

# BOOK REVIEWS

## REFERENCE

Treasures of the Library of Congress, by Charles Goodrum, newly revised and expanded, has been issued by Harry N. Abrams to celebrate the Library of Congress' 191st birthday. With 460 illustrations, including 173 in full color, this 344-page edition has marvelous illustrations of the history of the book, with a new final chapter detailing significant treasures acquired by the Library since the earlier edition. From Maya Lin's original drawings for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to contemporary political posters stored on videodisc, this new Treasures of the Library of Congress shows the Library as a continuously evolving, vital center of scholarship and ideas. \$75.

Fine Art Publicity by Susan Abbott and Barbara Webb (San Francisco, Art Business News Library, 1991, \$39.95) is a lively step-by-step guide to public relations, tailored to the business of promoting and selling fine art. The authors cover how to develop a relationship with the art press, how to make publicity and advertising work together, how to create and use publicity tools--media lists, press kits and pitch letters, how to promote special events. The book contains sample press releases, work sheets and charts for publicity planning. Available directly from The Art Business News Library, 1444 U.S. Route 42, R.D. 11, Mansfield, OH 44903.

Graphics 5 is available from Edition Schellmann, Munchen/New York, which contains fine prints and objects in editions by Arakawa to Warhol. Every piece is beautifully illustrated, in glowing color, when appropriate, and this is like an encyclopedia of contemporary prints. There are 200 pages and 300 color illustrations. Available from Editions Schellmann, 50 Green St., New York, NY 10013 (\$20 prepaid) or Edition Schellmann, Maximilianstrasse 12, D-8000 Munchen 22, Germany.

## GENERAL

On a Scale that competes with the world: The Art of Edward and Nancy Redding Kienholz by Robert L. Pincus (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1991, \$39.95) matches two artists with the most effective art critic for their work. Pincus, with a background in literature, cultural and art history, clarifies the work of the Kienholzes in a broad cultural context, suggesting that we view it against the backdrop of a soaring American optimism of the nineteenth century. In contrast to George Caleb Bingham and William Sidney Mount and the writings of Walt Whitman, the art of Kienholz and others of his generation radiates anger, yet the outrage is strongly social rather than political. Thus, we can understand The Illegal Operation, The Wait and The State Hospital with parallels in the writings of contemporaries such as William Burroughs, Allen Ginsberg and Norman Mailer. Their anger springs from the perception that grand American ideals have been betrayed.

Then Pincus discusses the art historical context of the Kienholzes' work in no less incisively portrayed in its regional, national and international dimensions, in relation

to Minimalist objects, Pop Art, the related sculptures of George Segal, and Conceptual art. Pincus brings them up to the present, with a chronology, bibliography and index. An important contribution to the work of two artists who have been overlooked in the U.S., but are now finally put into perspective.

Frida Kahlo: The Brush of Anguish by Martha Zamora (abridged & translated by Marilyn Sode Smith) captures the personal, brutal, penetrating and intense work of Kahlo, with 75 of her paintings reproduced here in lavish color, accompanied by historical photographs and Zamora's descriptive text. In this way, Kahlo's remarkable and tragic life is portrayed. There is a wonderful photograph of Frida's diary (a double page) which will definitely entice the readers of this newsletter (p. 101). There are many anecdotes which makes Frida Kahlo come alive. And 10 duotone photographs flesh out the story of this spirited and extraordinary woman. (San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 1990, \$29.95)

The Symbolism of Habitat: An interpretation of landscape in the arts by Jay Appleton (Seattle, University of Washington, 1991, \$17.50) asserts that aesthetic values in landscape are not found in an elevated philosophy of aesthetics or in a culturally bound artistic symbolism, but in the biological and behavioral needs that we share with other animals. In addition, Appleton also proposes terminology for describing the aesthetic elements in landscape. Going beyond concrete nouns--desert, jungle, mountain--he suggests abstract terms indicating features that increase the likelihood of survival: prospect, which allows an animal to see from an elevated place; refuge, which allows it to hide; and hazard, which stirs a feeling of being threatened and of wanting to escape. He applies all of this to paintings, drawings, photographs, gardens, high rise buildings, cottages and a play structure. Important book for those interested in landscape design, architecture, and the philosophy of aesthetics.

Happy-Happy, a children's coloring book, with drawings by contemporary artists such as John Ahearn, Karel Appel, John Baldessari, Sandro Chia, Eric Fischl, Gilbert & George, Jorg Immendorff, Mark Kostabi, Sol LeWitt, Rachael Romero, Kenny Scharf, Terry Winters, among others. This book is oversized, full of strong line drawings and some other kinds of looser drawings that lend themselves to the creativity of children of all ages. Order from Edition Lafayette, 496 La Guardia Pl. #399, New York, NY 10012 or find it at your local bookstore for \$9.95.

Art in Germany 1909-1936. From Expressionism to Resistance. The Marvin and Janet Fishman Collection by Reinhold Heller (New York, Prestel/Milwaukee Art Museum, 1990, \$65) celebrates an exhibition of this collection, unequalled in its focus on socially critical and politically committed art in Germany from Expressionism to the resistance of the early 1930s. Beckmann, Dix, Grosz, and Meidner are at the center, but among the 81 artists included are many,

such as Albert Birkle, Karl Hubbuch, Bruno Voigt, and Richard Ziegler, who remain to be discovered by the non-German public.

There is thorough documentation of the Fishman Collection, including an interview with the collectors and an overview of German art of the period. Detailed commentaries on each of the 193 paintings and graphic works reproduced place the individual pieces in their artistic, social, and political context, while the introductory essay discusses the role of artistic institutions and organizations in the artists' attempts to render their art an effective instrument of social and political change. Biographies of the artists, a select bibliography, and a list of major exhibitions that have included works from the Fishman Collection enhance the documentary value of the book.

Interpreting Contemporary Art, edited by Stephen Bann and William Allen (London, Reaktion Books, 9.95 paperback, 23.00 hardback) is a series of essays by various critics who have chosen a painting, sculpture, photograph or installation with a conviction that the work's own importance can be enhanced by what is written about it. Marcelin Pleynet writes about Robert Motherwell, Victor Burgin chooses a photograph by Helmut Newton, Wystan Curnow writes about New Zealand master Colin McCahon, and on and on. The range of contributions covers a broad international field, touching upon virtually all the most significant art-forms of the present-day.

This book defies the new and often bewildering trends and movements coming to the surface at a dizzying pace. Instead, we get critics who understand more about the profound links which unite the art of today with that of the past. Well illustrated with 8 in full color. Selected bibliography and index.

Order from Reaktion Books Ltd., 1-5 Midford Place, Tottenham Court Road, London W1P 9HH, UK.

Walter Gropius: An illustrated biography of the Creator of the Bauhaus by Reginald Isaacs is the first English-language biography of the public and private man, the founder of the Bauhaus, the single most influential force on modern design, war hero, lover and husband of the notorious Alma Mahler, and teacher of great influence.

Here we get behind-the-scenes views recording the legendary Bauhaus gaiety and creativity as well as its conflicts and inevitable politicization. Gropius fled Nazi Germany, but through his teaching at Harvard and his building projects all over the world he remained at the center of the architectural community until his death at age 86. Included are his vivid, extremely frank letters documenting political and romantic intrigues, the anguish of life in Germany in the 1930s and his relations with such leading cultural and political figures as Mies van der Rohe, Paul Klee, Le Corbusier, Wassily Kandinsky and John Maynard Keynes.

This is a hefty biography of 368 pages, with 157 black-and-white illustrations, this lively biography brings Gropius into focus as a human being, as well as a great public influence on design and architecture.

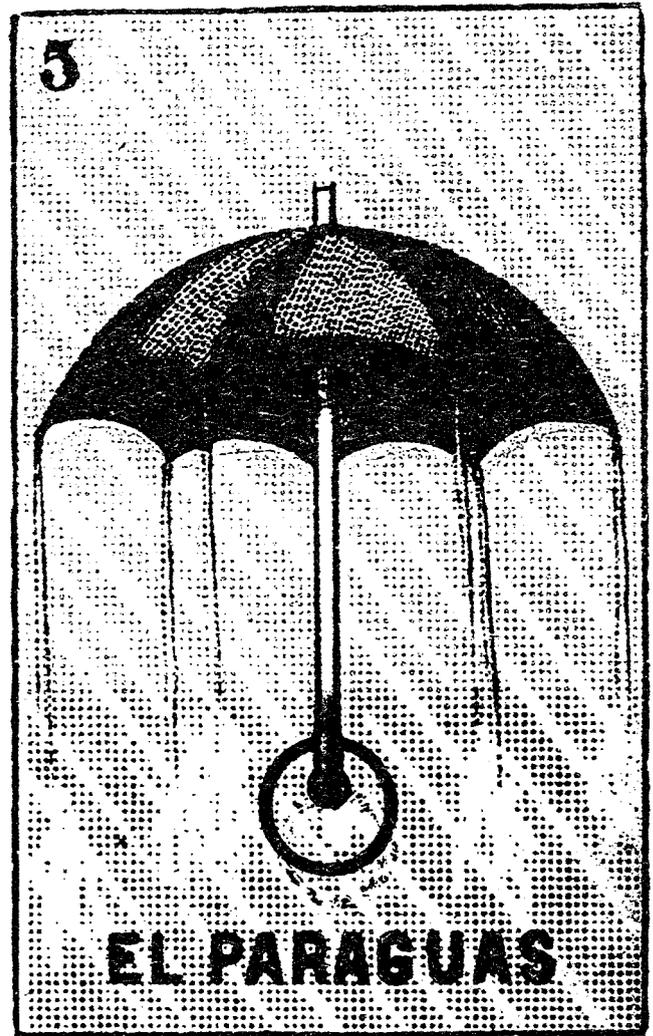
Published by Bulfinch Press (dist. by Little, Brown) for \$40.00.

## POSTCARD BOOKS

The Missing Nose Flute and Other Mysteries of Life by Nick Bantock is a series of old postcards reproduced with brand-new captions which include cliché) and his sense of the visually bizarre. From Old Japan to European romantic situations, the captions are of the 1990s. These oversized postcards are deliciously funny! San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 1991, \$8.95.

## BOOKS RECEIVED

Totem Poles by Hilary Stewart (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1991, \$29.95)



COVER: RABASCALL, Spanish-born, Paris conceptual artist, contributed the cover for June. Last year he had a show with Muntadas, curated by Robert C. Morgan.

## PHOTOBOOKS

### REFERENCE TOOLS

European Photography Guide 4 includes museums, galleries, magazines, publishers, critics, schools and associations. Published by European Photography in Gottingen, Germany, this reference tool has updated and expanded categories, organized in alphabetical order according to the city where they are located. Magazine information now has the year it was founded, language(s), number of issues per year, and themes. An invaluable reference tool for all collections! Order from European Photography, P.O. Box 3043, W-3400 Gottingen, Germany.

### REVIEWS

Scoring in Heaven: Gravestones and cemetery art of the American Sunbelt States (New York, Aperture, 1991, \$40) is the journey of two Atlanta photographers committed to record the most unusual, humorous and bizarre gravestone markers through the backroads and unmarked cemeteries of the south. Lucinda Bunnan and Virginia Warren Smith and their sheepdog, Daisy, travelled over 26,000 miles, often developing the over 13,000 negatives in motel rooms along the way. Scoring is the result of their one-year odyssey, immortalizing a dying tradition of creative expression that is unique to the American southeast and southwest.

Some examples are a telephone receiver dangling alongside the epitaph, "Jesus called and my darling Sugarbabe answered," in Paris, TN. A six-foot fence encloses a coffin in the shape of a giant Easter basket in Las Vegas, NM; and the words, "I told you I was sick," adorn the gravestone of a woman in Key West, FL. Poetic implications of an empty chair, a broken wheel, or a stopped clock mingle with woven ribbons and tequila bottles, baby bottles and chocolate cake, tributes to the creativity and resourcefulness of the survivors. Enough to make you laugh and cry! 150 black and white and 70 color photographs on matte paper with endpapers showing contact prints and notes by the authors.

Rule Without Exception (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico/Des Moines Art Center, 1990, \$50 hardback, \$29.95 paper) documents in one volume a survey of images by Lewis Baltz from 1967 to 1990, documenting the edges of the urban landscape, California's industrial architecture and mass-produced suburbs overlapping with the power of open spaces.

Texts by Jane Livingston, Mark Haworth-Booth, Jeff Kelley, Olivier Boissi/re, and Guy Blaisdell, among others enhance the sweep and depth of this California-born artist's photographs. Credit must go to Connie Wilson in collaboration with the artist for the oversize, bleed to margins, double-spread photographs, which offer its own narrative and artistic statement through the sequence of images, juxtaposition of images and text, and its highlighting of details. A real stunner with 135 illustrations, 25 in luscious color. An important contribution!

The Modern Maya, A Culture in Transition by MacDuff Everton, edited by Ulrich Keller and Charles Demangate (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico, 1991, \$45.00 cloth and paper) is a journey by an American photographer over more than twenty years to discover the Mayan culture in all

its ramifications, as well as its transitions. Not just a photographic essay, this is a humanistic essay, an anthropological and sociological study of a people whose culture has relatively been untapped by an artist such as Everton. His winning personality seems to have illuminated the structure of this society, from all angles, farming, the role of women, the chicleros (those who gather chicle, the basis for chewing gum.) The photographs, beautifully reproduced with duotone, create an ambience for the sensitive texts by the artist, who writes personally as well as objectively about these people he has known well. He has learned their language and has seen with an aesthetic eye the life of a people not with a scientific eye, but with a human eye. Burgeoning twentieth century tourism and development have encroached upon these people, some adapting to the new ways, others relatively untouched by the new ways. This is an important book, one lived as well as written by a sensitive artist and human being. This book should be in everyone's collection, but better yet, go and visit these people and share a little of what MacDuff Everton has experienced for almost 25 years.

American Photography and the American Dream by James Guimond (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina Press, 1991, \$39.95 cloth, \$17.95) is a powerful study how documentary photographers have expressed or contested the idea of the American Dream throughout the 20th century. Issues such as growth, equality, social mobility, and national identity come under the rubric of the Dream as it has been used to measure how well the nation is living up to its professed social and political ideals.

This thematic analysis of the most important photographers and development in the documentary genre during this century encompasses Francis Benjamin Johnston and Lewis Hine, the FSA photographers through the 1930s and the 1940s after the FSA broke up, the American-Way-of-Life as published by Life magazine, and the USIA during the 1940s and 1950s; the iconoclastic images of William Klein, Diane Arbus, and Robert Frank; and the work of four photographs of recent times: Bill Owens, Chauncey Hare, Susan Meiselas, and Michael Williamson. Historical and social contexts are explored for each of the photographers. A fascinating study by a professor of literature gives us a new perspective on documentary American photography.

Castellina in Chianti - A Portrait by Paul Hoffman and Alessandro Falassi (Comune di Castellina in Chianti, Assessorato alla Cultura, 1990) has photographs by Hoffman and text by Falassi. Published in June, 1990 in a small edition of 2000 by the village of Castellina in Chianti, Siena, Italy for distribution to its citizens and friends, the book is definitely a portrait of a small town in Chianti country, the people, their joys, their work, their youth and their old age. Hoffman, a San Francisco photographer, was invited by the village to be a guest during their festivals in 1981 in order to create a portrait of their village. Having taken over 6000 frames, 150 were selected for printing for the exhibition. The publication was the product of the success of the exhibition.

By Italian law, because public monies funded the book, the initial edition was "edizione fuori commercio" meaning it must be distributed without charge. The book is indeed looking for distribution in this country. Its texts are in

English, Italian and German. This photodocumentary of a village in Tuscany merits viewing either in exhibition format or in book form. Contact Paul Hoffman, 4500 19th St., San Francisco, CA 94114 or call (415)863-3575.

First World War Photographers by Jane Carmichael (London/New York, Routledge, 1989) is an amazing documentary book about all the theaters of war from the Western Front to Gallipoli with fascinating photographs of both military and civilians, including many crowd scenes, munitions factories, and battle scenes. Revelatory, especially compared to the Gulf War non-photos.

## TWELVETREES/TWIN PALMS PRESS

Photographs by Allen Ginsberg is a fortunate coalescing of text and people which Ginsberg has documented with his lens. Subjects include Jack Kerouac, William Burroughs, Neal Cassidy, Robert Frank and dozens of other writers, painters and friends involved in the "Beat" movement of 50s America. Just recently, Ginsberg has had the time and inclination to catalog and print his photographs, and to continue their visual history with a new series of portraits.

In his wry introduction to the book, poet Gregory Corso notes, "Many Chinese years ago, a picture was worth a thousand words, today after many American years a picture is worth a thousand dollars and then some." That may even be true for this newly discovered photographer, Ginsberg, but the real test for these photographs is that they are worth a thousand viewings.

Captioned in his own handwriting, the photographs become more personal due to the memories and circumstances relating to the photograph or the subject. There is a wonderful essay by the poet as well. But the photos deserve repeated contemplation, not only because of the subjects, but also because of the emotions elicited. Ginsberg, truly a candid camera, captures those moments, their atmosphere, true grit in the scheme of things.

Ginsberg's artist-subjects are not divine really mortal, human, full of tragedy and humor, and they are real and honest.

(Altadena, Twelvetreepress, 1989, \$55).

Sleeping Beauty: Memorial Photography in America with text by Stanley Burns, M.D. documents the widespread tradition in 19th century America to create a post-mortem portrait, which became the mainstay of America's commercial photographers. By the end of World War I, they had all but disappeared from parlor walls and popular culture.

Starting with handcolored daguerreotypes, there are glass-viewing coffins, stereotypes, photos of cemeteries, two bodies in one casket, and lots of "morbid" photographs. Dr. Burns gives extensive notations and writings on this neglected facet of photographic history. Yet it is in the air, as exemplified by the exhibition at the California Museum of Photography in Riverside, and a review you will find above in this issue concerning memorial tombstones in cemeteries in the South by two women photographers. 76 color plates, \$40 from Twelvetreepress, 1990.

Now Becoming Then: Duane Michals by Max Kozloff is a retrospective look at Michals' oeuvre by a much respected

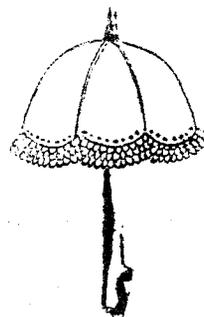
writer, Max Kozloff, which makes this the first major critical evaluation of the artist's contribution to the history of photography. We are fortunate to see many of Duane Michals' early sequences, and portraits are published here as well as unpublished new work.

There is a symbiotic relationship between Kozloff and Michals. Talk about a perfect match. Kozloff is the very best person to write about Michals, and having read that essay, you will learn to know and understand what Michals is really about. His contribution will be much more meaningful to you. This is an important document which travels with this exhibition for three years. There are 190 gravure plates in this \$55.00 cloth cover book, or \$35.00 for the paperback from Twin Palms Press.

This press, founded as a labor of love in 1980 by Jack Woody and Thomas Long--neither of whom had any background in the book trade, has become a going concern, yet remaining fiercely independent, handling its own distribution, resisting buyouts, and continually confounding its critics, who claimed, as usual, that a publisher could not succeed outside New York. The formula for their success is that quality comes first. These volumes are elegant and lush, dedicated not only to photography but to the art of publishing.

## REPRINT

On the Art of Fixing a Shadow: One hundred and fifty years of photography (Washington, National Gallery of Art; Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago, 1989, dist. by Bulfinch Press (Little,Brown) \$29.95.



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