

ARTISTS' BOOKS: news and reviews

NEWS

Franklin Furnace in New York City is exhibiting Avant-Garde Books from Russia 1910-1930, curated by Gail Harrison Roman.

- The Center for Book Arts has a gift catalog, which contains the work of members of the Center, including limited edition art books, fine bindings, sketch books and journals, books to wear as jewelry, unique books by artists, and much much more. Write to CBA, 15 Bleecker St., New York, NY 10012.

- Poltroon Press has issued Poltroon's Golden Treasury, a catalogue of new books for sale. If any of you know the name of Frances Butler and Alastair Johnston, then you know Poltroon Press. The catalog is a gem in itself. Be sure to write to Poltroon Press, P.O. Box 5476, Berkeley, CA 94705 and see what new delights they have up their press.

- The Pacific Center for the Book Arts in cooperation with Kala Institute, presented their First Annual Book Arts Exhibition in December, with offerings of fine press books, illustration, calligraphy, hand bookbinding, papermaking, livre d'artiste, and unique book objects.

- There was a book launching party for *A Book Working*, an anthology of six artists' books chosen in an open competition from a selection of almost 200 submitted manuscripts, published by A Space, 299 Queen Street West, Suite 507, Toronto, Ont., Canada M5V 1Z9. The party was held on 17 December. The book contains work by Bruce Barber, Michael Duquette, Miles DeCoster, James Dunn, Jo Percival and Andy Patton. \$18.95

- Kathryn Markel Gallery in New York City had an exhibition of artists' books during the month of December.

- Pamela Zwehl-Burke had her master's show at the California State University - Northridge of artists' books and drawings.

- Claire Owen is showing works on paper at the University City Science Center Gallery in Philadelphia through 3 February.

- *Kunstlerbucher* is the title of the catalog of artists' books shown at the Frankfurter Kunstverein from 16 - 23 October curated by various people from Sweden, Belgium, Australia, Brazil, West Germany and Austria, France, Great Britain, Holland, Iceland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Canada, Sweden, Switzerland, Spain, Czechoslovakia, Hungary and the United States. There were essays by all the national curators, a description of all the books in the exhibition, a bibliography, a list of outlets all cataloged during the Frankfurt Book Fair.

- *The Book as art object*, an exhibition of book objects curated by Marie-Louise Schaller in Bern, Switzerland, and Hubert Kretschmer of Frankfurt, was shown at the Landesbibliothek in Bern and at Produzentengalerie in Munich in July and August 1981. The show was accompanied by a small German-language catalog, published by Hubert Kretschmer in Frankfurt.

- Wedgepress & Cheese is a marvelous artists' book publishing house run by Leif Eriksson in Sweden. There is a fine list of books already published and others which will come out in 1982. The books will be reviewed in the March issue of this newsletter, but if you want a copy of the catalog (some of the books have English texts), then write to Wedgepress & Cheese, Leifs vag 11, S-237 00 Bjerred, Sweden.

Leif Eriksson also runs the Swedish Archive of Artists' Books, which is available to the public, artists and other interested people. The archive gratefully accepts gifts from artists and editors. The collection is cataloged and the first bibliography will be released next year and is to be continued with a supplement yearly. All donors will receive this bibliography. Write to the Swedish Archive of Artists' Books at Leifs vag 11, S-237 00 Bjerred, Sweden.

- Read the *Print Collector's Newsletter* for November -December 1981 for the article on "Good Book, Good Looks," by Philip Larson, about the book objects show at the Walker Art Center, with over 100 works by some 70 artists.

Betty Danon, creator of more than 30 artists' books, is having a show in Monza from 30 January through 19 February. She is now preparing to travel with her 32 books and is interested in having shows in the United States. Write to her at Viale Coni Zugna 37, 20144 Milano, Italy.

Sandra Jackman will exhibit "A Book Collection" at Artworks in Los Angeles in February and through 13 March. These are book-assemblages.

Isla Vista, a visual poem by Bern Porter, designed and printed by Harry Reese, is available in an edition of 49 on Rives heavyweight for \$10 from Turkey Press, 6746 Sueno Road, Isla Vista, CA 93117.

Visual Cataloguing & Mapping: Photographs, Installations and Artists' Books is being shown at the Visual Studies Workshop Galleries at 31 Prince Street in Rochester, with artists' books by Luciano Bartolini, Agnes Denes, Jan Dibbets, Mary Fish, Hamish Fulton, Eldon Garnet, Michael Gibbs, Wanda Hammerbeck, Geoffrey Hendricks, Sol Lewitt, Richard Long, Joan Lyons, Bruce Nauman, Ken O'Hara, Eggert Petursson, Bern Porter, Lyle Rosbothan, Charles Ross, Edward Ruscha, Laurie Seniuk, Michael Snow, Telfer Stokes, Athena Tacha, Joyce Wieland and others. The show continues through 6 March.

REVIEWS

Always Call When in Trouble: Sensational Garbage for No Minds and Other Weeds by Christopher Emmer is the eighth in a series of booklets which explore the possibilities of the printed word in conjunction with graphics of various sizes and degree. The little booklet is personal, but communicative although a very personal statement to be digested in a new way by each reader. \$7.00, edition of 200, available from Printed Matter.

20 Trial Briefs by M. Kasper is a joyful visual-verbal exploration of the nuclear family, politics, the draft dodger, small precious vignettes of life in New York City or psalms, short stories, etc. It is a beautifully conceived voyage which should not be missed. Published by Fault Press, 33513 6th St., Union City, CA 94587. Price unknown.

Casual Abuse & The Fault is a collaged interpretation of all the entries in the Punk/Dada mail art exhibition. It is color Xeroxed, offset printed, collaged, extruded, included—it is a marvelous work of art, given to all participants in the show. It is a book by a gifted artist as well, in fact by many gifted artists. Published by Fault Press.

The Big Zucchini by Judy Malloy was recently published by Judy Malloy and her Pathological Press, as a serial format distributed during the Performing/Performance at La Mamelles during September - December 1981. It is a cartoon-like serial which includes photographs and cartoons—the saga is about Lucy, Bob and Mrs. Frenzi. You'll get a kick out of this one. The saga was performed live on 11 December 1981 at La Mamelles in San Francisco. For more information or purchase, write to Judy Malloy, Box 1340, Berkeley, CA 94704.

Appearances Press has issued four small booklets (\$6.00 for the set or \$2.00 each):

Hey Honey Wanna Lift? a little erotic booklet in rough sketch format by Jane Dickson;

Keith Haring's more literal, but hilarious erotic encounters; Tom Otterness' anatomical drawings in booklet format, and *Fingerpaint portraits* by Cara Perlman, all identified on the back cover. Available from Appearances Press, 165 W. 26th St., New York, NY 10001.

Disappearing God by Skooter and the Westside Agent is a Xerox book, beautifully executed and bound, which depicts a Christ-like portrait with the Scrabble letters G - O - D copied and copied and copied until it literally disappears. The book is handsomely conceived, beautifully bound, and available for \$12.50 from the Westside Agent, 1802 Washington Way, Venice, CA 90291. Include \$1.50 for postage and handling.

Jazz-Eye by John Keech is a stunning black and white collection of reproductions from fifty original paintings on glass. Over the past three years, Keech, a teacher of painting and drawing at Arkansas State University, has lovingly done these original paintings on glass, then the photography, and the page layouts. The book is literally stunning, hand-made op art, computer graphics without the computer, a real trip! A visual joy, the book sells for \$10 plus \$1.00 shipping from John Keech, Box 43, State University, AR 72467.

Top Stories has issued two more in the series:

Number 8: *Transcript* by Judith Doyle includes texts taken from a performance, based on spoken accounts from three people—Andy Patton, Maria Camara, and Anna Camara. The story tells of a painful accident and the subsequent hospitalization of the woman. The second part tells of emigration from Portugal to Canada. The photo on the cover depicts Portuguese Canadians in Toronto marching against the Salazar regime in Portugal—a slide from the performance as source of this "top story." \$1.50

Number 9: *New York City in 1979* by Kathy Acker, a tough, bitchy narrative about sexual and non-sexual life in the Big Apple, in Acker's inimitable style. \$2.50

Mosaic Press /Valley Editions in Canada has produced two outstanding new titles:

50 Collages by Ludwig Zeller, a rich collection of Zeller's 50 best collages which hang in various museums, galleries, and private collections. The ingenious work of this fantastic and surreal talent is beautifully reproduced on rich heavy paper. There are 50 illustrations, with the text by Edouard Jaguer in English, Spanish and French. There is also an introduction by Arturo Schwarz. \$14.95 paperback.

Say Nothing: The Art of Tibor and Peter Kovalik is a demonstration of the mind-blowing art of this father and son. Although often appreciated as a team, each of the artists is different, Tibor being an artist who expresses himself in visual metaphor and symbolic allegory, while Peter is introspective, thoughtful and specific. Both of them have experimented with fantasy and play. They are devastating surrealists, yet playful at the same time. They are illustrators as well as true artists, illustrating the pithy statements, sayings, and quotations from famous artists, philosophers, poets and literati make this book an invaluable "trip." There are complete biographies, chronologies and descriptions of the works in the book. The two Czech artists have been living in Canada since 1968.

There are 47 full color illustrations and 30 black and white. \$24.95 from Mosaic Press, P.O. Box 1032, Oakville, Ontario L6J 5E9, Canada.

Birthday Book by Allan Winkler celebrates his 27th birthday. Produced on a Gestetner Press, the *Birthday Book* is full of pictures, one for each of his 27 years, with each color printed at a time. There is a little text as an introduction. Edition is 150, with 30 full color pages. It is the product of a multi-talented San Francisco artist, who has a fantasy display in the windows of the abandoned J. C. Penney Department Store at 5th & Market Streets in San Francisco, who has also done many paintings, of which some are reproduced on postcards which he sells, and who has done a very beautiful artist's book available for \$8.00 from Allan Winkler, 45 Brosnan no. 2, San Francisco, CA 94103. Also available from Printed Matter.

Ida Applebroog has started a new series of booklets, called *The Blue Books*, which are all based on performance/installation.

Sylvie L'Air du Temp: A Ballet of Love by Cynthia Stewart, a Xeroxed, hand-colored fantasy, is in a first edition of 50 copies, with a second edition of 100 to be produced. Packaged in a plastic envelope bordered with pink ribbon, this bittersweet love story between Howie and Sylvie, the revelation of the bitter truth, and the dance appears to be a cure for a broken heart. Although she contemplates a reclusive life, she is revived by the dance which allows her to return to the stage. The animals which represent hero and heroine are delightfully drawn—the book itself a fantasy. Produced at the Women's Graphic Center in Los Angeles, *Sylvie* is available for \$10 from Artworks in Los Angeles.

Monument by Susan Hiller is an installation on death and recreation, which physically consists of color photos and an audiotape. There is a book which accompanies the show,

which was first shown at A Space in Toronto last spring, and then circulated through several public galleries in England and is now showing at Eye Level in Halifax. The catalog/artist's book has several color illustrations, the text of the audiotape both in English and in French, and notes on the work. Available from Art Metropole, 217 Richmond Street West, Toronto, Canada M5V 1W2 for \$4.50.

Philadelphia Eye & Ear has published and distributes books by artists who are known for their work in more than one medium. Spearheaded by Stephen Spera (pardon the alliteration), the works published by Philadelphia Eye & Ear include:

The Only Romance is What is Accurate by Stephen Spera and Joel Colten, a collaboration of words by Colten and photographs by Spera, a wonderfully fantastic journey of interrelationships and comments on society by a rock guitarist and photographer and a poet. Life and art and their connections are explored. \$3.00

The Same Thing by Candlelight by Stephen Spera is a series of collage illustrations, which are surrealistic. A beautifully produced little book for \$2.50

Museum of Modern Rat, a cartoon-like, new wave irreverent and funny little book for \$1.00 in a series of small, inexpensive dollar books. All these are available, along with a catalog of all the titles, from PE & E, Box 1882, Philadelphia, PA 19105.

Great Expectations by Kathy Acker (Re/Search, 20 Romolo, no. B, San Francisco, CA 94133) is a blatant commentary on the whole literary hype system, calling into question the foundations of bourgeois morality. What Acker does in this remarkable book is to use and retranslate the works of others, almost like a collage, laid on to a basic Dickensian grid. The hero of this narrative is Peter (who is sometimes homosexual and sometimes heterosexual), Sara Ashington, Peter's girlfriend (who is sometimes Rosa, the student, sometimes Rosa, a brothel whore, sometimes Rosa, a female terrorist, and sometimes a female artist, and more and more). And finally we have the fictional Kathy Acker, who is sometimes the Princess of Cleves, Propertius, and Propertius' mistress, Cynthia. And yet there is no confusion, since all these first persons are really trying to survive in a world where all expectations appear to be illusory and are.

The book is full of puns and humor, social commentary and timeless questions, still using violence, pain, cruelty, and ugliness as her tools. Yet Acker is into life as much as anyone, as witnessed in the end of this book:

What is, is. No fantasy. Pain. Just the details: the streets, the green garbage bag a bum's sleeping next to, a friend, too much time no time, too much to eat not enough to eat, going to a movie with Jeffrey I don't know if the world is better or worse than it has been I know the only anguish comes from running away.

Dear mother,

This is an important book in the total oeuvre of Kathy Acker. Not well printed, but important enough to be purchased for \$5.95 and available almost everywhere.

Still Photography: The Problematic Model deals with the reproduction of information which influences contemporary life, therefore about life as it is and will be. What is foremost is the issue of context and how the unit of the photo-

graph is manipulated by the contextual relationship to the information implied. Life and reality are constantly compared to the still photograph, which is being interpreted not only by the average citizen, but also by the artist contextually.

Included in this book are works by Lutz Bacher, Al Nodal, Cindy Sherman, Robert Heinecken, Barbara Kruger, Hal Fischer, John Gutmann, Fred Lonidier, Peter D'Agostino, Larry Sultan and Mike Mandel, Donna-Lee Phillips, Barbara Jo Revelle, Muntadas, Meyer Hirsch, Reese Williams and Lew Thomas, among others. A very gutsy book by NFS Press, P. O. Box 31040, San Francisco, CA 94131.

Bern!Porter!Interview! conducted by Margaret Dunbar, published by the Dog Ear Press, is a booklength interview of the great pioneer in artists' books, Bern Porter, who now lives in Belfast, Maine. The book is a work of art in itself, with artists' postage stamps, die cuts, rubber stamp images and great illustrations, which include a portrait of Bern by Imogen Cunningham. The book contains everything you ever wanted to know about Bern as well as everything you did not. \$6.00 from the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance, P.O. Box 143, So. Harpswell, ME 04079. Add 75 cents for postage and handling. A must for all collections!

Verlag & Distribution Kretschmer & Grossmann have two titles:

Cretans Men (1900) by Istvan Laurer who analyzes the relationship between these two soldiers with color overprinting on the boots, or translucent overlays. 200 in the edition, 18 photos, DM 18 from am weidenborn 2, D-6100, Darmstadt, West Germany

The Complete Collection of Pin-Ups by Gerhard Theewen has 160 pages of nude pinups in photograph format. This is the first of a series all in the same format with 160 pages and hundreds of photos. Book II will be out in 1982 with *The Complete Nudist Salon*. DM 30

Letters to a Friend by Paul Reps is a book that shows the love, dedication, and just plain hard work that went into making this beautiful book. The great Zen enthusiast, Paul Reps, whose *Zen Flesh Zen Bones* was a widely distributed artist's book in 1961, has now been immortalized by this new publishing cooperative, Stillgate Publishers. Noting the lifetime correspondence between Reps and his friend Bill which comprises most of this book, the people who run Stillgate knew that the inspiration of the text could get them through the hard work of editing, designing, typesetting, printing and binding, and even hand-stamping the Japanese seals on the four pages opposite the tipped-in drawings at the beginning of each chapter.

Paul Reps, did you say? Yes, he is not very well known in this country although he is in Japan as a sincere philosopher, one who is pithy in his philosophy. Rather than exploit the philosophy or the art, this book represents a perfect blending, a harmony of both the greatness of Reps' art and his philosophy. A labor of love, the book represents the work of art as book, with its handmade paper and acid-free stock, and its sewn binding. This book will be a priceless treasure in any artists' book collection, one that will increase in value not only for the physical book, but also for its contents. \$75 from Stillgate Publishers, Box 67, Alstead, NH 03602.

Charlotte: Life or Theater? An Autobiographical Play by Charlotte Salomon (New York, Viking, 1981, \$75) is one of those rare experiences that comes upon the publishing world and the book art world so very seldom, and oftentimes must be brought to the attention of those connoisseurs who may miss the opportunity to savor such a book. This is not only an operetta of pain and despair, but it is also an uplifting example of an attempt at liberating herself from the curse of the times in which she lived, and from her family history which was especially peculiar.

Born in 1917 in Berlin to a cultivated Jewish family, Charlotte moved to France in early 1939 to be with her grandparents who had lived there since 1933. In the haste to get this visual diary down on paper, Charlotte created more than 800 gouaches, most of which are inscribed with text, dialogue, although some remain eloquent visual statements by themselves.

The child heard from her grandfather much of the family background at this time. At the age of 9 her mother committed suicide and soon after other members of her family did likewise. She saw her fate as to "commit suicide or to undertake something wildly eccentric."

That wondrous eccentric thing was to work feverishly and relentlessly to finish the gouaches who now have a dreamlike quality, even reinterpreting normally accepted perspective. In the two years she worked on this autobiography, she came to make Bemelmans-like drawings which are either distinctly sad with disembodied faces or joyful and full of life and living. At the end of 1942, she gave the drawings to the doctor of Villefranche-sur-Mer and asked him to take care of it. Then at the end of the war, in fact, in 1947, her parents returned to claim a self-portrait and 1,325 sheets of paintings and text, and returned to Amsterdam with them.

What we have is a life's work done in two years, with the emphasis on pain as inseparable from the life of human beings, showing the struggle with that pain. The book then came to the attention of the director of the Amsterdam Municipal Museum, Willem Sandberg, who then mounted a show at the Fodor Museum. It then came into the possession of the Jewish Historical Museum, after it had been partially exhibited throughout Germany. Now the work is housed in 95 print boxes in the finest archival manner, but fortunately the book has been published in both German and in English to allow a greater audience to enjoy it.

This is a remarkable book, one which must be examined with care many times, with care and with joy. It is as if one could easily divest oneself of his or her life and indulge one's whole psyche in the world of another. This is a monumental book, certainly not the last time we shall know about Charlotte. Her paintings have been exhibited at Anne Frank's House in Amsterdam, and a film has been made based on her work. And what happened to Charlotte? She was picked up in 1942 and sent to Auschwitz, where she died the next year.

So here is the story of Charlotte, or is it theater?



ILLUSTRATIONS FROM *Charlotte: Life or Theater?*

Tea Types, an opera by Peter Shire, is a finely made book by a non-bookmaker. Instead, a fine ceramic sculptor, one famous for his far-out tea pots and other sculptures, Peter Shire, has been experimenting with lead sorts, using them as metaphors for shapes which are known by him and by his admirers. There is a very precisely conceived transformation of these lead sorts to tea pots, to tea types with humor, fantasy, flights, and true dedication to getting a new medium to communicate in a new way.

The potter goes to print in an edition of 175, printed letterpress on Rives heavy with Bodoni Light for the text. The book measures 6 by 8 inches with 64 pages. There is a slip-case wrapped in grey paper with a printed title. From 3-D to 2-D in one fell swoop, the mystery of each page haunts the reader/viewer to return again and again to the forms and the shapes.

Published by Tea Garden Press in Los Angeles, the book is a treasure and sells for \$85.00. Randolph & Claudia Laub have designed the book which is available at 7365 Melrose Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90046.

Settan: 13 prose scores by Scott Norris, involves instructions for the reader to become the performer, the performer and the audience become the same. *Settan* involves performance, which to Scott Norris "is based upon the observation of the environment around us. Ideally, this observation involves all of the senses." In a special way, this book becomes a guide to new experiences, experiences of contemplation, meditation, listening to one's soul, one's feelings, one's environment.

The book is but a guide to other new aural experiences. Published by Bartholomew's Cobble, a small, independent press in West Hartford, Connecticut for \$2.50. (Bartholomew's Cobble, 19 Howland Rd., West Hartford, CT 06107).

Conrad Atkinson: Picturing the System accompanies a show of his work at the ICA in London. Edited by Caroline Tisdall and Sandy Nairne, this book contains conversations between Tisdall and Atkinson, documentation of much of his activity as a political artist, and essays by Lucy R. Lippard and Timothy Rollins. There is biographical information and an exhibitions list. £3.95 from Pluto Press/ICA, 12 Carlton House Terrace, London SW1, England.

AUDIOWORKS BY ARTISTS

Target Practice, a record album of eight songs, by Carole Caroompas, is available from Jan Baum Gallery, 170 S. La Brea, Los Angeles, CA 90036 for \$12.00. Caroompas is a collage artist, as well as noted for her performances. \$12.00 plus \$1.50 shipping.

Jean-Paul Curtay: Body Music 1 is a new cassette tape by Audio Arts in London. Included is an introduction by John Cage, a discussion of what is body music by Curtay, and then performances by Curtay. The literature accompanying the tape has an essay by Curtay on body music, the notation system, a score, and a list of his concerts in 1981. In addition, there are biographical notes on the artist. Available from Audio Arts, 6 Briarwood Road, London SW4 9PX, England.

OTHER ARTISTS' PUBLICATIONS

Antenna: Anonymous Issue (P.O. Box 16074, San Diego, CA 92116) has a cover done by Madam X and a few pages by her. *Antenna* is a semi-annual mag of poetry and graphics with contributions attributed only at the request of the artist or poet.

Van Gogh Studies: Five Critical Essays by John A. Walker includes a discussion of Van Gogh's motifs, the industry, as a peasant painter, his color theories, and art history vs. philosophy. Published by JAW publications, 87 Hillfield Ave., London N8 7DG for £3 (plus 50p in the UK and £1 postage and handling abroad). Large size paperback.

COPY OF LETTER SENT TO WOMEN ARTISTS' BOOK EXHIBITION:

Enclosed are books for the Women Artists' Book Exhibition. We are pleased for another opportunity to exhibit, since the book is a newly emerging and lesser-known art form. However, we have serious considerations and trepidations about sending work to an exhibition of this nature that:

- 1) rather casually requests a donation of art for an archive (implying little value in the work),
- 2) requires the artists to bear all of the expenses,
- 3) assumes no insurance obligations,
- 4) doesn't name a location for the exhibition.

Consequently, we are sending books that are already a bit worn from handling, and although we stand behind the work, it is not our most recent or interesting. If other artists feel this way, you are most likely to end up with a rather mediocre and lack-lustre exhibition. So, what's the point? . . .

Sas Colby
Susan Wick

Editor's note: These are some problems which should be discussed among book artists at the Bookworks: 82 Conference in Philadelphia.

BOOKWORKS: 1982 CONFERENCE UPDATE

More than 2,000 questionnaires were mailed out in early December regarding the **Bookworks: 1982 Conference** which is to be held in Philadelphia from 1 - 3 October 1982. If you have not received a questionnaire by now and if you would like to be involved in the planning and in participating in the Conference, please contact Michael Kostiuk, Project Director, Foundation for Today's Art, 2017 Chancellor St., Philadelphia, PA 19103. (215)667-8886.

As of this date, there has been overwhelming response from international bookmakers. The deadline for return of these questionnaires has been made indefinite so all those who are interested in artists' books can involve themselves in this outstanding event. As we have stated before, there will be workshops and seminars, a book fair open to the public, and events relating to artists' books, bookworks, independent publishing, with related extension in the form of performance, audio and video works.

Umbrella will serve as a forum for news about the Conference in each issue until next October. In addition, there is an opportunity for bookmakers, publishers, printers to use at least four pages in this newsletter, producing the work themselves and shipping it to the printer for insert in each issue of *Umbrella* throughout 1982. Write or phone for more information. (213) 797-0514.