

# MAIL ART EXHIBITIONS & COMPETITIONS

## Art and Politics: Mail Art in Australia

**Editor's Note:** These are excerpts from a letter from Dear Miss Cernak in Australia, sent to Mario Lara & Chris LoPresti in San Diego, and Miss Cernak has been willing to share some of her thoughts about Mail Art in this issue.

"The First big mail-art show happened in New Zealand last year, I think, and toured Sydney, Melbourne and ended in Adelaide during their Arts Festival in February. A broadsheet about it was printed at Sydney University full of who did what and where they were. It was quite remarkable that the Australian contributors—there was a theme on an anti-nuclear stance—all did exactly as one would expect, the right political line on the right artistic alignment. Only the overseas contributors, mostly European, would send stuff that said something to the point. A fair number of "important" people in Australia belonging to departments of art here and there wrote serious letters claiming their interest and support in this innovative and exciting medium, but because the government paid them they couldn't say anything. There were quite a few of those dismal letters.

So anyway there was that first one which the Visual Arts Board sponsored and thus was in a position to hand over, to Azio, the CIA, the KGB and anyone else with an interest in knowing who the political deviates were and where they lived, and then a second one, organized by a private gallery in Sin City, Sydney. That one was covered in the press. Still, there remain very bloody few people involved.

It's probably a reasonable reflection of the people mail-art appeals to on this island that most of it is about poverty, violence and post-war Kitsch. Poverty would be way out front. Lots of jokes about artists as well and the reason for that is our being an endangered species. Violence only turns up pictorially.

This is still a Protestant colony, founded by outlaws, Irish rebels, 19th-century imperialist perverts and a dying old guard of Liberal Utopianists. The three major political parties these days are right, medium right and ultra right of right. The reason voting is compulsory is simply that if it could change anything, it would be illegal. The system is organized that no matter really how one votes, the dye is cast by the manipulation that has gone into the listing of candidates. I tell you these things simply because this is the background from which we artists have come and that will be reflected in any mail art coming out of this little cloud at the bottom of the world. . . . It's frustration—powerlessness—feeling like a hen in a battery prison that motivates what we produce. I. . . . You'll see, I won't live long. None of us will. How dangerous are you to the government? Are you aware yet?"

—Dear Miss Cernak  
48 Charles St.

Petersham N.S.W., 2049 Australia

## An Interchange between Davi Det Hompson & Mario Lara

Letter from Davi to Mario:  
6 December 1980

"I know I could have used some help."

—yourself, from a letter to Judith Hoffberg

You're right. The business and the ethics of publication are not activities for a dilettante. A primary rule of a press is if, after soliciting material from an artist, you find that you are unable or unwilling to reproduce the work in the manner in which it was submitted, then you confer with the artist before publication. It's so simple.

I know you believe that by producing the "Space" issue of Common Press at a financial loss to yourself that a service has been rendered to the artist. To some, perhaps, but not to me. The failure to admit in the issue that a donation was required from each contributor as a condition for inclusion and then printing an obliterated facsimile, without explanation, of my contribution makes both of us look pretty damn stupid.

As you wrote, "Sorry."

## Response from Mario Lara:

12 December 1980

You obviously did not do your homework when you prepared and submitted your art piece for my project!

In the first place, nowhere on the invitation does it state that there was a mandatory fee to pay in order to receive a copy of the catalog. I asked for "donations" but stated clearly that a copy of the catalog would be sent to every participant. You obviously need to consult your Funk & Wagnall's more often!

And as for printing an obliterated facsimile of your piece, all I can say is that you should have known beforehand that it is illegal to print the image of a U.S. dollar.

I asked beforehand, when I was going over the material with the printer, if your piece was going to pose a problem for them and they told me that since it was folded, they didn't think it would violate the law.

It wasn't until the printing of the book had already begun that I received a phone call from the printer informing me that they would not be able to print your particular piece at all because of the dollar. The law states clearly that it is illegal to print, in whole or any part thereof, the image of U.S. money.

So I asked if it would be possible to obscure the image with a dot screen so that you could still tell that it was a dollar but not be a direct copy of the image and their answer was "no".

Well, since they had already begun printing, I didn't feel it was worth it to jeopardize the book by cancelling my order, especially since I had already been rejected twice by printers who thought that the material was too controversial for them to handle. So I gave the printer my O.K. to obscure the dollar bill.

I am well aware that by doing so the context of your piece was changed, but I do want you to know that I personally did not care that you chose to make a statement against my particular project, alluding to it as a "Mickey Mouse Affair", because I had chosen to ask for donations. The opportunity was there for you to make whatever statement you wish and I had every intention of printing that statement in its entirety. It's not my fault you chose to use a dollar bill as part of your imagery thereby putting me in an awkward spot, but I also am not about to jeopardize my project simply because you didn't have enough sense to know better!

I'll grant you that I should have provided a statement with the book pointing out the censorship but my money is tight and I could not afford, at this time, to print up 300 copies stating why the printers refused to print the dollar bill.

So I feel you are just as much responsible as I for the final result.

Now more about the donation issue. Out of the 196 artists that participated, only 49 chose to donate and not all sent money, some sent postage stamps! I had no intention of making one red cent on this project but I did want to put together a quality catalog worthy of all the artwork sent to me, so I chose to ask for a donation on the invitation but that in no way meant that if you didn't donate you wouldn't get a copy of the catalog. I believe my invitation made that clear enough. That you chose to interpret it otherwise is your problem. And as far as I'm concerned, there is only one person who looks pretty damn stupid here!

#### CHANGES OF ADDRESS: BANANA & DADALAND

Banana Productions (including orders, inquiries re: *Vile*, etc.) should be directed to:

P.O. Box 11739

San Francisco, CA 94101.

This is also the address for Dadaland and Bill Gaglione.

For Anna Banana, the new address is:

Western Front

303 E. 8th

Vancouver, BC V5T 1S1

Canada.

#### Letter from Piotr Rypson re: Commonpress 20

To all participants in Commonpress 20:

Sorry for the delay in contacting you. Post Remont/ former Remont Gallery, has been having and still has serious financial problems. That's why you still did not get the Commonpress 20 Children publication. Let's hope for a better future.

Yours,

Piotr Rypson

#### NEWS

*Arte Postale!*, edited by Vittore Baroni, was published monthly from October 1979 through December 1980. Now, Baroni announces that in 1981, *Arte Postale!* will be published quarterly, circulation 100 copies. Baroni requests 100 copies of your work referring to four theme issues in 1981:

1) POETRY ISSUE (Visual, concrete, linear, found poems, etc.) Maximum size: 21 x 30 cm. **Deadline: 1 March 1981**

2) THINK ABOUT MAIL-ART (texts, essays, projects, proposals of different uses of the mail-art network). Free size and medium. **Deadline: 1 June 1981.**

3) BOXED EDITION (Small objects, 3-D or relief works, etc.) Maximum size: 5 x 5 x 5cm. **Deadline: 1 September**

4) YEARBOOK 1981 (a collection of all the works that do not fit in numbers 1 - 3, plus more fun) **Deadline: 1 Dec.**

*The Oxidized Look*, edited by Daniele Ciullini, in 1981 will become quarterly, the theme will change issue by issue,

it will publish at the most 20 works, and it will contain very reproducible forms used by mail artists.

The Oxidized Look will be printed in 100 copies and will be free for contributors and anyone else interested in the magazine.

Address for Arte Postale!: Vittore Baroni, Via Raffaelli 2, 55042 Forte dei Marmi, Italy.

Address for The Oxidized Look: Daniele Ciullini, Via della Bellariva 29, 50136 Firenze, Italy.

*AICARC Bulletin* out of Lund Sweden in its No. 13 issue, 1980, dedicates it all to mail-art archives, with articles by Klaus Groh and a survey of Post-Dada archives and galleries. For further information, write to AICARC, Institute of the History of Art, Kyrkogatan 19, S-222 22 Lund, Sweden.

#### COMPETITIONS & EXHIBITIONS

##### Commonpress Deadlines:

39. **Homosexuality.** Editor: Christoph Mach Art. **Deadline: 31 January 1981.** Postcard, black and white. Exhibition at the Kommunikations-Centrum Ruhr in Dortmund, February of March 1981. Send to Christoph Mach Art, Kunstproduktion, Wiesenstr. 27, 5810 Witten 1, West Germany.
40. **The Museum Project.** Editor: Johan Van Geluwe. **Deadline: 31 January 1981.** You must send two identical postcards of an outside or inside view of museums. On the first postcard, please stick on ticket, official stamp of museum, and your signature and name, handwriting the address to The Museum of Museums. Then send the second card under separate cover and enclose, if possible, any other postcards or photos of interesting and unusual exhibits. For more information, write to The Museum of Museums, bouckaertstraat 8, B-8790, Waregem, Belgium.
43. **Mail-Artists live on the edge!** Send you response either verbal or visual, black and white copy only. Format: 20.5 cm x 13.9 cm (8 1/8 x 5 1/2 inches). Send to R. Saunders, OK Post East, Weare, NH 03281 USA. **Deadline: 1 February 1982.**

#### DECEMBER DEADLINES

**Freakfestival '81.** To create an event with the character where the public has the opportunity to determine the end result themselves. Given a basic model of the skull and the contour lines of the face, develop this idea to determine the ultimate character of your own freak-face! **Deadline: 15 December** to Stempelplaats, St. Luciensteeg 23, Amsterdam, Netherlands. Documentation to all participants.

**Rubber Stamp and Mail Art.** First Grove St. Gallery show of 1981. (An artists' cooperative). All entries were to be sent to Mail Art-Stamp Art, M. Goodman, Art Dept., 31 Elizabeth St., Worcester, MA 01605. No returns. **Deadline: 15 December 1980.**

**Mail-Art Exhibition, Revista El Mago.** On the occasion of the celebration in Madrid of the First Events of Vanguard and Underground Art, a mail-art exhibition took place in the Martin Theatre from 4 - 8 December. If material comes in afterward, Juan Pagán wants to establish the First Mail Art Museum in Madrid. So send mail-art to Juan Pagán, Revista El Mago, Apartado de Correos 2188, Madrid, Spain.

**From Italy, By Mail '81.** c.d.o./Istituto Italiano di Cultura, Stoccolma 1981. Italian mail-artists were invited to send c.d.o. mail art to be included in a mail-art exhibition in Stockholm, Sweden in February 1981, with catalog being published by the Italian Institute of Culture. For more information, write to c.d.o., Via dei Farnese 9, Parma, Italy.

#### JANUARY DEADLINES

**Current Myths.** Objects and materials related to the theme. Send to Tania Erlij, c/o Art Institute of Boston, 700 Beacon St., Boston, MA 02215. **Deadline: 31 January 1981.**

**Action/Reaction Postal Art Happening.** Theme: Make something happen with a postal message. Send documentation, effect, and/or result. No returns. Send to Reva, 436 Smithwood, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. **Deadline: 1 Jan.**

**Global Postal 84 artist's stamps.** MINA, Museo internazionale de Neu Art, invites all to contribute an image for a sheet of artist's stamps. All stamps to be printed in black and white. Image is to be superimposed on card furnished by Museum. Contributors will receive 3 sheets of stamps. All designs will be exhibited at MINA during February. **Deadline: 15 January 1981.** Write Global Postale 84, Box 3655, Vancouver, Canada V6B 3Y8.

**Mail Art Exhibition.** 2 - 20 February 1981. All works will enter Temple University's permanent collection. **Deadline: 15 January 1981.** Samuel Paley Library, 13th St. & Berks Mall, Philadelphia, PA 19122.

**Teach Mail Art Show.** Theme: High School. All media. Catalog to all participants. No returns. National travelling exhibition. Send to Cracker Jack Kid, 2468 S. 3rd St. Plaza, Omaha, NE 68108.

**T-Shirt at Large.** 1981 International T-Shirt Open, Vancouver, BC. With module, you were to fill in the blank T-shirt in any color or black and white medium including any type of collage. All entries included in exhibition at the Blue Mule Gallery; as many as possible will be published in color in *Vancouver* magazine. Documentation sent to participants. **Deadline: 15 January 1981.** Send to 1981 Int. T-Shirt Open, P.O. Box 46552, Vancouver, BC V6R 4G8, Canada.

**Challenge to a Possibility through your Postcards with Messages on.** Send national postcards (conventional ones) with your messages to Artists' Union, Koshienguchi 1-1-10, Nishinomiya City, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan. **Deadline: 10 January 1981.** Exhibition and symposium from 15 - 31 January.

**The Flamingo Project.** Mail art with flamingo theme. No returns, everything show. Exhibition at Phenix Hall Gallery, 40 No. Main St., Concord, NH 03301. **Deadline: 25 January 1981.** Send to The Flamingo Project, 40 N. Main St., Concord, NH 03301.

#### FEBRUARY DEADLINES

**TV Postcards.** Fill in the screen, fill out of the screen, do what you want. **Deadline: 20 February 1981.** Exhibition beginning of 1982. Catalog to be published. Send for postcard immediately to Ulrich Bernhardt, Parlerstr. 52, 7000 Stuttgart 1, West Germany.

**Eco, Socio, I Logica: First International Mail Art Show.** Send mail art, Xerox, visual poems, photos, slides, films, experimental music, etc. Exhibition first fifteen days of March. **Deadline: 2 February 1981.** Send to Cesar Almeida, R. Acungui 297, 86.100 Londrina, PR, Brasil.

**Obscura.** The journal, *Obscura*, is soliciting work from photographers who use the book as an art form. Accepted pieces will be reproduced in a special issue. For information, Jason/Brown, eds., 1533 Berkeley, no. 2, Santa Monica, CA 90404. SASE for return of work. **Deadline: 1 Feb. 1981.**

**The First and Last National Fan Mail Art Exhibit.** March 1981. Theme: Fan Mail. All works displayed, no returns. Send to F.A.M.E., P.O.Box 9025, Cincinnati, OH 45209. **Deadline: 12 February 1981.**

**Alien Transmissions.** Mail art exhibition 6 Feb. to 3 Mar. **Deadline: 1 February 1981.** Maximum size: 8½ x 14". Catalog on request. No returns. Terrestrials accepted. Mail to Alien Transmissions, Artlink Artspace, 1126 Broadway, Fort Wayne, IN 46802.

**Postcard Palace. Third Annual Mail-in Postcard Art Show.** Send original artwork in postcard form. **Deadline: 1 Feb.** No limit, no returns. Maximum, 5 x 7; Minimum 3½ x 5½. Cards must be postmarked. On exhibit through February. Opening reception: 5 February 7 - 9 p.m. Send to Postcard Palace, 756 Columbus Ave., San Francisco, CA 94133.

**Stamp Out Ronnie Show & Contest.** Lightwork Gallery of Syracuse sponsors exhibition. **Deadline: 10 February through 12 March 1981.** First prize: your very own Ronald Reagan Rubber Stamp Set, plus \$100.00. Second prize: Ronnie set of rubber stamps. Best entries will be reproduced and mailed to all contestants. Send to Stamp Out Ronnie, Lightwork Gallery, 316 Waverly Avenue, Syracuse, NY 13210.

#### MARCH DEADLINES

**Improvisation '81: International Mail Art Exhibition.** Duke Fine Arts Center, 18 - 24 March 1981. Sponsored by James Madison University, School of Fine Arts and Communication. **Deadline: 1 March 1981.** Open to all mail artists, no size limitation or limitation on media. No entry fee. No postage due work accepted. All work will be exhibited and no returns. Mail to Michael Brodsky, Art Dept., James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA 22807.

**Visible Language Correspondence Art.** Special issue of **Visible Language**, devoted to Correspondence Art. Artists from around the world are invited to send in work to conform to 6 x 9 inch page. Otherwise, it will be enlarged or reduced. Reflect your own current or past work, or the theme, **Visible Language**. Envelopes and contents will be considered for inclusion. Self-produced postage and cancellation stamps can also be submitted. Send your contribution to **Visible Language**, c/o John Held, Jr., Mid-York Library System, 1600 Lincoln Ave., Utica, NY 13502. Contributors will receive a free issue of the MIT Press Journal. **Deadline: 1 March 1981.**

**House of Artist.** Fourth project-show of Mail Art organized by Nicola Frangione. Send four slides representing your work-table, your house or study, and your person. **Deadline: March 1981.** Catalog to every participant. Send to Nicola Frangione, Via Ortigara 17, 20052 Monza, Italy.

**Liquids from the Human Body.** A book collated by Jupiter-Larsen. For inclusion, send 150 copies of your work on the theme. Maximum size: 21.5 x 28 cm. **Deadline: 31 March 1981.** All contributors will receive one or more copies of this book and be included on the C.C.P.S. & Nilmag mailing lists. Send to Jupiter-Larsen, P.O. Box 48184, Vancouver, Canada V7X 1N8.

**International Stamp/Mail Art Exhibition. Theme: Self-Portraits.** Unlimited entries, all entries exhibited, no returns. A special commemorative stamp art piece will be sent to all participants. **Deadline: 30 March 1981.** Sponsored by Spaces, Cleveland, Ohio. Send to Harley Francis, P.O. Box 268, Oberlin, OH 44074, U.S.A.

#### LATER DEADLINES

**Belfast:** Send a Belfast theme item, Alternative Energy theme item, and a Grain Elevator theme item. Write to the Belfast, Maine Chamber of Commerce for Belfast maps, info, and grain elevator photo. Send to Bern Porter, 22 Salmond, Belfast, ME 04915. **Deadline: July 1981.**

**Postage Stamps designed by artists.** Exhibition in Budapest in December 1981, organized by Artpool. Black and white on blank stamp supplied by Artpool, G. Galantai, H-1023 Budapest, Frankel Leo ut 68/b.III.16, Hungary. **Deadline: 30 September.**

**Magazine.** Send 100 copies 8½ x 11 inches (any subject), no deadline, for a magazine. Send to Luigette Serse, c/o Libreria L'Altra, via U. Rocchi 3, Perugia, Italy.

**Truth.** Please send all material you can find on the topic of Truth. Definitions of truth with source given if possible; books on truth; newspapers called Truth, Verdad, etc.; poems about truth, in all languages. Names of people with Truth, Truthful, etc. in any language. Send full name and the name of the town where person lives. Send to Piotr Rypson, 02-316 Warszawa, ul. Kaliska 8/10 m. 47, Poland.

**International mail art exhibit, San Miguel de Allende, Mexico.** Theme: ¡ Viva!. Any media or size. All work shown. No returns. We love color! Mail will be hand delivered from Viva! c/o G. Arthur Hopkins, P.O. Box 241, Vista, CA 92083

**The Biennial Report of the Performance Bank.** Send a performance proposal and furnish your own documentation. It will be published in the report and you will get a copy free. It may not, however, be performed. 12 proposals will be selected for performance & documentation by Fred Truck. **Deadline: 21 June 1982.** Send to The Performance Bank, 4225 University, Des Moines, IA 50311.

**Telephone Book page.** Please send me a page from the telephone book. It has to be the page containing your phone number. All of the participants will receive the documentation of the project. **Deadline: 1 April 1981.** Send to Piotr Rypson, 02-316 Warsaw, ul. Kaliska 8/10 m. 47, Poland.

**Libellus, a monthly mail-art publication.** Published by the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum, Antwerp. Editor is Guy Schraenen Number 1 was October 1980. If you send mail art, it will be exhibited in P.O. Box 415 Show Window, which is located in the entrance of the I.C.C. Send to Guy Schraenen, P.O. Box 415, B-2000 Antwerp, Belgium.

Antwerp International Mail-Art Festival, September 1981, ICC, Antwerp.

Audio Cassettes. **Deadline: 30 June 1981.**

Video-Vision. **Deadline: 1 May 1981.**

Mail Art of the Seventies. **Deadline: 30 June 1981.**

**Avant-Garde Post Card exhibition.** Rome, Italy. Send your cards to Enrico Sturani, Via del Cardello 14-A, 00184 Roma, Italy.

**End Paper** is a new Permanent Press production open to submissions from all interested parties. What do you have to say? The field is wide open. Send for your pre-addressed envelope. All submissions must be accompanied by a donation at the suggested rate of \$5.00. This helps defray production expenses and assures you a copy of **End Paper** in the mail. Write to Permanent Press, Box 6858 Station A, Toronto, Canada M5W 1X6.

