

FROM THE EDITOR

Dear Readers:

After a six month absence in New Zealand, I had time to re-assess and re-evaluate my 12 years in bimonthly publishing. This was necessitated by real problems with the publication. As a result, it is apparent that **Umbrella** cannot be all things to all people, nor is it possible for one person to cover the art world, especially the alternative media such as mail art, book art, and news from around the world. Over the years, we have tried to change formats, been anxious to have covers created by artists, applied for grants sometimes successfully (two small NEA grants early on) and succeeded in finding amazing friends who really wanted to be "angels" to keep this magazine going. The umbrella has widened over the seven years to cover countries such as Australia and New Zealand, Poland and Hungary, Holland and even Japan, making this magazine reach a wider audience throughout the world. But the numbers did not increase from year to year, and it has been hard going. In fact, I have had to find other means of subsistence for many months during the year.

When a publication does not pay for itself, it certainly must be subsidized. That is a fact of life. The National Endowment for the Arts this year has turned down **Umbrella** for a grant, which would have allowed artists to be paid for covers, writers to be paid for contributions, and the editor to finally pull a salary and enhance the publication with computerization. As it stands, I have become a slave to a tonnage of mail, to newspapers and magazines, and since I like freedom over slavery, I like that freedom from deadlines, that freedom from complaints from readers and subscribers, and the freedom to find another way to communicate. Economics for some people in the United States has developed into a science; for others, it has developed into a struggle. **Umbrella** is not closing, just folding. That is, **Umbrella** will continue in another format in 1985, probably as an annual which will deal solely with bookworks, a kind of bibliography/buying guide with reviews of the year's output throughout the world as they come to be seen by several different critics. It will be a handsomely printed volume, conversant with new printing techniques, and be a welcome addition to any bookshelf in any library in the world. Concentration on one subject at one time is what I have learned during my sojourn in New Zealand. To be focused and centered is a gift in this information age, and to narrow the focus means that the message will be more significant. So, for those of you who have continuing subscriptions, **Umbrella** has sold the subscription lists to **High Performance** and **Rubberstampmadness**, and subscribers will be hearing from those magazines in the near future.

While I was in New Zealand, I gave mail art workshops for both adults and children. The New Zealand Post Office will never be the same! In addition, I collected many items for the umbrella collection which were shown with the rest of my collection from 31 August - 3 September in Seattle during the Bumbershoot Festival. The center-fold shows some of the umbrellas during the show.

I shall miss sharing this with all of you, and I apologize to those of you who are disappointed, but this issue of **Umbrella** comes to you courtesy of a bank loan. There was no way of communicating with all of you except by fulfilling my obligations with this issue. Thank you, thank you for the years of fun, of passion, even of struggle. It doesn't hurt to work hard when you have friends all over the world. We just have to find a way to open **Umbrella** again.

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