

FROM THE EDITOR

At this writing, I have been at the Frankfurt Book Fair, New York City for the ArtistBook Salon, for publishing parties for Tim Ely and Johanna Drucker's new books, and to Philadelphia for the magnificent Brancusi show. And before that, I was in the hospital for a procedure to be sure I do not have cancer. And the good news is that I do not. But putting your life on hold makes you have some perspective. It gives you insight into yourself and what you do with your life, or in fact, have done. With a new lease on life, I seem to have been freed from the burden of doubt for two months. It did take its toll in productivity, although I fought the question mark for a long time. I tried to put doubt on the back burner to continue with life in its everyday pace. What becomes manifest is that the little things count a lot more than the big things—friendships, my comfortable condo, the unpredictable but great generosity of people who care about me, my readers who have given me a reason to communicate, and the great warmth of the human spirit which I treasure.

Then, too, there are books which keep me open and flexible, free and clear about what freedom to read really means. The moving memorial to the Sarajevo National Library at the Frankfurt Book Fair—burned books, a lily and a burning candle, made me realize how fortunate we are. If you note in News & Notes, there is a section on book banning and another on book burning—we are still being haunted by right-wing influences which seem to feel that certain things are deleterious to the minds of Americans. The puritanical ethic which the Founding Fathers perpetrated upon us from the beginning long endures. But we must fight this scourge every time we can, in order to remain free.

And speaking of freedom, those who are freely surfing the Net certainly have added a lot to my life this past month. It seems that Charles Alexander, formerly of the Minnesota Center for Book Arts and now a resident and bookmaker from Minnesota, questioned whether there were any journals concerning the book arts and/or artist books, and I was not at home to respond. Well, it seems one Karl Young jumped into the fray and expounded on Umbrella for paragraph after paragraph—and coming home from New York, I found the P.O. Box full of requests for subscriptions and/or information. A personal testimonial means so much to a small publication like mine, and it seems it really made a difference.

For those of you who have never heard of the Umbrella Tape, well, in 1989, I had DJ and amazingly talented Tom Nixon create for me an anthology of Umbrella Songs & Words, which I offered as a multiple to any subscriber of Umbrella. Umbrella Tape has been out of print for several years. I am now offering the Umbrella Tape to any donor to the Umbrella Editions Publishing Program, which will involve an anthology of Umbrella to commemorate our 20th Anniversary in 1997. The anthology will have our best interviews, profiles and articles, as well as a long article about the field of Artist Books to

wind up the end of the Millennium. That money would go into a special fund to publish this anthology in 1997. If any of you are interested, you also get all our publications as a gift. Be sure to look at the subscription form included in this issue. Remember that it is time to renew. You could save us a great deal of postage, if you renewed before the end of the year with this form. Please help us to save postage costs and renew, since subscriptions as usual are on a calendar year only.

I also want to let you know that the address for Umbrella now has a zip code of **90408**. It seems the Post Office never let me know that the Post Office itself has its own zip code and it is different from the one in the printed literature distributed by the U.S. Post Office. So please make a note of it. The fax number is also new: **(310)399-5070**.

I also want to wish you all a Happy and Healthy New Year. May it bring to all of us Peace, some level of prosperity, and the drive to continue to create books and other things to move the spirit.

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CHANGE OF ZIP CODE & FAX NUMBER FOR UMBRELLA: Please make a note of the new zip code for Umbrella: **90408**, not 90403. The new fax number is: **(310)399-5070**.



Cover: Umbrella Chair by Gaetano Pesce, winner of the Chrysler Award for Innovation in Design, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA. The chair is 12 x 12 x 36" (folding). (Photograph: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art)

ARTPEOPLE

Ed Ruscha, painter and bookmaker, was honored at the Governor's Awards in the Arts in Los Angeles, hosted by Gov. Pete Wilson, among other honorees.

Nancy Graves, 54, an erudite Post-Minimalist artist who combined an exacting naturalism with abstraction, died in October of cancer. She exhibited widely in galleries in the U.S. and Europe and is represented in museums around the world.

Louis Abolafia, who billed himself as the "love candidate" for President in 1968, staged "happenings" in Greenwich Village during his early career. In challenging Nixon for presidency although he was not old enough in 1968, Abolafia adopted the slogan "What have I got to hide?" and posed for a famous poster, naked except for a strategically placed hat.

Carl Giles, 78, known as Giles, a popular British cartoonist for more than 50 years, best known for his outrageous family, dominated by a ferocious **umbrella-waving** grandmother, died recently in London after a stroke. Most of his work appeared in London's Sunday and Daily Express newspapers.

Eleanor (Sue) Green, 67, the art museum curator who directed the first comprehensive U.S. exhibit of Picasso's post-World War II work. After founding the Newport Harbor Museum of Art, she became curator of contemporary art for the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the Washington Gallery of Modern Art, where she directed the widely heralded 1966 Picasso exhibit, which renewed interest in Picasso's postwar work and prompted a debate in art journals. Some of her shows included Ronald Bladen's *X* and Tony Smith's *Smoke*.

Jeanne Calment died at the age of 120, deemed the oldest living person on the planet. Hard of hearing and nearly blind, Calment vividly recalled selling colored pencils to Vincent van Gogh when the artist lived in Arles and frequented her father's shop.

John Walker, the former director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC, died in England at the age of 88.

Dick Higgins has had a retrospective exhibition which opened at the Archivio di Nuova Scrittura in Milan from 18 October through 15 December 1995. The focus of the exhibition is not only on the work with the written word in its broadest sense, but also on his explorations of the visual and musical elements which relate to this idea. There are paintings, graphics, documents and many of his publications from Something Else Press and Printed Editions, as well as other books from 1960 through the present.

Roy Lichtenstein, painter; **James Ingo Freed**, architect, and Beverly Hills philanthropists **Gerald and Iris Cantor** are among the 1995 National Medal of the Arts awardees.

Arthur Boyd, Australian artist, was named 1995 Australian of the Year at the age of 75.

Vladimir Syomin, a Russian, was awarded the W. Eugene Smith Grant in Humanistic Photography for his efforts to capture the Russia that few outsiders see. He photographs the destroyed roads, the vast woods, the ruined villages, and the muddy trails, as well as the hopeless people. The grant is \$20,000 given to a Russian for the first time.

Kate Witte Ericson, an artist who collaborated with her husband, Mel Ziegler, on indoor and outdoor installation works noted for their beauty, complexity and social awareness, died in October at the age of 39 of brain cancer.

Kosso Eloul, the sculptor who designed the eternal flame at Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem, died in October at the age of 75. He had sculpture at the Canadian Embassy in Beijing and a monument in Mexico City, but the flame in a large stark room, emerging from a stone floor through a bronze sculpture in the image of a broken goblet, is known to all visitors to Jerusalem. Under the goblet is a basement containing the ashes of Nazi victims taken to Israel from concentration camps. The floor is covered with victims' names.

Born in Russia, Eloul grew up in Israel, where he was co-founder of an artists' movement known as New Horizon. He moved to Toronto in 1964.

Alan S. Bridge, 50, a conceptual artist, was killed last summer. He started what he called his Apology Line in 1980, a free telephone confessional service, as a Conceptual art project. He posted leaflets and placed advertisements urging wrongdoers of all stripes to "get your misdeeds off your chest" by placing anonymous calls to the apology number, where their words would be recorded. The line eventually drew participants nationwide, after having been placed in art museums and galleries, and then to other confessors. At the time of his death, he was receiving some 100 calls a day. He also began publishing *Apology magazine*, a monthly collection of the best confessions in 1993.

Margorie Cameron, known professionally as Cameron, controversial poet and artist who helped develop the field of assemblage art, died at the age of 73. Married to the founder of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, John Parson, she was introduced to occult studies and to a group of jazz aficionados who were also involved in assemblage art and experimental film. Among them was artist Wallace Berman, who published Ms. Cameron's work in his magazine,

Semina, and included it in an exhibit at the Ferus Gallery in 1957. her erotic drawing of a copulating couple (which she said she drew while under the influence of peyote) is being shown at the Beat Generation exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art. The drawing caused the L.A. Police Department vice squad to close down the Ferus exhibit. She died of cancer in July.

John Coolidge, former chief of the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard University, died in August at the age of 81.

Joni Mabe was featured in the International Conference on Elvis Presley at the University of Mississippi in September, where she gave a slide lecture featuring her 30,000 piece roving installation called "The Traveling Panoramic Encyclopedia of Everything Elvis." She did a book with Nexus Press several years ago.

Helmut Gernsheim, a one-time photographer who nurtured the academic study of the history of photography and became one of its most influential and prolific practitioners, died in July in Switzerland at the age of 82. He had assembled one of the most extensive private collections of early photographs, as well as 50,000 images, 3,000 books and albums and 300 pieces of equipment which were bought by the Harry Ramson Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas. He wrote 26 books and many articles, as well as having curated many exhibitions.

Dina Dar, a prolific copy artist, who began using the color Xerox machine and then turned to laser prints, used the material of her life and her garden and made extremely poetic prints. World renowned, Dar died of leukemia on Thanksgiving Eve. There are few artists who have reached the mastery of her medium as she had. She was included in many international exhibitions in Paris, Spain, Israel and in the United States as well. Her memories of the concentration camps as a child remained with her and were reinterpreted in her art. A native of Poland, she spoke many languages and came to the United States and settled in California with her family.

DATELINE: FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR October 11 - 16

It was Frankfurt again--but different. Warm, very warm--can you believe eating outside at night in October in Frankfurt! I think it felt warmer than Los Angeles--and under a full moon at that!

Austria was being touted as the Country of the Fair--and they built a round pavilion in the middle of the Fair--with the greatest array of manuscripts and objects from their Pantheon of writers, poets and a few intermedia artists, like my friend Jaschke! Otherwise, it was a stunning pavilion with words and sentences pressed onto the curved windows all around the building. It was indeed a great party on opening night--and not to be missed!

But the fair? It was more business as usual than ever before--except for Halle 1 which was dedicated to multimedia--computers whirred and it was the most active, electric (read electronic) Hall of the Fair--with an exhibition of the best books of the year (German) and lots of funky art included in the electronic gathering point! Included was Wild Hawthorn Press of Ian Hamilton Finlay. Two wonderful young people are taking care of distribution of these beautiful books, postcards, multiples, and it was wonderful to see. There was also Flying Sugar Press of England with woodcuts and etchings in their small bookworks. But that was the draw and nothing else. This was the newest hall built specifically for the Art Fair they have in Frankfurt--but the conversion for the Book Fair was not unheeded. It meant something beyond the book--for sure!

No, I did not see all the 6,497 individual exhibits, along with the national exhibits, in which publishers from 97 countries displayed their wares, but I tried to see as many as possible. There was a sadness along the aisle of the Japanese stands--the larger stands, such as the University of Tokyo Press, were diminished in size to a closet; all the glitz of the electronics that I remember so vividly from the past did not shine. It's the economy, stupid!

Rumor had it that several publishers had gone bankrupt before the Fair--a distributor in Holland, 3 publishers in Italy, and a few having a hard time in other countries. Yet there was Centro Di, Kaldewey, Coracle Books, Bookworks (London), Imschoot (Ghent), Boekie Woekie, Johan Deumens from Holland. We greeted each other warmly, and there was United Untied, the group of publishers who sell artists books, setting up in Halle 5 to help each other and boost morale - Hundertmark, Hans Jorg Mayer, Wiens Publishing, Boekie Woekie, Skuta Helgason, Rainer Verlag, now located in southern Hungary, Guy Schraenen of Belgium, all having a good time with red wine or beer!

There is now a sense of community among the book dealers and publishers of artist books. As a result, it is like "old home week" when returning to Frankfurt. It brings us all together and the gossip is great!

