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# BOOK REVIEWS

## REFERENCE

**Interviews with American Artists** by David Sylvester (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2002, \$34.95) features 21 interviews conducted between 1960 and 2000, many of which are featured in print for the first time, taken by one of England's most influential critics of modern art.

The author, who died at the age of 76 in 2001, organized the book himself beginning with David Smith and ends with Jeff Koons, and throughout there are the voices of Jasper Johns, Louise Nevelson, Franz Kline, John Cage, Roy Lichtenstein, and Frank Stella. The contemporary photographs that accompany and serve as counterpoint to each interview include several by Dan Budnik, who worked closely with Sylvester during the time of his earlier interviews. The clash between the Europeans who came and the Americans who clashed with them, then fusing with them is fascinating. The more contemporary artists speak straight out of today's culture, such as Carl Andre, Cy Twombly, Alex Katz and Jeff Koons. This is a great reference to these artists and the forty years of American culture they reflect.

**Cyber Reader: Critical Writings for the Digital Era**, edited by Neil Spiller (New York, Phaidon, 2002, \$39.95) seeks to introduce the reader to the wide range of writings, subjects and disciplines that cyberspace has created and influenced. While William Gibson, the science fiction author, is the first to use the expression "cyberspace", its meaning holds a world of infinite possibilities. Potentially a poetic space, its depths increase with every image or word or number.

There are over 40 texts in chronological order, beginning with some precursors to cyberspace theory as we know it today. Beginning with early theoreticians such as Charles Babbage and Alan Turing, or authors such as E.M. Forster, they help to give a historical perspective to the subject. Spiller's introductory essay is illuminating. Then he introduces each extract explaining key themes and terms and providing cross references to related texts.

This is an essential sourcebook, introducing students, researchers and general readers to cyberspatial theory and practice. Bibliography and index.

**In Other Los Angeleses: Multicentric Performance Art** by Meiling Cheng (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002, \$24.95 paper) is an important contribution to the

understanding of performance art in Los Angeles, written by a poetic critical writer, who brings her own "center" into contact with others. Its theme is "multicentricity" which serves as a unifying motif in this volume which covers Suzanne Lacy, Tim Miller, Johanna Went, Oguri and Renzoku, the Sacred Naked Nature Girls, osseus labyrinth, and many others.

Unlike many critics of performance art, Cheng writes clearly and coherently about the most ephemeral of artwork, thus allowing the reader to glean new insights into a marginal but important art form which has been flourishing in Southern California for four decades.

She also meshes feminist theory, American art, and cultural studies into the mix, allowing one to understand fully how performance art plays an unusual, but important role in contemporary American art practice. The public is always a factor in this art form, and the author is so clear about her explication of the historical roots of this art practice which celebrates its own insufficiency, in the words of the author. This will be a study that will definitely change the tone of performance scholarship.

**Benjamin's Blind Spot: Walter Benjamin and the Premature Death of Aura & The Manual of Los Ideas**, edited by Lise Patt, with contributions by Carsten Strathausen, Marquard Smith, Gerhard Richter, Petra Kuppers, Vance Bell, Connie Samara, David S. Gross, Rajeev S. Patke, Erich Hertz, Colin Rhodes, Martin Gantman, Arturo Ott (Los Angeles, Institute of Cultural Inquiry, dist. by D.A.P., 2001, \$19.95 paper or \$34.95 with special color plates and stamp set in an edition of 200) began as two separate projects. **Benjamin's Blind Spot** was the second book in a series that looks at major cultural texts and interrogates their importance to a wide range of disciplines including critical theory, art, philosophy, film and literature. The first book in that series was **Bataille's Eye** which focused on Bataille's novella, **Story of the Eye**. **Benjamin's Blind Spot** focuses on the *Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, one of Walter Benjamin's most read and most problematic essays. The third book is slated to concentrate on Roland Barthes' last book, **Camera Lucida**.

**The Manual of Lost Ideas** was an ongoing Institute project that unfolded as we were working on the Benjamin book. As outlined in the introduction to the book, we felt it was worth sharing with the world. It did not escape our notice that Walter Benjamin is also associated with lost

ideas in that his most ambitious project, known as the *Arcades*, was lost when he tragically killed himself while trying to escape Nazi Europe.

The Deluxe Edition of the book includes a sheet of stamps that have been inserted into key pages to create color plates. We did this in the spirit of the (probably now defunct) childhood activity of pasting stamps into natural history books. The book also includes a full sheet of stamps under the front cover. The stamps were printed in Canada by Banana Productions.

Some of the essays are heavy going, with more academic language than most people can absorb, but on the whole this is an illuminating volume.

**A Conversation with David Antin** by David Antin & Charles Bernstein, with album notes by David Antin (New York, Granary Books, 2002, \$12.95 paper) is a monument to catching David Antin talking about his life, rather than the events that create a "talking" and this is an important book to add to one's understanding of this poet, critic, performance artist and polymath. Now a Getty Scholar, Antin's poetry is spoken, transcribed and only then does it become a written poem. But conversations are rich, engrossing and full of ideas with Antin, and to pick Charles Bernstein to go at it with him was a perfect match. The book is a great read, whether you know the protagonists or not, and is a result of an e-mail conversation back and forth lasting up to four months, which created not an article, but a book of uncut dialogue. And it is a history of the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century not only through poetry, but through culture, the culture of New York, the culture of the West Coast, the culture of two intelligent writers/readers/consumers of culture who coalesce into conversing as an art form.

The second text, *Album Notes*, is a kind of scrapbook of photographs from Antin's life with extended annotations, verbal elaborations of the pictures, which together, add further dimension to the work of a writer and thinker which Jerry Rothenberg has termed "as important a poet as we've got in America." Antin may think he is out of synch with what is going on, but he is much more prescient than most cultured people I know, and he offers us so much in this wonderful book which should be a treat for all! Buy two and give one as a gift.

## MONOGRAPHS

**Joseph Beuys: Mapping the Legacy**, edited by Gene Ray with essays by Lukas Beckmann, Benjamin H.D. Buchloh, Mel Chin, Pamela Kort, Kim Levin, Peter Nisbet, Gene Ray, Max Reithmann and Joan Rothfuss (New York, D.A.P. in assoc. with the John & Mable

Ringling Museum of Art, 2002, \$35.00 softcover) is the result of a symposium held at the Ringling Museum of Art in Sarasota, Florida from 4 -6 December 1998.

Beuys, arguably the most important figure in postwar European art, has already provoked strong reactions, negative and positive. According to Gene Ray, things are getting better since in retrospect, his influence has enriched important directions of contemporary art production, enabling artists to reassess Beuys' biography which is in dispute at times about his "Germanness", his attitude about the Holocaust, his plane crash, his influence on the Green Party in Germany, Beuys' chalk-talks and issues of persona, memory, self-presentation and the political role of the artist, as well as a translation in English for the first time of an interview with Beuys done in 1976 with Georg Jappe and of course, Benjamin Buchloh's devastating critique on the "twilight of the idol." This volume allows the new reader to come to terms with this controversial and enormously influential artist of our time.

**Camille Claudel, A Life** by Odile Ayrat-Clause (New York, Abrams, 2002, \$29.95) is the first fully researched biography of this gifted 19<sup>th</sup>-century French sculptor who worked with Auguste Rodin, became his lover, and then left him to gain recognition for herself in the art world. With a strong sense of independence and a firm belief in her own considerable talent, Claudel created some extraordinary works of art and challenged the social and artistic limitations imposed upon the women of her time.

Using newly discovered private letters, family photographs, and medical documents recently released to the public, the author provides the first serious, authoritative portrait of this brilliantly gifted, misunderstood artist. Questions about Rodin's appropriating works that were really Claudel's, his fury over her exhibiting *The Age of Maturity* which he saw as parading his private life in public, confusion over authorship, all of these questions are examined by the author. Even when the critics wrote glowingly about Claudel's works, there were also expressions of incredulity, showing the prevailing prejudice against women.

But it is Claudel's physical and mental deterioration and subsequent confinement in a mental asylum, suffering from increasing paranoia. She had an annual ritual massacre that the author explains this form of sacrifice and an act of rebellion against the world. Her mother committed her while her famous brother Paul, celebrated poet, playwright, and diplomat, watched as his sister was taken off to the first of two asylums where she would spend the remaining 30 years of her life. Although she had improved enough to allow her doctor to release her, her mother refused to authorize her release. This is a fascinating biography, one which contains ample notes, bibliography and index.

**Wallace Putnam** by Francis M. Naumann (New York, Abrams, 2002, \$75) brings to light an artist who has been sadly unappreciated. Putnam (1899-1989) burst upon the New York art scene in 1936 with a large assemblage provocatively entitled *Agog*, prominent displayed in the entranceway to a major exhibition of Dadaist and Surrealist art at the Museum of Modern Art. He went on to create a large body of work, mostly figurative, with elements of abstraction. But there is a lot more. His paintings consisted of the human figure, birds, animals, landscapes, but there was even more.

In the 1930s he did a series called "Crisis Series", which included *Head of Lincoln*, a long horizontal canvas that seemed ordinary except an actual wastepaper basket was affixed to the top of the painting. Assemblage before it was even known!

Having moved from Boston to Hartford, he befriended Milton Avery at Travelers Insurance Company, who would remain one of Putnam's closest friends for the next 42 years. In looking at his body of work, Putnam became a nexus between Avery and Rothko. He moved to New York, did a book called *Manhattan Manners* with illustrations, a stream-of-consciousness novel, in which the artist takes his readers on a whirlwind excursion of New York by means of a long and somewhat exhausting hand-printed text (Naumann's words). The quick pace was due to no punctuation, much like John Cage. And when he met Consuelo Kanaga, he found a life partner.

His Crisis Series includes painting a word across each painting and attaching an object to the frame, such as an open book, broken coat hanger, beads, a broken clock, powder puff, bell, ruler, playing card, all adding a formal value to the work. It is prescient and I believe a remarkable series of text and image.

Putnam has been a secret for too long. Each exhibition after his death in 1989 has always been revelatory. Perhaps Naumann now has finally given Putnam his due, a bit late, but it is done. There is much to understand about this incredible human being and artist. Appendix, chronology, bibliography, index.

270 illustrations, 180 in color.

**Arturo di Stefano** by John Berger, Michael Hofmann and Christopher Lloyd (London, Merrell, 2001, \$45 hardback) is the first monograph on the artist, offering previously unpublished images and statements, and displaying the full range of his utterly original creative spirit. An anomaly in the modern art world, his figurative painting with its strong narrative content, drawing upon a wide variety of literary sources such as *The Odyssey* and *The Waste Land* to create his art, Di Stefano has been overlooked until now.

From mythological subjects to unpeopled London cityscapes, the world he presents is of unusually haunting power, perhaps best demonstrated in his portraits. Arcades and corridors stretching off into the distance are also recurrent themes, redolent with suggestions of exile and home. Chronology and selected bibliography. Has 80 color illustrations.

**Philip Pearlstein: Since 1983** by Robert Storr (New York, Abrams in assoc. with Robert Miller Gallery, 2002, \$39.95 hardcover) is a stunning collection of larger-than-life men and women who occupy this master of contemporary realism's canvases, some posed sitting or reclining passively, disinterestedly, under stark, even light. Included in some of these are other objects, sculpture, folk art, making complex compositions that create visual tension between human and inanimate objects.

There is a fascinating interview with the artist and a insightful essay by Robert Storr, curator, scholar and art critic.

Includes 70 illustrations, 60 in full color, with selected bibliography, chronology, and index.

**Christo and Jeanne-Claude in the Vogel Collection** by Molly Donovan (New York, Abrams in collaboration with National Gallery of Art, 2002, \$35.00 hardcover) spans 40 years of collaboration accompanying an exhibition of 61 works from the collection of Dorothy and Herbert Vogel, whose relationship with the artists dates to 1971. From *Packages and Wrapped Objects* to *The Umbrellas*, *Japan-USA*, 1984-91 and *the Wrapped Reichstag*, there are photos, slides, models and drawings of the large-scale installations.

Besides the color photos there are a series of interviews with Christo and Jeanne-Claude, shedding light on their working methods, their artistic vision, and their various influences. Chronology, bibliography.

**Nathan Oliveira** by Peter Selz with an introduction by Susan Landauer and an essay by JoAnn Moser (Berkeley, University of California Press, 2002, \$65 cloth, \$35.00 paper) is the most comprehensive study to date of Oliveira's career as artist and teacher. His passion for inner-directed artistic tradition attached to the human subject has persisted over more than 40 years as a painter and a master printmaker. He has had an ongoing dialogue with artists such as Goya to Munch, Beckmann, Giacometti, and de Kooning. Even his paintings and monotypes bear the mark of his brush in the tactile quality of the paint and the unique printed surfaces of his monotypes. As professor at Stanford University, Oliveira is widely regarded as key figure in American art, and his paintings, monoprints, drawings, watercolors, and sculpture have attracted an international

audience.

With 183 images, more than 100 in color, and including valuable, previously unpublished biographical and bibliographical information, this book accompanies a traveling show by the same name.

**Ann Hamilton** by Joan Simons (New York, Abrams, 2002, \$75.00) is known for her visionary environments that combine sound, text, video, photographs, books, and huge quantities of material substances—tons of Linotype slugs, 750,000 pennies, 48,000 blue work pants and shirts, and much more. What is left after these site-specific installations are taken down are only photographs, sketches and other descriptive documents. Only a fraction of these have ever been published in journals and exhibition catalogs, and out of more than 60 installations Hamilton has done since 1961, most people have only seen a few if they run into them in Sao Paulo, Sydney or Venice, or Santa Barbara, Columbus or Charleston, South Carolina. This, then is the first full-length monograph devoted to Hamilton's work, representing the most complete documentation of all her temporal projects, as well as installation-related photographs, video, audio, prints, and objects. The investigation Hamilton began at the outset of her career is how a body of knowledge is generated, contained, perceived and absorbed—a kind of archival perception of ephemeral sculpture or environments. How do we grasp information—through memory, reason, and imagination. Now, she has used sound, video, and collaborative efforts with poets and dancers that makes her closer to performance artists such as Laurie Anderson than with traditional sculptors. And her latest tour with Meredith Monk in *mercy* certainly makes her a partner in contemporary performance.

Simon has used many interviews with Hamilton and others, using Hamilton's extensive photographic archive and other primary sources in a chronological arrangement. There is a chronology, a list of installations and related work, selected exhibition history, selected bibliography, a list of the 246 illustrations, and index. This is prime material on an artist that has made a difference in all our lives, and now we know why. As Robert Storr has said, "It's all elegantly simple and gently disorienting; walk-in Surrealism with the formal economy and referent of a Shaker homestead." 300 illustrations & photos.

**Sidney Nolan** by T. G. Rosenthal (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2002, \$75.00) with its generous illustrations is the first to cover the greatest Australian artist in the western tradition, best known for his 1940s and 1950s paintings of Ned Kelly, iconic outlaw of the Australian outback.

But it is the Australian landscape that plays a foremost

role in his work, yet even in his later years he was still experimenting, still playful, still intellectually curious. He died in 1992, leaving a large body of work, from his early paintings to the enormous, multi-paneled works known collectively as Oceania. Besides Australian lore, he also concentrated on ancient myths such as Leda and the Swan or Oedipus and the Sphinx.

Being a constant traveler with a visual memory, his trips in Australia, Europe and the United States, Africa, Asia and Antarctica created more works, including a number of Chinese landscapes which are now in Hong Kong. He also was multifaceted, being a book illustrator, theater designer and even, briefly, a sculptor.

Includes chronology, select bibliography of books and catalogs.

## GENERAL

**onetree** by Garry Olson and Peter Toaig (London, Merrell, 2001, \$29.95) is an extraordinary project that brought together British artists and environmentalists: a dying 170 year old English oak was felled and given to 72 artists, designers and craftspeople. The resulting collection of furniture, toys, jewellery, books, sculpture, clothing and poetry is inspiring and joyful. The story of the felling of the tree, managing to cut it into reasonable slices, and informing a large group of 72 artists, makers, designers and manufacturers from across Britain about the project to have them use the timber to make works. The exhibition opened at the Royal Botanic Garden Edinburgh and would move on to four venues across England. The entire project was documented by photographer Robert Walker, including the felling of the oak and the replanting of the Tatton Estate with acorns from the tree by local schoolchildren, demonstrating the endless renewal of our natural resources, and of new life springing from old. The show produced furniture, sculpture, bookbinding, jewellery, toys, automata, even poetry. One of the most interesting pieces was by Michael Leigh, a mail artist since 1980 who founded the A1 Waste Paper Co. Ltd., his handle in the mail art network.

With postcard exchanges and recycling projects which he had accumulated during the years of mail art, he used the thin veneer from the tree and brought an international flavor to the project in a collaborative way. He created a wooden card out of the veneer, had a flyer attached briefly explaining the onetree project and how he needed participants to add collage, rubber stamps, drawing or writing to the card and mailing it back to him. He added on each of them a stamp or piece of collage that was appropriate to the theme of recycling, ecology and trees. He sent out 150 cards to mail artists in over 28 countries and by November 2000 he had 57 responses. He calls it "You Can't See the Wood for the Trees". This is a remarkable project,

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one which should travel beyond England. 200 color illustrations!

**Information Arts: Intersections of Art, Science and Technology** by Stephen Wilson (Cambridge, MIT Press, 2001, \$49.95 cloth) is a rich compendium of the new role of artist to interpret and to spread scientific knowledge. This is the first comprehensive survey of international artists who incorporate concepts and research from mathematics, the physical sciences, biology, kinetics, telecommunications, and experimental digital systems such as artificial intelligence and ubiquitous computing. It covers everything from biology, physics, mathematics, kinetics, sound installations and robots, telematic art, radio-based art, web art, artificial intelligence and much more.

In addition to visual documentation and statements by the artists, Wilson examines relevant art-theoretical writings and explores emerging scientific and technological research likely to be culturally significant in the future. Of course, there are many artists not mentioned who should be in this voluminous book. I think of June Wayne who was doing art about the DNA before the madding crowd knew what DNA is all about, or her images about Solar Flares and Solar Winds in her gorgeous prints, but I am nitpicking.

His resources include exhibitions and festivals, educational programs, art and research collaborations, organizations resources, think tanks and web resources. His apologies are already included for omissions. An extensive bibliography, name index, subject index ends a book which offers us contemporary scholarship with energy and vitality showing us how the boundaries are now erased in this new millennium. An amazing contribution, with addenda in the next edition, we hope.

**New London Architecture** by Kenneth Powell (London, Merrell, 2001, \$50 hardcover) is a survey of over 100 different projects that have transformed both the skyline, as well as neighborhoods of London, in the process radically re-shaping the capital.

Besides Norman Foster's Great Court at the British Museum, the Swiss Re headquarters, and Daniel Libeskind's Victoria & Albert Museum extension, there are new underground stations, theatre renovations and private homes. With over 300 color illustrations, plans and critical texts, this is an essential book for anyone interested in vital urban architecture.

**Collapsible: The Genius of Space-Saving Design** by Per Mollerup (San Francisco, Chronicle Books, 2002, \$24.95 paper) is an ode to ingenuity, a clever survey of collapsibility as a design principle covering telescopes to umbrellas and Venetian blinds to fold-up and inflatable furniture.

Divided into three sections, the book first examines collapsibility as a concept of practicality. The author emphasizes size adjustment as a natural occurrence both in the wild and in the history of humankind. It's survival of the fittest meaning survival of the best adjusted.

The second section thoroughly examines twelve principles of collapsibility: stress, softness, creasing, bellows, assembling, hinging, rolling-up, sliding, nesting, inflating, fans, and concertino construction. The mechanics and historic applications of each are explored, and one can see the Swiss Army knife, the swift retraction of an umbrella, the storability of a fold-up map. But there is much to look at from an international point of view as well.

The final section considers furniture both as a tool and as an extension of the capacities of the human body. Collapsible stools and beds go back to 1360 B.C. So there are stools, chairs, beds, sofas, couches, tables, and storage furniture too. With 530 images, this picture book gives one a sense of the ingenuity of space-saving design!

**Ancient Microworlds** by Giraud Foster & Norman Barker (San Francisco, Custom & Limited Editions, 2000, \$65.00 hardcover) is the collaboration of two photographers who celebrate the fossil world. A kind of meditation on life and death and the incantatory conclusions that all life forms die and so shall man, but new life arises. These 78 color plates are remarkable beyond anyone's imagination. The combination of biodimensionality, the bright metal oxide and earth color pigments of the painter's palette, and nature's artful geometries with their distinctive distortions make this book an eye-opener. In fact, an exhibition is traveling throughout the United States showing 65 of these images. This is an exquisite large-size book which will illuminate and divulge new vistas which the human eye ordinarily does not see. There is a foreword by Francis M. Hueber, curator in paleobotany at the Smithsonian Institution. The book may be in your bookstore, but if you want to contact the authors, see [www.ancientmicroworlds.com](http://www.ancientmicroworlds.com)

**Art of the Lega** by Elisabeth L. Cameron (Los Angeles, UCLA Fowler Museum of Cultural History dist. by University of Washington Press, 2001, \$65 cloth, \$40., paper) investigates the culture and the art of the Lega peoples of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Among these people, art is only created for and used by the Bwami Society, a complex organization consisting of multiple levels, which forms an essential component of the political, social, religious structure of the Lega.

Within Bwami, artworks are used in conjunction with proverbs, anecdotes, and performances to form complex layered metaphors and to serve as mnemonic devices. As

initiates move up through the ranks of the Bwami society, a variety of different artworks asset them in recalling a vast corpus of complex aphorisms. Thus art is a code in order to remember. With 410 illustrations, 396 in color, these beautiful examples of Lega artworks are drawn primarily from the Jay T. Last Collection and include masks, animals, human forms, miniature tools, and spoons. Bibliography.

**Stencil Graffiti** by Tristan Manco (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2002, \$19.95 paperback) displays over 400 of the most creative and exuberant examples of stencil graffiti from around the world. Using spray can and stencil has gravitated from the street to the gallery with works on canvas, metal, and clothing. The result, however, is the same: innovative, original, gutsy with some poetry, some politics, some cutting edge.

Categorized into comic heroes, movie stars, life and birth, skates, good and evil, protest, comics, codes and much more, these images make you remember where you've seen many of them last. There is energy in the stencils and energy in the design of this book. In the "Off the Street" section of the book are the major practitioners of the art form.

This is a showcase of originators, innovators and the new generation who are breathing life into derelict spaces, adding texture to the street. Some of the imagery truly is strange, but most of it is funky, full of codes, or right out there for everyone to see.. Websites for various artists are included, as well as a selected bibliography.

**Desert Eves: An Indian Paradise**, with photographs by Hans Silvester and text by Catherine Clément (New York, Abrams, 2002, \$45) is a stunning, exotic, boldly colorful book documenting the inhabitants of a remote village in northwest India. What emerges in Clément's essay is a moving portrait of a people, especially the women, who have little, yet appear to have found great personal freedom.

Living in thatched homes made of earth, with no running water, no electricity, and no medical assistance, the women of this sand village in the harsh Thar Desert adorn themselves with jewelry and with dazzling colors that reflect their inner joy. They keep their homes immaculate, singing while they work in the fields or picking over grains, and while spinning thread in their tiny courtyards.

In personal adornment, they decorate themselves in richly colored clothes, with bits of mirrors and jewelry to enhance themselves, but they also decorate their homes with amazing designs. And to think this is near the birthplace of Mahatma Gandhi, who assumed the ways of the poor out of solidarity. It is a hard life, but these women know how to make it beautiful. A stunning contribution! More than 200 color illustrations.

**Eduardo Galeano: Through the Looking Glass** by Daniel Fischlin & Marth Nandorfy traces the remarkable life of Galeano, part journalist, part poet, part artist, part militant activist, part philosopher, part daring writer. Published by Black Rose Books in Montreal in 2002, the book began as notes for an unproduced documentary film on the author/artist. One must listen to this creative thinker whether one reads him, or listens to him on the radio, or sees him on a Charlie Rose program. He has a dynamic charisma that goes on and on, and he must be listened to, for his wisdom goes beyond borders. He is a universal spirit roaming the world with truths. Huge bibliography. \$24.99 paper

**Wise Women: A Celebration of their Insights, Courage, and Beauty** by Joyce Tenneson (New York, Bulfinch/Little,Brown, 2002, \$40.00 hardcover, \$19.95 paper) is a challenge by the artist, who tries to dispel the negative attitude of growing older by portraying women of energy, vitality, wisdom and deep beauty. Traveling through the U.S. to try to find women from 65 - 100 where age has enhanced, not hindered these women, whose lives can serve as positive role models for us all. From Supreme Court justice to volunteer teacher, from Academy Award winning actress to politician, from civil rights activist to former principle dancer at the Martha Graham Company, there is much to ponder here.

Included with these 80 portraits (she interviewed more than 300) are short interviews with these remarkable women. All speak to what it means to have lived and grown in strength as a women over the past three-quarters of a century. What will remain with the reader, men and women alike, is a new vision of what it means to be a truth-teller, a woman of age and wisdom. If you are woman, you will love yourself just a bit more because of this book, and if you are a man, you will indeed have more respect for the women in your life. This book is a gift to all who spend a little time with it. It is a must for all those who delve deeper into it.

## EXHIBITION CATALOGS

**Words Without Meaning, Meaning Without Words: The Art of Xu Bing** by Britta Erickson (Washington, DC, Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution with University of Washington Press, 2002, \$22.50 paper) represents this ongoing experiment with language that this global artist continues with each new installation and work. He loves using the written word to create new works of art. An accomplished calligrapher, printmaker and art teacher, Xu Bing turned his interest in and mistrust of language into an extended examination of Chinese characters, namely the *Book from the Sky*, the now renowned combination of books, scrolls and panels for

which Xu Bing invented thousands of new characters in the late 1980s. This causes an uproar in China due to the combination of the familiar and the unknown and led to government's censorship of his art and himself, forcing him to emigrate to the United States in 1990.

Featuring his square word calligraphy and his growth as one of the famed international artists, Erickson traces the artist's career, providing illustrations and in-depth analyses of his work which now have been seen around the world. Includes bibliography, Chinese names and terms, and index. Includes 60 illustrations, 54 in color.

**Islands in the Sun: Prints by Indigenous Artists of Australia and the Australasian Region**, edited by Roger Butler (Canberra, National Gallery of Australia, 2001, \$30.00 paper, dist. by University of Washington Press) reveals how the arts have flourished among indigenous societies in the Australian region since the 1960s and how the arts have been a potent force in maintaining cultural identity. With renewed interest in traditional images, designs, and narratives along with the evolution of new images and stories, the changing times and new technologies are revealed.

Featured are Aboriginal Artists from Tiwi Islands, Arnhem Land, prints from the Torres Strait Islands, as well as Papua New Guinea, New Zealand, and cross-cultural experiences. There are biographical notes, bibliography and 110 illustrations, 62 in color. They are stunning!

**The Reader Revealed**, compiled and edited by Sabrina Alcorn Baron (Washington, DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, 2002, dist. by University of Washington Press, \$29.95 paper) demonstrates a history of the book, showing the close relationship between reader and book, between reading and writing, during the 15<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, leaving us with a large body of evidence not only of the habits of individual readers but of the social and intellectual worlds they inhabited.

With the juxtaposition of the Folger and the Library of Congress in Washington, DC., this history brings to life the early owners and readers of books from the Folger Shakespeare Library, from the humble and pious to the most assiduous collectors. Early readers read with pen in hand; it is in their underlinings, emendations, and other marginalia that these readers are most vividly revealed to us.

This catalog represents the gamut from highly decorated icon books to cheap, well-thumbed chap books of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, which were carried in pockets until many disintegrated. The use of books as repositories of birth records, scholarly marginalia, and schoolboy doodles is also examined. 62 illustrations, a dynamic bibliography complete this important contribution to the history of reading and the

book.

**Fluxus Necessarius.** Is Fluxus necessary? Who needs Fluxus? And what is it anyway? The works collected herein by concert pianist Ellsworth Snyder, who knew several of the artists personally, consisting of objects, posters, programs and all kinds of publications is documented in this colorful and in-depth look at work from a group described as "the most radical and experimental movement of the nineteen-sixties." Included are Christo, Beuys, Cage, Oldenburg and Yoko Ono, as well as the usual Fluxus suspects, George Brecht, Maciunas, Vostell, Robert Watts, Ben Vautier and others, including around 200 items showing the genesis and progress of a visual and formal revolution. Formed by personal relationships, need, or shared ambition; and continued through more than two decades of humor, fun and friendship, Fluxus was a crucible of avant-garde, still capable of delight and surprise. \$50.00 from rha, 8446A Melrose Place, Los Angeles, CA 90069

**Len Lye** celebrates the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth with an exhibition curated by Judy Annear, of the Art Gallery of New South Wales in Sydney. This exhibition is touring through November 2003, and shows the depth and breadth of the artist, although in a minor key. With an essay by recent biographer, Roger Horrocks, Lye is portrayed as a South Pacific Modernist. Annear writes about Lye's use of light and his series of portrait photograms which make up a large part of the exhibition. There are a few kinetic sculptures in the exhibition, as well as 12 films, which are phenomenal in execution and in scope. Painting directly on film, Lye made adverts for Shell and the Post Office in Britain. But he was so much more prolific when he made his own films such as *Tusalava* and *Free Radical*, the best of the lot. This catalog is an important document to finally gain Lye recognition as a major sculptor, painter, filmmaker, photographer, and writer. \$18.00 Australian dollars from Monash University Museum of Art, Ground Floor Building 55, Wellington Road, Clayton, Vic. 3800 or [muma@adm.monash.edu.au](mailto:muma@adm.monash.edu.au)

## REPRINTS

**Graphic Design: A Concise History** by Richard Hollis (New York, Thames & Hudson, 2002, \$14.95 paperback) is a revised and expanded edition. Over 800 illustrations, 29 in color.

**The Business of Art** edited by Lee Caplin (New York, Prentice Hall in coop. With the National Endowment for the Arts, 1998) in its Third Edition. \$19.95 paper