

## FROM THE EDITOR

This has been the most difficult issue of *Umbrella* I have ever done. It has been weeks in the making, let alone months, but I have had separation pangs. I am a lover of paper—I love its feel, its smoothness, its sounds. And it is with deep regrets that I close 28 years of publishing on paper with this issue. I guess I'd like to publish a few books, and between the postal rates that have gone up as of the 8<sup>th</sup> of January and printing costs, which more than likely will always go up depending upon the price of salaries and the price of paper, I have opted to experiment with the rest of us and produce *Umbrella* online as a journal with articles by me and others 3 - 4 times a year. In the meantime, when the news comes my way, I will send it out to those of you who have sent me your e-mail addresses. It will come sometimes daily, sometimes weekly, but quite often and the news will be as hot off the press as I can find it. Rather than producing stale "news & notes", you will get the news quickly. And I won't have to accumulate it either in paper or on my computer. Thus, the news will not be archived, but the journal articles will. I therefore invite any one of you to submit to me any essay you might have on your mind to reach a larger audience of those who love artist books, or mail art, or any works by artists that can illuminate our lives. Feel free to contact me with ideas or development.

For those of you who do not have a computer, I am offering to produce a paper version of the journal online and send it to you, if you give me that information when you subscribe. I have set \$15.00 for individuals and \$20.00 for institutions to help maintain the website. It will be password-sensitive, meaning that if you subscribe, you will get a password from me to allow you to get online and see what is there. In the beginning, there will only be a short history statement about *Umbrella* and we will be under construction until there are journal articles later in the spring.

This is a heavy time for all of us with the world in a mess, "terrorism" rearing its ugly head in Washington, DC with scandals, messy politics, and lies. I read as much political news as art news and it fills my day. These are sad times as well when friends, as well as family, pass away and leave a chasm in our souls. I fear the phone calls, the e-mails, and the letters these days, but the letters are fewer and the news comes in quickly.

For the past 28 years, I have tried to gather

you all into a community, making sure that those of you who love artist books and the alternative arts in general get to know each other and know that there are appreciations that never fill the art history books, at least not yet. We have tried to document that which passes us quickly, from Fluxus to Futurism, from Mail Art to Media, from artist books to cyber art. If we have succeeded, only you can tell. It's taken up a good part of my life with no compensation. *Umbrella* has been a gift to you and a discipline for me. It has allowed me to meet people from all over the world, travel widely, and live on the edge. That has given me an appreciation of what an artist's life can be—lean and mean.

But there is joy and great events as well. Being a librarian and an archivist, I have "collected" a great many pieces of paper—some bound, many unbound. UCLA Arts Library has been the recipient of the bulk of this material, and this year they have committed to cataloging at least the artist books and ancillary material such as exhibition catalogs. Finally, I will have the bulk of my collection accessible to researchers. So in the midst of writing this issue, I am also packing up a great many artist books that have been in my possession for at least the past fifteen years. UCLA can take care of them a lot better than I and at least they will be part of a great library, open to serious researchers, faculty and students. I am sure my own shelves will fill up quickly with new contributions, but at least I will have more space and shelves, and I relish the time when there is a place for most everything at home. I have had a flood of papers and books come here, and storage has been a requisite to wait until this moment. I hope it works.

I wish you a very Happy New Year. Let's work together to see that *Umbrella Online* serves you well.

— jah

Cover: *Hypnogoogia* by Ara Peterson & Jim Drain

Back Cover: *Ed Ruscha, The End #23, 2002*

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Vol. 28, no. 4 (December 2005)

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E-mail: [umbrella@ix.netcom.com](mailto:umbrella@ix.netcom.com) Website is:

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