

FROM THE EDITOR

At this writing, I am fighting a sinus migraine, a dilemma for those of us who are susceptible to the many new plants that have been revived after El Niño had done its thing. So forgive me, if I am not as lucid as I would like to be. It is conceivable that this too will pass, but right now, the pain is without peer.

And we have been pained by the deaths of both Wolf Vostell and Dieter Roth, two artists who changed my life, who altered the direction of art by their lives, and who were literally little known in this country. And there was the passing of Buster Cleveland, too young to have gone, yet ailing for a while. He was a consummate mail artist, one who indulged in the history of the movements that went before and reacting to them, made a new kind of art, rebellious but immaculate. We will miss you all.

Buster's passing reminds me of the insane and deliriously thrilling times we had with Cavellini in Northern California at InterDada 80 and then again when I chauffeured Cavellini around Southern California for another 8 days. What a mad time it was with performances, demanding menus, meetings and congruous encounters, as well as the charm and manners of such a cultured man! Ah, such madness in Ukiah, such clockwork in San Francisco, and such rampant irony in Southern California! There will never be times like that again, I am sure.

And now with the internet and websites, with "networking" and interconnectivity, we hear less and less from many of our "friends", mail-art or otherwise. Is it because we are too busy on the Internet and have little time to synthesize, rethink and express ourselves in written form except in the "quickie" messages we create for e-mail.

I throw that out at you, largely because life is in the fast lane, no matter where you are. We use more paper than ever before, we have less time to read it all, and then, certainly less time to bring it all together and make sense of it. Too much information, too little time, and then there are the demands upon our time other than the computer and the Internet. Where are we going? What are we doing? Is there a future without this madness? I leave that to you.

But with all this advanced technology, the questions being asked whether it be in the newspapers, journals or even on the Net deal with the future of the book, the future of electronic technology which is "preserving" information and so much more, and yet has a short shelf life. And

so, we are asking our readers to send in their letters, comments and e-mail messages about the Future of the Book, from now until the year 2000. We hope to publish your comments and analysis of this issue, for it is a vital one. Between Rocketbook, Softbook and other ramifications of the "electronic book", the battery manufacturers will probably do a landslide business, but give me the old codex manufactured with paper and glue and some kind of binding. It's immediately portable, disposable and replaceable (for the most part), and has less chance to create glitches and lacunae because of bad software, etc. But there is room for both and more, in fact.

We would like to congratulate Printed Matter not only on its anniversary, but also on its new Catalog and its new Director, David Platzker. His energy and his know-how as to the field and to the exhibition of the works of art called artist books is a wonderful new direction for Printed Matter into the new millennium. We wish them well.

As for Umbrella in its 21st year, we will be publishing our Anthology by the end of the year, with surprise artist pages, and several replays of some very good articles, interviews and profiles over the past 20 years. We hope you have reserved your copy.

We still are collecting material for the Umbrella Museum, and how it has grown! Peter Smith, Director of the Center for Book Arts in New York City, sent along an umbrella for a dog! Mind you, he wanted to be sure I did not have one before he sent it along, but it certainly is a first for the Umbrella Museum, which is a large collection of paper ephemera, all sorts of items with umbrellas on them such as T-shirts, underwear, ties, jackets, kimonos, handkerchiefs, shower curtains, African fabrics, bathing suits, banks, toys, 465 rubberstamps, and postcards and broadsides made especially for Umbrella by artists all over the world--and so much more. So keep that Umbrelliana coming! One of these days, we'll have a grand exhibition. And we're looking for a museum to take the collection. Have a great summer!

-jah

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