga, Michelle Provoost, Paolo Scrivano, and Ed Taverne (Rotterdam, Nai Publishers, 2005, dist. by d.a.p., \$45.00 flexibound) is a remarkable study of expressions and representations of happiness in the European city during the second half of the 20th century. The team collated images of joy which combine three elements—happiness, the city, and space, and these are analyzed. Europe as a whole is the laboratory, from the Italy to Ireland, from the Ural to the Atlantic, to the Netherlands in the west, Rovaniemi in the north and Marbella in the south, for the international research team of 20 who did the work, overlooking the ephemeral and dedicating the study to universal motifs in the dynamics of our thinking about the city. Using postcards, cartoons, magazines, photographs, and posters, these architects, town planners, historians and sociologists collected dozens of icons, representing public happiness in Europe.

The cities you read about in this book seem mysterious countries, where people lead their lives in unfamiliar ways. Many of these cities have disappeared behind the iron curtain, or were alienated from us by the joint forces of politics, geography and the history

of modernism. Now unearthing them, the reporters have found themselves in an adventure where people were trying to eliminate traces of the war, building socialist-realist palaces for the common man, developing new communities, creating consumerism, using the city as a catalyst of revolution, developing festivals, monuments and changing a lifestyle.

Visual Music: Synaesthesia in Art and Music since 1900, organized by Kerry Brougher, Jeremy Strick, Ari Wiseman and Judith Zilczer (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2005, \$50.00 hardcover) is a groundbreaking new book which accompanies the exhibition which traces the history of an idea that fine art should attain the abstract purity of music. As of this date, *Visual Music* is the most complete examination of this phenomenon to date and features 90 major works of art plus related documentation. With more than 300 color illustrations, this beautifully designed volume by Tracey Shiffman with Ari Young explores the influence of music—from jazz to classical to electronic—on abstract and mixed media art forms as diverse as painting, photography, light shows, installations, and digital media. Because of the dimensions of the book, much of the visuals can be seen in graceful juxtapositions, substituting for a dvd or a cd to be inserted with the volume. In fact, the rhythms of the flow of the book are music in themselves, allowing the "reader" to appreciate the exhibition even more, since the catalog seems to be more than the parts of the show itself.

Essays examine distinct art historical periods in depth while an additional essay approaches the subject from a musicologist's perspective by Olivia Mattis. The book concludes with a chronology, artist biographies, and a selected bibliography.

NEW SERIES

Thames & Hudson has a new series called *Art Works*, which is a cutting-edge series celebrating the vitality and diversity of art in the twenty-first century. Each volume presents a unique exhibition in a book, "curated" by two authors and arranged into "rooms" expounding one central theme. Each volume concludes with a Q&A with the authors and noted art historians, curators, and artists, as well as a directory of artists and a list of suggested further reading.

Art Works: Place by Tacita Dean and Jeremy Millar (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2005, \$29.95 paperback) has 329 illustrations, 278 in color, indicating this "exhibition" format. The "rooms" are: Urban, Nature, Fantastic, Myth/History,

Politics/Control, Territories, Itinerancy, and Heterotopias and Non-Places. Artists such as Doug Aitken, Liam Gillick, Dan Graham, Stan Douglas and Thomas Struth, vie with Roni Horn, Paul Noble, Dorothy Cross, Maurizio Cattelan, Luc Tuymans, Susan Hiller, Steve McQueen, Chantal Akermann, Francis Alys, Janet Cardiff, Rirkrit Tiravanija, Allan Sekula and many more. The book serves as a portable exhibition space with feedback from the curators. Many artists featured here choose territorial divisions as subject matter, while others look at itinerant wanderers with no claims to the earth.

Art Works: Perform by Jens Hoffmann and Joan Jonas (Thames & Hudson, 2005, \$29.95 paper) show how some artists transform themselves through disguise, while others make everyday items into art by changing their function or context. Some explore the storytelling capacity of art, yet others present only cryptic fragments that leave the viewer to complete the narrative. For some artists, performance offers the possibility of leaving the gallery environment and enacting art in public, on the street, for everybody. Regardless of method or medium, all of these artists use art to figure out the intricate ways in which performance plays a part in our daily experience. Once again, this volume is documented with 329 illustrations, 278 in color.

MONOGRAPHS

Vito Hannibal Acconci Studio with essays by Corinne Diserens, Jean-Charles Massera, Christophe Wavelet, and Lilian Pfaff (Barcelona, Actar/MACBA, 2004, dist. by d.a.p., \$49.95 flexible binding, illustrated throughout) is not an exhibition catalog in the ordinary manner, but seems to be a visual and verbal catalog raisonné for this provocative, influential and often radical artist, whose practices have earned him international recognition. I do not remember a day without knowing who Vito Acconci is, where he lives, how he performs, what he writes, and how he gathers all of this in books, performances, and early videos. He came to art from poetry and writing, but made his mark early with confrontational and ultimately political works which evolved from the writing to conceptual art, bodyworks, performance, film, video, multimedia installation and architectural sculpture.

This "catalog" represents a complete selection of a wide range of Acconci's works (accompanied by a text on each project), an interview with the artist, an extensive bibliography, including a DVD with three

20minute videos in which Acconci narrates. This book brings you in confrontation with an amazing artist, whose art/life has influenced a great deal of the 20th century art. A not to be missed addition to your collection!

John Evans: Collages with an introduction by Robert M. Murdock (New York, Quantuck Lane Press, 2004, \$75.00 hardcover) documents this consummate artist's project he set out for himself, i.e. that every day, beginning in 1964, he would create a collage out of found objects ranging from clippings, business cards, product stickers or labels, ticket stubs, clothing labels, and all the ephemera or anonymous snapshots found on the streets of his East Village (NYC) neighborhood. Using colored inks, he built upon and embellished the collage elements, creating energetic, vibrant compositions. He decided to stop at the end of 2000, which seems an appropriate date.

To be sure, the beauty of these collages must be noted, but they also inform the viewer as mini-time capsules that mark the end of the Vietnam war, the fiscal crisis in New York City during the 1970s, the burgeoning economy, club scene and art market of the 1980s, and the scourge of the AIDS crisis. Many of the collages are autobiographical, marking exhibitions, mail art, tickets to events or museums, with postcards, snapshots and other objects that mark Evan's daily life.

The 365 collages selected for this monograph represent one year, but are drawn from all the collection. To be sure, there is an "Evans' look" with duck heads, forming a lower frame, as well as a palette of bright colors, a great talent for form, and the incorporation of a fully artistic life into a page exhibiting self-discipline, social and political conscience, and a wonderful sense of humor. To create these works each day becomes a visual diary of an artist who is completely engaged with the world and his external environment as well.

Murdock's essay fully fleshes out the life of and art of this amazing artist, his friends like Ray Johnson and A.M. Fine, as well as mail artists such as May Wilson, Buster Cleveland, Richard C. and others. This is a remarkable book recommended for anyone and everyone!

Robert Bechtle: A Retrospective by Janet Bishop, Michael Auping, Jonathan Weinberg and Charles Ray (San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and University of California Press, 2005, \$45.00 hardcover, \$24.95 paper) shows us how for the past 40 years, painter Bechtle has focused our attention on the everyday.

Working in a sun-bleached color palette and photorealist style, Bechtle gives us a quiet Americana: streetscapes, family scenes, portraits of cars. Working from photographs of familiar subjects (his family and home, for example), he creates a record of a precise moment while withholding just enough detail to remain painterly. The result is an uncanny reflection of middle-class American culture. Many viewers recognize the light and architecture of the Bay Area in Bechtle's images. Indeed, this San Francisco-based artist has taken his neighborhoods as a primary subject with ubiquitous palm trees, stucco houses, and the automobiles that spurred suburban expansion.

This is the first full-scale survey of Bechtle's art, tracing his career from his early photo-based pieces of the 1960s to his most recent work, with 91 paintings and works. Created in close collaboration with the artist, this publication also includes a series of incisive essays that provide a fresh perspective on Bechtle's output and re-evaluates his importance in the wider context of American painting. Includes exhibition history, selected bibliography, and catalog of the exhibition.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Another America: A Testimonial to the Amish: Photographs by Robert Weingarten with an essay by Robert A. Sobieszek (Gottingen, Steidl, dist. by D.A.P., 2005, \$50.00 hardbound) is an album of 80 photographs taken over four years by Weingarten of Amish communities in Indiana, Iowa, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Wisconsin. Believing in their separateness, and strictly in nonviolence, stressing humility, family, and community, the Amish have the tradition of farming and holding worship services in homes rather than churches, because of persecution by both Catholics and Protestants.

The black and white photographs emphasize the serene, quiet, simple life full of solitude and separation from the larger society. The silence of these photographs reflects the spiritual and bucolic life of this religious group. The photographs are moving testaments to another way of life. 80 duotones

Speaking With Hands: Photographs from the Buhl Collection with essays by Jennifer Blessing, Kirsten Hoving, and Ralph Rugoff (New York, Guggenheim Museum, dist. by d.a.p., 2005, \$45.00 hardcover) includes 96 plates, 96 figures and a fully illustrated catalog of an exhibition of 168 works by 150 artists. Henry M. Buhl purchased a photography by Alfred Stieglitz of Georgia O'Keeffe's hands in October 1993.

This photograph began a journey for the collection to include over 1000 images by the medium's foremost practitioners as well as little-known and emerging artists. From a photogenic drawing negative made in 1840 by William Henry Fox Talbot to serial Polaroids made in 2002 by Cornelia Parker, the collection also encompasses scientific, journalistic and fine art photography with a strong component of contemporary art.

The hand is dealt here as portraiture, as well as figuratively, in terms of the poetic emphasis given to hand gestures in documentary images. Jennifer Blessing explores the nature of collecting photographs, Kirsten A. Hoving emphasizes the prevalence of hands in Surrealist photographs and prose. Ralph Rugoff discusses the uncanny aspects of hands in contemporary art that uses photography. This is a must for any photography collection.

Sound of Summer Running by Raymond Meeks (Tucson, Nazraeli Press, 2005, \$50.00) captures a universal feeling about summer as glorious, endless, carefree and full of warmth from that sun-filled world. This book flows like a film, trying to capture the "feeling" of summer with a rhythm that is truly cinematic. The sepia-toned images are so poetic, stimulating all the senses in equal measure. No matter whether the camera is focused on children playing or adults in a contemplative mood, flora and fauna or just beautiful landscapes, the pleasure is overwhelmingly powerful. There is a universal quality to these images that makes the epitome of summer the message of our youth, our middle period and our old age.

Exceptionally designed, this monograph is printed in duotone on matt art paper and bound in Japanese cloth. A poem by Rick Bass ends the volume and a beautifully printed poem by Forrest Gander is included as an insert at the end. What a wonderful gift for anyone who loves summer—and that means just about everybody! Ed. 1000

EXHIBITION CATALOGS

Made in Japan: The Postwar Creative Print Movement by Alicia Volk and Helen Nagata (Seattle, Univ. Of Washington Press with Milwaukee Art Museum, 2005, \$28.95 paper) emphasizes the globalization of the Japanese print through the European models of self-expression and formalist innovation. This exhibition examines the artistic dialogue between East and West as it played out between 1945 and 1970. During this post-World War II period, Japanese printmakers effectively acted as