
Whitney Darrow Jr., a witty cartoonist for the New Yorker for 50 years, whose more than 1,500 satiric cartoons from 1933 to 1982, created an audience of at least two generations, died at the age of 89 in August. He was considered by his colleagues to be a master draftsman, and in contrast to many of them, he wrote his own captions!

Sir John Hale, a British historian who specialized in the Renaissance and was a former chairman of the National Gallery in London, died in August at the age of 75. He was the author of the great "The Civilization of Europe in the Renaissance," the crowning achievement of this great historian's attempt to bring to life a period's art, gardens and greed.

Sir Hugh Casson, a British architect who served as president of the Royal Academy of Arts, designed the interiors of royal family residences and in later years taught Prince Charles the techniques of watercolor painting, died in August at the age of 89. He also taught at the Royal College of Art for many years.

Martin Wong, a painter whose meticulous visionary realism is one of the lasting legacies of New York's East Village art scene of the 1980s, and a precursor of the identity-driven work of the 90s, died in August at the age of 53 of AIDS-related causes. He showed at Semaphore Gallery, then at P.P.O.W. Gallery in SoHo and had a retrospective organized by the New Museum of Contemporary Art in SoHo and the Illinois State University Galleries.

Eleanore B. Saidenberg, a gallerist who was for years Picasso's primary representative in the United States, died in August at the age of 88. She opened the gallery in 1950, soon met Kahnweiler, the influential Parisian art dealer, who asked her to represent Picasso. That association lasted from 1955 until Picasso's death in 1973. She was also founder of the Art Dealers Association of America.

Werner Haftmann, an art historian who was a former director of Berlin's National Gallery and creator of the first Documenta, died in July at the age of 87.

Leo Castelli, one of the most influential New York art dealers who shaped contemporary American art and fostered international acceptance of painters like Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein and Frank Stella, died in August at the age of 91.

SHOWS NOT TO MISS

John Singer Sargent Retrospective at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC through 31 May, then to the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston from 23 June - 26 September.

Diego Rivera: Art and Revolution includes 120 paintings and drawings at the Cleveland Museum of Art through 2 May. The show travels to Los Angeles County Museum of Art (30 May - 16 August), the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (19 September - 28 November) and the Museo de Arte Moderno in Mexico City (17 December - 19 March 2000).

Propaganda and Dreams: Photographing in the 1930's in the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., through 3 October, at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC.

Jim Dine: Walking Memory, 1959-1969, at Guggenheim Museum on 5th Ave. at 89th in New York City.

The Eye of Paris, curated by Anne Wilkes Tucker, at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston through February. Then on to the Getty and then the National Gallery of Art in Washington. This is the first major museum retrospective of Brassai's work to be held in the U.S. since the one at MOMA in New York in 1968.

National Gallery Sculpture Garden opened on 23 May with works by Bourgeois, di Suvero, Lichtenstein, Tony Smith, Oldenburg, Kelly and Abakanowicz, Barry Flanagan, LeWitt, Samaras. The garden includes a reflecting pool, with a fountain in its center, that will be transformed into an ice-skating rink in winter. Washington, DC now has a new open space!

The French Invasion called *Côte Ouest* will include 12 museums, 5 universities, 9 alternative spaces, 3 public art projects, 19 galleries and an art fair covering contemporary French art in the United States this fall.

El Greco, Identity and Transformation covering 70 works, including 11 paintings that have never before been part of an El Greco exhibition will be seen in Rome at the Palazzo delle Esposizione through 19 September, and then to Athens at the National Gallery from 18 October - 17 January 2000.

Hans Bellmer (1902-1975): Photographs & Drawings from the 1930s at Ubu Gallery, 16 E. 78th St., New York, NY 10021. Will appear at Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-

Westfalen in Dusseldorf from 24 July - 17 October 1999, and at Galerie Berinson at Auguststrasse 22 in Berlin from Winter 1999 - Spring 2000.

Raymond Pettibon at Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, 26 September - 2 January.

Venice Biennale: 13 June - 7 November. Ann Hamilton represents the United States. She is an installation and performance artist. Gary Hume represents the United Kingdom.

Nadar/Warhol: Paris/New York at the J. Paul Getty Museum, organized by the J. Paul Getty Museum, 20 July - 10 October 1999 at the Museum, then it will travel to the Andy Warhol Museum in Pittsburgh, 6 November 1999 - 30 January 2000) and then to the Baltimore Museum of Art (12 March - 28 May 2000).

To the Rescue: Eight Artists in an Archive at ICP, 1133 Ave. of the Americas, through 16 May, then Miami Art Museum 15 Sept. - 28 November, and Contemporary Arts Museum in Houston, 7 October - 3 December 2000.

August Saint-Gaudens (1848-1907) is being celebrated in the first major retrospective of his work in France at the Musée Nationale de la Coopération Franco-Américaine, 70 miles northeast of Paris, at the 17th-century Château de Biérancourt, including the celebrated public commissions as well as the double eagle gold coins commissioned by Teddy Roosevelt, plus delicate cameo jewelry, and more than 100 pieces. Through 18 October.

Theo van Gogh (1857-1891): Art Dealer, Collector, and Brother of Vincent, 10 years in the making, celebrates the opening of the Van Gogh Museum's new wing in Amsterdam. See www.vangoghmuseum.nl

Andy Warhol's Drawings 1942-1987, nearly 200 works, at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, from 8 August through 8 November.

Bugatti at the Cleveland Museum of Art through 19 September.

Maxfield Parrish, 1870-1966, a retrospective at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia through 25 September.

The Last Show of the Century: A History of the 20th Century through its Arts at the Milwaukee Art Museum from 10 September through 2 January 2000.

Clemente at the Guggenheim Museum from 8 October 1999 - 9 January 2000 featuring more than 200 works, ranging in date from the early 70s to the present. The show is divided into eight sections: "I", "Rooms", "Bestiary", "Conservation to Her", "Amulets and Prayers," "Books/Collaborations/Palimpsests" and "Sky". The exhibition will fill the entire Rotunda and Tower Galleries 5 and 7. Included is fresco painting, watercolor, pastel drawing, sculpture, and book illustration.

Keith Haring: Made in France at Fondation Dina Viñny - Muse Maillol in Paris including 60 works as well as documents which have been unpublished up to now. Through 22 September.

The Time of Our Lives at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York City explores and critiques the social construction of age and aging through works in a wide range of visual media. Organized by Founding Director Marcia Tucker, this show includes works by more than 60 artists, with over 30 film, video and TV programs and advertisements, live performances, music, and three interactive projects created by high school students and artists. Themes are invisibility of the aging body, sexuality among elders, attempts to mask the physical signs of aging, the differences in attitudes toward the elderly across cultures, and inter-generational relationships. For more information, see <http://www.newmuseum.org>

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A MAIL ART BOOK REVIEW

Rubber Stamp Art (L'Arte del Timbro) is the latest book from Vittore Baroni & Piermario Ciani's AAA Edizioni, with texts published in both English and Italian. The 175 pages are divided into three sections; an historical essay by John Held, portfolios of stamps by forty-two artists from the 50's to the 90's, two collection projects, two catalogues, a bibliography and an index. The portfolios are arranged by decades, with introductions by Baroni, who selected the quotes for each artist. The 5.5" x 8.25" page format accommodates enough stamp reproductions to give the reader a good sampling of each artist's work. A "split fountain" was used on the press, giving a blended color effect to the type and images which simulates the effect of rainbow stamp pads. Throughout the essay, stamps are reproduced, to show the works of more artists and break up text. Introductions to each section are printed in dark blue, with white type and images, so it's easy to find your way around the book. Designed by Piermario Ciani, this little book is an attractive and informative introduction to the history of stamping.

With all that going for it and Held's informative prose about the early beginnings of rubber stamps and stamp art, the various approaches to stamp art, (political/social comment, performance art, mail-art, hand carving) the sometimes oppressive political conditions in different countries where the art originates, one would could easily imagine one had in hand, the most authoritative, meticulously researched tome on the subject.

However, it doesn't take close examination to notice Held's bias; his devaluation of the work of women artists, and his obsession with famous personalities and art stars. In his discussion of Ray Johnson's New York Correspondence School and mail-art coming into focus in the late 60's, early 70's, he states "everyone who participated became an important and essential component in this interactive collaborative art."

Given that statement, how does one explain that, in listing some of the "widely known artists" covered in Hervé Fischer's 1974 book **Arte et Communication Marginale**, Held includes Beuys, Brecht, Vostell, Rot, Filliou, Klein, Vautier, Dadaland (Gaglione's 70's pseudonym), Kawara, Steinberg, Spoerri (page 17/all men), while he relegates the many women appearing in Fischer's book to a special "women's section," (page 43) which he connects, by proximity, with the late 80's and 90's craft/decorative approach to stamping?

Would any writer but Held put Gaglione in a list with Beuys, Filliou, Klein, et al?

How is it that Anna Banana gets no mention in either place, even though her work appeared in Fischer's book, and she has been active in the network since 1971? The same

question can be addressed to Held's comments about the "gallery artists" whose works appeared in the Rubber catalogues of Stempelplaats Gallery, where Gaglione & Banana shared equal space in an exhibition in 1978?

Why is it that his discussion of Kocman's 1972 book **Stamp Art**, covers the "important work of Schwind," on page 19, but we have to go to page 43 (women's pages) to read his comments about Patricia Tavenner's inclusion in that book?

Why is it, in reporting Arman's use of "rubber stamps for their pictorial possibilities," (pg. 19) he makes no value judgment, but when he mentions Tavenner's appearance in Kocman's anthology (pg. 43) he comments that her "contributions were based on commercially available stamps, in stark contrast to the conceptual underpinnings of the other artists included"?

Why does Held state Tavenner's work was based on commercially available stamps, when examination of her portfolio shows most of her stamps are phrases that she had custom made?

Why is it Held reports that Cavellini collected "Nouveau Realisme, Fluxus and Conceptual art," when in fact he collected the works of Pop artists?

Why is it we get no mention of Image Bank— that West Coast group of Canadian artists who were equally active in exchanges of mail-art with Ray Johnson as any of the other artists of that period?

Why is it, out of 46 portfolios of stamp art, there are only 4 women? Where is the work of Leavenworth Jackson? Irene Dogmatic? Pauline Smith?

Why do Mancusi (Gaglione's cousin) and Chuck Stake appear in the 70's section, when all the stamps in their portfolios were created in the 90's?

Why are all the stamps reproduced in Gaglione's portfolio ones he produced in the 90's, rather than ones he did in the 70's?

We get a mixed message when Held, on the one hand, champions stamp art as the "fruition of the 20th century avant garde," mentioning Duchamp's implied "anything can be art;" Beuys' suggestion that "anyone could become an artist;" and Nagourney's "rubber stamps . . . allow any individual to become a creator of art . . . without need to train one's talent," and his concluding statement, "This democratic quality should not be dismissed as a minor part of rubber stamp art's appeal." Then, in the next paragraph, he discusses the "mass exodus of participating art-world stars" from the mail art network, due to the amount of "kwick-kopy krap" circulated by the newcomers to the network. This juxtaposition of "anyone can be an artist," with "art world stars" leaving because of the "kwick-kopy-krap" reveals a dichotomy between the

idealism, or at least the rhetoric of the avant garde, and its actual opinion of what results if art is, in fact, democratized. ...and perhaps also, in Held's view as well.

While Held claims this "mass exodus of art stars" was "spearheaded by Fluxus artist Ken Friedman," in fact, it took place two years earlier. The attitude of artists involved in the network before **FILE** Magazine publicized the phenomena, Vol.1 #1, April 1972, (which opened it up to many unknown artists,) is reflected in Hudson of Ant Farm's and Robert Cummings' letters to the editor, published in the September 1973 issue of **FILE**: "The correspondence scene has gotten out of hand. Every day I have to reject 2nd rate junk mail that asks you to send to their shows . . .

Nothing by mouth, everything by typewritten Quikkopy. None of us can keep up with the shit flowing out of the bowels of the USA mail scene." Cummings' comments were equally caustic; "I've been trying to give a half dozen new correspondents the cold shoulder in hopes that they'd stop violating my mail slot each morning. . . I get stuff every day that makes it barely out of the envelope and into the trash it's so terrible." After this issue, **FILE** magazine edited and published by General Idea's "art stars," ceased its involvement with mail-art, and their "art star" readership followed suit. By the time of Friedman's 1975 call for debate, *Freedom, Excellence and Choice*, which he circulated to several hundred people in the network, most of the so-called "art stars" (except for Ray Johnson) had long since left the network.

Held goes on to trace the "3rd wave of activity" commencing (in the 80's) that would spread the use of rubber stamps from a fine art context into the general population." One wonders what Johnson would think of Held's efforts to locate 70's mail-art/stamp use in the "fine art context," when, as Nayland Blake observed in his March '99 **Art Forum** review of Johnson's exhibition at the Whitney, "The correspondence school stands in opposition to the traditional art world," and that Johnson's "obscurity was deliberately and lovingly cultivated." According to Friedman, on the other hand, "Ray would have liked to have been an art star to a far greater degree than he became, but his personal idiosyncrasies were such that few dealers would cater to him, so he cultivated the image of the outsider." Again we come to that dichotomy between the "famous art star," and the "people's artist," which Johnson played so well. In the end, I think we have to conclude that these terms are part of a continuum of artistic practice, and what we are witnessing today, with the exponential growth of rubber stamp companies and art, is the popularization, and thus gentrification, of a medium that began with a radical gesture. Depending on the stamp, and who is wielding it, the stamp can still make a

radical statement, or content itself with decorative, pictorial functions.

This book is a good introduction to the rubber-stamp genre, but for a more extensive, less slanted account, check some of the references in the Bibliography, especially Friedman and Gugelberger's 1976 catalogue essay in **Correspondence Art**. If you can't find the book, you may be able to access it through the inter-library loan system. For further insight into the questions raised here, you'll note, on the credits page of **Rubber Stamp Art: Consulente speciale/special adviser: Picasso Gaglione**.

—Anna Banana

To order the book, send \$17.00 for surface delivery. Add \$4.00 more for airmail for each copy. Every three copies ordered, you get a fourth as a gift. Send well concealed cash in envelope or international Money Order to: Vittore Baroni (the translator into Italian, the coordinator), Via Battisti 339, 55049 Viareggio, Italy. or

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