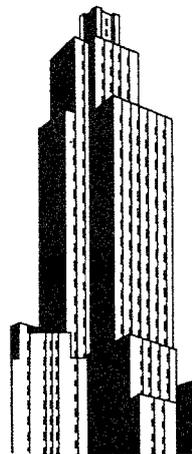


were truly works of art. All that were in the window were black theater chairs, row after row, with quilted theater jackets either set on the seats as if filled by humans, or on the backs of the seats, with a tuxedoed male figure on the left with grotesque head, such as a walrus or a bull. They were theater sets themselves, and very striking settings to advertise quilted theater jackets. I was struck!

Made lots of phone calls, then packed for Rochester.



ALTERNATIVE ART PUBLISHING CONFERENCE

5 NOVEMBER

Arrival was earlier than anyone's, largely because I wanted to help the Visual Studies Workshop in some way, also because I wanted the lustre of Manhattan to sink in with a less active day in Rochester too.

31 Prince Street looked might good to me, with its two stone buildings, and its inviting feeling. The vibes were wonderful, and I thereupon ordered lots of artists' books for my shop from the Book Bus, with Joe Flaherty at the helm. The Book Bus, itself, is now for sale, and only rolls on the wheels of UPS, I believe. The shop itself is packed full of wonderful books, and it was heavily visited during the course of the week. It was an inviting place to look over the products of the VSW and those of other artists too.

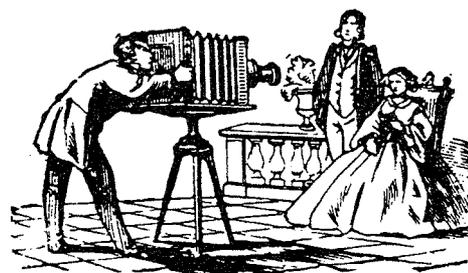
Slowly old friends and new friends arrived, and with name tags we recognized each other and embraced. Old correspondents became acquainted, new self-publishers introduced each other, and the feeling of camaraderie, like an United Nations of Art Publishers came to be felt throughout the week.

NEW NEA GUIDELINES FOR 1981

Going out to lunch with Nathan Lyons on Monday allowed me to be apprised of some very good news, before the opening of the Conference. Due to Nathan Lyons' persuasiveness on the Advisory Committee of the NEA these past two years, the National Endowment for the Arts will make **ARTISTS' BOOKS** a funding category! That means, that

- 1) With the 1981 Guidelines, Individuals and collaborative projects can request project support for artists' books, and
- 2) Artists' Books will come under Prints & Drawings under the Artists' Fellowship Program.

It is hard to imagine a more important announcement at the outset of a Conference on Alternative Art Publishing, but Nathan did make this announcement, seemingly to deaf ears. We just think that the import of this announcement did not sink in until later in the week, but we know that this began one of the most comprehensive and significant conferences in alternative art publishing ever launched.



RICHARD MINSKY & SHEILA DE BRETTEVILLE

The first day heard Richard Minsky, recently out of London and founder of the Center for Book Arts, talking about the history of the book from stone tablets until new formats of today, with an emphasis of course on innovative binding. Sheila DeBretteville of the Women's Graphic Center in the Woman's Building in Los Angeles, spoke on the development of the Center with courses, presses, production, and projects including exhibitions and motivations of the women she has trained and inspired.

Lunches, by the way, if purchased at the Workshop were catered by a remarkable chef who made humus sandwiches or fine roast beef, with cannoli for dessert, or home-made sourcream brownies, and the price was quite right as well. Since the weather in Rochester left a little to be desired, but certainly wasn't as bad as anticipated (just a little rain), no one was unhappy to find a good lunch available at reasonable terms at noon.

ULISES CARRION

Among the honored guests during the Conference, Ulises Carrion, founder of the first artists' book shop in the world in Amsterdam gave a theoretical talk about books and their logical verbal-visual import. The talk was illustrated on a blackboard with diagrams showing how the book has developed on a verbal basis just like a newspaper, which represents the spoken language and a space-time structure. So too have film and video developed (the visual) into Mail Art and likewise spoken language is countered by photography and eventually Performance.

Ulises illustrated his talk with an array of slides taken from his favorite books, books which he likes which illustrate the variety, accessibility, strange formats, and verbal/visual books which have come out of Europe. He emphasized "bookworks" rather than artists' books as the phrase he prefers. (His paper will be printed in a future issue of a familiar journal, which **UMBRELLA** will announce to you.)

Ulises went through a short history of the 1960s, discussing Something Else Press, Ed Ruscha and Dieter Rot, and then showed how European books describe, analyze and embody the process, both with a three-dimensional reality and the reading process.

TOM OCKERSE

Head of the Graphic Design Department at the Rhode Island School of Design, Tom Ockerse has long been interested not only in the making of books as time-space objects of visible language, but in the theoretical studies implicit in such work. His slides were an aesthetic experience in themselves, showing the work and projects of his students, showing word and image equations, meaningful use of form, materials and productions.

Many of his own books and those of his students were on exhibit in the Research Center Gallery. His philosophy of design and his emphasis on visual legibility were profound impressions made on the audience.

DAVID BUCHAN

Canadian periodicals and books were discussed by David Buchan, director of Art Metropole in Toronto, which is Canada's largest distributor of artists' books, periodicals and videotapes. A wide range of periodicals past and present were shown by slides.

To begin the whole Conference, a Book Fair and Exhibition opened on Tuesday, 6 November, with books from all over the world in the Composite Exposition, with booths representing publishers from all over the U.S. and Canada showing new and older titles with a vast array of older books offered by Backworks in New York. Sales did very well during the course of the week, since the Book Fair was open all the time, organized by the students of the Visual Studies Workshop with Adam at the helm, and sales taken care of by the students, allowing the publishers to participate in the Conference unencumbered. This was an innovation to be emulated by many other Conferences. Of course, not all facilities have students who are assigned to such a task, but it could be a solution to the difficulties in exhibitions/workshops.

DICK HIGGINS

Wednesday evening presented the audience with a legend in our times, for Dick Higgins spoke vividly about the growth and development of the Something Else Press, showing slides throughout the talk, citing facts and anecdotes to tell a whole new audience about this innovative collaborative press which produced some of the best-made books in the 60s, resilient books, books that made a dif-

ference.

From the demise of the Something Else Press arose from the ashes Unpublished Editions, and then a collaborative with Cage, Corner, Mac Low, Knowles, Oliveros, Higgins was formed as Printed Editions, which now has a catalog of several titles.

Higgins emphasized the importance of a collaborative, its benefits and its products.

He then entertained the audience with a series of readings from many of the Something Else Press books, which delighted the new listeners for quite a while, making the evening a sterling one indeed.

CLIVE PHILLPOT & STEPHEN FOSTER

Phillpot, Librarian at the Museum of Modern Art, spoke on Dada and Constructivist Magazines from 1913 - 1927, while Foster, professor at the University of Iowa, spoke mainly on the Berlin Dadaists and especially on Bader and his desire to publish to exhibit works, polemicize and promote themselves.

MARTHA WILSON

Wilson, founder and Director of the Franklin Furnace, spoke on the Last Ten Years of Artists' Publishing with emphasis on the exhibition she and Weston Naef produced for the Grolier Club in New York City from the archive of the Franklin Furnace, which demonstrated the variety, ingenuity and creativity of the artists who make books, especially those who have done so in the past 10 years.

BETSY DAVIDS & JIM PETRILLO

These two who form Rebis Press in the Bay Area of California presented a remarkable survey of printing in California from the turn of the century until now, from the fine letterpress tradition to the artists' book which is being made throughout California. The zest and vitality of artists' publishing in California produced much interest in the audience. Exploration of formats was analyzed as well.

HERBERT HOSMER

Hosmer, a collector of 19th Century illustrated children's books, brought several of contemporary pop-up books to sell at his booth during the Book Fair, but his major interest is the work of the German artist, Lothar Megendorfer, who was the chief exponent of mechanical and pop-up books. He demonstrated in his delightful and entertaining slide lecture the masterpieces of design and production these books were, representing a significant extension of graphic illustration and engineering.

FELIPE EHRENBERG

A surprise on the program, Ehrenberg came from Mexico City to talk about the founding of the Beau Geste Press in Devon as well as the infamous *Schmuck* magazine. To talk about "Art really is an excuse" in Latin American publishing today, this charismatic publisher told of the exile of many South Americans because of political reasons and their continued interest in disseminating ideas by publishing. He spoke sincerely of his own story, and that of many others who find that art is directly linked with politics and must be at this time in South and Central America, and Mexico. The devious means to publish and get governmental backing for these publications made fascinating listening for the

audience, who realized the importance of having Third World publishers represented in this Conference.

To be sure, Ehrenberg's saga will be reported in the art press soon.

JACKI APPLE

Apple, curator of exhibitions at the Franklin Furnace and a performance artist herself, spoke vividly about one-of-a-kind books which have been exhibited at the Franklin Furnace, books which are unique and are being made throughout the world. Sculptural bookworks were also amply explored.

CHUCK HAGEN

Publisher of *Afterimage*, the monthly tabloid of photographic news, reviews and commentary which Visual Studies Workshop produces, discussed the use of the book by photographers from 1930 until the present. His slides were taken from the books in the Research Center, which houses a fine basic collection of photographic books throughout the decades.

NUTS & BOLTS ISSUES

ARTISTS' BOOKS & PUBLISHING STRUCTURES

Joan Lyons, Coordinator of the Visual Studies Workshop Press and Printshop, and Muriel Cooper, editor at the MIT Press, discussed the differences between small and mid-sized publishing. In addition, Felipe Ehrenberg spoke about the Latin American experience of publishing structures, as well as his experience with the Beau Geste Press. Several other participants from the audience such as Kevin Osborne of the Writer's Center in Maryland and George Quasha of the Open Studio in Barrytown, New York also spoke of their experiences in publishing, as did Jim Snitzer of Chicago Books. Problems of production and distribution were also voiced.

PROBLEMS IN ART MAGAZINE PUBLISHING

Edit DeAk of *Art-Rite*, Eldon Garnet of *Impulse*, Chuck Hagen of *Afterimage* spoke each of their motivations in publishing a magazine, the problems and experiences mostly in distribution and in production. An interchange with the audience helped to clarify some of the issues brought forth by the panelists.

ART NETWORKS & COOPERATIVE BASES

The editor of *Umbrella*, Judith A. Hoffberg, spoke of the nuts and bolts of some of the problems encountered in the field of artists' publications, such as exhibiting at art-oriented and library-oriented conferences, buying mailing lists of art libraries, proper packaging of books and publications, the need for copyright statements, let alone the name of the artist-author of the book.

A sense of marketing and consumerism should be inculcated in the artist, not after classes, but as a necessary part of their education, since they are indeed creating products which are marketable and in fact are being purchased in outlets each day.

She pleaded for a continuation of the community-spirit that was generated during this conference, an on-going cooperative linkage that could generate problem-solving and in fact a professional stance among artist-publishers.

REESE WILLIAMS

Williams, a performance artist, publisher (Tanam Press) and director of Line, an Arts Service Organization that gives grants to artists working with the medium of the book, spoke of his experiences in establishing Line and indicated a new direction after the 1981 NEA Guidelines go into effect.

BOOK DISTRIBUTION

A panel discussion with Joe Flaherty, coordinator of the Book Bus Project at the VSW since 1973, Ingrid Sischy of Printed Matter, and Dick Higgins of Printed Editions ensued, with each briefly speaking of personal experiences. A give-and-take among the panelists and the audience generated much discussion.

CRITICISM

Panelists Peter Frank, Ken Friedman, Barbara Tannenbaum and Jorg Zutter of Amsterdam urged more critical vehicles for reviewing artists' books and publications, cited *Umbrella* as an excellent vehicle right now, and announced a forthcoming premiere issue of *Collation*, edited by Peter Frank.

EXHIBITIONS

Throughout the Conference, there was an exhibition of Book Objects by Ten Bookmakers of significance in the Workshop Gallery. In addition, there were selections from the VSW Press Archive, Book Productions from Educational Print Centers, the Speakers' Exhibition with original examples of works discussed in the conference presentations, as well as a remarkable exhibition of "The Evolution of an Artist's Book: *Pleasure Beach* by Syl Labrot" in the Print Loft Gallery as well as the Collective Exposition, a combined book fair of items sent in by artists from all over the world.

ROCHESTER

Oh, it was a good surprise had by all, for the VSW kept us all very busy, busier than anticipated and the listings of bookstores, galleries, museums, and restaurants abounded. The VSW was big enough for a week, because there was so much to see and so many people to meet. The Book Fair was handled in a most professional manner, the exhibitions allowed all conferees to visit all parts of the operation of the VSW. The physical plant was just right for a conference of art publishing, because we saw everything from production to consumption—and everything in-between.

As far as food, some of us found a delightful inexpensive place near VSW, which became in fact our watering hole, called the Wellington Water Works, which in fact, must have been the Water Works. We found a rather incredible item on the menu, and have since decided that in Rochester they only grow potato skins, and not potatoes. They serve potato skins deep fried, served with a wonderful mustard-sauce, and we ate them for days!

In addition, Rochester seems to be a luxurious walking town. The formerly rich home owners on East Avenue had a variety of architects, spacious gardens, and all the land you could imagine. Today, there are many Victorian homes empty, Victorian buildings empty and loft space to be had for a song. If artists could withstand the winters of Rochester, Mecca is here. We have already subdivided P.S. 2—or what we have named the public school which seems abandoned and ready for recycling into a marvelous artists' space.

After a final bash on Friday night, tired but so very glad we came, most of us wended home except for those who attended the Electroworks Exhibition at Eastman House and the subsequent Symposium.

To Nathan and Joan Lyons, the faculty, staff and students of VSW, hats off and three cheers. To Don Russell, who masterminded this whole Conference in his quiet way, no gratitude can be expressed that would be sufficient. To you, we owe the success of the Conference and to you we owe at least a week of rest, no phones, and sunshine and a beach, or whatever else relaxes you. To Dick Higgins, we owe a great deal for getting the legendary Jean Brown of the Shaker Seed House in Tyringham, Massachusetts to this Conference.

To those of you who could not attend, we hope the energy generated from this Conference will elicit still another to deal with some of the problems that are ever-present!

AAPN: PUBLICATION BUT NO FUTURE

A majority of Board Members of the Associated Art Publishers Network met in Rochester during the Art Publishing Conference and voted to dissolve the organization, for lack of interest and energy. Notwithstanding the publication of the first issue of *Artists' Publications in Print, 1979-80*, which was given to each registrant at the Conference, and handed out free-of-charge to all those who passed by the *Umbrella* booth, the Board Members debated the issue of the existence of an organization that did not have enough support from its own Board Members to exist. So, with the agreement of all members of the Board extant, the publication, *APIP*, will be distributed widely to all libraries, bookstores, museums and galleries before the first of the year, and the present Executive Director will be entrusted with dissolving the organization and contacting all members.

COPY ART SYMPOSIUM

COPYART SYMPOSIUM

With over 200 works of art including prints, books and three-dimensional items created with the copy machine (and not necessarily Xerox), Electroworks opened with great fanfare.

After an overview by the Curator of the show, Marilyn McCray, A. D. Colman, Alexandra Anderson, Hollis Frampton and Ken Friedman gave critical perspectives about the exhibition and the reason for their being there in the first place. The critics seemed to view the elitist approach to the show with critical coolness, but all seemed to feel the need to comment upon the museum approach to "cheap" and "accessible" art. The discussion that ensued from the remarks of the critic brought vehement criticism of the exhibition and the approach also from the audience and the debate among the critics and among the critics and the audience led to a rather heated afternoon.

The opening (the second in a series) on Saturday night, 10 November, was immediately more democratic, and heavily attended by the community, photographers, VSW staff and conferees, as well as members of the Eastman House.

11 NOVEMBER

Pati Hill, author and artist, and one of the participants in the Electroworks show, who does not use the Xerox machine but instead uses the IBM, spoke of her involvement with copy art, her books, and her philosophy about what this all means. She felt that the Electroworks show marks the end of an experimentation with the machine, and the future will reflect a dynamic revolution which will be much different from now.

Judith A. Hoffberg spoke on "The Artist, Publisher and the Copy Machine" and explored through slides the multiple uses of the machine in book format from the early sixties until today, as well as the exploration



ELECTROWORKS

The George Eastman House, under the auspices of the Xerox Corporation, opened the Electroworks exhibition on Friday night 9 November for members of the corporation, Eastman House trustees, and friends of the corporation.

In the Hutchinson House next door, artists and symposium participants were invited to partake of drinks and dinner, separate from the corporate members and seemingly classed as quite different from the black ties and gowns next door. For some reason, the artists and critics were grouped apart and then allowed to come into the House to view the exhibition. There was a distance and class distinction that did not settle well among artists and critics alike. The difference between the VSW Conference and the Eastman House reception began a weekend that could have been a disaster, but instead turned out to be an important one for all those concerned.