

FROM THE EDITOR

Well, dear readers, this is an issue dedicated to Asia. I had never dreamed that I would one day get to Asia, but as you all know, I was invited to Tokyo and decided to combine it with my 70th birthday celebration, and so as you read my article on Japan, it was a transformative journey. A pilgrimage for my soul, a delicate and delicious experience for my body, and a bonding with my new grandniece in Hawaii. Alas, my camera (a replacement for my tried & tested XA malfunctioned and I lost lots of rolls of film).

In the midst of this critical year in politics, I went off the computer entering temples and shrines, visiting gorgeous gardens and walking through history which I had to learn by experience rather than intense study. I learned that hands and expressions make a language unto itself. I left with trepidation, but gained confidence everyday in knowing that I could get through without knowing the language. Humanity comes through in the long run.

But you might wonder why I'm publishing in August, and that is that we are in the crunch of a critical election campaign, and I want to help as much as I can in getting the right man elected because the fate of our democracy is at stake. No matter what side you're on, you must vote and get your friends and family to vote—it is so very important. Your vote counts, it really does! And alas, this journal will be published after the Republican Convention, so I won't be able to tell you more than that the Counter Convention will be a performance art piece bigger than anything you have ever seen on the face of this earth! Just look up the counterconvention.org on your computer just to see the calendar of events!

In addition to all of this, I will be sending you all a detailed letter and new subscription form for 2005. This journal will become an e-journal, namely a journal that you can get from the computer in PDF form, meaning that you can download your own copy each time it is published. In addition, I will have a website dedicated to information about bookshows, opportunity to enter exhibitions, mail art opportunities, and current news about what Umbrella covers around the world. I will probably update umbrella.info every week, whereas I

will publish 4 - 5 issues a year of the Newsletter on umbrellaeditions.com. It will look just like issues I the past, but will be read either online or you can printout your own copy. By the time I contact you, there will be a nominal fee for entrance into the site. Subscribers will get the Information sheet as part of your subscription. In the long run, after 32 years of paper publication, it is time to cede to the new technology and "get it on!" as Mr. Kerry says. I think we will do it better and more often.

A special treat will be the Information Sheet which will also have news about umbrellas, show paper ephemera and Images from the Umbrella Museum, and indulge in tidbits about umbrellas from time to time for your personal edification. We are still working out the details, but I won't let you down. I think my energies will be channeled better and give me some time to write my book. If you don't have a computer, I am sure your local library will have access to the website.

So I wish you an active political autumn, one that will provide us with results that will safeguard our democracy, our civil liberties, and our personal rights. This country is under siege of surveillance, and instead of watching out for the "terrorists", Big Brother seems to be watching Us. It is an eery feeling, and only when you get out of this country do you feel the freedom we once cherished and must keep defending. I wish you a good Autumn and the next issue will be out in December. VOTE, VOTE, VOTE, VOTE, VOTE—just once, but vote!

—jah

Cover: Tomioka Eisen (1864-1905): Woman with Umbrellas (late Meiji era) Detail.

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