

BOOK REVIEWS

EDITED BY ROBIN KAPLAN

BOOK OF NOTE

Contemporary Artists. Edited by Colin Naylor and Genesis P-Orridge. London, St. James Press; New York, St. Martin's Press, 1977. 1077p., illus. ISBN 0333-22672-0 \$50.00

We haven't had such a fine reference tool in a long time. In fact, we can say that up to now, this must suffice as the most exhaustive bio-bibliographical reference work on the personal and professional lives of about 1300 internationally-known artists. The advisory board which was instrumental in selecting artists for inclusion range from Jean-Christophe Ammann in Switzerland, Germano Celant in Italy and Jean Clair in France to Lucy Lippard in the U.S., Barbara Reise for the UK and the U.S. and Pontus Hulten for France and Sweden, among others.

The editors, two correspondence artists of much renown, are aware of the idiosyncracies of choice which entered into the selections of the advisors and make no bones about it. Even the guidelines that an entrant have worked as a professional artist for at least five years, exhibited his or her work not only in several one-man shows but also in large scale museum-type survey shows were not rigidly enforced. In addition, we get the inclusion of deceased artists dependent upon the continuing influence of their work on current art activity, which this reviewer finds redundant and unnecessary. Taking up valuable space, the deceased artists can be found in other reference tools and should not be confounded with living contemporary artists, no matter how much influence they have.

After an alphabetical list of all artists included in the publication, we get an entry for each artist including a biography, a complete list of one-man shows, important group shows, collections in which the artist's work is included, a bibliography, the name and address of the artist's dealer, the artist's address, and in many cases, a comment by the artist on his or her own work. The majority of the entries also contain an illustration of the artist's work and a signed critical essay by one of more than 100 prominent American and European art critics.

This is an over-size, somewhat cumbersome reference tool—which is expensive and will make an ideal library acquisition to be used by the larger art community, yet it has a wealth of information, collated from many sources including the artist's own files, "meticulously checked by a team of experienced art researchers," presented in a clear, well-spaced format for easy reference.

One of the problems is that coverage for some artists is uneven. For instance, Larry Bell is brought up to date including 1977, whereas Eva Hesse who died in 1970 is somewhat neglected, so that Lucy Lippard's brilliant volume, *Eva Hesse*, published by NYU Press in 1976, was not mentioned under the artist in this volume.

Poor Man Ray doesn't seem to be able to get into any reference publication of this sort. And Yvonne Rainer among other performance artists just doesn't seem to exist. Photographers have not been explored very well, but printmakers also haven't been given their due, e.g. June Wayne, etc. And Wallace Berman, who died almost two years ago, still lives in this volume. More careful editing is necessary.

When all is said and done, however, we must thank the publishers and especially the editors who have done a noble job, creating an invaluable tool. We only hope the publishers see fit to update this volume often enough to make it a current reference tool and not one which becomes obsolete before its time.

Well, we finally got our *Who's Not Who in Contemporary Art*, and we think it was worth the wait.

—jah

REFERENCE

Artists' Associations in the U.S.A.: A Descriptive Directory. Helen Schlein, comp. Boston, Boston Visual Artists Union, 1977. 307p. \$4.00 + .50 postage. Order from Directory of Artists' Associations, 14 Reservoir Road, Wyland, MA 01778.

This paperback directory lists over 1600 U.S. visual-artists' associations including for many the number and type of membership and characteristic activities. A coding system facilitates identification of organizations for correspondence and exchange of information.

The information, gathered from lists solicited from State Arts Councils, artists' congresses and notices run in art newspapers, is produced from offset typewritten copy. The directory is most useful and is an economical tool for those interested in the current art scene.

Cummings, Paul, ed. *Fine Arts Market Place*. 3d ed. New York, R.R. Bowker, 1977. 403p. ISBN 0-8352-0918-0 \$19.95

This improved edition contains 4,500 firms, individuals and organizations serving the fine arts field; entries are arranged within 30 categories (such as Art Dealers, Auction Houses, Framing Sources, Art Book Publishers, Art Book & Museum Stores, Packers & Movers, Restorers). A useful resource (but a high-priced paperback) for those involved in the dynamics of the art market.

Gebhard, David and Winter, Robert. *A Guide to Architecture in Los Angeles & Southern California*. Santa Barbara, Peregrine Smith, 1977. 728p., illus. ISBN 0-87905-0489-7 \$11.95

A long-awaited work, this "most comprehensive guide... to the man-made environment of Southern California" mixes a folksy tone with a great deal of scholarship and architectural appreciation. Not as comprehensive in detail as anticipated, this guide is nevertheless a landmark.

Photography Market Place. Edited by Fred W. McDarragh. 2d ed. New York, Bowker, 1977. 502p. \$15.50 ISBN 0-8352-0922-9

This new edition contains some 5,500 separate listings within 40 sections, such as "Picture Buyers, Photographic Supply Stores, Stock Photo Agencies, Review Sources, Professional Associations, Career Opportunities," many of which have

detailed breakdowns. "Picture Buyers" contains eleven different sub-sections of prime markets for photos, while "Equipment Sources" lists stores which carry a full line of professional supplies and photocopy and telephone answering equipment services as ways for the photographer to streamline business practices. An index completes this comprehensive paperbound guide designed for photographers, art directors and picture researchers needing a most current directory.

PHOTOGRAPHY

Davies, Thomas L. *Shoots: A Guide to your Family's Photographic Heritage*. Danbury, NH, Addison House, 1977. 72p., 48 halftones. ISBN 0-89169-012-3 \$3.95

The nagging question of what to do with the old family photos is answered here in Davies' inviting text, which explains how to restore, preserve and systematically organize those antique portraits and candid shots. There are step-by-step procedures which are clearly outlined in this handsomely produced book as well as instructions in caring for the photographs and improving picture-taking ability. An appendix on sources of supplies and a bibliography on archival and photographic history are included.

Nettles, Bea. *Breaking the Rules: A Photo Media Cookbook*. Rochester, Inky Press, 1977. 55p., illus. ISBN 0-930810-00-7 (dist. through Light Impressions, Box 3012, Rochester, NY 14614) \$5.95

Bea Nettles' answer to the many similar texts on film processing is this exploration of photographic techniques which are easy to use and inexpensive to practice. Full color prints illustrate magazine lifts, cyanotype, color Xerox, Van Dyke Brown printing and Kwik Prints on various surfaces. Bea Nettles closely supervised the printing of this exciting book for all photographers.

Rexroth, Nancy. *The Platinotype 1977*. Arlington, Virginia, Violet Press, 1977. 31p., diags. (Order from 1228 So. 24th St., Arlington, VA 22202) \$3.50

This pamphlet, the result of Rexroth's summer internship at the Smithsonian Institution, is the most complete description of this non-silver process to date, of value to beginning photographers. Note that the second printing includes comments from readers of the first who have offered corrections and additions.

Rexroth, Nancy. *Iowa*. Yellow Springs, Ohio, Violet Press, 1977. 120p., 75 illus. \$17.50 paper (from Violet Press, 1228 So. 24th St., Arlington, VA 22202).

This is a six year odyssey "taken with a plastic camera which costs \$1.00. They are dreams and memories of Iowa I knew as a child. In many ways *Iowa* is the best part of myself." This book is conceived as a kind of psychic journey from one emotional mood to the next. Rexroth says she shot 1,021 rolls of film in all, never knowing if the book could ever be published.

But she found the right printer, Thomas Todd of Boston, who understood. Printed in 300 line duotone with the last 15 pages done in a pink and chocolate run that adequately reproduces the original sepia and gold toned prints in the last section, this book is indeed an odyssey through a young woman's feelings and emotions that make the feelings and emotions universally felt to any sensitive eye and soul.

The window varnish that coats each image makes a three-dimensional quality to each memory--for the photographs are memories and living ones at that. Nancy Rexroth takes you down the path of her early life--and brings you into her sensitively drawn present with her little Diana camera, a toy that changes the past into a living past. You can also order from Light Impressions, P.O. Box 3012, Rochester, NY 14614.

PRINTING & GRAPHIC DESIGN

Fairbank, Alfred. *A Book of Scripts*. London, Faber & Faber Ltd., 1977. 48p., 80 plates. ISBN 90571-10876-8 \$7.95

This third edition, with 80 plates and an up-dated bibliography, provides an excellent introduction to calligraphy by a master in the field. A classic brought up-to-date.

Thompson, Susan Otis. *American Book Design and William Morris*. New York, Bowker, 1977. 258p., illus. ISBN 0-8352-0984-9 \$29.95

Handsomely produced, this volume contains over 100 black and white photographs and a text which explains the influence of William Morris and his Kelmscott Press on American typography from 1890 to 1950. Thompson describes two conflicting viewpoints regarding book design during this period: the mechanized technology and printing managers seeking efficient inexpensive quantity versus the desire among many people for fine quality books. As much a biography of Morris as historical documentation of the American book design movement during this golden period, the work includes a bibliography of over 900 items and an appendix with excerpts of Morris' statements on book design. A superb addition to any collection of typography or fine books.

GENERAL ART INTEREST

Ames, Kenneth L. *Beyond Necessity: Art in the Folk Tradition*. Winterthur, Delaware, Winterthur Museum (dist. by W. W. Norton), 1977. 131p., illus. ISBN 0-912724-05-6 \$14.95

This exhibition catalog of 225 items in the Winterthur Museum Collection shown at the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania (17 September - 16 November 1977) is sumptuously illustrated with black and white and color plates. Not only does it depict the richness of American folk art, but it discusses recent developments in the appreciation of this genre. The catalog includes an annotated bibliography.

Crichton, Michael. *Jasper Johns*. New York, Abrams, 1977. 243p., 149 black and white illus., 128 large color plates. ISBN 0-8109-1161-2 \$28.50

Michael Crichton reveals the essence of the artist in essays on Johns, his work and the relationship between the viewer and the object. A welcome addition for those interested in contemporary art, executed in a style that will appeal to visually literate people.

Ellis, C. Hamilton. *Railway Art*. Boston, Little, Brown (a New York Graphic Society Book), 1977. 144p., illus. ISBN 0-8212-0710-5 \$9.95 paper

This fascinating picture book captures the impact of the railway on the imaginations of artists in many countries and indicates the importance of the railway to some of the greatest painters and illustrators of the 19th and 20th centuries. The text and picture captions supplement the visual history of this means of transportation.

Emory, Michael. *Windows*. Chicago, Contemporary Books, 1977. mostly illus. ISBN 7819-7 \$25.00 (25% discount for institutions. Order from Contemporary Books, Inc., 180 No. Michigan Ave., Chicago, IL 60601)

A picture book with excellent reproductions on a new popular art form, store-window displays. These market-place visuals reflect sociological commentary, philosophical statements, a kind of street theater. Includes narratives by outstanding window dressers including Robert Currie, Gene Moore, Colin Birch, Victor Hugo, and Andy Warhol.

Environmental Communications. *Big Art: Megamurals & Supergraphics*. Philadelphia, Running Press, 1977. 84p., mostly illus. ISBN 0-89471-006-0 \$6.95 paper

An informative work on U.S. wall art, although the scale of the reproductions is not always consistent with the actual wall. The illustrations are clear, in color, and, in order to keep the price down, small and multiple on a page.

Spies, Werner. *The Running Fence Project—Christo*. New York, Abrams, 1977. 144p., 126 illus. (14 in color) ISBN 0-8109-2080-8 \$9.95

Wolfgang Volz's superb photography captures this monumental 24 1/2 mile art work for those who failed to see it across the rolling hills of northern California. The documentation, which accompanies a corresponding exhibition being shown in many major European museums, includes maps and data on the last three months of the four-year-long project.

BOOKS AT A GLANCE

Barr, Alfred H., Jr. *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art, 1929-1967*. New York, The Museum of Modern Art, 1977. 658 p., 1693 black and white illus. \$40.00

A veritable survey of twentieth-century art, this richly illustrated volume is a complete catalog of the Museum's holdings at the time of Barr's retirement in 1967 as the founding Director of the Museum. It is the first complete catalog of the Museum's holdings since 1958. There are, in all, 2622 works of art by 999 artists. A supplement in paperback, entitled *Painting and Sculpture in the Museum of Modern Art: Catalog of the Collection, January 1, 1977*, edited by Alicia Legg, is available for \$6.95 in paper, listing 550 new acquisitions since 1957.

○ *Japanese Prints: A Bibliography of Monographs in English* by Leslie E. Abrams is available to all interested libraries and collectors for \$6.00 in February from the author, 220 McCauley Street, Chapel Hill, NC 27514.

○ *Olana's Guide to American Artists: A Contribution toward a Bibliography* will be available in March, 1978 for \$30.00 with approximately 4000 books, exhibition catalogs, magazine articles, and historical society publications. Approximately 1000 artists represented alphabetically and chronologically according to publication date will be included, with index. There is a prepublication offer of \$24.00 or 20% discount. Write to Olana Gallery, P.O. Box 325, Bronx, NY 10471.

○ Excerpts from Papers presented on 18 May 1976 at the John E. Walley Commemoration Design Conference on "Freedom and Identity" are available from the University of Illinois at Chicago Circle, College of Architecture, Art & Urban Sciences, School of Art & Design, Box 4348, Chicago, IL 60680.

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