

## BOOK REVIEWS

### REFERENCE

*How to Survive & Prosper as an Artist: A Complete Guide to Career Management* by Carol Michels (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1983) is written by an artist who has not only made a living from her art, but also from her business as an artist's consultant. She presents a basic program for selling yourself and building confidence including dealing with dealers, being exhibitionistic, making it legal, playing the grantsmanship game, finding alternatives to, driving a cab, doing your arithmetic, and tuning up your psyche. In plain English, Michels gives artists the how-to-make-it, the clout to be a self-supporting artist without losing your own backbone, fibre, and in fact soul. The back of the book is as important as the plain, hard facts including resources such as accounting and bookkeeping handbooks, alternatives spaces, space and opportunities, art colonies and artist-in-residence programs, arts legislation, publications and organizations, arts service organizations, grants, health hazards, loans, pension plans, periodicals and slide registries—all of this being a digest of the literature and available source materials. \$7.95 isn't a lot for the paperback (\$14.95 for hardcover), and I find this book better organized than *The Business of Art* (Putnam, 1982).

### GENERAL

*Leonard Baskin's Miniature Natural History* (First Series) (New York, Pantheon, 1983) is in fact four miniature books in a box containing superb watercolor portraits of animal life. Each volume, approximately 3 3/4" square, is devoted to pictures with identifying captions of a species. Included are the common and scientific names. The first book, *Seven Fish, One Crab, One Lobster & One Octopus*, featuring creatures that represent the beginning of life, in the sea, is followed by *Insects* (larger than life) to appreciate the marvels of nature; the third shows *Domestic Animals*, but the fourth, *Extinct Creatures*, is the most disturbing, for Baskin alternates portraits of creatures that have been extinct for millions of years with several that scientists believe are lost forever or in immediate danger of destruction, e.g., Stephen Island Wren, extinct, c. 1894; Mexican Grizzly Bear, endangered, last seen in early 1960s."

This book is not a children's book, but recommended for all ages. Miniature books with a message by a master. \$9.95 boxed!

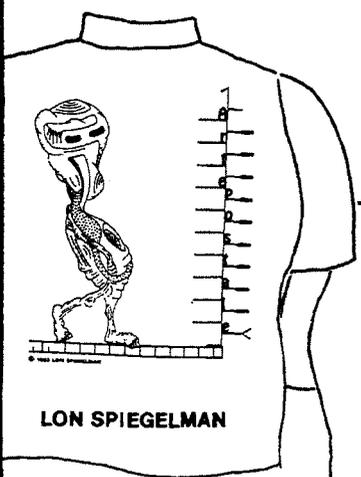
*Bruno Zevi on Modern Architecture* by Andrea Oppenheimer Dean (New York, Rizzoli, 1983, \$15.95 paper) documents Zevi's important influence and impact on the shape of the man-made environment, a critic whose words have made a difference. In four chapters, the author explains and illustrates Zevi's early essays, his feelings about modernism, his search for a modern language of architecture, and his feelings about architecture and criticism today. The appendices include his essays and articles as well as some of his speeches. There are biographical notes and a selected bibliography. Rather than an evaluation of Zevi's thinking, the author serves to explain and examine how his philosophy about architecture evolved. 40 black and white illustrations in 218 pages.

*Aspects of Recent New Zealand Art: New Image Painting* is a curatorial show to showcase some painters who evoke memories of, or associations with, objects. Included are Wong Sing Tai, Denys Watkins, Richard Killeen, Paul Hartigan, Dick Frizzell, Gavin Chilcott, George Baloghy. Essays for each artist, color and black and white illus. \$14.00

*Aspects of Recent New Zealand Art: The Grid: Lattice and Network* is another in a series of curatorial shows and documents the work of several artists who use the grid as their basic element in their work, with essays on each artist, as well as black and white and color illustrations. \$14.00 US

All the catalogs above are available for the price indicated in U.S. dollars, which includes postage and handling, from Auckland City Art Gallery, P.O. Box 5499, Wellesley St., Auckland, NZ.

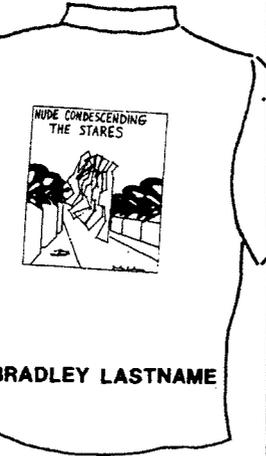
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*Kanban: Shop Signs of Japan* by Dana Levy, Lea Sneider, and Frank B. Gibney (New York, Weatherhill, 1983, \$29.95) is a voyage through time via signboards known as *kanban* in Japan. The signs themselves were on exhibit at Japan House Gallery in Manhattan in April, a tribute to the creative genius of Japanese craftsmen. In 30 color, 82 gravure and 173 monochrome photographs, the richness and variety of design and coloration of these embellished wooden or metal signs which began trademarks or seals for merchants of Japan from the 17th century until recently are demonstrated in this handsomely designed volume. The four-color offset, with rich gravure monochrome, is a book handsome for its book production, skillfully bound completely in cloth, with gold stamping on both spine and cover.

The signs themselves vary in richness of design with visual puns, calligraphy and ingenious shapes defining the trade and class of business or tradesman. Even with stringent governmental restrictions, the imagination of the merchant overcame the structural requirements and made the signs and seals masterpieces of symbol design. There is a commentary in the back on each plate, a chronology of Japanese historical periods, a glossary of *Kanban* terms, a glossary of shops and occupations referred to in this book, and a bibliography. There are giant teacups, spools of thread, the "beckoning cat", and so much more. A beautiful explanation of the importance of the merchant class in the development of the Japanese society.

*The Japanese Influence in America* by Clay Lancaster (New York, Abbeville, 1983, \$39.95) is the first major book to explore the historic background and to define the impact of Japanese concepts, aesthetic ideals, and art forms on the United States. The book is quite timely, since the Japanese influence on American fashion has taken hold this year with open arms, from T-shirts covered with Japanese calligraphy which is merely design to Americans, to Japanese furniture. Here we find that the current vogue for things Japanese is not a relatively recent development, but Lancaster demonstrates conclusively, with abundant pictorial evidence, that Japan has played an important part in American cultural life for the greater part of a century. In gardening, interior decoration, fine arts, applied arts, printmaking, literature, and most important of all, architecture, the Japanese influence continues today and cannot be ignored in understanding the development of contemporary American art and design. Over 200 illustrations, notes and glossary makes this book invaluable.

*Anatomy of a Cloud* by Paul Jenkins with Suzanne Donnelly Jenkins (New York, Abrams, 1983, \$75.00) is more than a coffee table book, but an insightful explanation of the inner workings of an artist, one renowned for his color abstractions on canvas, who shows us his inner self through his opulent collages, evocative works of art, which have been shown for the first time ever in this volume. These are visual articulations of his own thoughts and feelings, as well as of his past and present, which are also accompanied by selections from his diaries and other writings.

15 years in the making, this book is more than a documentation of the stunning paintings of the artist, but instead the personal notebooks, thoughts, sketches, memory fragments, snapshots, old letters and photographs that have meaning for Jenkins. "Clues to the secret self" as he calls them, these me-

moabilia form the majority of this marvelous book generously spread into 270 pages with 70 full-color plates and 100 black and white gravure illustrations. There is a list of plates, a chronology, solo and group exhibitions, a bibliography, as well as a list of exhibition catalogs. A not-to-be-missed experience for all who know Paul Jenkins, and all those who wish to discover him. \$75.00.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

*Wild Flowers* by Joel Meyerowitz, unlike his *Cape Light* and *St. Louis & The Arch*, is an accumulation of an interest of his "secret garden" from 1963 and 1981. This recent in storage boxes containing years' worth of these pictures triggered this book which runs throughout the gamut of flowers—from formal garden to blossoms in a woman's hair, from a storefront sign to a lace veil—all of these come from all over the world. As such, we get photographs of people and locales: a Cadillac in Los Alamitos, California, a magic show in Spain. Done in flat color reproduction, the strength of Meyerowitz's other books does not seem to evolve in this volume. Perhaps keeping "secret gardens" secret may be important too. \$35.00 (New York Graphic Society/Little, Brown, 1983).

*Alfred Stieglitz and the Photo-Secession* by William Innes Homer (Boston, New York Graphic/Little-Brown, 1983, \$35.00) is the first in-depth study of the period of Photo-Secession gleaned from interviews and much other unpublished material examining the careers of Eduard Steichen, Gertrude Kasebier, Alvin Langdon Coburn, Clarence White, and others. Enhanced with 103 black and white illustrations, the book traces in detail the origins and aesthetic principles of the movement, its connections with European modernist artists and photographers, and contemporary critical reaction to their work and influence. There is a detailed analysis of *Camera Work* and the growth of the exhibition schedules in America and abroad, which adds a great deal to the appreciation not only of Photo-Secession, but its documentation and early photographic printing and mounting in the magazine. Detailed notes, an appendix which defines the processes of pictorial photography, a list of the members of the Photo-Secession and an extensive bibliography make this book an invaluable reference tool, as well as a historical document in its own right.

*In the Middle: The Eskimo Today* by Stephen Guion Williams, with an introduction by Edmund Carpenter (Boston, David R. Godine, 1983) is a timely and original photographic portrayal of the Inuit people living at the top of the Hudson Bay in Northern Quebec—caught between two worlds. The last hunting culture on the North American continent, the Inuit people are struggling to maintain their traditions in the face of "progress". Here we have 56 duotone photographs which convey the barren beauty of the Inuit villages invaded by powerlines and snowmobiles, which foretell change. The spare, simple text combines with conversations with the people themselves to enforce this message. And the text is printed both in English and in Inuit syllables, while the endpapers are drawings by Anarqaq, an Inuit shaman. In the tradition of fine bookmaking, Godine does it again. \$20.00

*New Mexico Revisited: Photographs by Bernard Plossu*, text by Gilles Mora tells the story of a French photographer's love affair with the area where he lives now—a re-discovery of a land which breathes of mysticism, filters of Mexican imagery combined with the Wild West, bright light and overwhelming vistas—a travelogue of nostalgia and intuition into a place which is always to uncover and discover, always with new insights, which the photographer captures in black and white. Plossu enjoys a reputation for flat black and white prints, and even with luscious duotone, the flatness prevails. Yet New Mexico even in black and white evokes a tender, loving feeling, which Plossu has captured in his adopted home. \$19.95 from University of New Mexico Press.

*Aaron Siskind: Pleasures and Terrors* by Carl Chiarenza (Boston, New York Graphic Society/Little-Brown, 1983, \$50.00) is the long-awaited critical biography of a first-generation American artist, who through his work, his teaching and his life, altered the evolution of photography as a medium of artistic expression, and who at 79 continues his career with an international reputation. Anxiety and mishap filled the life of this fascinating artist, born on New York's Lower East Side in 1903. Delving into social reform, then music, literature and poetry, a wedding gift of a camera changed his life in 1930. Early photographs in the series *Harlem Document*, a tribute to a New York in the depression years; but in the forties, his imagery shifted from subject and description to symbol, form, and abstractions. Ironically enough, his friends such as Newman, Gottlieb and Rothko also rejected the mainstream of regional, political and social art in America, to take risks and find sources of timeless art. Failing to change the world with their art, they responded by withdrawing into the personal and re-examining the person in relation to the world, except the painters and sculptors go into the histories of modernism in American art, and Siskind, who pursued photography, did not, remaining in a peculiar limbo. As his career developed over the next decades, his photographs paralleled the growth and development of his abstract expressionist painter friends. This richly illustrated (272 photographs, 74 in duotone) book pays tribute to this complex and beloved photographer, by one of the country's outstanding photographers, critics, and historians, who has supplied us with a sensitive biography with abundant notes, and a selective bibliography.

*Carleton E. Watkins, Photographer of the American West* by Peter E. Palmquist (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1983, \$70.00).

The majority of Watkins' photographs in this volume, which serves as the exhibition catalog for the Amon Carter Museum, have not been previously published—and it is a treat to see the scope of his work. While we know his vistas of Yosemite and Yellowstone, the body of work contains architecture, seascapes, and interiors as well as landscapes. Much of the work was commissioned by businesspersons and litigants, and because of this we see documentary photographs which also reveal Watkins' aesthetic taste. The progression from the salt prints of the 1850's to the albumen prints of later years shows a growth from strict documentation to a more abstract seeing—the work just gets better and better. Reproductions are beautiful, and the text is a delight to read, offering a complete biography of Watkins, technical information about

the work, and a history of California and the West between 1850 and the early 1890's. A chronology of Watkins' life follows the plates. The book will be of interest to photography historians and to historians of the American West, as well as being a visual treat.

—Janice Felgar

*The Photographer's Almanac* by Peter Miller and Janet Nelson (Boston, Little/Brown, 1983, \$15.50) is a compilation of all the important information for which a photographer searches (often in vain) in separate, obscure sources. It is written by professional photographers who have confronted the problems of the fledgling, and who are interested in sharing experiences and information. Included are ideas about careers, travel, equipment, and marketing work. There are sections which show contact-sheets and the final images selected from them, on how to be an assistant, and on storing work.

The book is written in a flippant, offhand manner, unabashedly biased, and it contains many illustrations, making it a treat to peruse. There are anecdotes, short histories, sage sayings, helpful hints, and good solid information. One could wish for an index to complete the picture, though its absence is countered by an excellent table of contents, and scanning that is the best approach to finding the answers to specific questions. It is a most useful volume for anyone seriously interested in photography as a career, and it is a pleasure to peruse for those who have encountered questions along their photographic paths.

—Janice Felgar

Drawing by Erica Weihs.



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