

FROM THE EDITOR

Well, my dear readers, it has been a difficult time between issues. How do you stop missing someone who has passed away? Someone who has been your best friend and your anchor, your mentor and your confessor, your alter ego who has shared the very same history? My sister passed away on 1 February after a remarkable battle against leukemia, a disease that ravaged her with three bouts of chemo, with brain surgery because of a platelet clot on her brain, who smiled as often as she could and touched the lives of doctors, nurses, dietitians, her former students, her dear friends, even the handymen and the charities she gave to. She touched all their lives and we are all diminished by her not being with us. But she is at least not suffering anymore. And for that we are all grateful. So if you have been waiting for the news, it has been difficult juggling hospital visits, business, and writing. And to make a long story short, in order to heal, I went to Australia and New Zealand where I had already hoped to go for the Adelaide Festival (Australia's oldest) and because of wonderful friends, I giggered, bathed myself in the warmth of friendship and of climate (it was the end of summer and deliriously beautiful), and I calmed my soul for two weeks, just for two weeks. But I came back to 500 e-mails and 6 weeks of work which had been neglected while I was spending time in the hospital. So forgive me for the lateness of our first issue in our 25th year! A milestone of sorts, a labor of love completely, and it's getting more difficult to do each issue because of the influx of so much information. If I have left you out, avoided you, or even misinterpreted the material you have sent, please forgive me for neglect, omissions, transgressions. I have not been this devastated in a long time, and there is a gap in my life which I shall never be able to fill. So bear with me, and I hope I have shared enough of my trip, the information gleaned and the trying times in which we live. Yes, artist books are alive and well and living throughout the world. Even in Australia and New Zealand, where I resurrected a movement in New Zealand in 1982 and it seems to have sparked a new interest again with my talks with artists and writers this time around.

I did go to Albuquerque in late February and attended the Collectors, Collecting, Collectibles section of the Popular Culture Association's regional conference and learned so much. Anna Banana, my dear friend and colleague, also attended and we giggered together about Mail Art, and then I had my "pad" photographed with all the umbrelliana that I have on exhibit to add decor and interest to my condo.

It was strange seeing images of that with which I live each day, but I wanted to share it with the group. It's quite a lively group, and collecting has become more than a "hobby". There are many who are young scholars who have done remarkable work on various aspects of the world of collecting. This is not just an e-bay plug, but collecting has been going on well before e-bay every reared its grasping head!

I want to thank all those who informed me of their inability to read Umbrella online—so we are doing paper again this year. I am getting old and tired, my dear friends, but I'll continue through this year and then we'll see what we shall do. Hard to talk about a quarter of a century, indeed.

There is lots to read, lots to see in the next few months, so I've tried to gather as much information as I can. Of course, you know that documenta is again at Kassel, Germany this summer. It should be an interesting demonstration of what the world is doing in the contemporary art world. Europe may be just the place this year to take it all in!

If any one knows of a student who might want to help me this summer with cleaning up the archive and getting it ready to give to UCLA, please let me know. I am trying to reduce the storage I rent, and so it's clean-up time. I would appreciate anyone who would be willing to give me two weeks of work in exchange for what it takes to get you here.

This is the last chance you have to renew for 2002. Please do so right away or we will not provide you with the best information on artist books you can get.

Have a great spring and see you in the summer!

— jah

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