

BOOK REVIEWS

NEW PHOTOGRAPHY BOOKS

Wild Flowers by Joel Meyerowitz is now available in paperback for \$16.95 from New York Graphic Society, a sequence of color photographs taken between 1963 and 1981 with theme of flowers throughout. A splendid continuity.

Cecil Beaton, A Retrospective, edited by David Mellor (Boston, New York Graphic Society, 1986, \$35.00) is the first retrospective of all of Beaton's careers, not just the photography, but literature, theatre, painting, caricature, film, fashion, and of course photography. Included are six essays by Beaton authorities including Hugo Vickers, Terence Pepper, etc. There are 362 black and white and 22 color photographs celebrating Beaton in all his glories.

All the Right People by Barbara P. Norfleet, photographer and sociologist, has entered the world of the privileged. Through a series of candid images at once compelling and unsettling, she has captured her subjects in all pursuits and surroundings. Included are seven frank and intimate interviews accompanied by 63 black and white photographs. Here we not only have fine photographs, but a unique and important social document. \$29.95 from New York Graphic Society.

Chauncey Hare's **Interior America** (New York, Aperture, 1978, \$15 paper) begins with an autobiographical introduction, defining his feeling of alienation from the corporate world, having worked for Standard Oil for 20 years. This alienation is a premise for the photographs, which are meant to reveal "the spiritual desolation that lies across the great industrial wasteland of modern life like a gathering death wish" (Theodore Roszak).

Starting with a premise and attempting to document it is at best risky. What comes through is Hare's alienation rather than that of his subjects. Often interiors are lit with a direct glaring strobe which cast harsh shadows against overlit rooms. The photographs feel invasive, and Hare himself alludes to using a wide-angle lens in order to include people who don't realize they are in the picture. The work is in the tradition, I suppose, of Arbus, Sander and Avedon in terms of documenting people in a dispassionate manner and rendering them as specimens; however, Hare's work, three Guggenheim awards notwithstanding, does not compare visually—the images are not memorable.

--Janice Felgar

Todd Webb: Photographs of New York and Paris, 1945-1960 by Keith Davis (Kansas City, Hallmark Cards, 1986, \$16.95) is exactly what the title indicates, and the photographs are very nice. There is a reminder of Atget and Cartier-Bresson in the street scenes and wry eye of Webb. There is a series of storefront churches in New York, and more people photographs in Paris. Wandering in New York with a camera in the mid '40s and Paris in the late '40s and through the '50s must have been great fun. These are Webb's personal photographs, and they deserve to be seen.

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Between Dark and Dark by Thomas Joshua Cooper (Edinburgh, Graeme Murray Gallery, dist. by University of New Mexico Press), 1985, \$32.50) is a piece of art. The premise is that the photographs allude to or "recollect" magic sites—not a documentation, the dark moody landscapes gathered from around the world have titles such as "Ritual Indication" and "Ceremonial Dwelling." They are beautifully reproduced, evocative photographs combined with poems and titles which produce an overall effect of the passage to another realm, dark, beautiful and magical.

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August Sander: Citizens of the Twentieth Century: Portrait Photographs 1892-1952 (Cambridge, MIT Press, 1986, \$55)

It is difficult to review a book that you really love without sounding overly infatuated, but here goes! Finally, here is the book that (partially) realizes the most ambitious portrait project envisioned by August Sander in the 19th century—a published documentation of the people of his country. The photographs are fascinating, despite Sander's rather detached, cool relationship to his sitters, underscored by the lack of names, but rather the titles of their jobs. We sense their humanity, their vanity (Notary, Cologne, 1924, pl. 228), their vulnerability (gypsy, pl. 361); their hopes (Persecuted Jew, Mr. Leubsdorf, c.1938, pl. 412). These are wonderful portraits, and the volume compares with what Disfarmer did with a less ambitious approach in a smaller milieu—portraits that really tell us something about the sitter and his/her environment. They are full-figure (mostly), frontal (mostly) views within an environment; and the long sittings required by Mr. Sander's old lens allowed proximity between the photographer and the sitter. The text is well-written, well-organized and clear. The only thing that one could wish for is to see the work that was omitted, and the work that was destroyed in the bombing of Sander's studio during World War II. This is a wonderful book, one can become lost in it. Highly recommended.

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Judy Dater: Twenty Years (Tucson, University of Arizona Press, 1986, \$50.00) is a compilation of Dater's work over the past twenty years. It includes portraits, many of which are wonderful (especially Ansel Adams); nudes, color work in Egypt and finally self-portraits both in color and black and white. It is difficult to see the work as a cohesive whole, though that is perhaps not a criticism as much as an observation; the work varies in intensity because the early portraits and the black-and-white self-portraits are strong and wonderful; and the color work seems contrived. There is a strain of confrontation within the body of work, a directness and clarity of purpose, especially in the black-and-white work. The volume is a valuable part of any collection of books on contemporary photography.

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Gypsies by Josef Koudelka (Aperture, 1986, \$19.95 paper) is a reprint of 60 photographs of the nomadic peoples of Czechoslovakia, the artist's native country, reflecting their energy, pride, beauty, openness, and independence. There are no comments except for time and place, for the

images speak for themselves in wonderful duotone. These mostly frontal portraits are of the people, as they are in rite and ritual, and everyday living.

Britons with photographs by Neal Slavin, preface by Auberon Waugh (New York, Aperture, 1986, \$45.00) is a rare document, not only because the 48 full-color photographs of England's religious, social and military groups were done on the hefty 180-pound 20 x 24 Polaroid camera, but because there is a symbiotic relationship between the offbeat eccentric English character and the photographer's wry sense of humor, irony, and off-centered worldview.

The book is a saga, telling the tales and adventures of the 4,000 mile odyssey which lasted two years when Slavin and his crew were often pitted against man and nature, time and travel, and with that very big camera. From debutantes to dogs, the photographs reveal that crazy sense of humor mingled with eccentricity that one knows when one stays in England for any length of time. Of course, this reviewer's favorite is the oldest umbrella shop in London, James Smith & Sons, but there are so many other hilarious groups, in living color.

Yet, what I find most enlightening is the interview with the artist who discusses the trials and tribulations, the unforeseen events which certainly led to more adventures than anticipated in photographing these shopkeepers, the Hanging Committee, the Royal Shakespeare Company, and so many outlandish groups which prove to all that "There will always be an England" especially with such undaunted character as revealed in these photographs. A great book with 48 full-color photographs and 4 black and white.

EXHIBITION CATALOGS

Lebasque: 1865-1937 by Lisa A. Banner and Peter M. Fairbanks includes 82 illustrations, 65 in color, with bibliography about this artist, who was closely associated with Matisse, Bonnard, Rouault and other well known post-impressionist painters. This is the first publication in over 50 years to treat the life and works of this artist, representing extensive research and many newly uncovered facts about Lebasque. Bibliography, commissions, collections, museums, salons are all included. Distributed for Bedford Press Publishers in San Francisco by University of Washington Press.

Mater Dulcissima by Demeterio Paproni and Michelangelo Castello documents the installations by a group of outstanding European artists in the Church of the Knights of Malta, a church which was bought by the City of Siracusa in 1980, restored to provide a center for artistic and cultural displays. This was the opening show with work by Mimmo Paladino, Gilbert & George, Gerhard Richter, Mario Merz, Giuseppe Penone, Sol LeWitt, Giulio Paolini, Jannis Kounellis, Anish Kapoor, Arnulf Rainer, Pistoletto, Vedova and Zorio. Published by Tema Celeste Edizioni in Siracusa, this is a beautifully published documentation for what can be imagined as an ideal space for installations in January and February 1986. Each

artists as biography and chronology with photographs, as well as bilingual statements by each artist (Italian/English), as well as critical statements by some outstanding curators and critics. The illustrations (117) are indicative of the power of this show. Available from Nigel Greenwood Books.

Jacob Lawrence: American Painter by Ellen Harkins Wheat documents the retrospective which began at the Seattle Art Museum and will circulate throughout the U.S. for the next year. With 75 color illustrations, 74 duotone photographs, notes, bibliography, chronology, index, we have a major publication on an artist who has been widely regarded as America's most important black artist. His work has reflected the black American experience from the Civil War to the civil rights movement and beyond. Lawrence speaks in these pages about his own work and development, for the interviews with the artist have been lucid and clear. He is one of the most articulate of artists, one who feels about social and political issues as well as aesthetic ones. \$40.00 until 31 December.

Liberty: The French-American Statue in Art and History with an introduction by Henry Steele Commager was published on the occasion of the Centennial of the Statue of Liberty. The exhibition began at the New York Public Library and then travelled to the Musée des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, and then will be on a national tour. There is history and hysteresis, with straight-on documentation and hilarious depictions of the Lady, tracing history, art, technology and construction, symbolism, imagery, and the Statue's role as a monument to French-American friendship. This iconographical study should be in every library, since this is the first comprehensive and fully illustrated (500 images) book about the Statue of Liberty. \$19.95 from Harper & Row.

Bob & Bob: Selected Works, 1980-1986 was published in conjunction with the exhibition *Bob & Bob: A Retrospective 1975-1986*, organized by the Otis/Parsons School of Art Exhibition Center in Los Angeles in April/May 1986. Essay by Peter Frank, Performance notes by Bob & Bob. Price unknown.

Also from the Otis/Parsons are two other exhibition catalogs: **A Brokerage of Desire** featuring the work of Alan Belcher, Gretchen Bender, Anne Doran, Jeff Koons, Peter Nagy and Haim Steinbach represents the new abstract art from New York, featuring the introduction of actual objects from the everyday world into the realm of art, much like the readymades of Duchamp. This summer show included documentation with short biographies, illustrations and bibliography for each artist. \$5.00 from Otis/Parsons, 2401 Wilshire Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90057.

Chicano Expressions: A New View in American Art represents an exhibition at the Otis as well as the Museo de Arte Mexicano in San Francisco, in the spring of 1986, with the four parts curated by different people, including visual arts, grafica/urban iconography, murals/public art and home altars, and the arts of devotion. Organized by INTAR Latin American Gallery in New York City, the viewpoint is definitely not from a Southern California perspective. Perhaps that is what makes it interesting, with color and black and white illustrations, essays as well. \$5.00 from Otis/Parsons.

Liubov Popova and Kazimir Malevich: Gouaches & Drawings, recently held at the Leonard Hutton Art Gallery in New York, was accompanied by a small catalog. Write the gallery at 33 E. 74th St., New York, NY 10021.

Panorama del Paseo de la Reforma y otras obras of Jan Henderikse is an exhibition of his work held at the Museo Universitario del Chopo in Mexico, with illustrations as well as chronology. Available from the artist, 110 Christopher St., New York, NY 10014.

Miriam Schapiro: "I'm Dancing as Fast as I Can": New Paintings at the Bernice Steinbaum Gallery, 132 Greene St., New York, NY 10012 is documented in a catalog which includes an essay by Thalia Goumo-Peterson, with exquisite color plates, as well as chronology and bibliography.

Laddie John Dill: A Selection of work, 1969-1986 is a catalog with interview with the artist by Joan Quinn, as well as 5 color reproductions and two black and white ones for \$5.00 from the Long Beach Museum of Art Bookshop/Gallery, 2300 E. Ocean Blvd., Long Beach, CA 90803.

An Enkindled Eye, the Paintings of Rockwell Kent: A Retrospective Exhibition by Richard V. West is available for \$20.00 from University of Washington Press, P.O. Box C-50096. With 70 illustrations, 16 in color, a selected bibliography, a list of plates, and three scholarly essays, Rockwell Kent is put into perspective at last.

Robert Arneson: A Retrospective by Neal Benezra is a stunning and important addition to 20th century contemporary art. Long recognized as the foremost clay sculptor of our times, Arneson is also a draughtsman of international stature and this catalog, published on the occasion of a retrospective exhibition organized by the Des Moines Art Center, has 100 illustrations, 30 of which are in color and a chronology, bibliography and exhibition history. The show travels to the Hirshhorn Museum and the Portland Art Museum. \$16.00 from the University of Washington Press, Seattle.

Vito Acconci: The House and Furnishings as Social Metaphor documents an exhibition which appeared at the University of South Florida Art Galleries in Tampa and the Knight Gallery of the Spirit Square Art Center in Charlotte, North Carolina. Included are essays by Kate Linker and an introduction to his own work by the artist. There is a list of the works in the show, the biography and bibliography, showing the latest works of this incredible artist. \$10.00 plus \$1.00 handling from USF Art Galleries, College of Fine Arts, Tampa, FL 33620-7350.

Hollywood: Inside and Out documents a recent exhibition at the Municipal Art Gallery in Los Angeles, including the work of many artists from the Los Angeles area such as Ed Ruscha, Sabato Fiorello, Richard Duardo, Anthony Austin, Don Gachardy, Richard Adkins, Simone Gad, Cindy Sherman and others. Write to MAG, Barnsdall Park, Hollywood, CA 90027.

El Cami de Dotze: Artistes Catalans 1960-1980: Barcelona, Paris, New York is a remarkable collection of works by Frederic Amat, Eugenia Balcells, Robert Llimos, Medina Campeny, Miralda, Muntadas, Joan Rabascall, Angels Ribe, Benet Rossell, Francesc Torres, Jaume Xifra, and Zush. The volume is hefty, the documentation is exciting, and the multilingual catalog allows one to see the energy and drive of these Spanish artists who travel from one continent to another easily with their dynamic. Available from the Department of Culture, Catalonia, Spain.

Lloyd Hamrol: Works, Projects, Proposals is a catalog for a recent exhibition at the Municipal Art Gallery in Los Angeles, including an interview, biography, bibliography. For more information, write to MAG, 4804 Hollywood Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90027.

Only L.A.: Contemporary Variations, 27 Los Angeles Artists, representing work of 27 artists showing the diversity and ethnicity of the visual arts in L.A. today.

The University of Iowa: Museum of Art: 100 Masterworks, with introduction and essays by Robert Hobbs is divided into the Ancient World, the Western World, Africa and the Americas, with brilliant color plates.

David Hlynsky: Likeness and Artifact documents an exhibition at the Centennial Gallery, Oakville, Canada of this hilarious photographer and innovator. Biography, chronology, collections are included. Write to the artist at 73 Pendrith St., Toronto, Canada M6G 1R8.

Wingtrace/The Sign of its Track by Joyce Cutler-Shaw documents an exhibition of the artist's work at the Johnson Museum of Art, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY with chronology, bibliography, biography, list of public works, etc. The catalog itself is designed like a bookwork which the artist has done for several years, and is a true evocation of her work as the Artist as messenger.

No! Contemporary American DADA is a two-volumed wildly designed exhibition catalog or even bookwork playing with typography, color, and evocative of the Dadaists themselves, reflecting a spirit of lusty creativity and provocative zanyness, including work of Chris Burden, Llyn Foulkes, Hans Haacke, the Kienholzes, Rock Video. Volume 1 is straight Dada; Volume 2 is documentation, but the two of them make for one of the best looking catalogs we have seen in a long time. Worth every penny of the \$35.00 for the two volume boxed set (add \$2.00 for postage and handling). The essay by Ileana B. Leavens is indeed a brilliant expose of today's neo-Dadaists with great historical ramifications.

Southern California Assemblage: Past and Present, curated by Elena Siff for the Santa Barbara Contemporary Arts Forum, is documented in a catalog which covers a historic section and a more contemporary exploration. This exhibition is monumental, and no catalog unless it were in full color and pop-up would do it justice. With 77 artists in the show, assemblage appears alive and well and living in Southern California, including essays by Anne Ayres, George Herms, Gordon Wagner and Dianza Zlotnick, with short biographies of each artist as well as an abundance of illustrations, albeit in black and white. \$8.00 plus postage and handling to College of Creative Studies Gallery, UCSB, Santa Barbara, CA 93106.