

FROM THE EDITOR

It seems like too long between issues, but once again too much information, not enough time. There is so much more coming through the Internet these days that it is almost impossible to avoid it. It is hot information, pithy and very desirable, so forgive me for trying to integrate all that pours into this computer each day, plus the P.O. Box and everything else. It is always a matter of selection, and that which I do not insert means that I have no room, nor time, nor patience at times, although I have a lot more patience than I have ever had these days.

And there are people who are making me aware that it will be 25 years in 2003 that Umbrella has churned out news and reviews, and it makes me feel old. In fact, some people are working to have an event to celebrate this juncture. But more news in the December issue.

I write this the day after the many commemorations, memorials, celebrations, rituals, protests, and the rest. It has been a long year and a short year, and I write this a bit freer than the burden of 9/11 on our minds. It is right to think about artist books, about mail art, about networking, about sharing information. That is what is important in our lives. Live for the day, for the moment, and make it worthwhile not only for yourself but also for your neighbor, your family, your friends.

Having lived through several wars, I can vouch that no war is good, not even the Civil War. And although we have the best documentation in the world thanks to technology, I still cringe at the beauty of the explosions, at the dynamic photographs in our newspapers, at the electronic digitized photographs that keep pouring into the Internet. But there comes a time when too much is too much. Yet we must admire the art editors of our newspapers, especially the New York Times, because the photographs are terrific! They are dynamic, beautiful and breathtaking at times.

They have set the example of fine art direction, in which the photographs really are as important as the articles in many way. At least, they give the reader a much clear image of what is really going on in the world, with a sensitivity of the photographers quite evident. Photography is not an art form, it is part of our lives.

Recently, I found art news in the New York Times in the Escape section, in the House and

Home section, as well as the Circuits section. And that is not in the Arts section itself.

Even in the Los Angeles Times, we have better photos, as well as articles about small press, rubber-stamping, collectibles and collectors, and art news sometimes even on the front page. That does not mean that art is really considered an essential for the majority of citizens. Witness the huge cut in the California Arts Council's budget. And I am sure California is not alone in this economic crisis we now have. Must everything go to Defense-homeland or national?

I suggest that you contact your Congressman or woman, tell them what's happening, tell them that the Arts need support even in this "war on terrorism." We need our civil liberties retained and enhanced, and we need to be able to safeguard our "pursuit of happiness."

There is a heavy season ahead of us, full of remarkable exhibitions, workshops and classes in the book arts, more groups coalescing into centers for the book, and we hope you have a great Autumn full of new aesthetic experiences and the dynamic of excellence in all that you do.

This issue has an interview with Miriam Schaer who recently visited California, as well as a history of Peter Netmail, who is celebrating 20 years of networking. Hope you enjoy it.

-jah

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