

ART

mail art



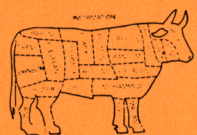
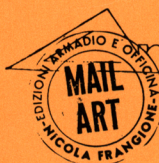
Late Artzoic



PANPOST



moo wave
Avenue B School
of Art



MAIL ART
1983
MAIL ART



FRANKLIN FURNACE
FRANKLIN FURNACE

FRAGILE
LIQUID

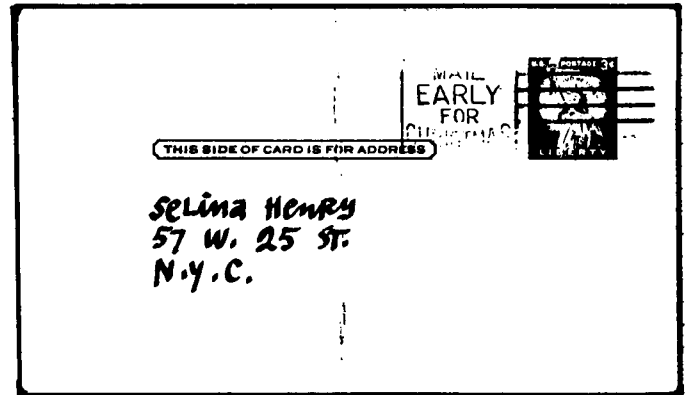
NY MAGGIC CITY

MAIL ART
FRANKLIN FURNACE
112 FRANKLIN STREET
NEW YORK
N.Y. 10013
U.S.A.

MAIL ART 'THEN'

Did you know that New York School painter Ad Reinhardt

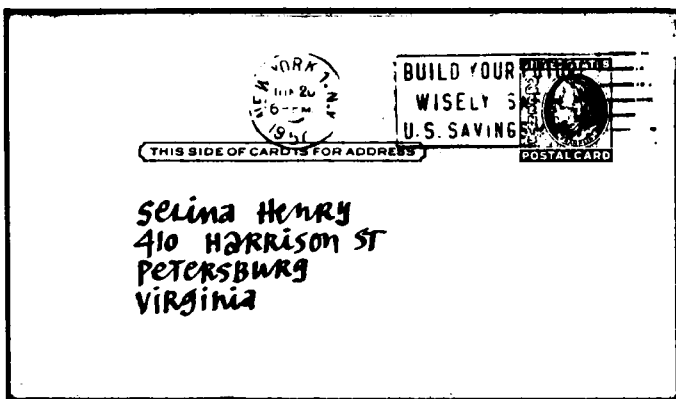
Selina: SYD KURLAND WILL BE IN CLASS NEXT WEEK AND EVERY WEEK BECAUSE OF AN EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE BLOND STUDENT NAME OF PENNY OR DORIS OR DOREE WHO IS ONE OF OUR EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE CROP OF STUDENTS THIS YEAR. RACHEL SPITZER REALLY RUNS AN ART MAGAZINE I FOUND OUT WHEN SHE TRIED TO SEND SOMEONE TO PREVIEW MY SHOW. CAROL ZUCKERMAN OR ALTERS IS STUDYING WITH R. MOTHERWELL. SEE, I KNOW WHAT'S GOING ON WITH EVERYONE EXCEPT YOU. WHAT'S GOING ON WITH YOU? Ad



AD REINHARDT POST CARD. Undated, ca. 1959-60.

During the 1950s Ad Reinhardt was known for his distinctive use of the mails as a means of sending news, humorous and at times sarcastic messages about the art world.

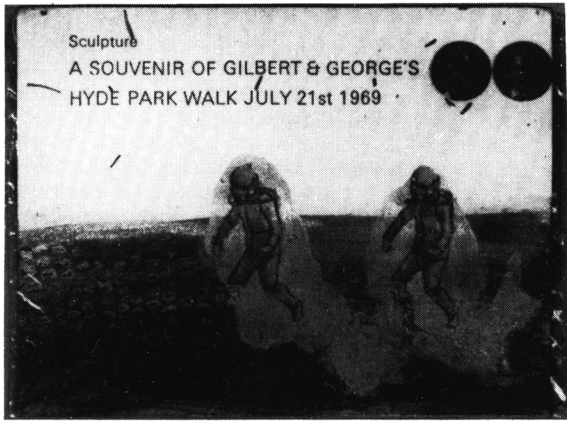
Selina Trieff, the recipient of these post cards was a painter and former student of Reinhardt.



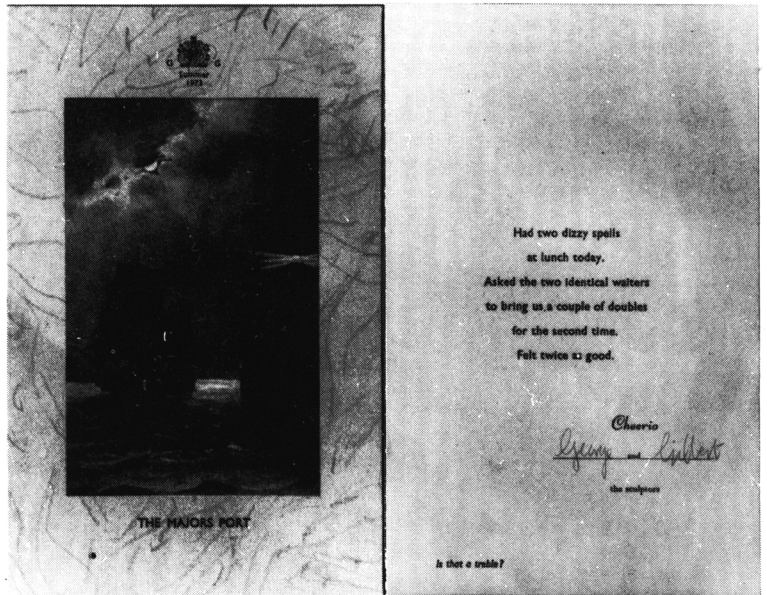
DEAR SELINA: THE JAMES GALLERY HAD A LATE-SPRING-EARLY-SUMMER SALON LIKE THE STABLE AND THE STABLE SALON OF 1957 SOLD ONE PAINTING (MINE) AND LARRY RIVERS WON \$32,000 ON THE TV AND LIFE MAGAZINE HAD A COLOR SPREAD ON FEMALE ABSTRACT-EXPRESSIONISTS LAST MONTH AND THE HI (HOFMANN) SHOW CLOSED LAST WEEK AND THAT'S THE NEWS, THE SUCCESSES, THE LATEST, FROM THE BIGGEST (CITY). WHAT'S THE SIGN "MI"? LIKE THE OLD "4F"? RUSSELL'S GOING TO EUROPE TO BRING HIS BABY BACK. SEND THE HAM ON CORN PORRIDGE TO SYRACUSE WHERE ALL US GOD'S CHILREN (LITTLE) LOVES SHORTEN BREAD. Ad

AD REINHARDT. POST CARD. June 20, 1957

and British conceptual artists Gilbert & George did mail art?



GILBERT & GEORGE. SOUVENIR PACKAGE. Cellophane enclosed card with bits of dried grass. 1969.



GILBERT & GEORGE. THE MAJORS PORT FROM "THE GREETING CARDS" SERIES. 1973.



May we describe to you with picture and words a sculpture which began on the last Saturday in November of '69 we had just made some cocoa when it began to snow so we positioned ourselves at the window as we began to look we felt ourselves taken into a sculpture of overwhelming purity life and peace a rare and new art-piece we thank you for being with us for these few moments

Yours sincerely  George and Gilbert

*Art for All, 12 Bourne Street, London, E.1, England

In the late 1960s and through the early 1970s, Gilbert & George used the mails to document and further explicate their work for both the amusement and edification of their audience. Under the trademark "Art for All," they sent booklets, announcement cards, greeting cards, post cards and printed statements.

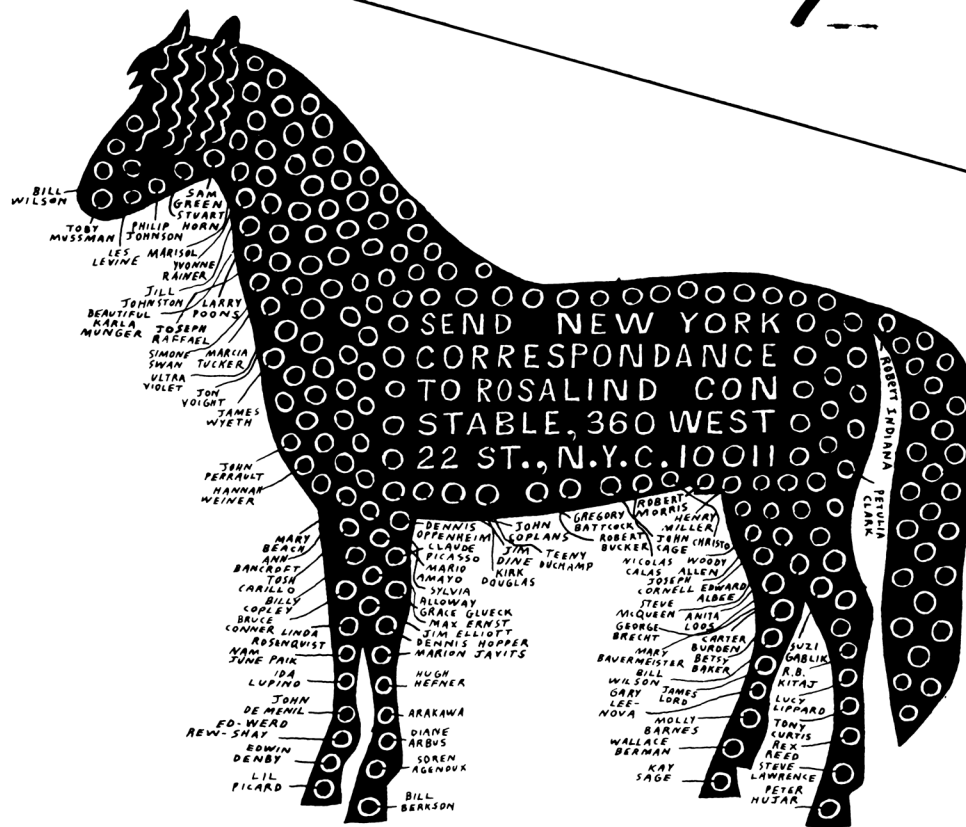
GILBERT & GEORGE. PRINTED MESSAGE 1969. 1970 Mailing.

RAY JOHNSON
65 LANDING ROAD
GLEN COVE, N. Y. 11542

NEW YORK, NY
NOV 18 1969

SAVE

John Evans
101 Ave. B
hyc, ny



Mail Art Then and Now

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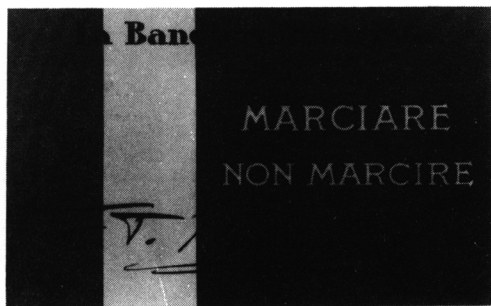
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Franklin Furnace holds the largest public collection of published art works, periodicals, postcards, pamphlets, posters, records, cassette tapes and other ephemeral material published by artists in the United States and perhaps in the world. Franklin Furnace's magazine the FLUE, is intended to be a forum in which ideas related to artists' use of language, the printed page, the book format, and other issues suggested by works contained in the permanent collection may be critically explored. The views and opinions expressed in the FLUE are those of individual artists, writers and contributors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions or views of Franklin Furnace Archive, Inc.

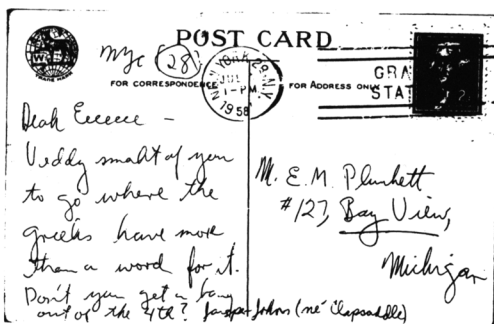
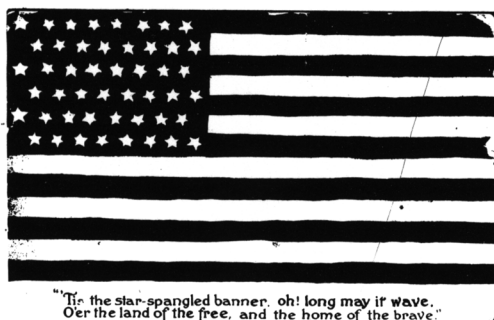
We gratefully acknowledge funds received from the New York State Council on the Arts and the National Endowment on the Arts for this issue of the FLUE.

FROM PRE-TO POST-POSTAL ART

by Ed Plunkett of the Surrealist Digest



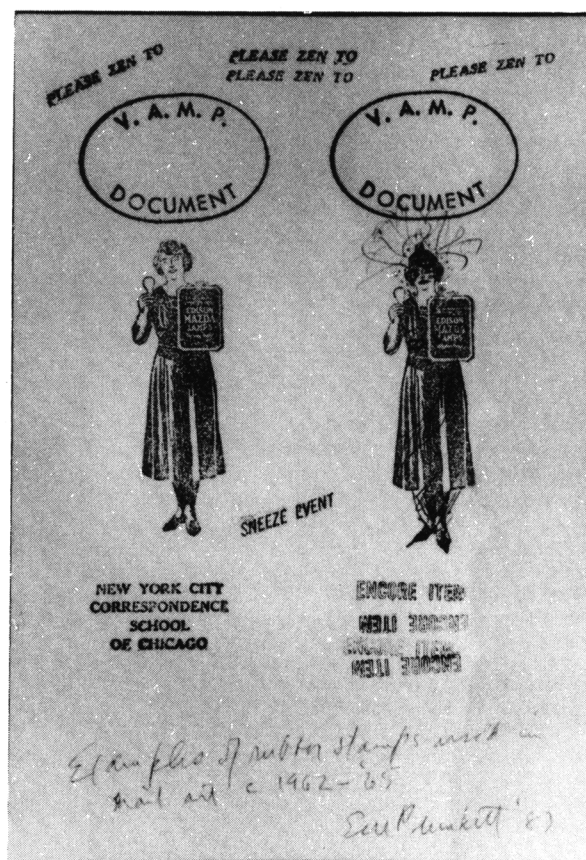
F.T. MARINETTI. FUTURIST POST CARD. Jon Hendricks collection.



NOT A JASPAR JOHNS. 1958. Post card sent to Ed Plunkett by a friend who knew that he knew Jaspar Johns. It is an early example of mail art used to comment on art work in another medium.

Thirty five years ago I performed a Surrealist gesture. I found some mouldy dried up paste at the bottom of a jar; I put it into a small box and mailed it to some friends. I told them I was sending them a cancer specimen that was given to me by a proctologist friend. My chums received the package but never opened it. Since then I have maintained a reputation for shipping rather morbid material through the mail. But I didn't know that other artists were using the mail as an art expression until I met Ray Johnson. That was early in the 1960s through David Herbert.

David had a gallery then and was receiving things in the mail from Ray. He was considering giving Ray a show of these things, but couldn't decide how to exhibit them. I was fascinated by what I saw of these mailings. I then began to mail things to Ray. Soon I was hearing from Ray via the post and receiving



ED PLUNKETT. SHEET WITH EXAMPLES OF RUBBER STAMPS USED IN MAIL ART. c. 1962-65.

small envelopes full of goodies often with instructions to mail some item to someone else. I enjoyed this new game of contacting people without the necessity of actually meeting them and going through the usual social amenities, which I felt in those days was a bore.

My mailings by now were no longer of the macabre kind but more Dada oriented, as was most of the materials I was receiving from Ray or from others on his list. These mailings consisted mostly of scraps of collage material, peculiar labels, odd bits of newspaper clippings, some news photos. Perhaps the photos were altered by drawings in pen and ink. This business was referred to as correspondence art, but I began to call it the "New York Correspondence School." It was a reference to the "New York School," meaning the leading group of mostly abstract painters that flourished then.



NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL. PASS-ALONG MAIL PIECE. Early 1960s. Contains contributions by several members. As Ed Plunkett explains, "The buck-stop was me."

There were perhaps thirty to fifty artists or non-artists involved at this time. But mail art has expanded tremendously since then. According to Johnson, perhaps 50,000 participants from all over the world are involved. Yet this phenomenon is really the extension of a process that goes back to antiquity.

In the days of the Arabian Nights, the Emperor Charlemagne received two elephants from the Calif of Baghdad. (Chessmen carved from their tusks are on view today at Charlemagne's palace at Aachen.) In the 17th-century, the Duke of Buckingham presented Charles I and Queen Henrietta with a pie which contained a dwarf by the name of Jeffrey Hudson who became a court favorite, at times by posing in costume as a talking dog. Some scholarly research needs to be done on the history of this sort of extravagant presentation as



BETH GREENSPAN. LETTER. 1963. According to Ed Plunkett, Beth Greenspan was a friend of artist Bruce Connor. The collage clippings are typical of mail art of this period.

communication. In modern times the Futurists were noted for their innovative correspondence, creating their own stationery and such. In 1919, Tristan Tzara in Paris contacted Marcel Duchamp in New York and asked him if he'd care to participate in a Paris Dada show. Duchamp cabled back "Balls to you."

No doubt the predilection for correspondence will continue despite rising postage rates, and given the artists' propensity for new ideas, further possibilities of communications could lead to endless speculation. Perhaps with some efforts artists could arrive at a scientific-fiction stage of contact via thought transference or teleportation, or possibly make extra terrestrial connections and discover what art and life is like in other spheres. God knows we could use some new inspiration at this point.



MARIE STILKIND (VAMP 1st Class) LETTER. 1964. Stilkind's aka VAMP identification refers to the Vamp theme found in Plunkett's paintings and rubber stamps of this period. The Ontario post mark make Marie Stilkind one of the earliest Canadians to participate in NYCS activities.

CORRESPONDANCING BY TATTOO

by John Evans

Poem by Richard C.

(with apologies to Robert Indiana)

LOATHE

RICHARD C. (CRAVEN). *Loathe*. No date. Richard C is another imaginative artist who communicated with Ray Johnson and the NYCS group. John Evans collection.

It must have been in the Summer of 1964 that I first met Ray Johnson. I remember that we were at a party at Harvey Spevak's top floor walk up apartment on West 10th Street in the Village. It was one of those hot New York evenings when the air feels as though one could cut it with a knife. The apartment was one with several small rooms, and since it was so warm part of the party moved up to the roof, where it seemed somewhat cooler.

Harvey introduced me to Ray and Albert M. Fine, and they asked me a lot of questions about the crude tattoo which I have on my left forearm. They seemed fascinated by this, and I told them how I had had it put on my arm when I was in high school in Redondo Beach, California. Some of my friends and I had taken ordinary needles and wrapped thread about 1/16 of an inch above the tip and then dipped the needles into india ink and tattooed ourselves. My tattoo is a knife with 3 drops of blood dripping, which seems pretty silly to me now, but which is mainly how I got involved in Correspondence Art.

As one tends to do at parties, we drifted apart, but later in the night Ray came up to me and gave me a drawing, which he had done on a small scrap of paper. The drawing was of a knife and he had written the word "knife," and had signed it with his name. I was not sure what to make of this, but I kept the paper, and now have it framed.

After a while I began to get things from Ray in the mail, usually pages with "please add to and send to" someone else stamped on them, which I would send off to total strangers, who would sometimes reply, too. It was in this way that I have come to know many of the people involved in "Correspondencing" or Mail Art — May Wilson, Ed Plunkett, John Dowd, John Willenbecker, Michael Scott, Anna Banana, Robin Crozier, Bill Gaglione (Dadaland), Irene Dogmatic, Pauline Smith, Buster Cleveland, Carlo Pittore, Richard C, Guy Blues, Cavellini, St. Scarlatina, Alex Torridzone Igloo, Dislokate, Al Ackerman, Jim Bohn, E.F. Higgins, Steve Durland, Whitson, Sir Q, and a host of others too numerous to list here.

Correspondence Art has grown into a large international network of people mailing things to one another. The things range from droll rubber-stamped works, to heavy political manifestos, with all sorts of wild and wonderful things in between. There are now shows of Mail Art in places from museums to storefronts. There is even a store out in Greenport, Long Island called "the Great Mail Art Supply," which is run by Heather Taylor, and in it one can buy things related to Mail Art such as original stamps by artists, rubberstamps, etc. Over the years I have received some truly beautiful works through the post from Ray Johnson and Albert M. Fine, who I also met on that fateful night almost 20 years ago. When one stops to

think about all of this, one wonders if it had not been for the tattoo, if I would have met many of the people I have come to know, and love, and whether or not my life would have taken the turns it has. If not a form of "Mail Art" certainly tattoos are a form of communication.

Richard C.
2436 E. Lake Drive
Raleigh, North Carolina
27609

For John Evans
Box 1004

Against New York City, N.Y.
10009



John Willenbecher - perhaps you could have George Ashley xerox this bit of information and then you could mail it to Richard Lippold with parts circled in red pencil?

How much do pork chops cost in Vancouver?

Dec. 27, 1968

Michael,

I thought this would interest you:

7 August 1968

Ray -

She was the best in "The Bone Man Wrong" - the circus performer who stuck her head in a lion's mouth (CAT), married her husband and escaped justice (LAW), won the affection of a very young Cary Grant (HUN), and ate a peeled grape (SEX). This is one of the first movies I remember seeing (before starting school) at the Tacoma Theatre in Indianapolis, Indiana, naturally, and was knocked out of my seat by the experience. The painting will be exhibited in Indianapolis in September.

Robert Indiana

Ray

THIS IS NOT DUCK

THIS IS NOT DUCK
RAY JOHNSON

Mr. John Willenbecher
15 West 68 Street
New York City, N.Y.

Dear May:

This piece of correspondence hasn't a thing in the world to do with you but George sent me so many more xeroxes than I ordered that I'm sending them out to everybody regardless.



MAY WILSON. LETTER. 1969. Mailed to John Evans. This is a striking example of correspondancing in action. The sheet on the back of which May Wilson wrote a personal letter derived from a Ray Johnson orchestrated pass-along mail piece. Ray Johnson sent the contents to John Willenbecher who sent the letter and envelope to George Ashley to be xeroxed per Ray's instructions and then John Willenbecher sent a xerox to May Wilson. John Evans collection.

1/23/69

our sec 1 on the envelope is, your Landship, better, so I am hoping it was an attack of Lumbago, as my body doesn't bore me as much as my fucking symptoms, analysis, and trying to change my emotional

nting done over the week-end, which must have made

om is good for me, and I did not have to hustle to d it, and I had never been mentioned in TIME before,

me you met John DeForest at a party. He was the alienated from. (could be because he was on XUND, and tape-recording, questioning, and I found that I (and others have told me) was a bit paranoid. If you can imagine that kid, unversed in art, asking questions of me. Did I tell you he started off by wanting me to discuss homosexuality in the art world and my friends? He once asked me, HAVE IT ALL AT ANY STRAIGHT FRIENDS?

Yes, Robin Evans is a good name. The low, right on wrong, the lam... what does you and Robin living together have to do with the charges against you? Oh, it is not what THEY want in our society... it is enough to make you puke.

I only know Karl Wilson, having corresponded with him, through Ray, for years, and he is a sweetie. Lived with a Larri for a long time, she became pregnant and they got married, but kinda keep it secret, so as not to disturb their income. Isn't that a howl?

No, I have heard nothing about HUSBUN, nothing from Stephen Phillips either. I was not interested in HUSBUN, as I am not a TUNER and did not like the idea of a show closer, and another show of works not of first choice, or whatever their plan was. I think it stinks.

I probably won't hear from George Deem for ages, as I did not hear from him often, but know I am in his life.

So many people have gone through my life in the 25 years I have been here as to be unbelievable, and because I find it impossible to formally invite anyone here, missing new friendships, I am going to find myself friendless, as it takes too long to do, and I don't do my part.

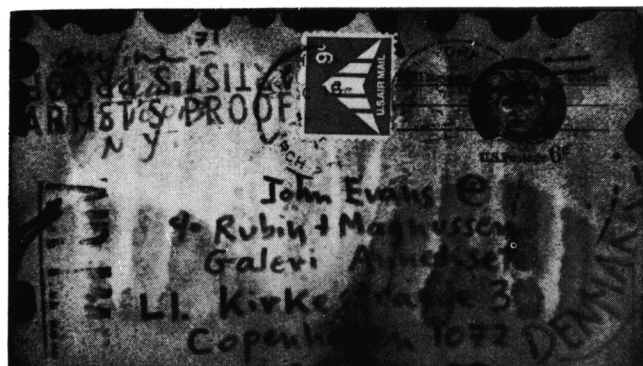
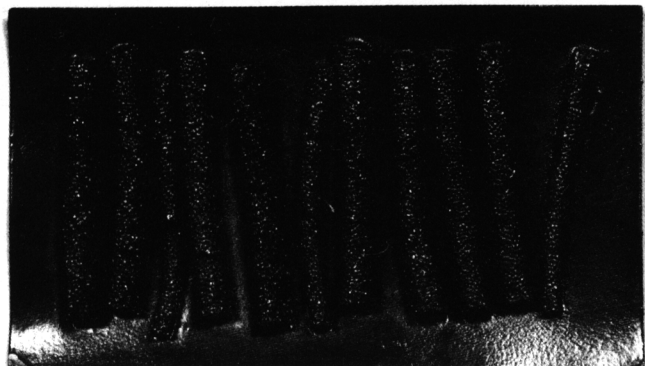
Did you read Billy Wilson's article in ART NEWS? we don't understand it. Do you know Lee Ford? he phoned once and said he'd call again about visiting me. He said he is a friend of Leonard Hinkle's, and paints, but I know nothing else about him.

Oh, I did not do the FIRST collage-work, and don't know who did. I set so much for me mail, from whence, on whom, I do not know.

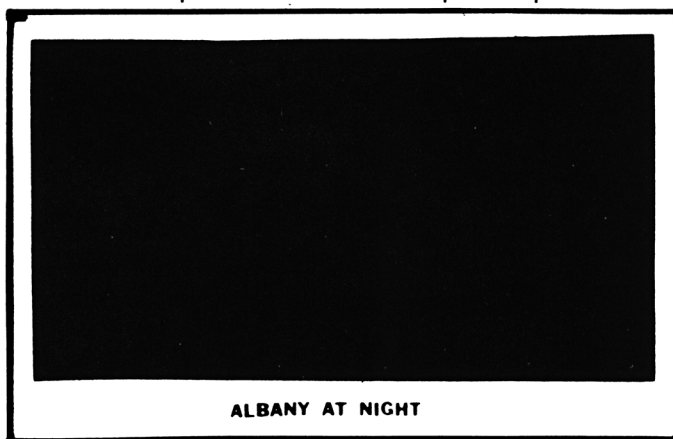
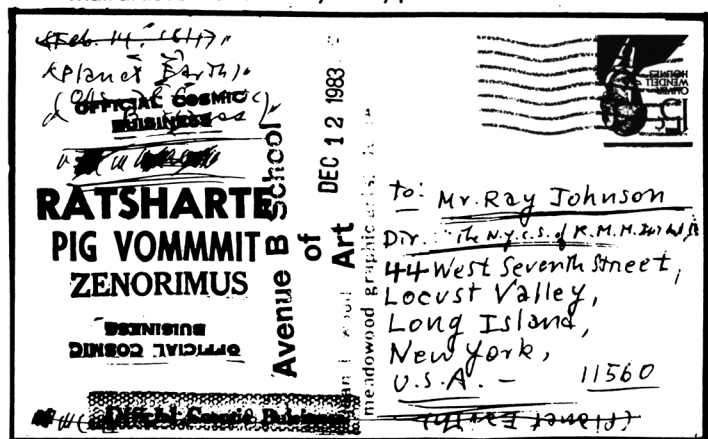
Someone sent me a copy of (in. of Va. REVIEW with my HUN photos in) I had given them to the original owner of nothing.

I love your letters as they always give me something to grab hold of, and answer. Except for living in and out of anxiety since this week, all is quiet. Hope Robin's traveling venture is successful, and your painting.

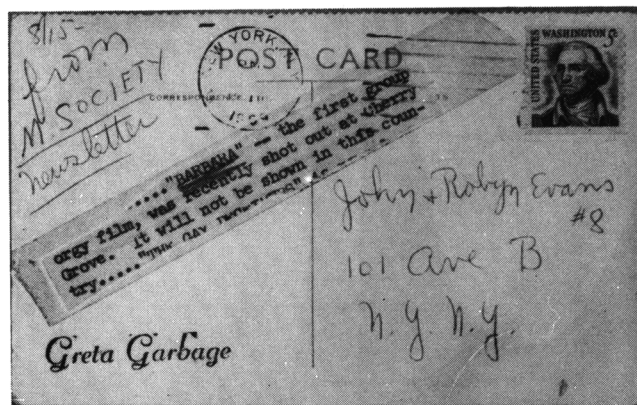
Love, May



ALBERT M. FINE. COLLAGE POST CARD, 1971. Mailed to John Evans. Albert M. Fine is considered the quintessential mail artist's mail artist by many practitioners in the field. Works such as this example are valued for their expressive power.

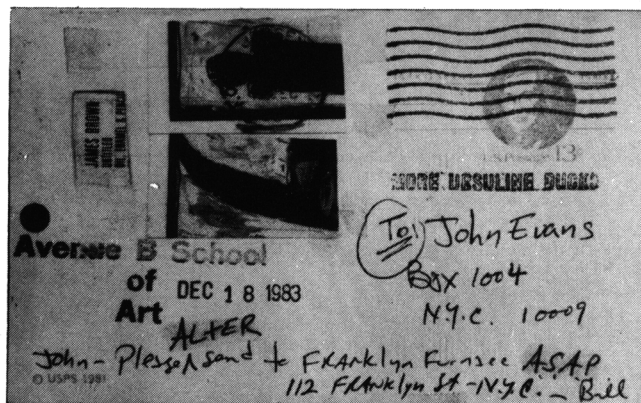


ALBERT M. FINE. ALBANY AT NIGHT. No date. Mailed to Ray Johnson who mailed it to John Evans. John Evans collection.



MAY WILSON. COLLAGE POST CARD. 1969. May Wilson, who is one of the most celebrated members of NYCS used the rubber stamp Greta Garbage as a signature. John Evans collection.

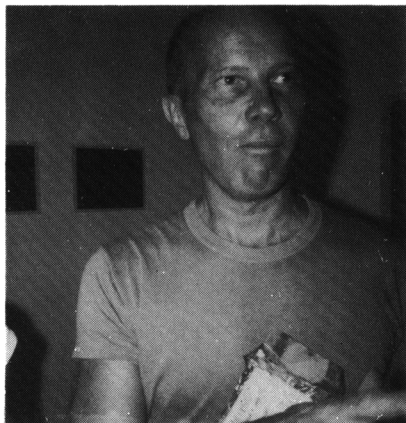
JOHN EVANS. PASS-ALONG MAIL PIECE. 1983. Mailed to Franklin Furnace Mail Art Show. The rubber stamps MOREURSULINE DUCKS and AVENUE B SCHOOL OF ART are messages found frequently in John Evans' mail art.



ILLEGAL MAIL ART

(a poetical essay) by Valery Oisteanu

Growing up behind the iron curtain makes even the most elementary letter a tool of subversion. Correspondence with Westerners is tightly censored and controlled. The letters have a lengthy two week delay to allow snooping KGB gents to x-ray, xerox and translate all mail. The only way to communicate with the outside world of freedom is to code everything. The art of metaphorizing, coding and visual messages became a tool of a new form of communication. Thus mail-art became an instrument of freedom, and the perfection of dadaist metaphors and the sophistication of conceptual messages. The mail artist will try the impossible by taking the letter to the heights of subversive art. One of my first creations was collective poems or "exquisite corpse" (from the surrealist tradition) through a collaboration of 40 artists from the Eastern



RAY JOHNSON DEVOURING MAIL ART. 1979. Photo by Valery Oisteanu.

European countries. Several letters reached West Berlin and there they were reassembled line by line by my late friend, photographer Martin Roth, and Andrei Eyestone who came to the rescue in the late 1960's to Bucharest, Romania. After years of planning and three unsuccessful attempts, I finally escaped to Rome, thanks to mail art. During the late 1960's mail-art contained illegal visa rubber stamps, false official stamps, and even fake passports page by page.

When I reached New York in the early 1970's and met Ray Johnson at a "Paloma Picasso-fan club" meeting, only then did mail-art regain its innocence. Ray introduced me to a vast network of ex-New York correspondence school members. In a very short time the underground organization PASS-Poets and Artists Surreal Society, flourished into an international membership club, that established the new link between



MAY WILSON IN HER STUDIO IN CHELSEA. Photo by courtesy Valery Gallery.

the mail artists from Russia and Eastern Europe, and the exotic regions of India, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand. (Ed. note: On April 5, 1972 Ray sent a letter announcing the death of NYCS to the New York Times.)

Although Ray Johnson proclaimed NYCS dead, by burning huge trashbags of mail art, in Locust Valley, the art and the desire were very much alive. Personally, only in the past ten years, I participated in over 100 mail art shows from the first New York postcard show at NYU, to the rebellious shows in front of MOMA, to the mail art mask show at New Zealand University; from the Last Correspondence Show at CSU in Sacramento to the National Cremation of Mail Art at the University of Wisconsin. But the most outstanding events were still the ones organized by the granddaddy of collective insanity, Rayjo. His events dated from 1955 — in 1955 he had already 200 people on his mailing list — included Buddha University meetings, Nothing Events, Decca Dance, and culminated with the Mail Art Show at the Whitney Museum of Art. Currently a big retrospective of this genius is being organized at Nassau County Museum.

I was very fortunate to curate some of the memorials dedicated to Art and Artists gathered around Ray Johnson. For example the "Grandma Moses's of the Underground" at the Buecker and Harpsichords in Soho and several "Ray Johnson-fan club" international mail art shows. All of them were a pretext for a

reunion of the Legends of the Avant Garde headed by octogenarians, dadaists, and surrealists like May Wilson, Lil Picard, Sari Dienes, and Charles Henri Ford, Ed Plunkett, Ray Johnson and Cavellini. Beside it's historic and esthetic value mail art proves also to be revolutionary. The illegal connection with Romania, Yugoslavia, Hungary and Poland continues until today. Unfortunately we must use private and unofficial messengers and sometimes even diplomatic briefcases or black market "mules" to smuggle correspondence art, antique books and underground writings. For example, the show on Dadaism and Surrealism from Romania, presented in 1980 at Franklin Furnace, featured over 100 artifacts and books smuggled out of Romania over a 12 year period simply because the government banned these books and was holding them under lock and key. With the help of courageous mail artists: "1906-manifestos" written by Tristan Tzara arrived in this country. Valuable drawings by Marcel Janco, Brancusi, and Victor Brauner were shown for the first time ever thanks to anonymous heroes. Thus mail art becomes a force of defiance, resistance, and experimentation. The most common technique to cover the trail of a secret mail art message is re-mailing it using Ed Plunkett's slogan, "please zen to." The receiver just adds his or her contribution to the message, rubber stamping it, collaging it, and finally re-posting it to the next mail connection.



CHARLES HENRI FORD. 1979. Photo-Portrait by Valery Oisteanu.

Another form of testing the freedom of mail is creating unconventional mail objects: AM Fine sends a smashed soda can with a postage stamp attached to it; a Dutch artists sent fake drugs (white powder in a plastic envelope) to his parents; an American rubber stamp reads "report obscene mail to your postmaster"; a Japanese artist uses self made post stamps. . . all of which defied sanctimonious institutions.

The hardest hit are the art agents, dealers, and the galleries, simply because mail art evades taxation, percentages, resales, appraisals, and other forms of artist exploitation. Correspondence art is still the freest form of exchange of ideas and collaboration, the most liberal and democratic art trading from artist to artist. Every mail artist is also a lucky and rich collector. And all thanks to Ray Johnson to whom I dedicate this poem manifesto.

SEND NO ORDINARY LETTERS

Only for Ray Jo

*Send snakes of paper combs
and hats*

*Send May Wilson on glitter stilts
Zen Joseph Cornell — collage —
rubbage*

*And make art silhouette and
Moticos*

*Correspon-dance of disorganized
scraps*

*We are the united nations of
trans Avant Garde*

*Above all galleries and museums
Just shadows pen-pals epistolary
intercourse*

*A coincidence of probability to
feed Babar*

*Only for Ray Jo, we sing cha-cha
ump, ump pa pa, Duchamp
Duchamp is a dump, but Ray is
no dead*

*Just absent, he is asparagus,
spaghetti, blue eyes club*

He is a ghost of Kool-Mail-Art

He serenades on his omelet harp

Ruth Ford, Paloma Picasso,

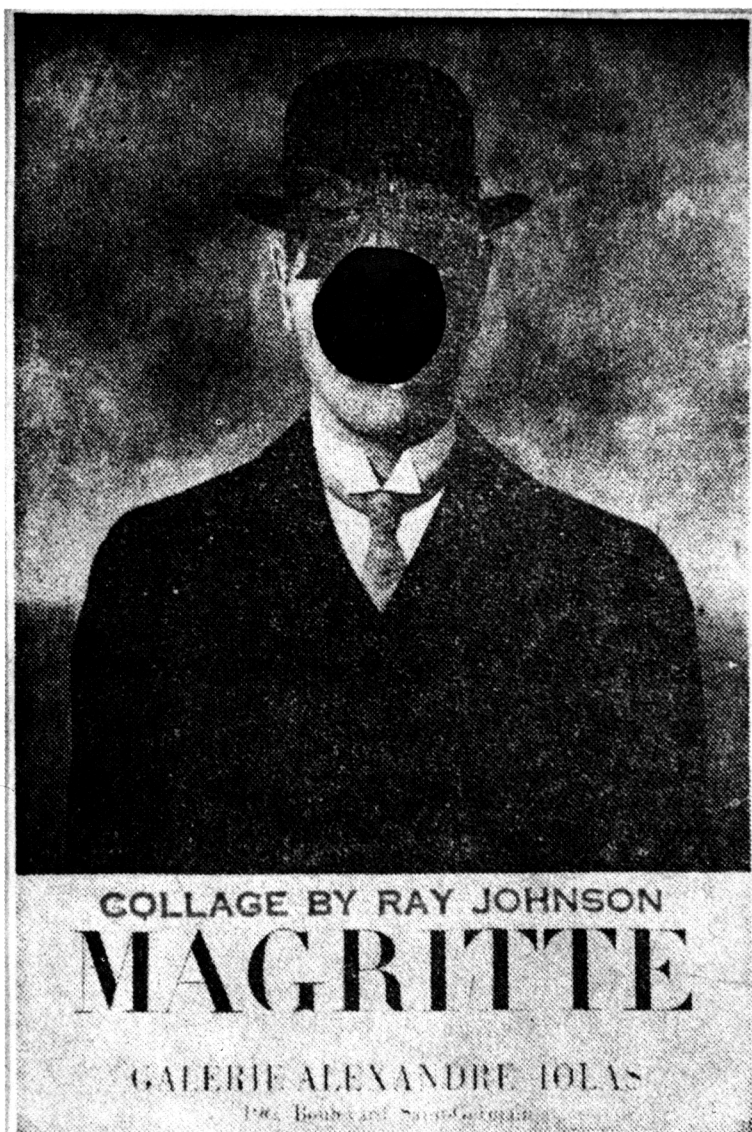
Shelley Duvall, and Yoko Ono

*He paints Gertrude Stein with
asbestos lunch*

*And performs nothing-happen-
ings with pink matches*

He drinks pink tea with Kafka

*Till it evaporates random like
poetry.*



COLLAGE BY RAY JOHNSON.
late 1960s. Ray Johnson, in a direct and droll move, has superimposed his own features over Magritte's man with a bowler hat. John Willenbecher collection.

Contemporary Arts Forum
7 W. De La Guerra
Santa Barbara, California 93101
U.S.A.

Non-profit org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Santa Barbara, CA
Permit No. 486

VALERY & RUTH OISTEANU
170 2ND AVE., #2A
NY, NY 10003



Postman Richard Burrus at the opening: "All the mail art for the Magic Show was a welcome and enjoyable addition to the mail I usually deliver. I thought that the exhibition was terrific."

The Magic Show will be on exhibit at Lang Art Gallery, Scripps College, Claremont, California, from November 13 to December 11, 1983. The opening reception will be Sunday, November 13, 2 to 5 p.m.



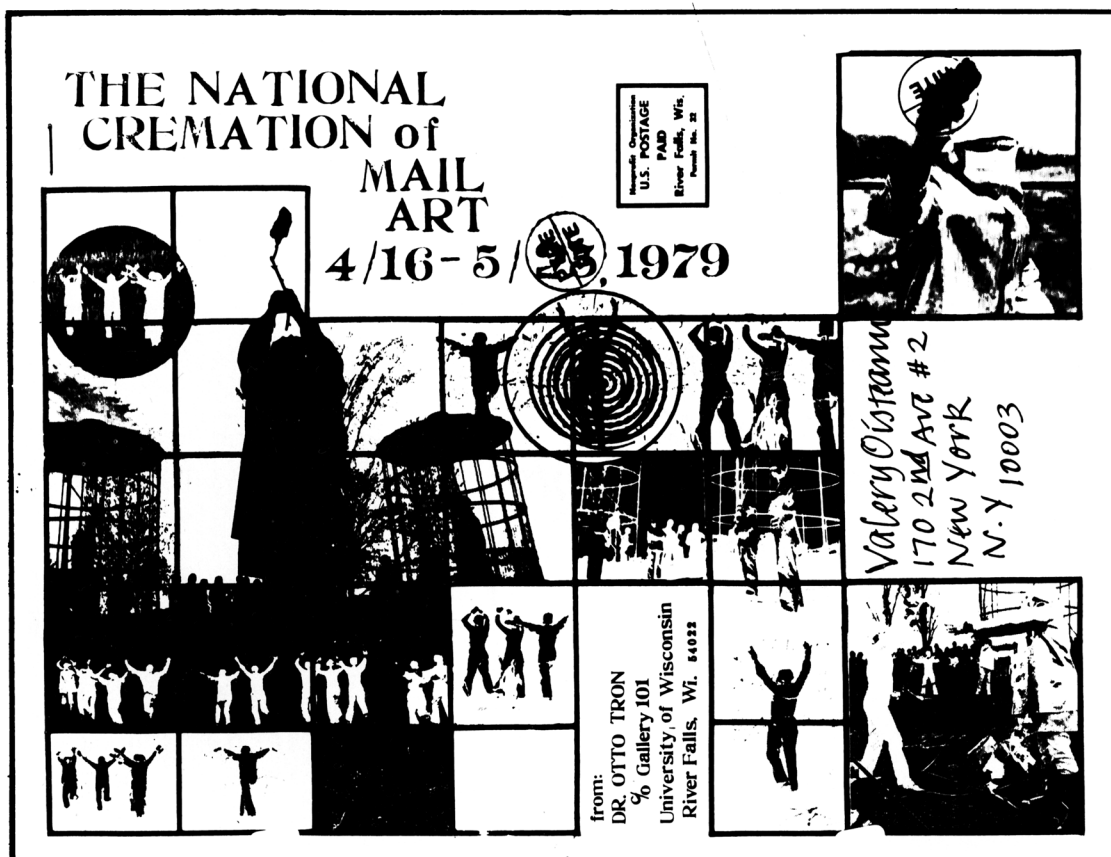
THE MAGIC SHOW

An International Mail Art Exhibition

Dec. 19, 1982 - Jan. 21, 1983

Santa Barbara
Contemporary Arts Forum
California, U.S.A.

Catalogues of two of the many mail art shows in which Valery Oisteanu has participated. Valery Oisteanu Collection.

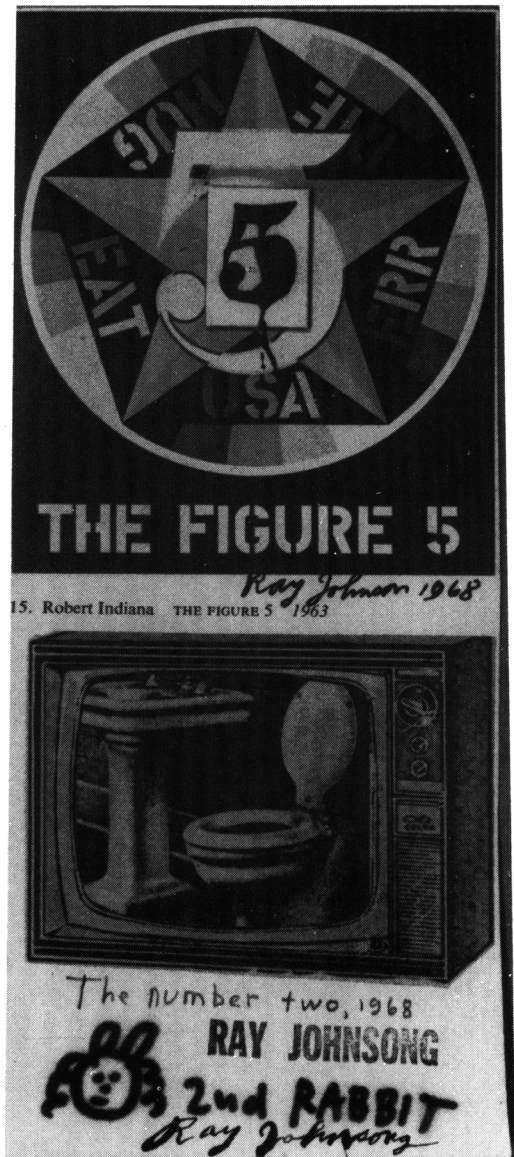


MAIL ART THEN Ray Johnson Speaks

1983

Renny,

I enclose a never copy of
a 1943 (40 years ago) envelope
to Arthur Secunda — years ago
before the New York Correspondence
School was named as an
activity — I was writing letters,
decorating envelopes, etc. as a
teen-ager in Detroit, where the
necessity to write letters



RAY JOHNSON. THE FIGURE 5/THE NUMBER TWO. Collage, 1968. John Willenbecher collection.

*Just a few of Ray Johnson's
imaginative mailings and
choreographed mail art events
from 1968-69 to enjoy.*

The Meeting in Sheridan Square began with Ara Ignatius and his dog Pucci. A square egg carton construction by Tody Cesar who works at Act I was presented by Stuart Horn of the Northwest Mounted Valise also a wallpaper collage inscribed to Diane Fisher the girl who answered the phone said she left the night before for Mexico City to cover the trial of the Menendez brothers. My Cousin Perry Street asked to try on the ring Andy Warhol gave me at Sacha Kolins' dinner. She wanted to trade rings and asked to be invited to any parties I might ever give. May Wilson, George Ashley and Helen Iranly were seen leaving trying to get a taxi I went over and said aren't you going to say goodbye to Sarah Pittman? They all seemed to have enjoyed their time with her dog Friday. She was last seen at the Minimal at the Ark & Kate Wilson birthday party and I offered her cake. She was in the Mel Shultz movie. He wore two wrist-watches one had a buffalo in it. Bob Biscan of WBAI was there with a microphone asking questions. I got a lot of polka dots talking to the Northwest Mounted Valise shoe store. The store had no butter sandwich plastic cups and mouse traps. Welsh artist George Loughner wearing a gold arrow head and a green stone ring we thought was from the New Yorker. Gretchen MacLaine was very impressed with Ara Ignatius recipe for Chinese chicken with Firecrackers. Kathryn Stinson was wearing a black and white print dress. Harvey Spivak in shades. Ursula Molinaro in black & white print dress. Marjorie Herasovitch in purple velvet. Florence Kennedy, famous woman lawyer was not there. Jonathan Coffino, 247 West 11 St. asked to be on the mailing list. He has a mustache like Calico. Frank Elliott Long from the Sartre Memorial pier died. I told him how I was presented with Jim Elliott's baby photo in front of Salvation. Frank Lilly showed up in a silk Hong Kong suit from a medical convention. Karin Bacon of City Parks conversed with me about the new dog park. David Marlan, Jay's brother Jed, a lovely girl who said she was nobody & her name was Kim was with the Warhol group who arrived with Fred McDarragh, John Wilcock, David Bourdon, Mitsou, Jerry Jones of 58 West 25 Street and Ulvra Violet in a blonde wig impersonating Joan Crawford. There were a lot of green peppers. Mickey: an improvident person who lives in expecta-
fortunes. Bill Wilson gave me a duck safet drank a can of beer wrapped in a brown paper I discussed sun tan. What was Leslie Jones and Freddie Lawrence and her dog Fudge. Hamburgers four of them were in Anita Steck conversed warmly and then went off to the A by with his dog Tony. James Moss wrote in George Ashley gave me a plastic egg with a picture they have an old friend in common and her daughter Veronica did an Indian dance and baby Noel Dowd was wearing on his botto Heide sandy. Helen Iranly finally attended Heidi sandy haired tan and Friendly. David and I shared. Rumors I attended I attended we shared a Fresca watched black & white to The Return of the Romannoids listened to mu the next Meeting at the Architectural League does Phil Weidman want that kind of publicti in his MG on Greenwich Avenue & 12th Street stripe cotton shirt & beige trousers, Mary Avenue. Madison, Connecticut.

Dear John

The New York


Meeting for

Street, New

Can we expect

Sincerely,

Ray Johnson

jewicz,
neo School is holding a Second Meeting
in College, 62 East 78 Street, New York
on 3 - 4.30 P.M.
end? Sincerely, Ray Johnson 

15

RAY JOHNSON
65 LINDING ROAD
GLEN COVE, N. Y. 11542

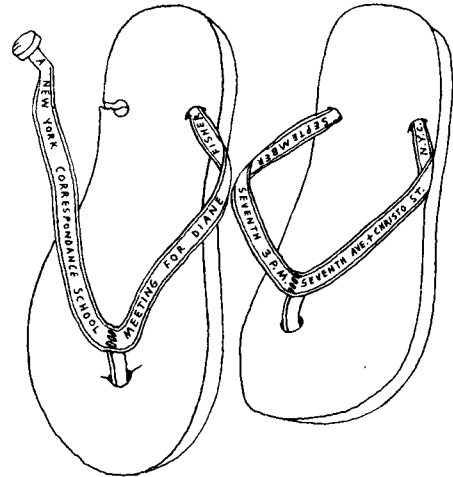
O'Brien and Cone

COW LANE, KINGS POINT, N. Y.

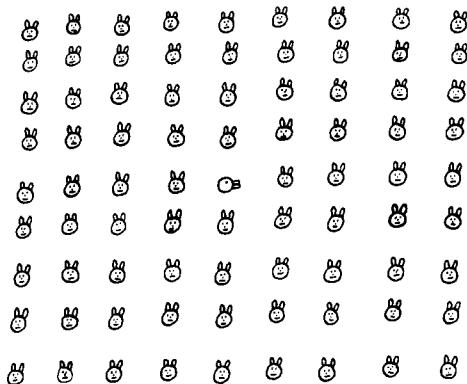
John Willenbecher Poem for Diane Fisher's second Ray New York
Correspondence finch dance:

November New York City November 7, 1968
Dear Ray:
The Last evening at Radio City Music Hall there was a great
for commotion in the middle of the orchestra while the
City Rockettes were kicking. Some man started shouting 'Get
Can a cop get a cop get a cop' and in the dark people
November started getting up and moving around and going up the
Dear aisles and the ushers descended from everywhere and the
The Rockettes were kicking away for all they were worth,
for which is considerable, and the man was shouting 'Get
City a cop get a cop' and finally some cops came and there
Can was more people bouncing up and down all over the
November orchestra and more people getting up in the dark and
Dear going out and more people coming down the aisles to see
The what was happening and the Rockettes meanwhile kicking
for their little hearts out up there on the big stage.
City Jesus Ray I'm getting all this correspondence from
Can California, the main trouble spot being Sacramento.
November Ray Johnson you'll pay for this.
Dear Did you hear the story of how David Bourdon helped
for Stephen Phillips clean out his studio?
City Thanks for H. Strutz' address. Did you send it to
Can Jean Patrice Harandel or shall I or shall we both.
November Maybe we could get Ray to send it too.
Dear I noticed the rabbit face which you marked on your letter,
The the latest one, dated Election Day, has a frown.
for You shure have drawn a lot of rabbit faces in your day.
City In Reply to your letter dated November 1:
Can A second meeting for Diane Fisher?
November What about Diane Chambord?
Dear Enclosed is a poem.
The Sincerely,
for John
City P.S. Did you know that John Lennon has a hang-down
Can not a hang-up?
November Nov. 8
Dear Dear Ray Johnson -
The Thanks for your invitation for the 23rd - yes, I'd
for like to come.
City Cheers, Michael Benedikt
Can
November November 9, 1968
Dear Dear Michael Benedikt,
The I am delighted that you will be able to attend the New
for York Correspondence School Second meeting for Diane
City Fisher at Finch College November 23rd. The meeting will
November last from 3 to 4.30 P.M.
Dear I wonder if it is possible for you to bring with you an
The alarm clock set to ring at exactly 3.30 P.M.?
for Most sincerely, Ray Johnson
CAN

RAY JOHNSON. LETTER COLLAGE. Letters from artist John Willenbecher and Michael Benedikt related to Second Meeting for Diane Fisher. John Willenbecher collection.



RAY JOHNSON. A NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL MEETING FOR DIANE FISHER. Drawing, 1968. Ray Johnson collection.



THE NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL RABAT, MOROCCO FEBRUARY 21, 1969



NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL

RABAT, MOROCCO FEBRUARY 21, 1969

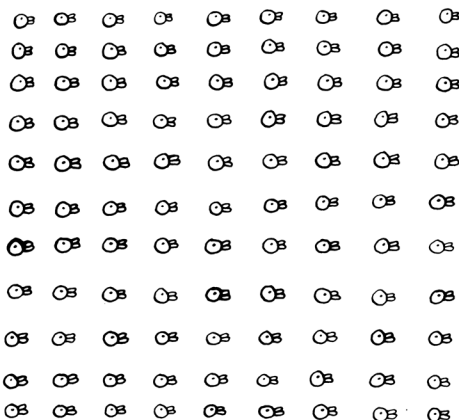
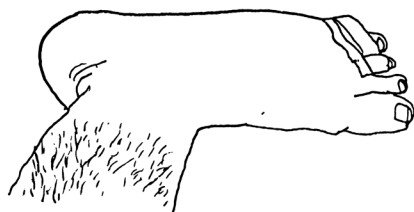
PLEASE ADD TO AND
RETURN TO RAY JOHNSON

KARL WIRSUM

RAY JOHNSON. TWO DOCUMENTS RELATED TO THE NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE SCHOOL, RABAT, MOROCCO. Ray Johnson collection.

July 28, 1969

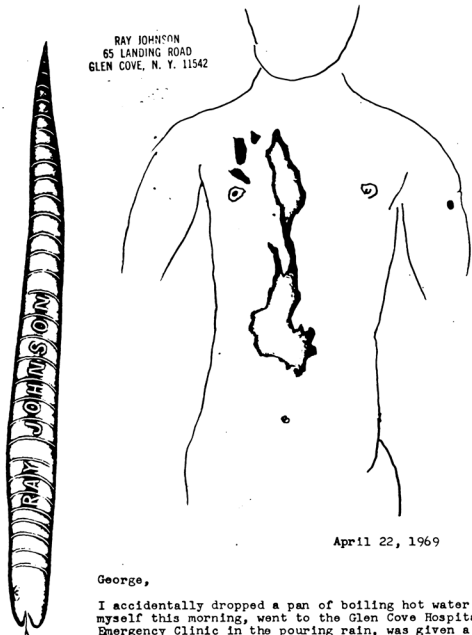
Ray Johnson is not dancing today because he got two broken small toes on his left foot jumping into the Great Neck Country Club swimming pool yesterday. He did not even want to swim "I get to go swimming every day where I now live, Eva" "eva, can you get someone to lend me a bathing suit I'll go swimming with Cyril since he's crying" so floppy green bloomers were produced and the Peeting was on it's way. On Saturday, David Bourdon in a telephone conversation said that he and the 365,000 Christos were coming out to Eva Lee's in Great Neck to visit and were to be taken to a swimming pool costing \$1,000 a year to swim in. "Oh, God, I'd love to be invited! Why wasn't I invited?" I said. David said he'd arrange it and call me at one o'clock. He called at 12:30. I decided to wear my black net see-through shirt ("that's a terrific tan you've got there, buddy") which I had worn to the Shoji Japanese dinner with Teeny Duchamp and Ultra Violet and my new Levi striped bell bottoms. I made a N.Y.C.S. package for David which was a piece of broken wood I found on the beach on which was stamped in big black letters AGAR AGAR, who was Shirley Temple's first husband. For Christo I put into an envelope a small drug box Philip McCracken had sent me containing small pieces of wood with small nails which were part of a destructive work of art a bow and arrow which suddenly flew apart in Jean Moreau's library. I told Christo I had written a letter to Truffaut because when I went to see "Three in the Attic" in reel one the movie stopped and they passed out rainchecks because the projectionist had just dropped dead of a New York Correspondance School Time Magazine Behavior Department Beating heart attack. In "Stolen Kisses" the old detective keels over during a telephone conversation. "What is a drainboard?" said Madame Christo. On the Christo envelope I had written in red magic marker CHRISTOE CHRISTOE little knowing a few hours later I would have two broken little toes badly x-rayed at the Great Neck Hospital taped together with white tape like a Christo package by a doctor whose first name was Harvey (rabbit).



A NICE, CUTE, COLORFUL, QUACKING DUCK NAMED ANDY WILL BE RAFFAELED AT THE NEW YORK CORRESPONDANCE SCHOOL MEETING MARCH 26TH, 1969 AT SACRAMENTO STATE COLLEGE, CALIFORNIA

RAY JOHNSON. Sample Mailings, 1968-1969.

RAY JOHNSON
65 LANDING ROAD
GLEN COVE, N. Y. 11542



April 22, 1969

George,

I accidentally dropped a pan of boiling hot water on myself this morning, went to the Glen Cove Hospital Emergency Clinic in the pouring rain, was given a tetanus shot in my left arm. Could you please xerox this page sending one copy to Andy Warhol, 33 Union Square, New York City? I could use about forty-four xerox pages for N.Y.C.S. mailings.

Peace,
OB

OCTOBER 13, 1968 DEAR RENE MAGRITTE, I HOPE THAT YOU AND YOUR WIFE CAN ATTEND THE STILT WALK ON CENTRAL PARK MALL THE 26TH OF OCTOBER 2-4 P.M. BRING YOUR STILTS. SEND A MYSTERIOUS POST CARD TO PHIL WEIDMAN SLANT STEP, 6325 BISMARCK DRIVE, NORTH HIGHLANDS, CALIF. 95660.



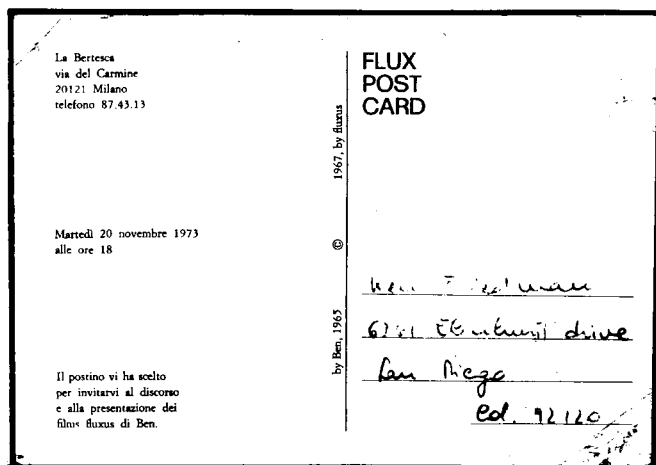
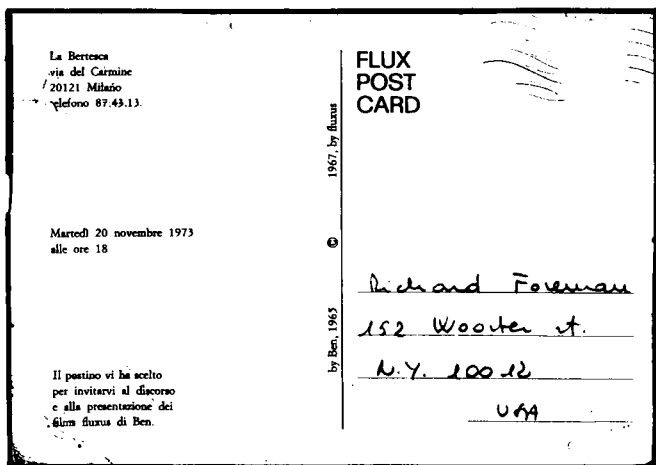
OUT THERE WITH WILLENBECHER ARTICLE BY DAVID BOURDON SEPTEMBER ART INTERNATIONAL

RAY JOHNSON

Ceci n'est pas une stilt.

MAILART HISTORY: THE FLUXUS FACTOR

by Ken Friedman



BEN VAUTIER. POSTMAN'S CHOICE. 1973 reissue of a 1966-67 post card printed by Fluxus based on a 1965 work by Ben. This mail art work involved the issues of choice and chance. Ben simply addressed both sides of the post card and left it up to the post man as to which of the two addresses would receive it. It was received by Ken Friedman. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection.

It would be difficult to pinpoint the moment when artists' correspondence became correspondence art. By the end of the late 1950's, the three primary sources of correspondence art were taking shape. In North America, the New York Correspondence School was in its germinal stages in the work of artist Ray Johnson and his loose network of friends and colleagues. In Europe, the group known as the Nouveau Realistes were addressing radical new issues in contemporary art. On both continents, and in Japan, artists who were later to work together under the rubric of Fluxus were testing and beginning to stretch the definitions of art.

Correspondence art is an elusive art form, far more variegated by its very nature than, say, painting. Where a painting always involves paint and a support surface, correspondence art can appear as any one of dozens of media transmitted through the mail. While the vast majority of correspondence art or mail art activities take place in the mail, today's new forms of electronic communication blur the edges of that forum. In the 1960's, when correspondence art first began to blossom, most artists found the postal service to be the most readily available — and least expensive — medium of exchange.

Today's micro-computers with modern facilities offer anyone computing and communicating power that two decades ago were available only to the largest institutions and corporations, and only a few decades previous weren't available to anyone at any price. Transistors and miniaturized electronics

make it as simple today to record and to send a video-tape as to write a letter. With teletext, interactive cable, mailgrams, electronic mail, electronic computer networking, video, inexpensive audio, and — looming on the horizon — a myriad of new communications techniques, correspondence art is harder to define than ever before.

While these facts establish a sense of perspective, the soul of correspondence art remains communication. Its twin faces are "correspondence art" and "mail art." Here the distinction is between reciprocal or interactive communication — correspondence — and unidirectional or one-way communication, mailed out without any requirement for response.

There are special wrinkles in correspondence art that involve the mails as medium of transmission for purposes other than mail art. The best example of this would be an exhibition of art from Eastern Europe in which the cheapest and safest way of sending art to the United States would be through the mail, though the art works sent would actually be intended as — and only as — photographs, drawings, paintings, or artists' books.

Certain forms of art have become associated with correspondence art and mail art both by virtue of tradition and the ease with which they are mailed. These include post cards, artists' books, printed ephemera, rubber stamps, artists' postage stamps, and posters of various kinds.

The first phase of correspondence art primarily involved individual expression in reciprocal relationships, a natural

outgrowth of artists' correspondence. History and tradition list Ray Johnson as the central figure in this phase of correspondence art. To the degree that he identified, named and himself became identified with the emerging art form, this is true.

Working in the tradition of collage and the *objet trouve*, he was perhaps the first to identify the transaction of art works and notes with colleagues as an art form itself. Through this stroke of inspiration, correspondence art was born. Johnson gave it focus by promulgating the rubric, "The New York Correspondence School of Art."* Thus, by permutation, the world was given the new medium, correspondence art, and its first body of practitioners, The New York Correspondence School (NYCS).

However, correspondence art as such first grew from the work of the European artists identified as the "Nouveaux Realistes," a term coined for them by French critic Pierre Restany. The core issue of the "New Realism," a movement born in the early '50's, was the conception of an art made of real elements, that is, materials taken from the world directly rather than pictorially. The group includes Arman, Yves Klein, Piero Manzoni, Martial Raysse, Raymond Hains, Daniel Spoerri and Francois Dufrène, and — in some senses — Christo. As one can see, these artists each use a rather direct slice of life. The actual sectioning ranges from the highly tenuous or theoretical projects of Manzoni and Klein to the embedded and

*The name itself was coined by Ed Plunkett, then given its broad use by Johnson.

snared works of Arman and Spoerri, the decollages of Hains and Dufrene and the world-embracing, massively realized projects of Christo.

The issues and ideas that motivated the Nouveaux Realistes also emerged in the Pop Art of the late '50's and early '60's in Britain and the United States, though Pop Art tended to be an art which took the real into its scope emblematically rather than by direct incorporation or manipulation.

The college sensibility and incorporation of the real are attitudes shared with much later correspondence art. It is in the use of the postal system, of artists' stamps and of the rubber stamp that Nouveaux Realisme made the first gestures toward correspondence art and toward mail art.

Several early key works in these media were created by these artists. Klein's famous Blue Stamp was a postal *cause celebre* and a bureaucratic scandal after it was successfully mailed and postmarked in the mid-50's. Arman introduced the rubber stamp into contemporary art with his cachets and accumulations of the early and middle years of the decade.† Spoerri not only created ephemeral mailed works and projects, small gazettes and cards, but his involvement with mail art—unlike that of Klein or Arman—continued unabated for over a decade and a half spanning all the phases of correspondence art.

Thus, it can truthfully be said that the first artists involved in mail art were the Nouveaux Realistes. However, it was Ray Johnson and his circle of friends in the New York Correspondence School who gave the first phase its characteristic sensibility and presence.

If the Nouveaux Realistes created paradigms of correspondence art and mailed art as works, it was the New York Correspondence School that took the notion from paradigm to practice. Ranging at times from seventy-five to as many as three hundred people, the NYCS was summoned into being by Ray Johnson but, at its height, existed around him as many intersecting relationships independent of his direct involvements. Many distinguished artists participated in Johnson's whirling vortex of mailings and events, some of whom, such as Richard C, Ed Plunkett, or Dick Higgins and other Fluxus artists became themselves major shapers of the ethos and attitudes of correspondence art.

†Kurt Schwitters had done stamp works as early as 1918 and the Russian Futurists had achieved the distinction of creating the first modern art with rubber stamps a few years previous. However, the medium vanished until Arman resurrected it in his *oeuvre*.

YAM HAT SALE
(11th)

11
12

YAM DAY

at the Hardware Poet's Playhouse
115 West 54th St. New York

endless and
continuous program
of performance
beginning about
noon on Saturday
through evening
and Sunday

some scores performed by
arrangement with FLUXUS

PARTIAL PROGRAM : G. Brecht (Ladder, Chair, A Play, Lamp) Robert Breer (Pat's Birthday) Earle Brown Joseph Byrd (Birds) John Cage (4'33") Barney Childs (Fourth String Quartet) Philip Corner Lucia Dlugoszewska Robert Filliou (Lilla Kirkestrade No. 1 - a 53 kg. poem) Malcolm Goldstein Ned Grooms/Rudolph Burckhardt (Shoot the Moon) Al Hansen Dick Higgins (Danger Music, Celestials, Two for Hamlet Rev.) Spencer Holtz (Stories) Terry Jennings (Place for String Quartet) Ray Johnson (Funeral Music for Elvis Presley) Jill Johnston Brooklyn Joe Jones (Mechanical Music) Alison Knowles (Proposition, Mince Cream Place for Oscar Williams, Child Art) Arthur Kopsche (music while you work) Takenishi Kosugi (Micro L. Arima 1) Philip Krumm (Construction for Performer) Gary Kuhn Peter Longato (A Method for Reversing the Direction of Rotation of the Planets) George MacLunas (Place for a Sick Man, Music for Everyman, Piano Compositions) Jackson Mac Low (John Bull Pack; Night Walk; Adams County, Illinois; Poet-at-Prince; 5th Light Poem; Solo Readings) Robert Morris (Stories, Construction) Robin Page (Solo for Guitar) Ben Patterson (Pond; Paper Place; Gloves, From Methods & Processes; Three movements for teeing - Can you hear it?) Yvonne Rainer (a dance-drama) Oskar Rot (Ich liebe mich...) Tomas Schmit (Zyklus; From Santas!) Robert Swisshelm James Tenney (Collage) Stan Vanderbeek (What, Who, How; Mankind) Robert Watts (Cascade, News, Two Inches) James Yaring (Wind Music #3) - Diane Wakoski (Emmett Williams (4-directional) song of doobs, Opera) Christian Wolff La Monte Young (Compositions 1960; Piano Pieces for David Tudor; Compositions 1961, 2 sounds, 566 for Henry Flynt, String Trio), plus news reports, birth & death notices, beauty contest, sweaty palms...

CONTRIBUTION \$4. LIMITED SEATING. HARDWARE POET'S PLAYHOUSE c/o BLOEDON 37 WEST 46TH STREET NEW YORK N.Y.

YAM FESTIVAL. ANNOUNCEMENT. 1962. *YAM was a multimedia mail and performance art event, which as this announcement indicates brought together a variety of artists, ranging from George Brecht, Robert Watts, Alison Knowles, Dick Higgins, Ray Johnson who were among the well known figures in mail art circles, to sculptor Robert Morris, dancer Yvonne Rainer and composer La Monte Young. What did YAM stand for? Nothing more esoteric than MAY spelled backwards. Ed Plunkett Collection.*



YAM FESTIVAL PART 5

DELIVERY EVENT

by subscription

R. WATTS and or G. BRECHT
will assemble a work
and arrange delivery
to you
or an addressee of your choice

upon receipt of either

(A) \$1 2 3 5 8 13 21 34 55 etc.

or

(B) a number of \$ equal to the date of the month
on which the work is subscribed to multiplied by
the number of food items consumed by the sub-
scriber on that day.

To subscribe, address:
YAM FESTIVAL, P.O. Box 412, Metuchen, N. J.

R. WATTS AND G. BRECHT. YAM FESTIVAL DELIVERY EVENT. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection.

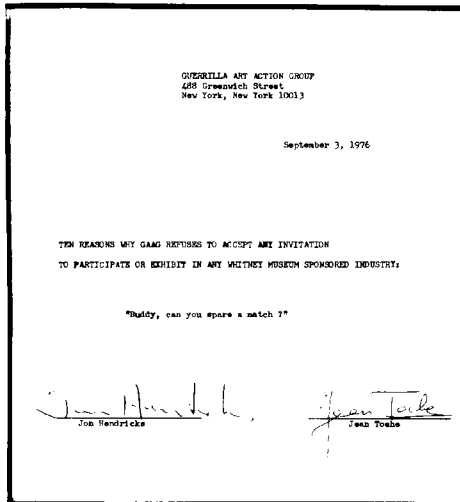
The NYCS relied on direct interaction between correspondents. As a result, the works that one might receive in the early days were highly personal, often highly crafted. Hand-made collages, carefully printed photographs, even framed paintings were fairly common. Odd and lavish objects were not uncommon. Some participants took pride and even a perverse pleasure in sending to one another the most outlandish and possibly unmailable objects or series of projects they could conceive. My fondest memories are of a series of chairs, smaller chairs mailed whole, larger chairs mailed disassembled to fit within postal size limits. The challenge was to mail them unwrapped and visible, persuading postal clerks to accept the items as falling within regulations. This was, of course, a time when postal regulations were far different and substantially more lax than today.

In the '60's, Ray Johnson set the tone for the NYCS. *The Paper Snake*, a book on his work, published by Something Else Press, is a good example of the abundance and flavor of the time. Direct and personal interaction were the salient qualities and greatest pleasures of the NYCS and the era of the '60's. The first phase of correspondence art was also characterized by a trenchant sense of privacy. These were private letters and activities, exchanges among friends. An attitude that only members need apply prevailed. Johnson himself issued numerous lovely, dense printed collages in which he specifically used the names of "members" of the NYCS, occasionally adding or dropping names. These seemed to point inward to a closed circle. This is not to say that it was bad: it's simply the way it was. In the first phase of correspondence art, the paradigm blossomed, flourished and found most of its major practitioners. In the second phase, correspondence art turned outward to the world.

It is at this point, during the first phase of the development of correspondence art—but looking toward the second—that it is best to explore the role of Fluxus in the development and dissemination of mail art.

Fluxus germinated in the artistic ferment of the late 1950's. Some of the Fluxus people found each other in John Cage's and Richard Maxfield's classes at The New School. Others met through George Maciunas' publications or committees or the early festivals, and in the moving feasts of the era, such as the ongoing series of events at Yoko Ono's

loft on Chambers Street. By 1962, Fluxus was fairly well formed and named. A few individuals from Europe and America, such as the Czech artist Milan Knizak, Joseph Beuys the German artist, Geoff Hendricks or I, came into the group slightly later, with members of the initial cast of characters coming and going through about 1966.



GUERRILLA ART ACTION GROUP (GAAG) Letter. 1976. GAAG used the mails as a means of expressing opinion on political issues both inside and outside the art world. Jon Hendricks Collection.

Fluxus has always been a rather unlikely movement: sprightly, hard to pin down, a bit Zen-like in its reluctance to be described, it is hardly a movement at all. One may rather call it a rubric, a forum, an elusive philosophy made real by the fact that real artists engaged one another and the world in real acts under the name Fluxus. The edges of Fluxus have never been particularly crisp or brutal. So it is that Fluxus shares Daniel Spoerri with the Nouveaux Realistes; Christo has occasionally floated into Fluxus, though he has about him always a sense that he can never be part of any particular group with which he may share interests. Half a dozen of the most active and charming participants in the NYCS were very active in Fluxus. At times, even Ray Johnson took part in various Fluxus publications and events.

As elusive and unlikely to proselytize as Fluxus seemed, it also had a very public side. Massive festivals, grand publishing programs, extensive tours of performances and concerts, proposals

for social reform and public housing came out of a movement which was as much characterized by these prophetic, even socio-political leanings as by such typically evanescent projects as George Brechts' laconic events.

At first, the Fluxus artists active in the correspondence art world (including many who did not participate in the NYCS) were quite content to create private works. These included mail art pieces by individuals, and marvelous series of publications, post cards, stamps and stationery published by George Maciunas for Fluxus artists including Bob Watts, Robert Filliou, Ben Vautier, Daniel Spoerri, and others among us. There was even a Fluxus Postal Kit prepared in 1966 complete with a Fluxpost cancellation mark, permitting an entire, Fluxus-controlled postal exchange to take place.

By the late '60's, the public opportunities of correspondence art and mail art became manifestly visible. It was then that the prophetic side of Fluxus emerged, establishing the second phase of mail art. Now, for the first time, the correspondence art—in the previous sense that the term has been used here—that reached out to the public, embodied not only correspondence art, but a larger, and admittedly less private, mail art. Through this outreach, the extraordinary latent power for international communication became overt, termed "The Eternal Network" by Robert Filliou. It was at this time that mail art first created, and began to make the real, its potential for social change and for contributing new forms of communication to the world.

Having taken counsel by the bad example of self-congratulatory colleagues, I've come to feel a bit uncomfortable writing about my own work. Whereas I first began writing on art to explain my work, or to explain Fluxus, and therefore, in a sense, felt free to write about myself, I prefer now to write about art to explain issues. In that I have been called on for this article to write about Fluxus, and, in particular, Fluxus' relation to mail art, I have, in part, been called on to write about myself. I beg the reader's pardon for that which may seem boastful. The historical documents are available, and, with the forthcoming appearances of Michael Crane's massive study on mail art, a plethora of documents will be accessible to the public. Where the reader finds me questionable or disagreeable, therefore, I suggest a first hand look at the material to permit each

- 2F/ccc CLOUD SCISSORS, \$1.
- 2F/88 ICED DICE, Event Prospectus \$3.
- 2F/88c EXIT & ENTRANCE music on tape, \$2
- 3F-ca PENNANTS from GEORGE BRECHT, \$30 and up; PLANS \$50 and up (bunting, sewn legends, with staff)
SIGNS (oil on canvas, mounted) \$25 and up. Sets of two \$40, available with following legends:
 AIR, arrow, set of two: BOTH/NEITHER, BUTTERGUIDE, DANCE, set of two: DAY/NIGHT, DUST, EARTH MEETING, EDGE MEMORY, END, GATE, set of two: FACT/FICTION, FOOD, FORGET THIS, FRONT, LIMIT, LISTEN, LOCATION, MEETING, MIDDLE, MIND GADE, NINE YOURS, MONDAY, NO SMOKING, NO VACANCY, O'CLOCK, QUESTION, RAIN TRICK, RAY, REMBER (not available), REMEMBER THIS, RIVER WAX, ROOM, SILENCE, SMOKE, SOUP, START, surprise signs, set of two: THING/THOUGHT, TOP, UNIT.
- 3F-cb SUITCASE or TRUNK packed, ready for traveling, \$ 50 and up.
- 3F-cd RELOCATION. score/prospectus, 50 ¢.

EUROPEAN MAIL-ORDER WAREHOUSE. 1964. This publication of the European Flux Shop is a catalogue with a price list that was meant to be used to order the contents. Available items that would be sent through the mails ranged from "Robert Watts: events in wood box, \$3" to "Alison Knowles: canned bean roll \$6;" "Fluxus-Machine \$5;" "Nam June Paik: exhibits and compositions \$8." The catalogue illustrated here was sent to Robert Watts. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman Collection.

to make his or her own determination. That said, I'll write it as I see it.

Fluxus was a forum for experimentation. The commitment to experimentation and to research was profound. It was characteristic that Fluxus participants not only asked "Why?" but "How?" — and then they would generally go on to ask "Why not?" and "How else?" A fair number of Fluxus' members came to art from untraditional backgrounds — Spoerri from ballet, Higgins from music and printing, Paik from music and robotics, Filliou from economics, Brecht from natural and biological sciences, and so on. Others, such as Alison Knowles or Wolf Vostell were trained as artists, yet they developed a highly experimental notion of what art could be. Finally, the ringmaster of the Fluxus circus, George Maciunas, was both pragmatic and experimental. As the chief editor and frequent organizer of Fluxus activities, his paradoxical whims, highly refined organizational sensibility and peculiar administrative quirks gave Fluxus its unique flavor and offered Fluxus artists the wide range of philosophical permissions and encouragements that came to characterize the Fluxus ethos.

At first Fluxus artists took part in correspondence art as private individuals. Some were involved in Nouveau Realisme, some in the New York Correspondence School, some as individual participants on the growing network. By the end of the 1960's, a number of Fluxus people had begun to view mail art as a medium offering unique potentials and challenges. They saw beyond the basic issue of art through the mail, and began to explore the reaches and media of correspondence and mail themselves.

The first major step was taken by Dick Higgins when he established Something Else Press and the *Something Else Press Newsletter*. The Press was an innovative publishing house designed to bring experimental and avant garde work to the public eye in well designed, handsome, durable books. It is by now well known as one of the early sources of much contemporary art. Higgins himself is famed as the essayist who brought the term "intermedia" into current usage. When Higgins wrote his seminal essay on intermedia in 1966, he sought a format to make it widely known. The form he chose was that of the newsletter.

In his newsletter, he created an inexpensive medium for sharing art and art ideas with thousands of readers. It was through his ever-expanding list of read-

ers, book buyers, recipients of the newsletter and the Press' catalogues that Higgins first redefined the mail art network. This is a significant moment in mail art, even though Higgins did not entirely view the newsletter as a mail art format. For the first time, a correspondence artist consciously used the mails as a regular medium of public communication. Even though the newsletter was primarily outbound in its form, there was always a flavor to it that encouraged response and participation, a fact that Higgins' and the Press' voluminous files and archives demonstrate. Higgins' respondents and correspondents moved into the network and into the art world. Staid artists became experimental, and experimental artists came into contact with other experimental artists. Something Else Press, founded as an outgrowth of Fluxus, small, perhaps private in its original conception, became the locus of a vast resonating network of correspondents. It is vital to note the development of a network intended as a forum through which ideas might be exchanged and through which like minds might come into communication. This was a public realization of the idea inchoate in the New York Correspondence School, but never fully realized due to the highly private, personal con-

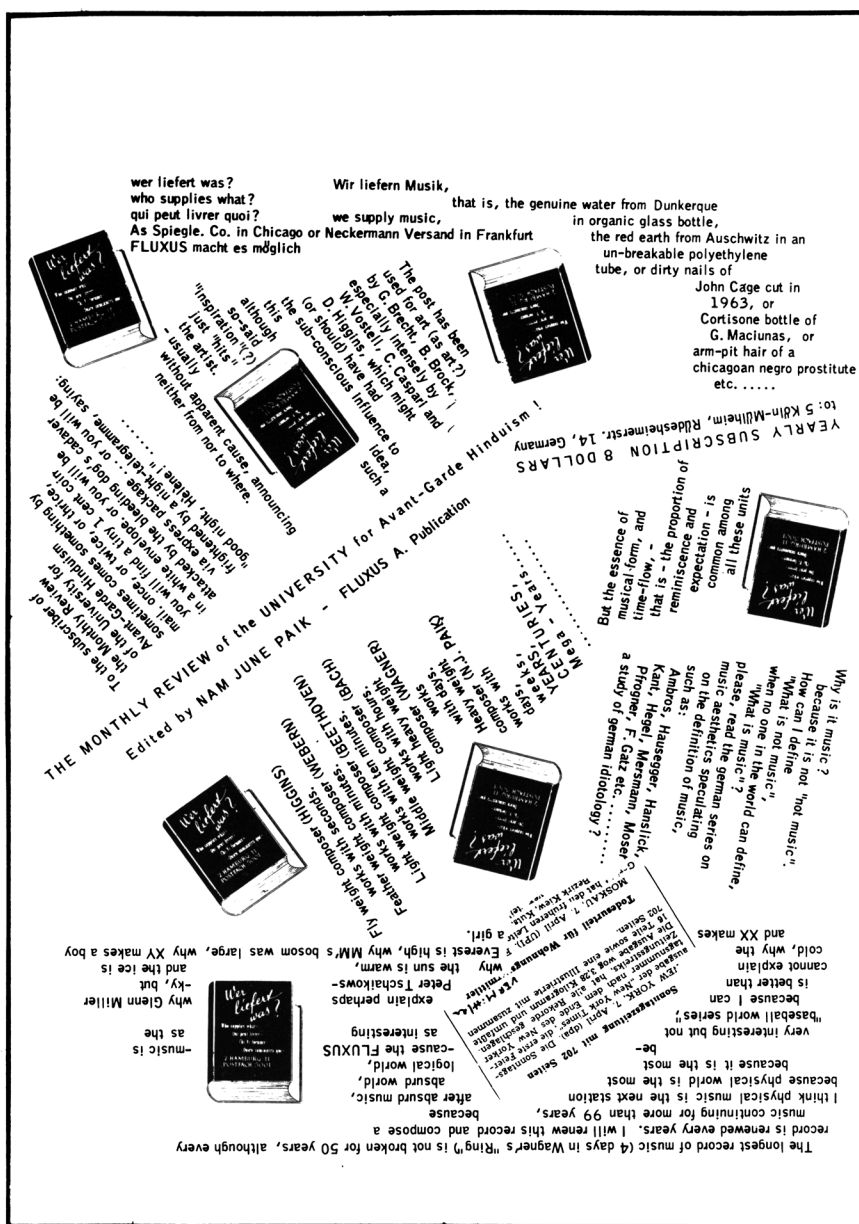
text that characterized the NYCS.

Further, it was through the Something Else Press that the projects of artists such as Robert Filliou, George Brecht, Daniel Spoerri and even Ray Johnson himself first found a broad public.

The next Fluxus contribution to correspondence art and to mail art was the exploration and use of the medium of mail as a communication system. These projects came in three parts. The first had to do with communication, the second with exhibition and the third with publishing.

When Fluxus began, the art world was a smaller place, experimental artists comprised a far less significant faction of the art world. It was difficult to find out who was who or to reach others who might share given interests. In the early days of Fluxus, George Maciunas regularly published the Fluxus mailing lists and membership lists. This permitted ready access to people about whom one might wish to know more. It also suggested to some of us the notion of contacting those whom one didn't know; to find out who they were, what they were doing, and what made them interesting enough to incorporate the Fluxus list.

Starting in 1966, Fluxus West began to publish annual compilations of the Fluxus lists, adding to those lists interesting artists whom we were able to locate and identify. By 1972, the lists had grown to a point where we published over 1400 names and addresses, together, where possible, with phone numbers. The 1972 list was published in cooperation with Canada's Image Bank. It was released in hundreds of copies, distributed gratis to artists, arts organizations and publishers around the world. The list became the core of the first *File Magazine* artists' directory, was used to develop *Flash Art's Art Diary*, and, in expanded and better researched versions, served such staid reference tomes as *Who's Who in American Art* and *Who's Who in America*. The project was an act of social responsibility: access to a fuller universe of information in a professional environment marked by restricted communication. The restriction of communication is a tool and a weapon. It gives power to those who possess the media of communication and it works against those who lack rich success. It seemed to us that certain individuals at the center of art world media — critics, curators, dealers — could reach anyone, while the rest of us had a hard time finding jealously guard-



NAM JUNE PAIK. THE MONTHLY REVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY FOR AVANT-GARDE HINDUISM 1963. Jon Hendricks collection.

ed mailing lists to reach others. The wide publication of the lists, right or wrong, changed all that. The reference tools and media that grew from our lists had an impact on the art world that was not foreseen when, in order to gain greater control over its own communication, Fluxus West began the annual directory and publications.

The existence of such substantial numbers of people, many — if not most — interested in communicating with one another and experimentally inclined (at least from time to time) suggested new ways of exhibiting art and of preparing exhibitions. The first such notions were rudimentary. It was tough to bring large works of art out of Eastern Europe in crates, but a big drawing or a suite of photos could easily be put in an envelope to be mailed out as a letter, albeit a thick letter. So it was that at first, even as we were using the mail to create experimental works as individual artists, we were also using the mail to transmit fairly ordinary or traditional art works for exhibition. Two or three important exhi-

bitions blossomed simultaneously that were to transform correspondence art and mail art from private activity to public access. The first projects were the major mail art shows organized by Marcia Tucker at the Whitney Museum, to which Ray Johnson's personal friends and New York Correspondence School colleagues were invited, and the 1971 Biennial of Paris, curated by French art historian and critic Jean-Marc Poinot, involving the several dozen figures who were at that time seen as the leading artists in the field.

At first, the mails were used to create exhibitions or used as a forum for private artists whose interactions were exhibited. The leap to a public process seems to have emerged from an idea that I had after my experience with the lists. I reasoned that the lists themselves might be used as the body of artists invited to exhibit. The notion went through stages. When George Neubert then curator of the Oakland Museum, offered me a one-man exhibition for 1972, I chose a one-year project inviting people to correspond with me through the museum. This invitation started with the use of the lists and grew to become public. A second project was mounted at the University of Washington museum, The Henry Art Gallery, in Seattle. At the Henry Gallery, we addressed the public directly to create enormous regional group participants, incidentally involving participants from afar through extended media and wide public coverage. The final apotheosis was a project entitled Omaha Flow Systems, mounted at the Joslyn Art Museum in the Spring of 1973.

For Omaha Flow Systems, we devised a number of projects and sub-projects, using all of the administrative and analytic tools available to us. The show, while serving to model a wide variety of ideas and projects, became best known as the largest mail art project to date — or since. Thousands of invitations were mailed, and mass media, local, regional, national and international, were used.

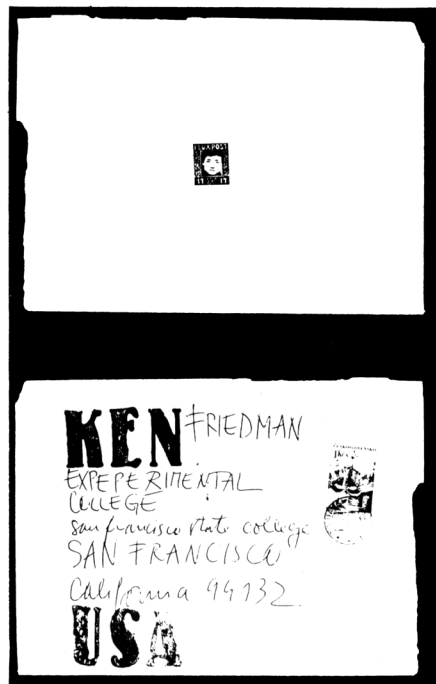
Over 20,000 items were received at the Joslyn, with many tens of thousands additional viewer contacts, input/out-put transactions, systems that we could not trace, satellite exhibitions at other institutions across the region and around the world. The recent histories of mail art cite the Omaha Flow Systems project as the basic model for all mail art exhibitions since 1973, and — in its sub-projects — as the model for several uses of mail art and correspondence

art in both exhibition and other forms. (I must add that in many cases, mail art projects modeled on the paradigm developed in Omaha did not come from Omaha directly. Rather, the model was adapted, say, by an artist from South Dakota who invited a friend from Iowa to participate. The Iowan created a mail art show that was an inspiration to some artists from Staten Island. The Staten Island show influenced some people in Connecticut, and so on. Further, several shows developed at the same time as Omaha Flow Systems, also using our lists and research, had enormous direct influence. These included, most notably, David Hompson's *Cyclopedia*, and the several exhibitions organized by Terry Reid and by the Canadian mail art geniuses at Image Bank.

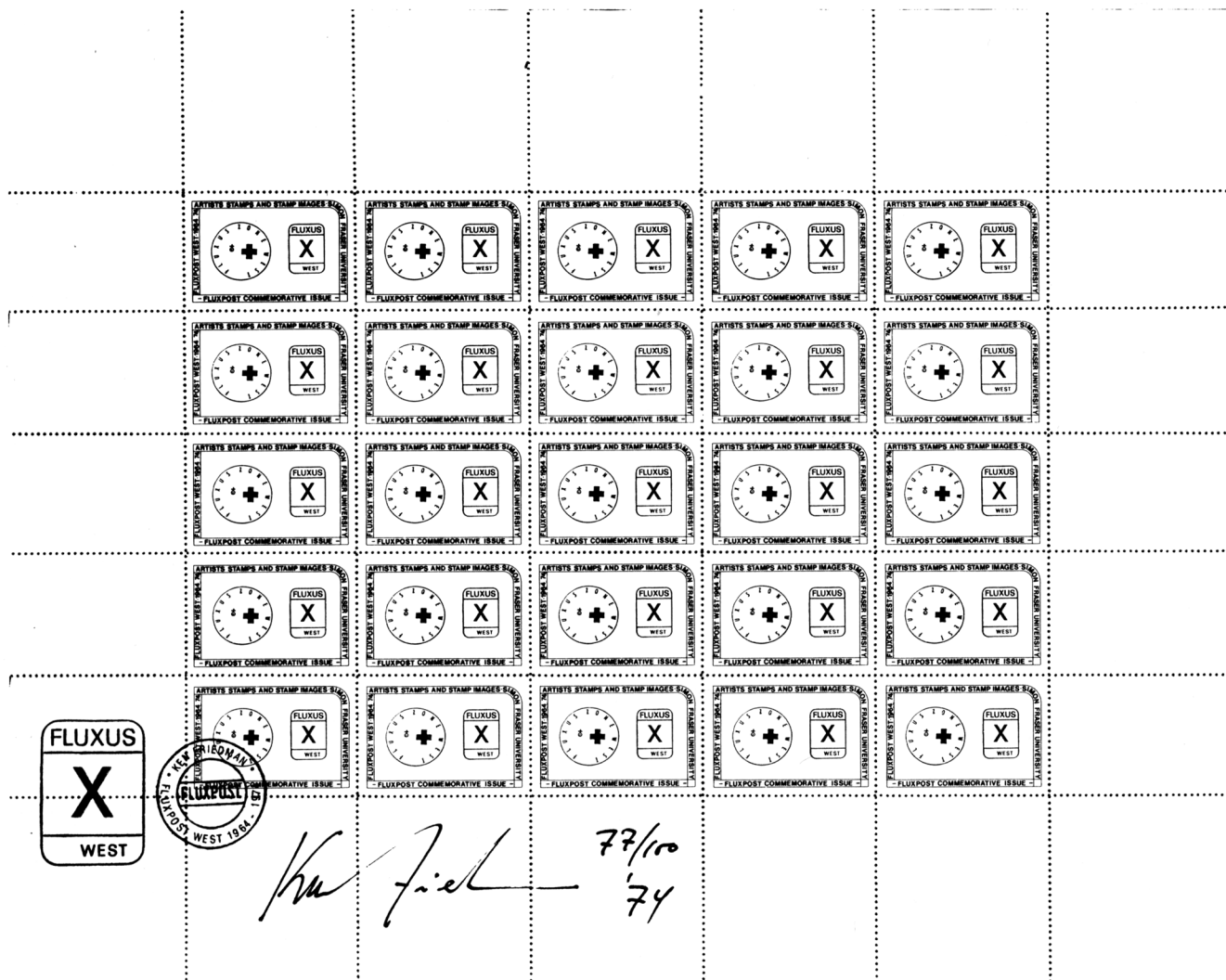
The publishing paradigm developed through Fluxus have had substantial impact on mail art. At first, the notion of newsletters and periodicals was treated playfully, as, for example, Nam June Paik's *Review of the University of Avant Garde Hinduism*, or Daniel Spoerri's magazine from his Greek island retreat at Simi. Dick Higgins, as already discussed, took a further step with the *Something Else Press Newsletter*. George Maciunas created the *V-Tre* newspaper, allied conceptually and physically to the production of Fluxus multiples and concerts. Where the Fluxus publishing ethos came directly into the realm of contemporary mail art was in *Amazing Facts Magazine* and with the birth of *New York Correspondence School Weekly Breeder*.

Amazing Facts Magazine was a crudely assembled publication created at Fluxus West in 1968. We gathered in our mail, put it into a folio with a cover, and sent it out. The idea lasted one issue, but established a notion of gathering as the editorial principle for a magazine. Independently in Germany, Thomas Niggel was creating *Omnibus News*, the first truly gathered or accumulated magazine in multiple editions. These two preceded the better known Ace Space Company anthologies gathered and published by Dana Atchley, and, finally, the *Assembling* anthologies developed by Henry Korn, Richard Kostelanetz and Mike Metz, today the best known and most widely disseminated of such periodicals.

More quirky and playful, the *New York Correspondence School Weekly Breeder* was a jest intended to tickle the sense of youthful fancy one had in school in receiving the *My Weekly Reader* periodicals, and to create a



MILAN KNIZAK. AKTUAL. Letter, 1969. This mailing consisted of a single sheet, folded into a rectangle to form an envelope. It opened up to reveal a colored drawing. The lettering of the envelope and FLUXPOST stamp are representative of Knizak's work in the late 1960s. The Gilbert and Lila Silverman collection.



KEN FRIEDMAN. FLUXPOST COMMEMORATIVE ISSUE. 1974. This sheet of stamps celebrates the 10th anniversary of FLUXPOST stamps. Ken Friedman Collection.

regular, weekly contact with other artists. The *NYCSWB* was published through about 10 or eleven issues at Fluxus West, then passed to Stu Horn, a Philadelphia artist. Horn, already well known as The Northwest Mounted Valise, a longtime friend of Ray Johnson and a talented graphic poet, produced a number of issues for the second volume and then passed the periodical to Bill Gaglione and Tim Mancusi in San Francisco. Gaglione and Mancusi took the idea on, and through their network of friends and correspondents, transformed the *NYCSWB* into an odd—and oddly influential—periodical. Starting with its modest, single-sheet beginnings in 1971, the *NYCSWB* grew to spark the phenomenon in publishing known as

the “Dadazine,” a format adopted not only by mail artists, but widely influential for artists books and for publishing in fields as diverse as punk rock and art criticism.

In surveying Fluxus’ influence on mail art and correspondence art, the results of a survey reported to be in Mike Crane’s forthcoming book is very revealing. Fluxus as a group emerges as the largest single influence, followed by Ray Johnson (2), then by Fluxus artists Ken Friedman (3), Dick Higgins (4), George Brecht (6), Robert Filliou (8), and Ben Vautier (9).

Fluxus approached mail art as an opportunity to experimentation, to communication and to interaction. At the beginning, the Fluxus artists were part

of that primary group of individual participants on a small network: at the end, the trenchant experimentation that Fluxus artists pursued, the paradigms they developed and proved redefined the medium, taking it into its third phase and leading to its present state. Mail art and correspondence art have without doubt grown into a new phase, a fourth phase made possible only by a widening public and a generation of new and vital artists. Fluxus’ role in the history of the medium was to create the bridge between private and public states, and to develop the new media that today’s artists employ in exploring today’s issues.

MAIL ART: CANADA & WESTERN U.S.A.

by Anna Banana

Before settling down to discuss mail-art's early stirrings on the West Coast and in Canada, I think it only fair to acknowledge Ray Johnson, whose wit, genius and imagination got the whole thing rolling. Got it going, at least, as a recognizable movement, a phenomena. No doubt artists and other creative individuals have always included drawings, collages, photos in their letters to friends and families. I certainly did, and have heard the same from many other artists. And, many still do, without ever entering into exchanges with the "International Mail-Art Network," that has grown out of Johnson's New York Correspondence School.

The first link between Johnson and the West Coast art community was in 1968, when Michael Morris, AKA Marcel Dot/Marcel Idea, from Vancouver, visited NYC. Morris, along with Vincent Trasov (Mr. Peanut) and Gary Lee Nova (Art Rat) were collaborating at the time on Image Bank; their project to collect, classify and archive images from the commercial media. Morris was instrumental in bringing Johnson and his collages to Vancouver in March of '69, as one of the artists exhibiting in the *Concrete Poetry* show at UBC's Fine Arts Gallery.

At this time, address lists were exchanged, and in 1970 Morris, Trasov and Lee Nova began issuing one or two page "Image Request Lists," which gave

name, address and a brief listing of the sorts of imagery each artist would like to receive. For example, Peter Daglish wants palm trees and drag queens; Lee Nova wants telephones and sunglasses, Flakey Rose Hips wants recipes, etc.

In the meantime, American artist Dana Atchley began teaching at the University in Victoria on beautiful, but isolated, Vancouver Island. Cut off from friends and any stimulating art community, he decided to do a project to keep up his contacts with the "outside world." Inspired by Ian Baxter's N.E. Thing Co., which he liked because it created "a good interface with the real world," and gave the artist the anonymity of a corporate identity, Atchley registered himself as A Space Company with the provincial government. Then he bought 250 3-ring binders and sent out invitations to all his friends to participate in a self-publishing project, the *Notebook*. Those invited were to extend the invitation to their friends, and to send 250 copies of up to 10 pages. No work would be rejected, as long as the contributor sent the required 250 pages. By the end of the year (69), there were about 60 contributors, and Atchley set to work, with the help of Eric Metcalfe (Dr. Brute) and Kate Craig, to assemble the 1st edition.

Meanwhile, back in Vancouver, Morris, further inspired in his own mail projects by the response to the *Notebook* project, began working with Trasov and Lee Nova on a massive postcard show. They pooled address lists, including Ray Johnson's and Atchley's. *The First Image Bank Postcard Show*, curated by Alvin Balkind, was exhibited in October 1971 at UBC's Fine Arts Gallery. It then travelled Canada, showing in another 8 or 9 galleries and made its final public appearance in Paris in 1973 as part of the *Trajectoire '73 Show*. Coach House Press in Toronto published an edited set of postcards from the show in 1972, the boxed edition quickly becoming a collector's item.

In 1970 another Vancouver artist, Ed Varney (Mr. Poem) began his mail-art activities under the banner, The Poem Company. His mailings were a small booklet of poems printed on an 8½ x 11" sheet, folded twice and cut to form an 8 pg. booklet. These were sent to about 300 people, friends, artists and poets with whom he was acquainted, asking for a poem or some other response.

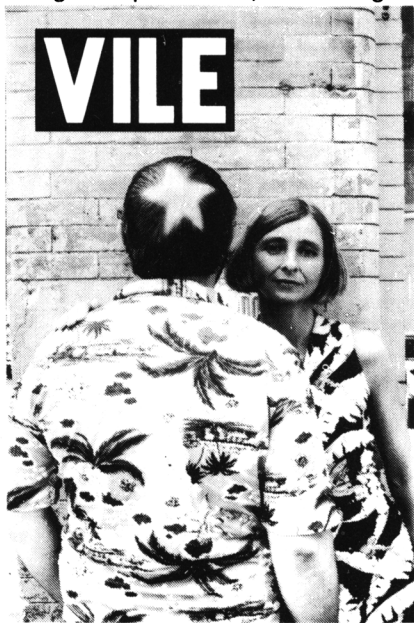
In '70-'71, Atchley launched his second notebook project, *A Space Atlas*, with invitations going to the increasing



VILE COVER SERIES: ANNA BANANA, MR. PEANUT, AND HANK BULL AT THE ART RACE. Vancouver Art Gallery. May 1974.

numbers of contacts that came about from the meeting of Atchley, Morris and Lee Nova. This second notebook drew over 120 participants from 7 countries, and in the fall of '71, Atchley, with the aid of a Canada Council grant, left Victoria with his van full of *Space Atlas*, to personally deliver them to the North American contributors. This started him off on a ten-year stint as visiting artist, presenting his *Road Show* to university art departments from Vancouver to Athens, Georgia, and ended his involvement with mail-art.

1971 was a year in which the simultaneous beginnings of many artist publications had the unexpected effect of illuminating a "network." This flurry of publishing made the many isolated individuals and small groups aware of themselves as members of a much larger group, which was soon referred to as the "International Mail-Art Network." These publications stimulated intensified mailing activities by all concerned, and the next two years saw a dramatic increase in the number of people involved and quantity of work being mailed. Aesthetics dropped (more quick-print & xerox "mailers" vs. original drawings and collages) as quantity grew, and by '74 many of the original mailers quit the network in favor of private practise with selected favorites.



VILE COVER SERIES: HOMMAGE TO DUCHAMP BY ANNA BANANA AND BUSTER CLEVELAND. Toronto and New York. August 1978.

In the Bay Area, Patricia Tavenner (Mail Queen), feeling a need for more dialogue and creative input, began organizing her collaborative publishing project, *Mail Order Art*. Her idea was to produce a newspaper tabloid of artwork that provoked interchange. Collaborators were to contribute work, help pay the printing in exchange for a portion of the run which they could distribute to their friends and contacts. Her collaborators in the first issue of *Mail Order Art* were Lew Carson, Phillis Ideal, Peter Hagburg and Nancy Maas Mosen (Irene Dogmatic).

A copy of the first issue found its way to Ray Johnson who responded with an invitation to participate in a show organized in Chicago. Tavenner sent work, and in time got a catalogue listing the names and addresses of all participants, and her network expanded accordingly. There were 4 issues of *Mail Order Art* from 1971 through 1973, each with a new set of collaborators. During that period, Tavenner produced her first artist postage stamps; 12 editions of 30 copies each, offset and perforated. She also began her years of work with Dogmatic on collaborative performances and postcards.

In Victoria, I began publishing the *Banana Rag*, a 2 to 4 page newsletter, as a supplement to my Town Fool activities. The first few issues, published bi-monthly, were mailed to friends, Lee Nova amongst them. He put me in touch with the developing network by sending copies of the *Image Request Lists* that he and Morris had been producing. Intrigued, I sent out images as requested, included a copy of the *Banana Rag* and asked for banana information, images, etc. The response was immediate and positive, and I soon found myself mailing to Dr. Brute, Flakey Rose Hips, Marcel Dot, Ray Johnson, Davi Det Hompson, Richard C., Stu Horn, Dadaland, Irene Dogmatic, Pat Tavenner, Ms. Generality, Mr. Poem, Ken Friedman, etc., etc.

In Calgary that year, Don Mabie (Chuck Steak) began his mail-art activity by printing up 500 copies of his drawing, sending it to friends and people in the media. Also in Calgary, Clive Robertson, newly arrived from England, began using the mails to break down the distance between himself and various artist friends in England and Europe. He focused on bringing in scripts and ideas for performance works he could realize in Calgary, rather than images. He, like the rest of us, had no idea there was a "network" out there.

In the fall of '71, the first issue of FILE magazine appeared, illuminating the overall picture of mail-art activity to date and giving the names, addresses and image requests of artists involved. FILE magazine, with its LIFE-like logo and page format was printed on newsprint with a glossy cover in editions of 3-5,000. It circulated widely, and it's two '72 editions included artists from Canada, the USA, all over Europe, South America and Australia. The magazine, edited and produced by General Idea, a Toronto based collective of artists including Jorge Zontal, Michael Timms (A.A. Bronson), Ron Gabe (Felix Parts), Mimi Paige and Grenada Gazelle, received financial support from the Canada Council.

In December 1972, Image Bank published their *International Image Exchange Directory*, a forerunner of *Politi's Art Diary*, listing over 300 artists, their image requests, addresses, etc., who had corresponded with them or appeared in FILE magazine's 1st three issues.

Two other items helped "popularize" mailart; an article about it by Thomas Albright, published in the *Rolling Stone* in 1972, and one by David Zack, "An Authentic Discourse on the Phenomena of Mail Art," published in *Art in America* in their Jan/Feb '73 issue.

These projects and publicity deluged the mail-boxes of these artist-publishers with more mail than they could answer. The mail-exchanges, which began between a select few suddenly turned into a flood of mail from a mass audience. Many of those initially involved, dropped out. FILE magazine shifted its focus to other facets of the contemporary art scene, refusing to answer mail-art requests.

Back in California, in 1971 or 1972, Ken Friedman started sending out his *Weekly Breeder*, one or two 8½ x 11" collaged "flyers" from his San Diego base. I would guess this activity grew out of his earlier association with the Fluxus movement in NYC, and expect it was through that connection that he appeared on the *Image Request Lists*. Out of Los Angeles, I received mailings from the Bon Bons, Gerry Dreva, Bobby Lambert and others mailing newspaper clippings of their appearances/performances. Lowell Darling was also mailing works from L.A., original, hand-drawn postcards and notices about his projects to nail-down certain cities, the San Andreas Fault, etc.

In 1972, Friedman passed the editorship of the *Weekly Breeder* on to the

Bay Area Dadaists (B.A.D.), Bill Gaglione, Tim Mancusi and Charles Chickadel, who expanded it to book form producing 7 issues between '72 and the final issue in '74. These artists were also known as Trinity Press, after a small printing press they bought and ended up moving more times than they printed on it. Chickadel started up the *West Bay Dadaist*, a small instant-print publication in the 8½ x 11", folded twice format. Gaglione and Mancusi contributed to this publication as well, and it also appeared under the title *Quoz?* Monty Cazazza collaborated with the Bay Area Dadaists, and put out his own mailings, such as the *Yellow Peril*, as well.

Irene Dogmatic also went on to publish various instant-print booklets, such as her *Dogarythms*, *Star Spanialed Boners*, the *Canus Book of Dog Records*, etc., for all of which she drew stories and material from the network. However, I'm getting a little ahead of myself here.

What has been called the "grand finale" of all his collaboration and cross fertilization by the initiators of the "first wave" of mail art, was the *Decca Dance*. This event, which took place in Hollywood in February '74, involved artists from Vancouver, Toronto, New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles and San Diego. A spoof on the academy awards presentations, it was inspired by and to a large extent organized through mailed communications. It was documented by video tape produced by Ant Farm, and later a book published at Coach House Press in Toronto.

After this, mail-art continued, but with a different set of principals, and principles. For the first wave, I would say that aesthetic communication with selected artists was the objective. For the second wave, I feel play, participation, and communication with a wide range of persons were the amended objectives.

Of the second wave principals, Chuck Steak of Calgary holds my nomination for the title KING of Mail-Art, for his dogged consistency in organizing, showing and documenting mailart. From '73 to '81, Chuck organized a record number of mail-art shows, often with "boredom" as their theme... '73—*Homage to Boredom*, '74—*1st Annual Toronto Correspondence & Junk Mail-Art Exhibition*, 2nd *Homage to Boredom*, etc. etc. In '75, he began publishing *Images and Information*, a mailart magazine in the ½ x 14" folded format, with assistance of a government work initiatives program. His shows

continued through '75 with the *2nd Annual Correspondence & Junk-Mail Art Exhibition*, the 1st Calgary show of the same title, exhibiting these in Canada's parallel gallery system. (Many suggest this gallery system grew out of mail-art activity contacts). In 1976 Chuck organized 3 mail-art shows, finally abandoning the boring theme that had by then bored me to absence. In 1977 he organized two shows, one at the New Reform Gallery in Aalst, Belgium, the second in Calgary at Parachute Center. 1978 saw him busy with changes within the gallery as Parachute metamorphosed into Clouds 'n Water Gallery, where he organized 6 shows in 1979. 1980 was a quiet year, then 1981 brought about his involvement with *Rough Cut Audio Art* and his last big (to my knowledge) mailart show, *IMAGINE/ The Legacy of John Lennon* which showed at Off Center Center, then toured.

In Vancouver, the second carry-over from the first wave, Ed Varney quietly continued his publishing and mailing activities. After his '71 issues of *The Poem Company*, he produced a couple of editions called *Junk Mail*; the first a printed envelope of materials from the press, the second, a box of postcards. In 1973, he produced an edition of 500 copies of Stu Horn's book, *The NorthWest Mounted Valise*. After numerous postcards, rubber stamp and stencil works, he began publishing artist postage stamps.

His *1st International Artist Stamp Edition*, 1 sheet, 2 colors, perforated, appeared in 1976, and the 2nd edition, again in 2 colors, appeared in 1978. In 1980, he organized a mail-art show, *Global Postal*, the catalogue for which took the form of 5 or 6 sheets of artist stamps, printed in black only, and perforated. His most recent edition, his *3rd International Artist's Stamps*, is 4 sheets of full color stamps. In every instance, contributors received a free copy of the edition, and persons wishing to purchase these should contact Ed through his Museo Internazionale de Neu Art (MINA), Box 3655, Vancouver, BC, Canada V6B 348.

And last, but not least, we have yours truly as the third carry-over from the 1st to 2nd wave of mailart. By the time of the 2nd wave, I was living and working in San Francisco, having made the move from Vancouver in the summer of '73. I produced my 9th and 10th edition of the *Banana Rag* in San Francisco that year, the 10th being a set of 12 postcards, instant printed at my first SF job.

By then the editors of FILE were chafing at all the "quikkopy crap" junk-mail they were receiving, and published several letters to that effect in their fall 1973 issue. Still hot on mail-art myself, and surrounded in my new job with the means of quick, cheap production, I decided to take up the cause of mail-art myself. And thus, VILE was born. I solicited contributions from my correspondents and in February '74 produced my first issue, 56 pages, in an edition of 200. These were instant printed, with vello-binding and a glossy, two-color wrap-around cover. A 48 page second edition came out that fall, 200 copies.

Neither of these editions satisfied my desire to parody LIFE, so the third issue, published in '75, included poetry and fiction laid-out with old ad art from early LIFE, and came much closer to my idea. The CCLM (Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines) approved my grant application, and put \$500 into the production, which was produced in an edition of 1,000 copies, saddle-stitched.

Gaglione, with whom I'd lived since moving to SF, decided to get into the act too, publishing the 4th issue of VILE (numbered 2/3), the double international Issue in an edition of 1,000, perfect bound. The major difference in our approach was my interest in parodying LIFE, and to that end, publishing poetry and fiction for the "textural quality." A certain part of me also wanted to maintain the "vile" theme of the publication, which Bill, in spite of his dada sympathies, did not share.

The Summer of '77 issue of VILE, my fourth production, finally achieved the overall appearance I had been after from the beginning. While I had always reproduced mail-art works as received, this issue combined these works with texts, photos and ad art in such a mix that I felt the uninitiated reader MIGHT confuse it with LIFE on first inspection. Having accomplished that, and having seen FILE do battle and lose to TIME/ LIFE over their use of the LIFE-like logo, we decided it was time to move on to other cover designs.

In '78, Bill produced VILE 6 in a new format (7 x 10"), with a totally different cover and subject focus than all previous issues. For *Fe-Mail-Art*, as the 6th issue was sub-titled, we gleaned material from our archives. I wrote the introduction and managed to get another grant from the CCLM. Their \$923 paid for an edition of 675 copies of what proved to be one of the most popular issues... all about women involved in mail art.

The 7th issue of VILE, called STAMP ART, is a special, limited edition of 300 copies of hand-stamped pages by 200 artists in the International Network. It was edited by Gaglione, and was in the works for the better part of two years. A third CCLM grant assisted in the production and mailing of this edition, which first went out in the fall of '80. The first 200 went to contributors, the 3rd hundred sold out within a year. Since then Gaglione has continued his interest in rubber-stamp works, and has produced 4 editions called *STAMP ART*, in which participants send 150-200 copies of their page. Gaglione binds and distributes them. Back issues are available from him at Abracadada, 2311 Lake Street, San Francisco, CA 94121.

Since my return to Vancouver in January of '81, I've attempted to cut back on my mail-art activities, but without much success. I've produced issues 16 and 17 of the *Banana Rag* since my return, primarily to answer the growing number of children involved in mail-art. (These are inspired by Randy Harelson's book, S.W.A.K. — Sealed with a Kiss, and I feel there must be some way of getting children involved in mailing without necessarily connecting them with adults. One or two aren't bad, but I've been swamped!)

After struggling with it since the summer of '79, I have finally managed to publish my final edition of VILE, done as a book, *About VILE*. In this edition I pay long overdue tributes (*Excerpts: Tour Journal*) to our European mail-art friends who we visited in the course of our '78 tour. It's a book in the same format as the magazine, giving its own history, biographies of a number of my "heros" in the network, and an excellent article about mail-art by Michael Scott in Leeds, England. There's an 8-page feature on the work of Robert and Ruth Rehfeldt of East Berlin, and a portfolio of photos from events I organized over the years, but omitted from VILE because they weren't (vile). This book is my swan song to mail-art, although it appears more and more unlikely that I shall ever completely disentangle myself from this fascinating activity.

Before closing this already over-long account, I must mention a few artists whose contributions have been substantial, if not as sustained as those discussed at greater length. In Vancouver, Rick Hambleton (Trace-It) published two editions of *I.D.'s Mr. Reece Search* in '79, with works from 300 participants in 29 countries. There was also the

mysterious Five/Cinq Aesthetics who produced an edition of 500 "legally genuine" share certificates in the "Radiant Energy" of Five/Cinq Aesthetics in Dec. '78. They dissolved the company in 1980 after producing a "Not Responsible" series. Another Vancouver artist, Ladislav Guderna produced three of *Scarabeus* (6 x 7½ format) in '79 and '80, distributing these to the network. He's also produced numerous postcards and postage stamps.

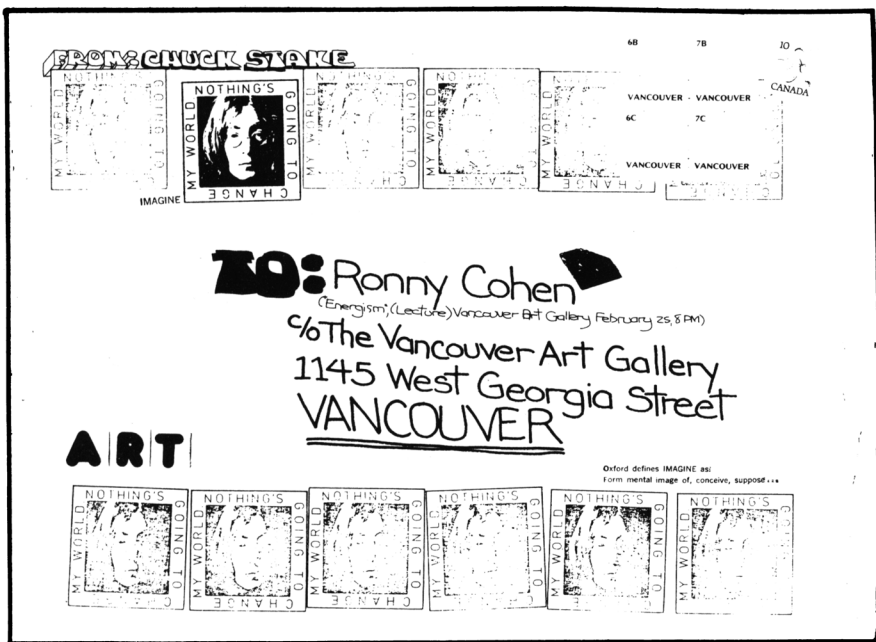
In Seattle there's Raymond Chew, whose high quality printed and color xeroxed postage stamps circulate on a limited scale within the network. He sends his works to people whose work he likes, and ignores the rest. Another

west-coaster I can't quit without mentioning, is Buster Cleveland. While he hasn't done any publishing, he has produced limited edition color xerox prints of his many outstanding collages, and these are treasured items in the collections of many. Buster lived in Ukiah and, along with Polly Ester Nation and Nicola Vanzetti, led the organization of the Inter-Dada 80 Festival in May of that year. Inter-Dada '80 was, like the Decca Dance years earlier, a 4-day festival of contemporary arts, based on the mail-art network, and drawing participants from New York, Gurdon Ark., and Italy, as well as all parts of California.

A publication that has done much to substantiate Mail-Art, since its incep-

tion in '78, is Judith Hoffberg's *UMBRELLA*, with its reviews of artist books, mailart shows and listings of mail-art shows, deadlines and themes. Anyone wishing to get into mail-art should send \$3 to Umbrella for a sample copy. The address is PO Box 40100, Pasadena, CA 91104.

That about winds it up. There are many many artists with whom I've exchanged works, and whose works I keep safely in my archive, but who've not been mentioned here. I regret this, but given the space limitations for this article, I've had to draw the line somewhere. My apologies.



CHUCK STAKE. ENVELOPE. 1982. Ronny Cohen Collection. Imagery related to *IMAGINE: THE LEGACY OF JOHN LENNON*, a mail art exhibition by Chuck Stake and held at Roleson Square Media Centre, Vancouver. July 14-21, 1981.



PAT TAVENNER. ARTIST OF UNKNOWN MEDIA and MAIL QUEEN. 1973. Photo source: *ARTISTS' STAMPS AND STAMP IMAGES*. The Simon Frasier Gallery, Simon Frasier University, Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada. 1976.

New York Corres Sponge Dance School of Vancouver Reunion

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

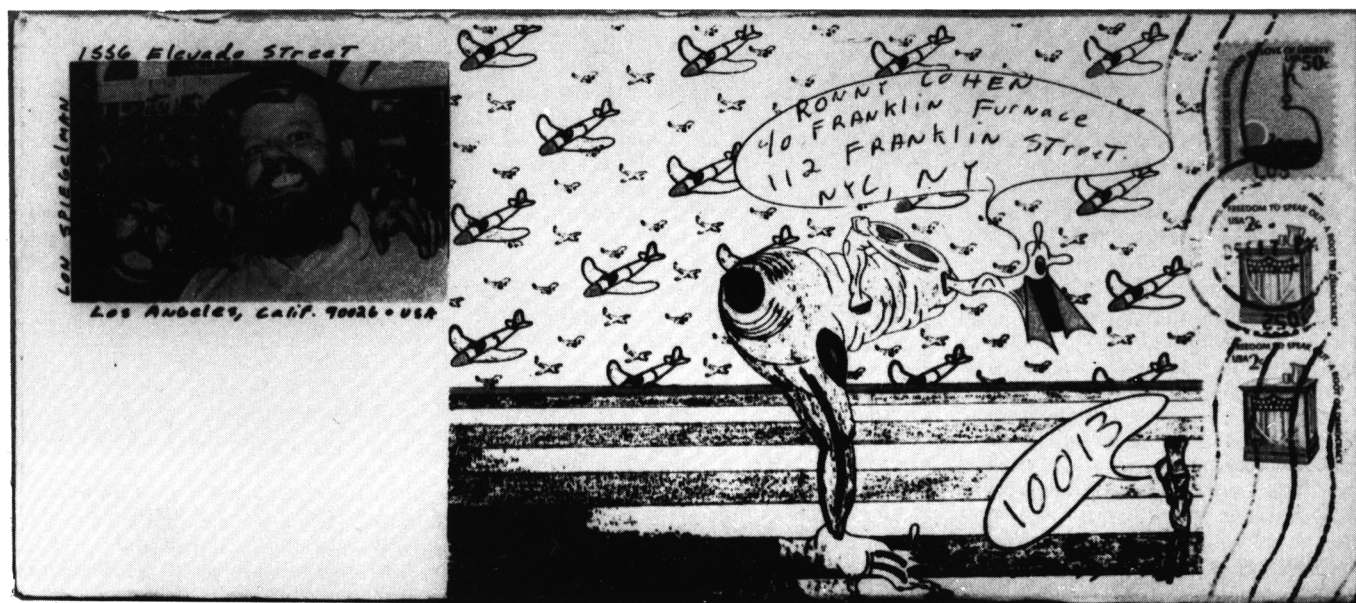
Glenn Lewis

GLENN LEWIS. NEW YORK CORRES SPONGE DANCE SCHOOL OF VANCOUVER REUNION. 1970. Photo source: *ART AND CORRESPONDANCE FROM THE WESTERN FRONT*. Western Front Publications. 1979.



IMAGE BANK POSTCARD SHOW. 1971. Photo source: *ART AND CORRESPONDANCE FROM THE WESTERN FRONT*. Western Front Publications. 1979.

A HISTORY OF LOS ANGELES MAIL ART (1978 THROUGH 1983) by Lon Spiegelman



LON SPIEGELMAN. ENVELOPE. 1983.

For the past six years of my life, living in Los Angeles, I've been playing mailart to the tune of 40-60 hours a week and I still find it impossible to synthesize a universal definition of what mailart is all about.

As I look about my mailart den (the factory, as Bern Porter called it when he visited) I see the faces of mailart friends who I have come to know. It's almost impossible to think of what life was like before these like-minded artists touched my soul.

I could write about any one of the 3-400 different mailartists from anyone of 30 countries with whom I correspond, but their basic stories would be similar.

I feel that the bottom line of mailart is the fact that it is a support system for artists around the world to keep producing and practicing that art which God has put in our souls, while we maintain our families and homes and whatever else is precious to us. I keep going back to that statement which I read from Zabala a long time ago that "Art Is A Prison." I feel that this is true. We can't live with it and we can't live without it. So, what do we do?... MAILART. Lets thank God for the international postal system which keeps we artists from being isolated while finding our way out of the established maze of rejection and degradation.

I sincerely believe that mailart activity points to a political realization which will have to come about if we are to survive

on this planet. It typifies the finest points in each of the battling giants (capitalism and communism). Shows are truly a social effort, displaying a whole that is indeed greater than the sum of its individually produced and free parts. It's a collage.

Like Zabala says, "Art is a prison." Mailart keeps one sane and alive and producing in a world that demands one's time performing mundane tasks in order to pay the bills. Also, mailart offers hope, through exposure, that someday the great discoverer in the sky will recognize the validity of one's work and free the talent's time to share its gift with society. And, if we're only kidding ourselves, well, that's OK tooooo.

There seems to be a duality in the mailart mind which hinders the construction of this retrospective view of Los Angeles' mailart activities. On the one hand mailartists are extremely skeptical of these overviews because no one person knows it all while on the other hand we have a thirst for some kind of sense and order to be made out of all of these divergent mailart-related happenings. The only way to really know mailart is to live it. Every mailartist has a different view and approach to the network: A lot of egos in the art soup. Where does the beginning begin and where do the boundaries of the spotlight end?

What comes to mind as an illustration is the interview I did with oldtime Dada mailartist Buster Cleveland in September of 1981. While Buster was visiting Los

Angeles for a couple of weeks before continuing on to New York with Linda Burnham, publisher of "High Performance" magazine, he stayed at my house for a week and helped me paint my kitchen. During the previous year at InterDada '80 when I met Buster for the first time, he referred to me as a "third generation" mailartist. This concept stuck with me and as we painted and drank them zesty malts, as Dr. Ackerman is so fond of saying, I began writing down his responses to my questions concerning dada and the early days of mailart.

After he left, I made several copies of the interview along with his lists of first, second and third generation mailartists. Even before I mailed these few copies out to the network, I started receiving very negative responses from some local mailart newcomers who had merely heard about the article. And, eventually, the network's response was less than enthusiastic. Maybe because too much of Buster's ego was involved, I don't know. Or, maybe it was because others viewed things differently. However, I feel that Buster's observations, no matter how skewed, added sense and order to mailart's Tower of Babel.

What I'm trying to ask myself is "whether or not mailart is truly too anarchistic for even reviews." However, this mailartist is somewhat structured and I feel that I am a third generation mailartist whose birthday is February 1978 coinciding with the Artwords/Bookworks Show

at the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art, curated by Judy Hoffberg and Joan Hugo.

The Artwords/Bookworks show was the first major mailart happening in Los Angeles to awaken local artists to the international mailart network's existence. That exhibition, consisting of 549 international artists, germinated into an intertwining growth consisting of an approximated 66 significant mailart-related happenings over the next six years, similar to a family tree branching out in many directions.

Basically, the three main branches of this mailart tree consist of "shows," "out-of-town visiting mailart dignitaries" and "related mailart happenings."

During the past six years, 28 mailart shows have been presented in the greater Los Angeles area. Some have been large and public while others have been small and more personal. Some have produced catalogues and others have not. Being that space limits any review of these shows, they are merely listed at the end of this article for reference.

The second major-mailart happening to leave its mark on Los Angeles was Dadafest L.A., which was organized in May of 1980 by Michael Mollett, Neal "Skooter" Taylor and Patty Sue Jones.

Mailart events for the two-year period between the Artword/Bookworks show and Dadafest were sparse; however, visiting dignitaries, as I like to refer to our out-of-town-mailart friends, started visiting Los Angeles on more of a regular basis.

Other than, budding mailartist, Marilyn Rosenberg's visit in July of 1978,

that year was taken up personally by me being inundated with mail from my Artwords/Bookworks mailing. That's how I got involved in mailart. I wrote a postcard to all 549 artists in the show catalog and asked if "they wanted to trade works?" By October I had received something like 200 positive responses.

In April of 1979 Michael Mollett, a second generation correspondence artist, gave a mailart-slide lecture at the Old Venice Jailhouse near his home in Venice. Mollett initially got involved in mailart in 1976 by using R. Mutt's mailing list and catalogues to mail out 1500 postcards into the network, asking for "questions" which he would then paint on the side of his 1964 VW bus and drive around the city, changing questions each week. Michael told that R. Mutt, one of L.A.'s founding mailartists, died in late 1978 of an apparent heart attack.

Three months after the Jailhouse, Steve Hitchcock, editor of the now defunct "Cabaret Voltaire" magazine came up from San Diego with his saxophone to visit. Around the same time Geoffrey Cook, conceptual/performance artist, came down from San Francisco and performed his "Doggie Dinner" piece at the LACE gallery in downtown L.A.

Two months later Tohei Horrike, the Ray Johnson of Japanese mailart, visited with us for a week, continuing work on his Five Years Research Project.

The year of 1979 ended with me, Mollett, and his roommate Steve Granach, a photographer, and dog Homer rolling down Colorado Blvd. in Mollet's VW bus as part of the DooDa Parade, the day prior to the official Rose Parade, me pounding out rhythm on the hood, Steve blowing bubbles at Homer barking and Michael throwing out bogus dada dollar bills to the hungry crowd. We saw Hoffberg along the route, taking pictures for "Umbrella" and bumped into Dan Barber, a Pasadena mailartist/carpenter, sipping Jack Daniels Black Label.

The new decade opened when Bern Porter (physicist, first American publisher of Henry Miller's works, and grandfather of self-published artist' books and more) jumped ship for a night from one of his cruises around the world to give a lecture on found poetry at the newly established Artwords/Bookworks bookstore in Venice, owned by Hoffberg, Lael Mann and Barbara Pascal.

Hoffberg had already begun to be a focal point for mailart in Los Angeles with the bookstore and her establishment of "Umbrella" magazine which began soon after the Artwords/Bookworks (A/B) show.

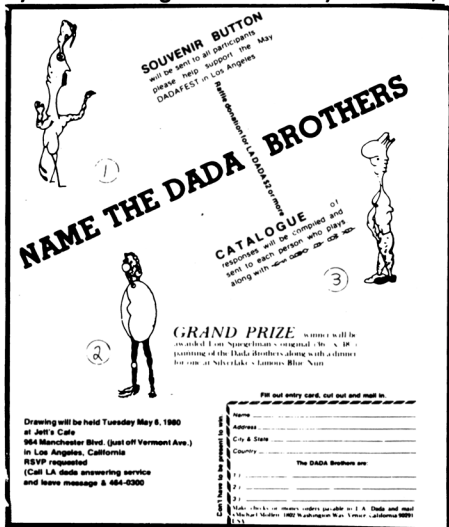
I believe that the A/B show was the demarcation of a mailart generation, just as Pearl Harbor was the symbolic demarcation of the WWII baby-boom generation. I don't know what the inclusive ending date would be. It's more a state of mind than anything else. And, I feel it to be the same with mailart generations. It's impossible to finely-slice the ending of one and the start of another. It's a frame of mind bounded by specific events, like the depression years, WWII, the 1950's, and the 1960's and the A/B show and in relation to Los Angeles, Dadafest L.A. in May of 1980 which psychologically might demarcate the beginning of fourth generation mailart in Los Angeles.

Dadafest was a major event, not only for Los Angeles, but for the international mailart network. It was the second and southern half of InterDada '80 and as a result, many local artists got involved in the network. What crowned Dadafest a significant event were the personalities who lived it.

Guglielmo Achille Cavellini was the eye of the hurricane which swept south from San Francisco/Ukiah, closely surrounded by such out-of-town and local mailart personalities as Buster, E.F. Higgins, Turk LeClair, Bill Gaglione, Jimmy Evans, Dan Barber, Judy Hoffberg, Corrina Mabbese, Pam Rome, Anna Banana, Jerry Dreva, Ken Dany, Mollett, Skooter and Patty Sue Jones.

Where does one stop a list of persons who participated in 21 separate/related events. This is where the problem comes in writing about mailart-related functions. Should I not include BB, Joe DeMarco, David Weiss, Kenny, Steve Granach, Teddy, Gronk, G. Rich, George, Denver Tuttle, Amanaa Speedueen, Aida, John Fox, Paul Newman, etc., etc., etc. For a detailed account, two books have recorded these happenings. One is my "California Dada" book and the other is Cavellini's "Cavellini In California" book. I think GAC printed maybe 50,000 copies in three languages.

Following a six-month respite from Dadafest, Dave Zack, founder of nut art and king of difficult verbage, took up residence, first in Venice where he shared a room with some Chinese importers and later moved across from MacArthur Park in the same seedy central L.A. building with Richard Skidmore, a music hustler and Tequilla Mockingbird, a local woman about town; one floor above Jan Gaskill, a six-foot-two intellectual writer with whom Zack was eventually to collaborate on a series of "Art Romp" publications. "Art Romp" or "Prom Rot" as it was later agreed upon after a physical discus-



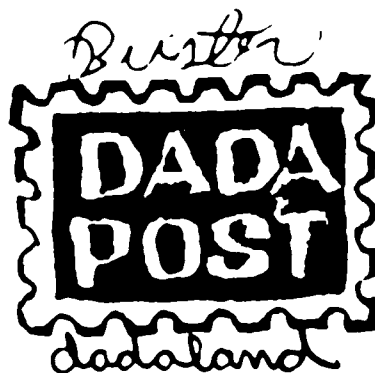
MAY DADAFEST. Los Angeles. May 1980. Courtesy Lon Spiegelman.



CAVELLIN EASTER EGG HUNT

Easter Sunday officially opens L.A.'s 55-day Cavellini Dada Celebration with an end on Memorial Day, May 30. Here's L.A. Dada's Dada of Cavellini's Dada's Dada to be opened in the year 2014.

THE DADA SUNRISE SERVICE will be held Easter Sunday April 6th at the May Company downtown store 801 South Broadway and officially kick-off the 55 day Cavellini Easter Egg Hunt.



RUBBER STAMP. BUSTER CLEVELAND.

CAVELLINI EASTER EGG HUNT. 1980. Los Angeles. Courtesy Lon Spiegelman.

sion, was a local "what's happening mail-art rag of the artsy-music scene."

That was around the same time that Wazatta's Zero Zero Club was going strong. It was located on Cahuenga Blvd. in Hollywood and was a sleazy after hours joint with no sign or number on the door. For a year or so it was a popular mailart den of inquiry—hosting good shows and selling cheap beer.

On the 11th of October 1980 Zack put together "The Artist-Weight Saxophone Boxing Championship of the Known World" at the Zero. The famed Danish artist Neils Lomholt was in one corner seconded by Zack and the L.A. Art Thugg, Wayzata Cameron of the Brainiacs Band was in the other corner seconded by L.A. mailartist Richard Meade. It was billed as "Seven Rounds of Three Minutes each: TO THE FINISH." They both played saxophone at each other, round after round. I backed them up with my tablas and someone recorded the event, but I never found out who and I've never heard it to this day.

Shortly after this Ulises Carrion, cosmopolitan curator of the Other Books and So Archive in Amsterdam, visited Los Angeles.

Two weeks later I received a phone call from Richard Kirk, Chris Watson and Mal (three mailart musicians from England) saying that their Cabaret Voltaire Band was in town for a one-night (only) gig. I drove down to meet them, and in the overflow crowd I bumped into Dreva who I took up to meet the group.

Richard Hambleton (The old R. Dick Trace It) visited L.A. during the beginning of December. He, Richard Meade and I snuck out under the cover of darkness with a bucket of wallpaper paste and plastered Dick's life-sized posters all around the city.

The year ended again with the DooDa parade, that spoof on the Rose parade where anything goes and anybody can enter. That year a dozen or so mailartists and cohorts formed a group and called ourselves the "Benedict Arnold Marching Backwards Junior High School Band."

The following year I marched in the DooDa carrying a big sign reading "Homage To Our Polish Mailart Friends" which Dan Barber helped me carry. This was a few months after the shit hit the fan in Poland. I wore the mailart-decorated jumpsuit that I had leftover from my Benedict Arnold days, and wore my old WWI German helmet that was sent through the mails in 1917 with the bullet hole in it. I also shaved off my beard which really blew people out.

Phil Nurenberg, who is writing a book on Bern Porter's life was instrumental in organizing the Sunday-afternoon salon-reception at our home to honor Bern on February 1, 1981. Porter, had again jumped ship in Long Beach Harbor for the day to visit with the 25-or-so guests, not only mailartists, but long-time friends of his such as Rupert Pole, Anais Nin's husband, and others.

This was the first of three Sunday mailart salons that Linda and I held at our house honoring mailart dignitaries.

The second was in March of this year ('83) when approximately 25 local mailartists gathered for the exclusive L.A. showing of "Mail Art Romance," a fifteen-minute Jam-packed movie including the work of 100 mailartists from 15 countries. This movie, documented the lives and arts of John M. Bennett and C. Mehrl Bennett.

Three months later local mailartists again gathered to meet Fred Truck and family, of Performance Bank. Corrina Mabuse's premiere showing of her

"Mailart animation movie" highlighted the afternoon for all two-dozen guests.

It just goes on and on: the people, the events, the interactions. Jerri Allyn of the Waitresses performance group visited; Mollett did another bus show at the Zero; Dr. Al Ackerman, old-time mailart absurdist and recluse, stopped by the same day that Inex, a mailartist/performer, knocked on my door; John Carson, Ireland's singing mailart troubadour, arrived and took up residence in L.A.; Abdada LeClair crashed here for a week; German mailartist Angelika Schmidt and friend Isabel Walter visited for a week; Mollett and I crashed the official Olympic Committee party, doing a gorilla performance and passing out subversive literature and on and on and on and into 1984.

It's time to stop and go to sleep in the Mohammed, Plinio Mesciulam, bed, which resides in our guestroom. Over the past six years a lot of mailartists have visited in Los Angeles and crashed on that respite of brotherhood. When I awake in the morning I will have cuddled with Lee Spiegelman, Steve Hitchcock, Tohei Horriike, Bern Porter, E.F. Higgins, Pam Rome, Ulises Carrion, R. Dick Trace It, Buster Cleveland, Jerri Allyn, Dr. Al Ackerman and family, Inex, Turk LeClair, Ginny Lloyd, Angelika Schmidt, Michael Mollett, and dreamed of 1985.

THE N -TITY

by Carlo Pittore

A PROCLAMATION: The N -tity has become the historical Now, & is upon us. None of us control it, all of us Navigate it. Concurrent, coalescing energy, the N -tity is all that we share N common.

The N -tity is the vanguard expression of the explosion in the means of communication & the consequential response to this fact, & the continuing shrinkage, of time & space.

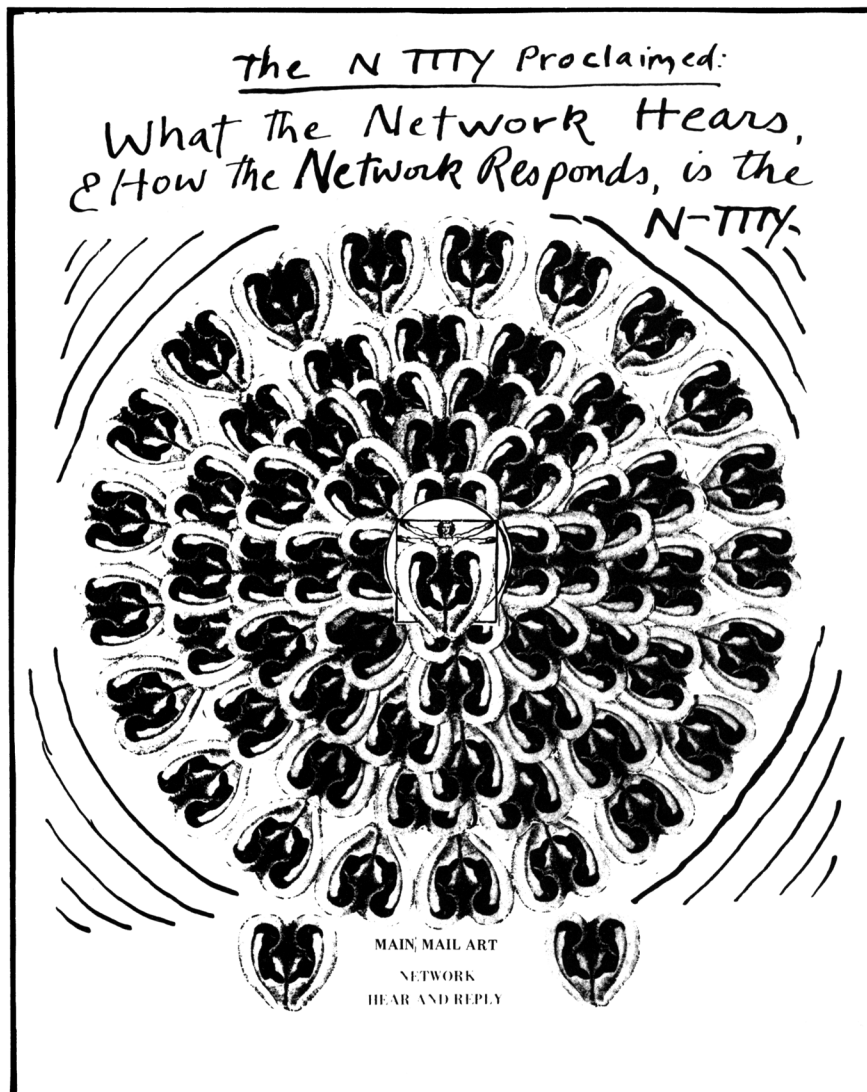
Artists have always revealed a predilection to mail or correspondence. With the evolution of government-operated post offices, which became universal in 1859, artist/poets often employed the mails in expressing their art.

The Italian Futurists, who Hailed Science (1912) and who Hailed Speed, and the New, and the Novel, and who lambasted the Art of Rome, the Art of the Sixteenth Century & the Art of Museums, and who praised the Workers and the Masses, were the first to embrace letters as a fitting democratic component of this receptivity to the New. Dada and Surrealism International also used the Letter, and Mail.

Even in 1960 the letter, quickly delivered by an efficient U.S. Post Office, cost only three cents to mail, one cent for a postal. The Fluxus Movement, Ray Johnson and The N.Y. Correspondence School gave an American spur to correspondence as an art, & in time, even legitimacy, as well as revivifying The International. Perhaps only 200 artists were consciously mailing art in 1960. By 1980, with the letter at 20 cents each, with the Post Office much less efficient, twenty thousand artists sent mail as art.

International Mail Art is a new and significant development, & is a natural outgrowth & extension of both Fluxus, & the N.Y. Correspondence School. And though all three movements (Fluxus, Correspondence, and International Mail Art) utilized the post office in an increasingly sophisticated & unprecedented manner, recent *International Mail Art* has nothing necessarily to do with mail.

Born by the desire to participate in the art of our time, *International Mail Art* fosters an attitude of independence, coupled with community; a willingness and a preparedness to multi-disciplines, multi-correspondence and to exhibit, perform, communicate and interrelate.



CARLO PITTORE. THE N-TITY PROCLAIMED. 1983. Courtesy Carlo Pittore.

Mail has been the most efficient means to get out of the studio, & share ideas. With 20¢, an envelope, and creative ideas, a mail artist gets out of the studio, exhibited, published. Mail Art is democratic, unpredictable, & individualistic. It is public, and incorporates the extremes from the handmade, to the standard, & to the reds & to the greens. *International Mail Art* is a splendid, sophisticated communications experiment, relying on broad international cooperation & collaboration, which, except in cases of Dictator State censorship, defies regulation, control, and market.

While *International Mail Art* remains the least expensive way to mount an exhibition, and is the last resort for the disenfranchised, the term "Mail Art" has become vestigial.

International Mail Art, which boasts of artist postcards, stamps, books and

magazines, telegrams, copymachine, microfilm, painting, poetry & collage, sculpture, film, etc., and which includes the hand delivered and the sent, now also includes the computer and the transmitted.

Modern technology, which has completely transformed the 20th Century, has touched everyone, and every aspect of our lives. The changes, even in the last five years, have contributed to *International Mail Art*, to an extent unimagined previously, in overcoming barriers of language, as well as barriers of time & space.

Concomitant with this international communications experiment and the artistic utilization of advanced technology, is the formation and sustenance of an evolving Network of idealist communicators. This Network is the foundation of the N -tity. The Microchip has made possible the technology to shortly do

CONTENTS:

"THE SIMIAN PROJECT" ©

A LIMITED EDITION PORTFOLIO OF
MAIL BY BERNARD BANVILLE.
BEGIN BY FINDING ENVELOPE (D)
AND READING IT'S CONTENTS
(LETTER [E]).

1982 - Command - Banville

5:55

NUMBER SOME AND
HEAVY HANDED, (TOO
MANY ENVELOPES POSING
AS RED TAPE, ETC.)
SO NEVER GIVING
UP, I WAS ABLE TO

TURN IT INTO A
GOOD LAUGH, AT CUNT,
MYSELF, OR ANYONE.
ALSO, I AM SENDING
"YOU THE PRINT
AS A KIND OF RETURN,
FOR THE ENERGY YOU
PUT INTO THE "MURALS"
(AND THE
EXQUISITE "CATALOGS"
IT WAS GREAT TO
SEE THE SHOW, BUT
IT WAS ESPECIALLY A
PLEASURE TO COMMUNICATE
WITH YOU IN PERSON.
SO, PICTURE ENFORCED,
UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN
NEEDLESSLY,
- BANVILLE -

DEAR CARLO,
HERE IT IS!
WITH FURTHER INSTALL-
MENTS TO COME.
STAY TUNED FOR "MURALS"
"K" AND "L" (WHICH
I AM IN YOUR STUDIO).
ALSO, FINISHED
MY REPLY. (IT STAYED
AWAY A LETTER TO
BANDERS SO NOW I'LL
WRITE ANOTHER ONE)
I STARTED THIS (WITH
THE INTENTION
OF WRITING "MURALS"
[BUT] REALLY) A
SILLY LETTER BUT
REMAINING THE WHOLE
AS YOU - THEN I CAN AT LEAST

REVIVE THE PROJECT
AS A SORT OF
INDEFINITE QUANTITY.
I FUNCTION BETTER
WITHOUT GUIDELINES
OR INTENTIONS.
NOW THE "SIMIAN
PROJECT" IS TAKING
ON THE RIGHT KIND
OF PERSONA.
IT'S OWN MEMORANDUM
GOES WHERE IT WILL.
LOGICALLY, I WANT
TO TAKE NO FOR AN ANSWER
BUT IF I MUST
THEN I CAN AT LEAST

17/25

BERNARD BANVILLE. ENVELOPE. 1983.

away with government postal systems altogether. Communications, and the concept of communications are being wholly revamped for the following historic centuries, as more individuals and groups own and operate ever more sophisticated computer terminals for an almost instant access to seemingly unlimited information and communication.

The evolution of the emergent microchip presents humanity with a new dynamic. If the work of Cezanne and Seurat in the last century were directed to an analysis of light, artists at the end of the 20th century must direct their attentions to the microchip. While intimately connected with the shrinkage of time and space, and continually necessitating accommodations of our internal lives to a constantly changing world, the negative components of the microchip pose a real and most alarming danger.

The handmade is obsolete.

The microchip threatens to destroy our consciousness, and threatens to destroy our sensibility, by dissolving and destroying the existence, the need for, and possibly the significance for, communication. Instant access computer terminal knowledge, that already performs major responsibilities in government, industry, and business, is already creating. The independent, individualistic, non-computer connected, must become increasingly irrelevant.

All of us are being sucked into a whirlpool of continued technological advance which is inevitably robbing us of individuality, will, and humanity. We are gradually and irrevocably losing the ability to think, to feel, to see, to hear, to touch, and to have ideN -tity.

Already we imitate the computer.

We regularly sacrifice quality and substance for participation, and speed, and package everything in a standardized manner, for storage and retrieval, and

this certainly must rob us of breath. We have learned to hide behind the machine, as we have hidden behind fashion. Our wills, imaginations, and abilities are being continually assaulted and sapped, as we lose the ability to create, and to appreciate the eccentric, a process already more than 100 years in motion. We have sacrificed the intimate and the detail, for the massive and the quick.

The insurpassable Mural Art of the 16th Century Must Be Hailed Again. As we are realizing that technology is not necessarily our friend, or savior, its influence already has diminished the idea of the human.

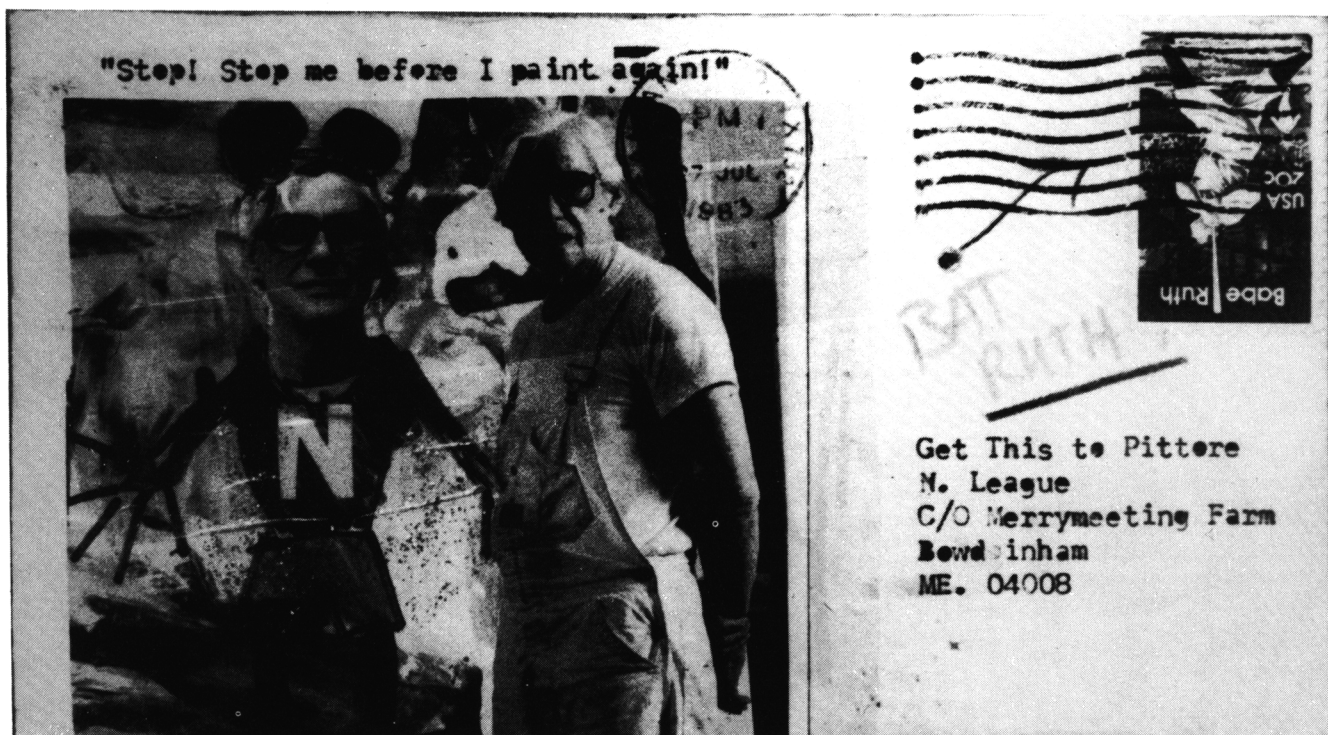
Everyone and everything must fit into standardization imposed by progress. Science, which we hailed at the beginning of this century, has no soul! It is amoral. In our frenetic world, we have lost the ability to savor the sensuous and the sensate in the rush of ever higher speed expectation and profit. As technology continues to get stronger and overwhelms and subjugates us more, fragile art remains as one of the last humanizing forces.

Art is not art for art's sake. Art is a standard of communication, with enormous implications. If creative time equals the time given to create an ideN -tity, Art is both individualistic and communal, and is a denial of selfishness and dehumanizing profit, and our greatest fear, that of nothingness.

The N -tity is our communal comprehensive for mounting a challenge to the onslaught of progressively inhuman technology. The pursuit of the creation of the handmade, and the survival of a humanist community, regardless of its non-utility to the microchip and to profit, represents the greatest challenge to our ability to be, and to choose.

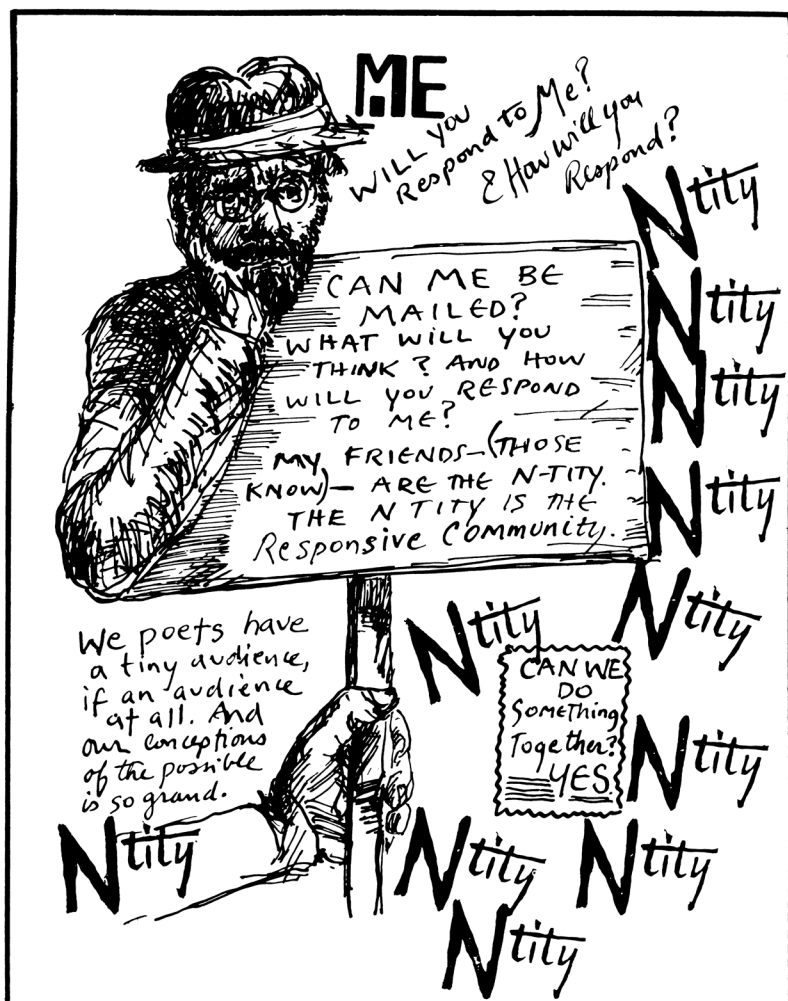
From Cell Me at League Headquarters, Grand MEhattan Island, United States of AMERICA, this is a call to all who hear, to respond. What the Network Hears, and how the Network Responds, is the N -tity.

Post ME P.O. Box 1132, Peter Stuyvesant Station, N.Y.C., 10009



BLASTER. ENVELOPE. 1983.

The network has emerged as one of the major aspects of mail art activity. At issue in the network is the concept of directed correspondence. Network mail artists are those who choose to correspond with other network mail artists. In the process of sending and receiving messages they build a larger, communal communicative entity. N-tity, besides being a play on words, is a comment also on print media uses of the letter N as stand-in for the word nuclear. A lively interest in language and the expression of verbal ideas is something that Mail Art Now shares with Mail Art Then.



CARLO PITTORE. ANNOUNCEMENT. 1983. Courtesy Carlo Pittore.

THE P.A.N. PROJECT

by Mark Bloch

A five year project is coming to a close. The P.A.N. Project wasn't always meant to be an experiment. It just turned out that way. This report is dedicated to every person who ever sent me a piece of mail.

Mark Bloch has used mail creatively since early childhood. In 1977, while attending Kent State University, Bloch sends rubber stamped and stickered postcards to friends and relatives. Summer 1978—Bloch graduates, moves to Laguna Beach, California; continues to mail. January 9, 1979, Bloch suggests a "postal art network" to Kim Kristensen, who is still in Kent. They will be PAN West and Midwest, respectively. Michael Heaton in Manhattan becomes PAN East. Bloch reads *THE RUBBER STAMP ALBUM* by J. Miller and L. Thompson and establishes contact with E.F. Higgins in New York. Bloch sees a notice for VILE stapled to a tree in Venice, California by M. Mollett and writes Bill Gaglione in San Francisco. PAN begins to snowball. People Bloch works with catch on and use "pan" as a noun, as in "Send me some pan." Bloch has moved from rubber stamps and stickers to collage on postcards. Bloch starts the Eighties by asking dozens of people to send addresses of their 80 most interesting friends. Many respond. Bloch receives progressively more from the International Network and switches from postcards to envelopes full of "recyclable" material. Bloch is fascinated by anything postal. What began as a way of getting his correspondence appreciated by friends becomes an obsession. Bloch and friends hang a poster declaring "Support The Postal Arts" at the Newport Harbor Art Museum which Robert Rauschenberg and others sign. Bloch receives a note from John Cage saying "Best wishes with correspondence" via Heaton in New York. May 1980—Cavellini visits west coast of the U.S. Bloch is there and meets many mail artists. A series of tributes follows. Addiction to Cavellini spreads to Pamela and Terry, Bloch's neighbors at 20431 Sun Valley Drive, Laguna Beach, CA 92651. They rename the house they rent to Bloch the S.C.C.S.C.—Southern California Center for the Study of Cavellini. Bloch names his cat "Cavellini." July 6, 1980—Bloch meets long-time correspondents Reva and Maia for the first tie at Laguna's Main Beach. Raw meat and cowhead are exchanged in plain sight of all in attendance. Event billed as East Meets West. A film is made. Ironically, Bloch's first experience with not being able to keep up with the weekly



"PAN IS PANTHEIST ART." Summer 1981. Mark Bloch, Venice Beach, California. Bloch reads a lecture from a blank book with his mouth taped shut. Mark Bloch collection.

Mark Bloch says: "There is a direct correlation between my performance and mail work. I use the mail to document my performances. And the art of working on my mail often becomes a performance piece. Wanting a particular post mark on my mail, I will work from waking up to the last possible moment, growing more frantic as time slips away, with the entire process culminating in my arrival at the window at the General Post Office."

deluge of mail follows. Bloch, jobless, applies for a job with the U.S. Postal Service, is offered a position as a mail carrier in Beverly Hills but must decline due to a less-than-perfect driving record. Finally, a new job (unrelated to mail) provides enough cash to resume Pan Project in the form of xeroxed postcards. Bloch creates PANMAG (ISSN 0738-4777) to document his work as a performance artist. November 16, 1980—Bloch distributes PANMAG 451 and works on mail art in the window of the Fahrenheit 451 bookstore in Laguna Beach. A table is set up on the street where passers-by do postal art. Early 1981—Bloch and Barry Berg give lecture on mail art to about 40 people at Saddleback College. Slides are shown, mail is displayed, PANMAG 2, featuring art sent to Berg, is distributed. Bloch impersonates Cavellini. Bloch announces

the Last Mail Art Show as a reaction to the international glut of mail art shows. Bloch meets Zack, Dreva, Spiegelman, Mollett, Scooter, Meade and other LA mail artists. Bloch meets Judith Hoffberg and stays in her studio while she is in Australia. He reads voraciously, sorts the P.A.N. archives, and decides to move to New York. May 1982—Bloch moves into the M'webwe Institute in Manhattan's East Village. Fall 82—Cavellini visits New York. Bloch performs at Club Armageddon with other mail artists in a tribute to GAC. Bloch meets long-time correspondent Carlo Pittore, who influences The Pan Project. 1983—Emmett Walsh visits New York en route to Europe. May 1983—Pittore invites Bloch to join himself, H.Y.P.E., John Evans, and others in initiating Heather Taylor's Great Mail Art Supply Store on Long Island. Bloch impersonates Ray Johnson. Late 1983—Bloch meets Johnson, then Ed Plunkett. Bloch realizes how limited his experience in mail art is. Bloch spends the last days of 1983 contacting people who have "dropped out" of the network for the Last Mail Art Show. "One must catch the fever that is the network."

Observations: The Network is an excellent way to communicate one-to-one with like-minded souls. Shows are good for exposure but the real shows are each artist's individual archives. Receiving mail daily is the heart of mail art. One feels rewarded on a good mail day. In mail art there is justice. Mail artists get what they deserve. Mail art is a connection to the world. No mail means a severed connection. It hurts. One cannot casually be a mail artist. One must catch the fever that is the network. The network could not have been created by any one person. My early attempts to form a Network were forced to succumb to the larger network. Mail art has a life of its own and we are it. It is a living entity, a way of transforming, a process, not an object. I realize my own work thus far has had to do with ideas, not objects, being sent. My work has become increasingly verbal, with an emphasis on mail rather than art.

The future: In 1983 I am a mail artist. It is what I think about most. Mail art is like a lover one cannot forget. The PAN Plan ends January 9, 1984. The Last Mail Art Show will be the culmination of this project. 1979-84 was spent methodically reaching out to the mail art network. I feel myself moving away from abstraction, toward the metaphor of Pan, the goat-god of antiquity. P.A.N. is dead—long live Pan.

ON MAIL ART: DOO-DA POSTAGE WORKS

by E.F. Higgins III



E.F. Higgins III. *DOO-DA POSTAGE WORKS*. 1978. E.F. Higgins III collection.

Within the framework of Mail Art, many artists work with artist stamps; both rubber and postal type. C.T. Chew, Buster Cleveland, Pat Beilman and others use color copiers extensively for the creation of multi-colored stamps. The Cracker Jack Kid aka Chuck Welch of Omaha, Henning Mitendorf from Frankfurt and Harry Fox from Florida use traditional etching printing to create beautiful stamp works. Among artists with rubber stamps are Anna Banana, John Jacobs, Bill Gaglione, Cavellini, E.A. Vigo, Citizen Kafka and a host of others.

Many of these artists have developed countries, logos, aka's, cancellation marks, pseudo-characters and individual alphabets in conjunction with their stampwork. Carlo Pittore's "Post me" stamp and mail art magazine from NYC extol the virtues of self-historification as does Italy's G.A. Cavellini.

Annie Whittler, Madam X and Judy Malloy publish books and magazines to personas of their own invention. Lon Spiegelman, Al Ackerman, Vittore Baroni and others have recently attempted to define "mail art" through writings on this phenomenon published

in catalogues from mail art shows.

Hubert Kretzschmar, the Galantois and Peter Below regularly with self-published post cards, stamps and other mail art ephemera.

James W. Felter of Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, Canada has organized shows of mail art and has assembled at Simon Fraser University one of the most extensive collections of artists stamps.

Unfortunately, I have yet to hear of any individual stamp or mail artist receiving a N.E.A., New York State CAPS grant or other funding available to artists working in more traditional mediums.



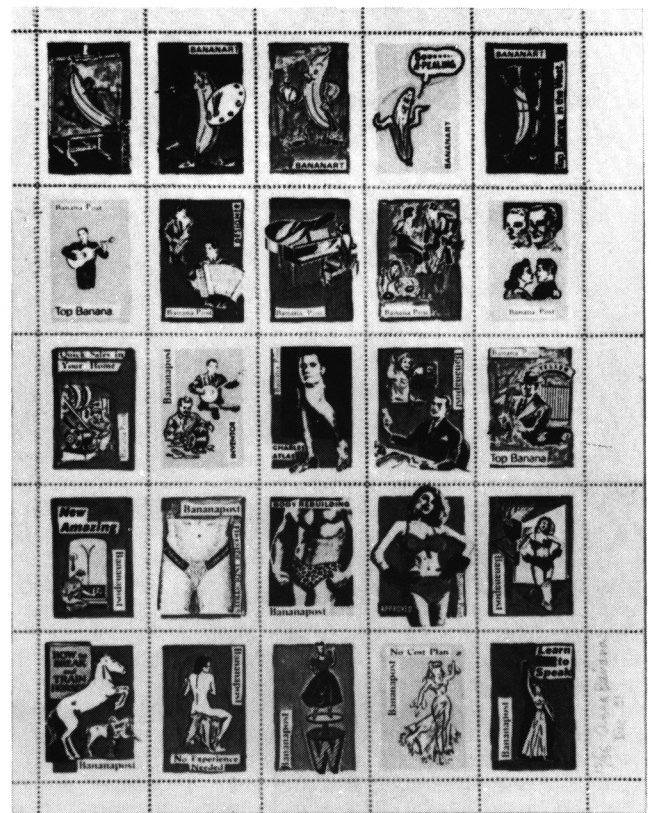
E.F. Higgins III. *"Portrait of the Artist"* 1981. E.F. Higgins III collection.



Patrick Beilman. *Last Day of Issue*. 1983. Courtesy Patrick Beilman.



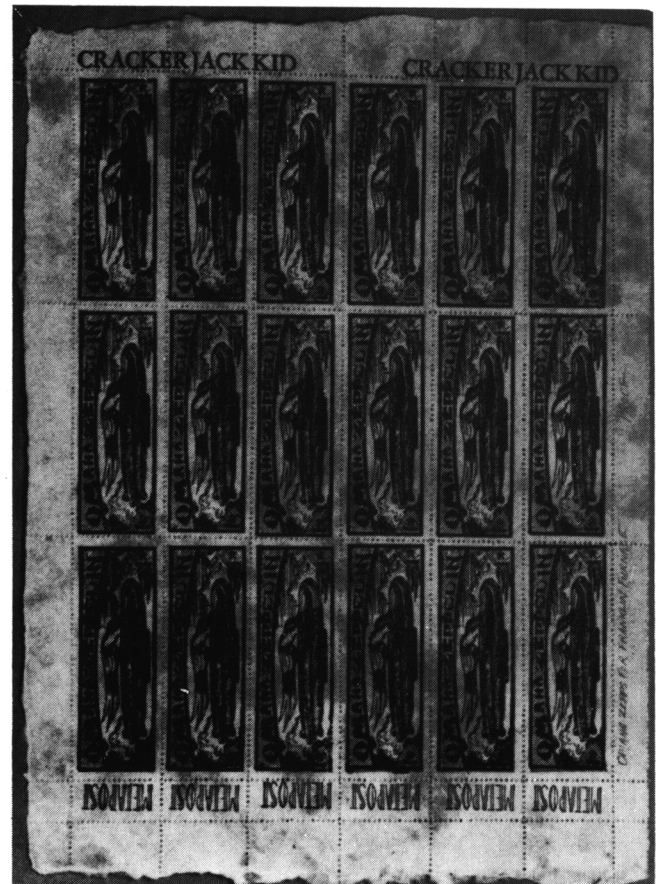
Buster Cleveland. Stamps/Rubber Stamps. 1983.
Courtesy Buster Cleveland.



Anna Banana. Stamps. 1981. Ronny Cohen collection.



Carlo Pittore. Stamps. 1983. Courtesy Carlo Pittore.



Cracker Jack Kid. Metapost. 1983. Printed on handmade paper. Courtesy Cracker Jack Kid.

As a participant in the Mail Art network for 8 years, I, like the rest of you, have a "regular or irregular" life as well. For some of us, Mail Art is our main fortai', our main art form . . . For some, it's a spin off or extension of previous artistic concerns extrapolated through the "eternal network". For some, Correspondence is the correspondance of communication, . . . For some, this new idea, introduced through a local mail art show they happened into, is a heady, WOW! or puberty stretching it's pants into this newly discovered dimension of art as previously un-mentioned by the MUSEUMS, ART MAGS, Collections, etc. etc. . . .

For some, Mail Art is an open-ended phenomenon of diverse realities, to be collected, catalogued, commented about and hope they buy the bit. (or at least the artifact, or a last "my collection of Ray Johnsons, so's I can put my kids through college".)

For some, Mail Art is a way to meet new art . . . maybe people . . . maybe sensibilities . . . maybe get married.

For some, Mail Art is a way to let one's spirit soar; when in jail, or when repressed or when the local geeks are buying the HEAVIES at the back of the gallery at your one man show in Oshtabula, Montana or Osaka, Japan, or when you are the local geek and except for the extenuating circumstances, you'd be selling the stuff in the back room . . . or be doing it.

(IT AIN'T CALLED MAIL ART FOR NOTHING)

When your shoes are gone, when you're practically out of stamps or friends, or beer, or practically nothing makes any sense, and the paint you bought is the wrong color, and suddenly you don't feel like painting anyway — and who is that person, and who are those kids? and what the hell am I doing here anyway? . . . gotta get some new shoelaces, but I bet ya a case of beer the damn shoes go first . . . never any trouble with the tops . . . they always wear well. Don't know how that is

Anyway, no matter what, ya can always find a stamp, I don't care if you have to steam it off a . . . never mind, . . . do Mail Art.

For some, Mail Art is a soapbox, Radio Free Somewhere, Modius Operendi, on the friends on the road, when Hitchiking.

For some, Mail Art is nothing more than a passing fancy, a fast lay, a parade, a hupla and then . . . "Amaze your friends, be the first on your block"

For some, Mail Art has been disappointing . . .

For some, Mail Art has been gratifying.

For some, Mail Art has been alot of shit mixed in with some pearls.

For some, Mail Art has been graffiti.

For some, Mail Art has been brought together kindred souls.

For some, Mail Art has brought together the type of people that wouldn't give each other a second glance had they only met the first time in person.

For some, Mail Art has brought together idiots, assholes, and n'er-do-wells.

For some, Mail Art has brought together learned persons of amazing wit, verve, and resources.

For some, Mail Art was just something to do for awhile.

For some, Mail Art was something to do forever.

For some reason, Mail Art takes up a portion of my "regular, or irregular" life. Copyright May, 1983 . . . EF. Higgins III, N.Y.C."



Henning Mittendorf, E. F. Higgins III. Stamp Art Pass-Along Piece. 1983.

A CONVERSATION WITH MIKE CRANE

Interview by Ronny Cohen

Mike Crane is co-editor of *Correspondence Art: Source Book for the Network of International Postal Art Activity*, San Francisco: Contemporary Arts Press, 1984.

RC: Why mailart?

MC: I'm an artist and have been involved with the network since 1974. The communicative aspects of mailart have always been a primary interest of mine. The book started as a means of getting in touch with people.

RC: What does the book cover?

MC: The book, which has been six years in the making, is an historical anthology offering in-depth look at mail art from 1958 to 1978. Some materials even dealt with the 1980s. Among topics and issues discussed are the definition, origins and world-wide spread of mail art. Essays by 26 different authors as well as 300 illustrations are featured in this 500 page work. Readers will find the lists of exhibitions and publications useful.

RC: The theme of the Franklin Furnace mail art show is *Mail Art: Then and Now*. What in your opinion were the dominant characteristics of mail art "then", that is to say early mail art?

MC: What typifies the early work are personal activity and cross-communications. For me, 1958-68 define the first generation of mail artists. Ray Johnson and the NYCS, Fluxus people like Ken Friedman and the New Realists in France were the principle participants.

conceptual artists and concrete poets. Important individuals on this continent included Clemente Padin and Jorge Glusberg. Terry Reid was very important in Australia and New Zealand. In Japan, significant roles were played Yukata Matsuzawa and Jun Micokami. In Eastern Europe, one has to stress the Czech artist Milan Knizak and Group Aktual, whose happenings and mail pieces served as a link between first and second generation artists. Other active and regular Eastern European participants in the early 1970s include Czech artists Pter Stembera, J.H. Kocman, Jiri Valoch who did rubber stamps and concrete poetry, Hungarian artist Endre Tot and Yugoslavian artist Miroljub Todorovic. In Western Europe, the most significant second generation mail artist who did the most to spread knowledge of the existence of the network around was Klaus Groh, the West German artist. Klaus Staeck, another West German known for his post cards and placards, and Hans Oiseau-Kalkman sent out ecological and environmental-oriented messages and statements. In France, the writer Jean-Marc Poinot, author of the important anthology *Mail Art: Communication A Distance Concept* (1971) and organizer of the mail art show for the 1971 Paris Biennale did much to make people aware of mail art activities. Important French mail artists of this era include Christian Boltanski, Jochen Gerz, Jacques Charlier. Major

Zack, Peter Whitson aka Whitson Dadà, Tony Mew.

RC: You have just given an idea of the spread in numbers of participants that occurred in 1968-73. What followed?

MC: The entry of the next generation in 1973-76. This was due to the activities of the second generation. At this time, the era of the mail art shows start with the Ray Johnson exhibit at the Whitney Museum of American Art in 1970. The Omaha Flow System Show held at the Joselyn Museum in Omaha, Nebraska was significant as a model of the type of all-inclusive, large mailing list mail art show still being done today.

This was also a period of quick-print mail art publications. Together, the shows and publications lent self-consciousness or self-identity to mail art.

A list of significant third generation mail artists would have to include Buster Cleveland, EF. Higgins, Sir Q, Steve Hitchcock, Uncle Dan, Michael Mollett, R. Mutt, Al Souza, Michael Crane. In France, Fred Forest, Julien Blaine; in England, Paul Cater; in Canada Ed Varney; in West Germany, Angelika Schmidt; in East Germany, Robert and Ruth Efffeldt, Rolf Staeck; in Holland, Ulises Carrion; in Italy, G.A. Cavellini; in Poland, Pawel Petasz; in Latin America, Paolo Bruscky, Leonhard F. Duch; in Japan, Tohei Horike.

RC: What is the next stage?

MC: From 1976 to 1979 exhibitions and publications increased substantially

MC: All continents except Antarctica were touched by mail art activities...

RC: How then did mail art activities develop?

MC: I see another generational spread occurring in 1968-73. I believe the potential in the identification of mail art as a truly international network and a spirit of cooperation happened during these years. At this time, artists were actively looking for alternative means of communications. And mail art was one of them and it spread around the world.

RC: What were some of the significant centers of mail art activities in 1968-73?

MC: All continents except Antarctica were touched by mail art activities in this period. During the second generation time a real locus of energy was Canada with the Cora Sponge Dance school of Vancouver, Image Bank, Western Front. In South America, various activities were initiated by groups which included

English mail artists in this period include David Mayor who published Beau Geste Press together with Felipe Ehrenberg; Genesis P-Orridge and Cosy Fanni Tutti, both of whom were well known for their explicit sexual and sado-masochistic things — they were busted for indecent uses of the mail; Robin Crozier, Stephen Kukowski and his Blitzinformation, and Pauline Smith.

Switzerland boasted John Armleder and Ecart Press in Geneva. In Holland, Peter van Beveran, a major rubber stamper, and poet Michael Gibbs were significant.

RC: What about the U.S.?

MC: While it is impossible to list everyone, significant second generation participants include Lowell Darling, Stu Horn aka Northwest Mounted Valise; Dana Atchley aka Ace Space Company, Anna Banana, Bill Gaglione, David

in numbers. There have been as many shows since 1980 as there were in the decades 1970 to 1980. After 1976, the spreading has become horizontal. There are phenomenal changes in numbers more than content. The late 1970s into the 1980s has been a time of specialization for mail art. Various media, including audio tapes, are being explored.

RC: After all your research and deep involvements in mail art what do you like best about it?

MC: Its character depends on tomorrow's postal delivery. Mail art can change tomorrow. That is what keeps it intriguing. It is a clearing house, a matrix for communications for its users. Mail art is an open channel. And, finally, I learned from my research that mail art is like other art."

by Fatima Bercht, Josely Carvalho

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printed images, maps, letterings, rubberstamps, etc.); the ephemeral nature of the works' support; the use of mechanical means of reproduction when the work is conceived to be available in multiple copies; and, above all, their intention to use the postal system as the means of distribution.

"Mail art" has been produced in Latin America for at least the past fifteen years. In the early 70's artists did works in which the postal system played a decisive role in both conception and realization. In many cases this entailed the participation of other individuals, who through the mail, would contribute, alter, and circulate an idea-work conceived by another artist. Geo-political barriers were overcome; isolation was overcome. Soon, mail art, as produced by artists in Latin America, became a vehicle for expression of political dissent. In Latin America, the decade of the 70's also marks the rise of military dictatorships in the region. If one studies the mail art collaborative projects produced during this period, it becomes clear that mail art had become an expression of political opinion for Latin Americans. Mail art allowed political dissent during the worst periods of official censorship, which were zealously applied to artists and intellectuals. During this period an international network of mail artists was established. It not only exchanged mail-works. It provided the opportunity to express solidarity, to communicate among themselves, provide information regarding the jailing of its members or the disappearance of relatives to comment on the tragedy of exile and the traumatic



CLEMENTE PADIN 1983

events in countries like Chile, Brazil, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Argentina, and Uruguay.

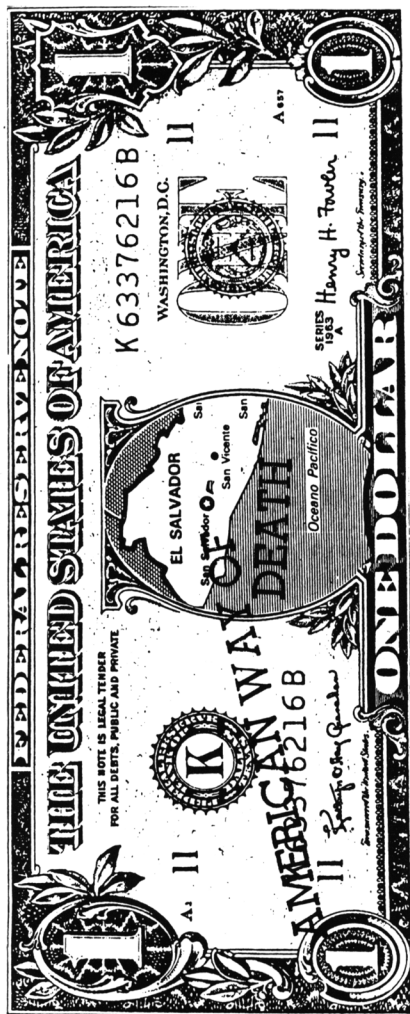
Solidarity Art by Mail has used the postal system to organize an exhibition of Latin American artists. Mail artists have joined painters, performance artists, printmakers, photographers and graphic artists in responding to this call.

The exhibition of Solidarity Art by Mail was held at Judson Memorial Church, New York City (January 21st-February 4th, 1984.).

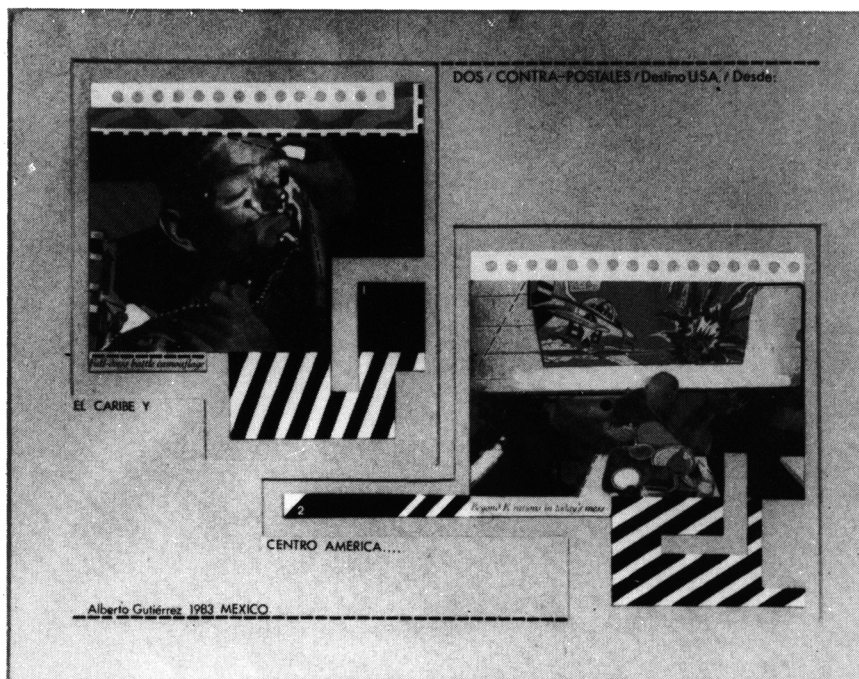


GUILLERMO DEISLER 1983.

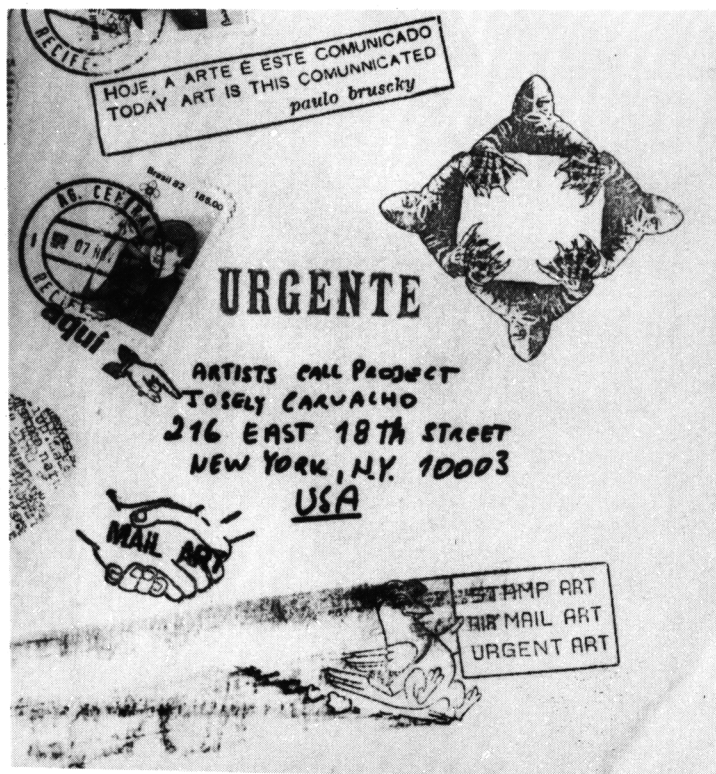
LUIS ALBERTO DE HERRERA 1983



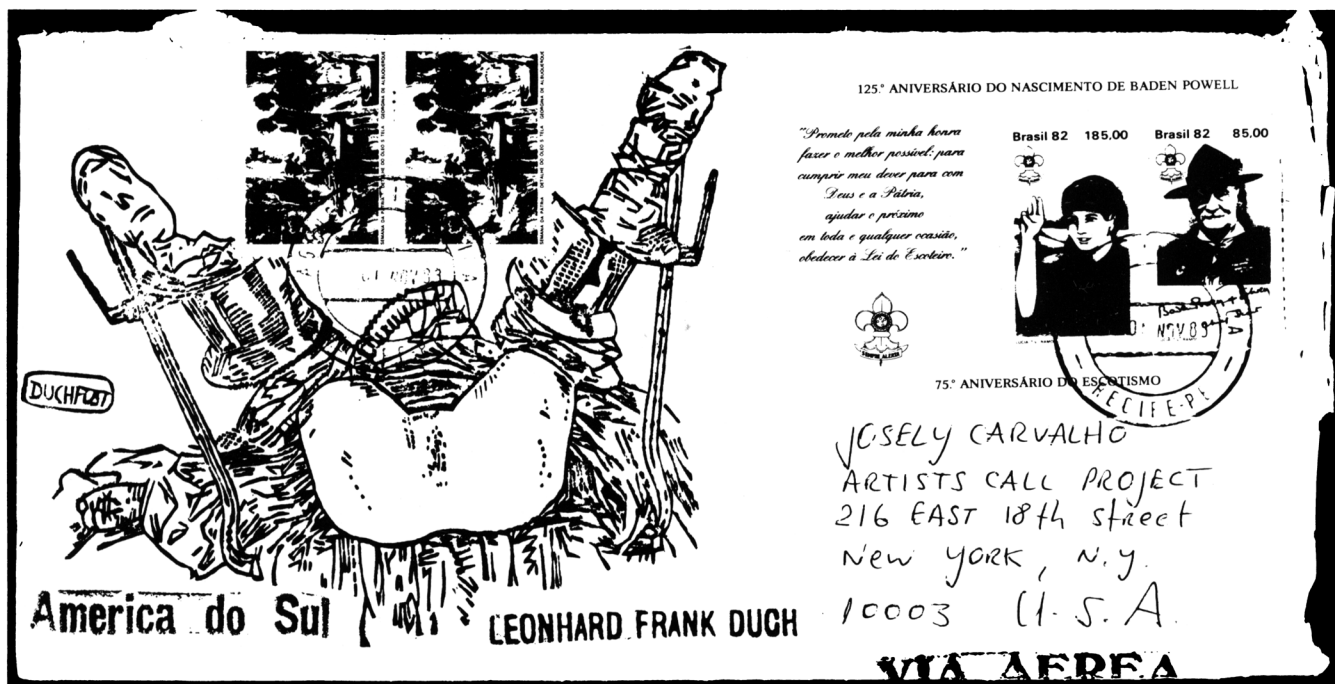
A. DE ARAUJO 1983



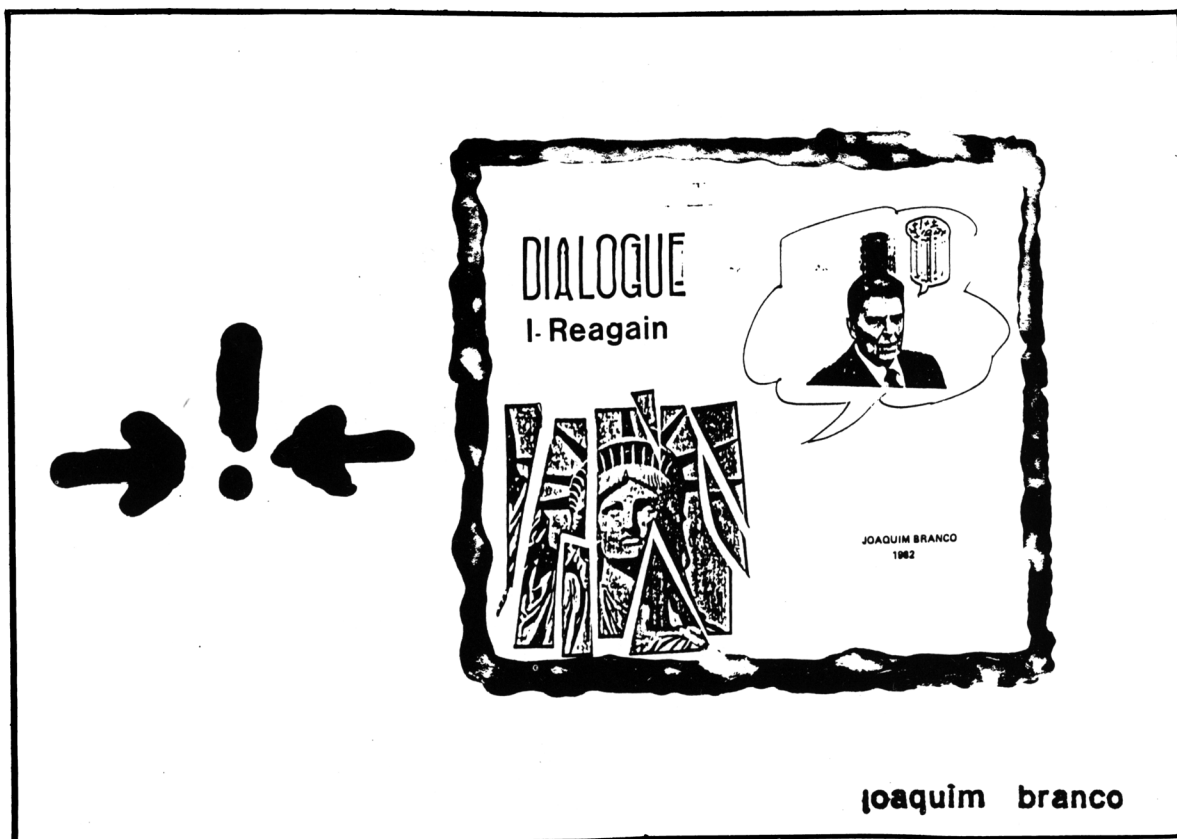
ALBERTO GUTIERREZ 1983



PAULO BRUSCKY 1983



LEONHARD FRANK DUCH 1983.

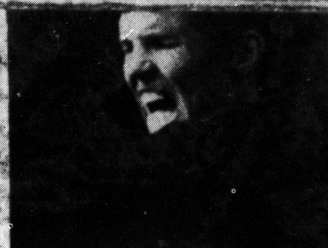


JOAQUIM BRANCO 1983

EL SALVADOR



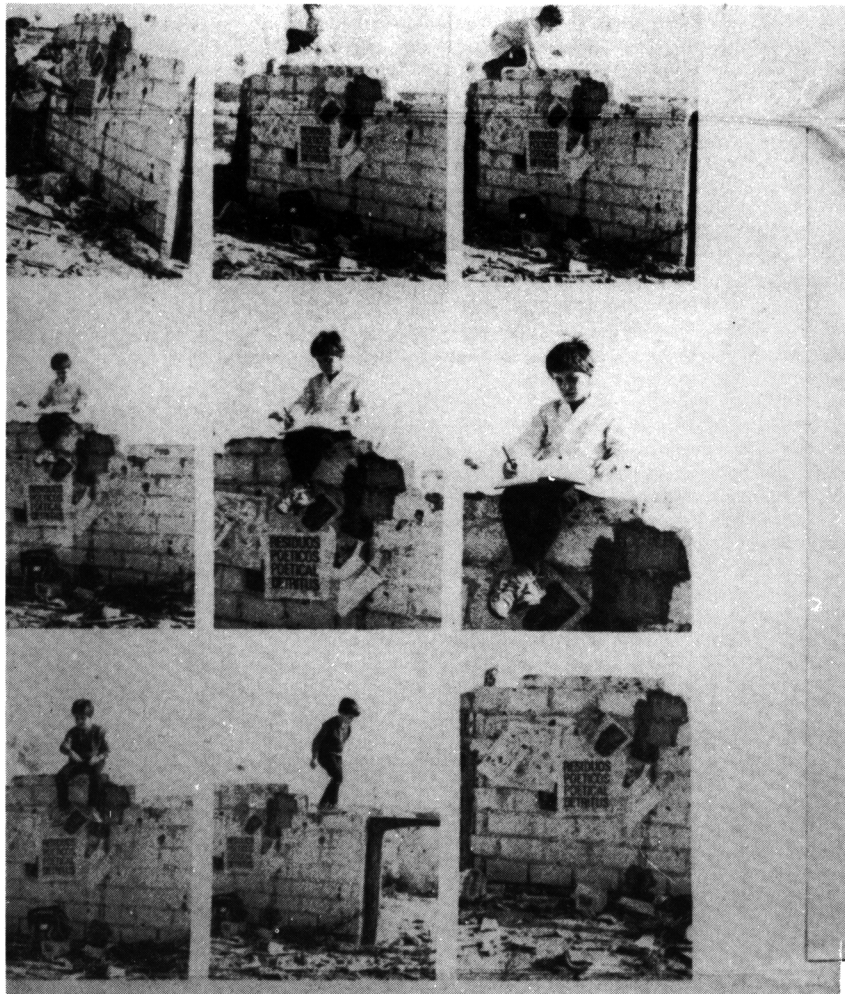
NICARAGUA



GRANADA

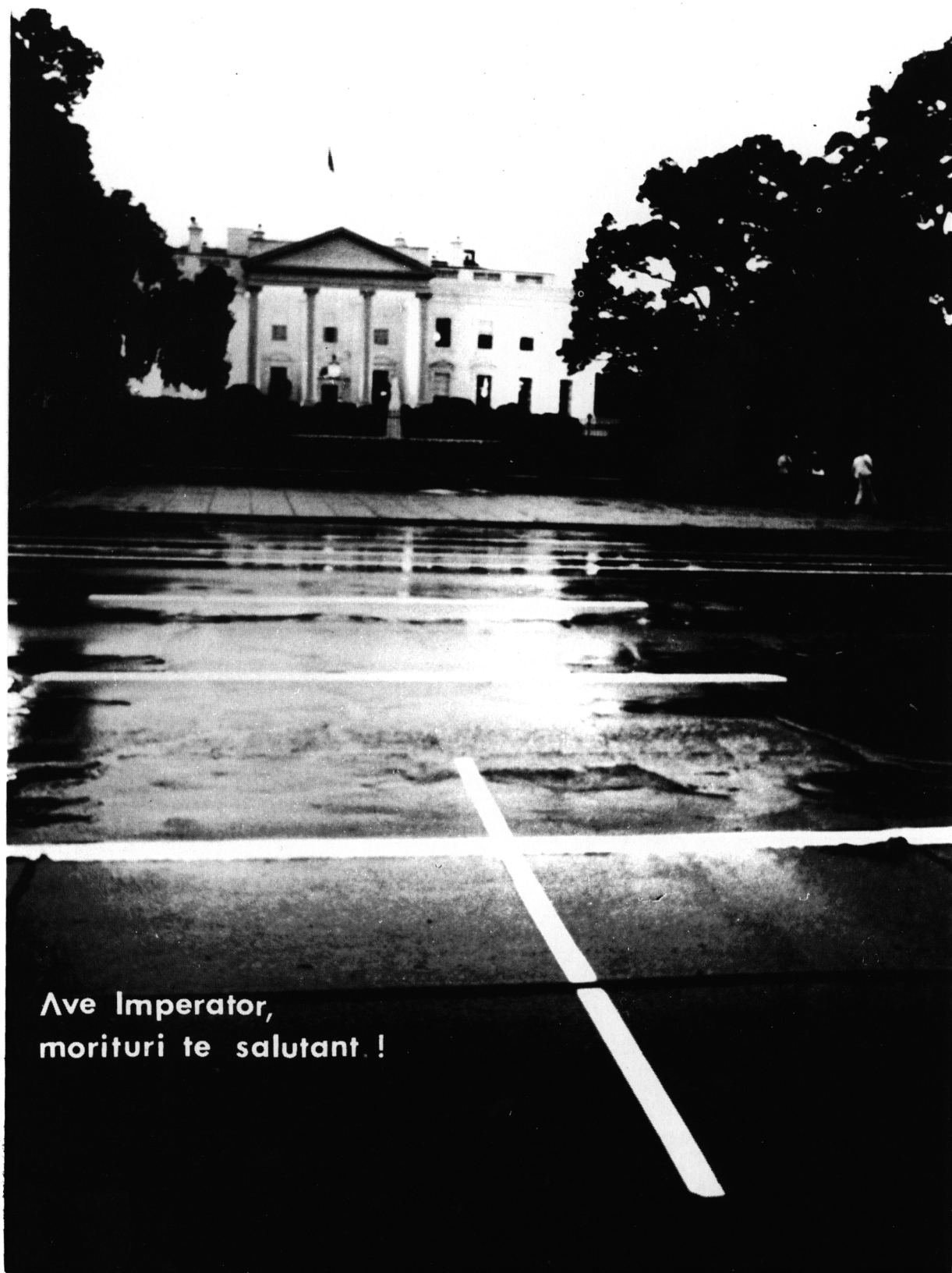
MALVINAS





THE ACTUAL
GLORIES OF
MARGINALITY
MUST DO
HONOUR TO
THE (ED)
CON FUSION'
NEWBORN
(HU)MAN

GRACIELA G. MARX 1982





ELLEN RUMM used the story of *Susanna and the Elders* to investigate how the individual is manipulated and subsumed by popular culture, a force created and supported by ourselves. The installation was entitled "Natural Hazards". (September 21-October 22)



"WE. . .", an installation of videotapes, books and photographs by PETER D'AGOSTINO surveyed 10 years of his work confronting personal and cultural codes of perception, language, structure and ideology. (October 26-November 26)

Photo: Marty Heitner

Performances



TONY MASCATELLO's "Morning, Noon and Nite," took the audience through the day of an alcoholic artist in a madcap, surrealistic performance. (October 27)

JOHANNA WENT brought her ritualistic rock-n-roll extravaganza from Los Angeles to Franklin Furnace. She chanted, assaulted the audience with homemade objects, and performed on an elaborate stage set with a host of props including dildoes, animal carcasses and blood. Music by Mark Wheaton. (October 6)



"Jack Johnson," FRED HOLLAND's "real" time exploration of the legendary black boxer, incorporated a grueling training session, taped reminiscences, reenactments of scenes from Johnson's life, and a boxer dance to create an echo between present and past. (October 20)



California artist RACHEL ROSENTHAL moved from "Kabuki-esque" to storytelling to corporate style lecture, through the conscious and unconscious, to pursue a new hope for humanity in "Traps". (November 3)

Photos by Benita Abrams

We gratefully acknowledge funds received for the FF performance series from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, and the Jerome Foundation.



Photos by Benita Abrams

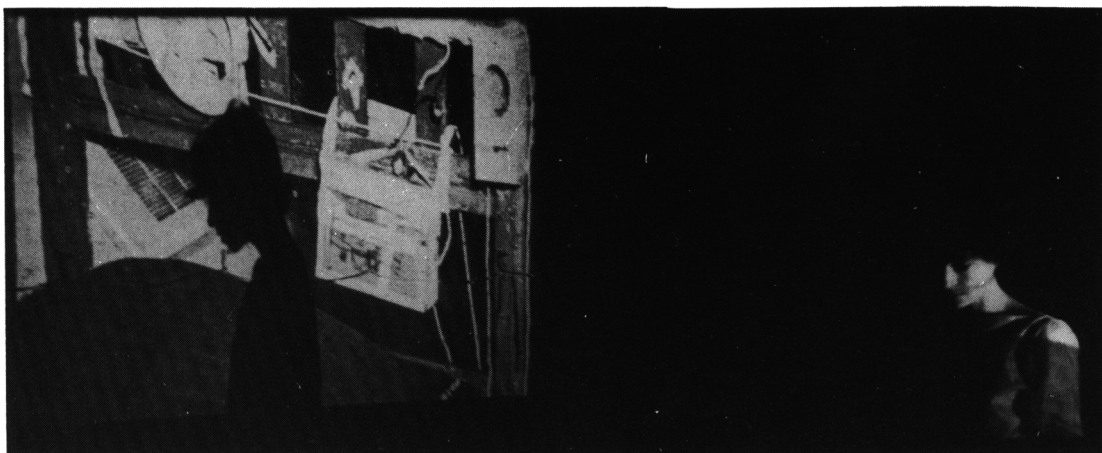
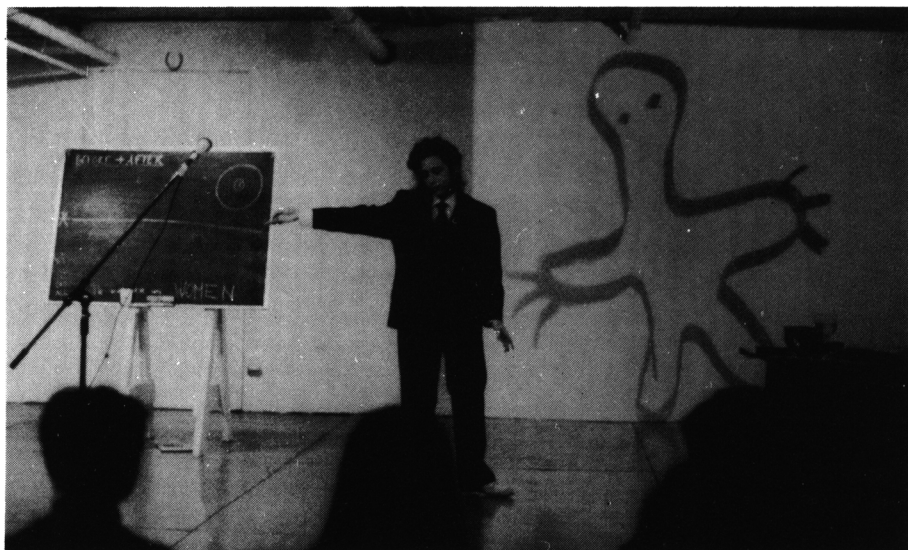
HARRY KIPPER performed another of his outrageous pieces entitled "Actor Says Goodnight" in which he narrated dog fights, shot arrows at water filled balloon-people, and had dialogues with himself. On a shared bill, KAREN FINLEY performed a nonstop verbal rampage through various states of mind, dress, comedy, and pathos in "I Like the Dwarf on the Table, When I Give Him Head." (September 22)



Photo: Marty Heitner

"Men Are Circles; Men Are Spears," explored the sexual identities, fears, and hang-ups, of the three artists: HERB PERR, ROBERT LANDY, and IRVING WEXLER. Using confessional slide narration, reminiscent of West Coast feminist performance work, these men confronted material publicly which is often avoided even in private. (October 13)

BETH LAPIDES lectured, sang, projected objects and drawings to explore the relationship of identity, dreams, particle physics, and decision making in "Having Fun in the Dark". (September 29)



Bruno Bettelheim's case study of Joey, a boy who feared he would run out of power while sleeping, inspired BARBARA DUYFJES' "Sleep Tight" performance. Accompanied by Jed Speare's soundscore, slides and film, BARBARA DUYFJES' live actions explored sleep positions, power, insomnia, and technology. (December 8)



LENORA CHAMPAGNE performed two works: "Manna" and "Flying Home". Movement and stories took her through a southern beauty queen background to a different understanding of compassion and politics. (December 1)

Photos by Benita Abrams

The Mail Art show has brought in many interesting works, as well as catalogs from other shows. Following the exhibition we plan to establish a mail art file for all items sent in for the show and for the materials currently in the collection. I hope that Franklin Furnace continues to receive mail art both for the stimulation of the staff and for our collection. I am especially interested in mail art catalogs and other types of documentation. If you have such materials please consider donating a copy to us. We have a good start at the fine collection, one that is accessible to the general public, it would be exciting to see it improve over time.

We gratefully acknowledge and thank the following artists, publishers, organizations and others who have donated books, periodicals, audio works and printed matter to the Franklin Furnace Archive since September 1982. Apologies to those who have been inadvertently left out of this list. We will try to include them in a future issue in the *FLUE*.

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|------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| M Aballea | E Crawford | Hard Press | A Marinai |
| P Adrian | R Cristobal | E A Havelock-Bailie | Kathryn Markel Gallery |
| J Affelder | J Cutler-Shaw | J Henry | J Marron |
| S Altman | E K Darton | D Henes | Media Space |
| Alive | D R Deakin | S Hendrick | M Metz |
| J Aminoff | C DeJung | G Hendricks | V Mens |
| J Andrews | J Demaree | J Hendricks | P Echevarria Meyers |
| X Anleo | A Demmerest | E Hicks | J Meyer |
| Another Room | De Novo Press | D Higgins | R Michaels |
| E Antin | S DeSando | P Hocks | A Miller |
| Optical Gesture | L S De Oliveira | J Hoffberg (Umbrella) | J Miller |
| D Arndt | A Dougherty | M Hogan | R Milazzo |
| M Arnold | G Dover | E Honig | D Milliken |
| Artspace | M Dritschel | C Hooker | Museum of Modern Art |
| Art Hazards News | P Dubroff | S Horvitz | D Moore |
| Art Contemporain | S Durland | T Hsieh | H Munson |
| Art Metropole | J Dupuy | H Huisman | M Nannucci |
| Astro Artz | 80 Langston Street | P Huttering | ND |
| L Bach | N Einreinhafer | J Ingberman | L Neaderland |
| S Balassanian | E Eller | B Irland | J Nechvatal |
| D Baldwin | R Ellison | S Jackson | F A Nettelback |
| A Bealy | S Elwood | Just Above Midtown (Black Current) | B Nieslong |
| Liza Bear | S Erenberg | W Kaiser | R Nonas |
| Beck & Jung | L Erickson (Wedgepress & Cheese) | B Kalberg | H Oh |
| J Bennett | K Eubel | Kalejdoskop | A Olafsdottir |
| M Berghash | W Farancz | C Kasnowski | Optic Graphics, Inc. |
| A Bernstein | S Faye | J van Kerkwijk | Orchard Gallery |
| Bettina | J Fekner | R Kern | L Ori |
| D Beube | H Fisher | M Klivar | K Osborn |
| Bibliotheek Stedelijk | A Ferro | A Knowles | M Owen |
| M Bienvenue | L Fisher | A Knutson | R Pace |
| I Bitzan | S Fishbein | S Krizan | A Paci |
| Black & Red Publishers | F-stop Fitzgerald | J Kramer | F Palaoa |
| R Blitt | N Frangione | E Kulas | M Palumbo |
| Bomb | L Fredenthal (Waterdrinkers) | K Lambert | R Peci |
| Z Bowery | L Fulton (Dust Books) | T Lane | S Penland-Mace |
| B Brace | Z Funk | Lapp Princess Press | R Perin |
| T Braustein | S Garrison | B Lastname | S Petroff |
| K Brown | H Gee | B Laurin | J Petterssen |
| B Buzack | A Geiger | H Lauridsen | M Peven |
| California State Univ | M Geller | T Lausten | D Piepol |
| Cahiers | GE | R Laxson | M Pilz |
| Capt Collage | S Gerson | Learner & Turner | S Plass |
| J Carson | S Gilbert | W Levy | E Plunkett |
| Cavellini | Gimpel Fils | Lightworks Magazine | S Postman |
| CEPA Gallery | G Gini | D Lindsay | S Polsky |
| A Chaiklin | J Glantzman | L Lippard | F Poole |
| D W Chang | C Gleber | Lotta Poetica | I Poole & J Balingit (Blades) |
| L Childs | E Gomez | M Lovejoy | H Pott |
| V Christian | K Gongdon | M Loytred-Hardegg | A Pou |
| J Cohn | J Goode | P Lyssiotis | Processed World |
| G Colombo | D Graham | J Macher | E Putzar |
| N Colp | K Groh | A MacLennan | S Random |
| C Cone | T Grothus | D Mahler | S Rosillo |
| J Cordella (Art/Life) | G Griffin | G Malanga | J Rasenberger |
| C Cowles | N Hall | M Manen (LeoMat) | The Real Comet Press |

We have altered our method of storing the collection from lateral files to metal shelving. Oversized books are now in flat files, as are posters and broadsides. We plan to begin building proper enclosures sometime in 1984. This project will take an estimated four years to complete at which time the collection will be accessible via a catalog.

We are now in the midst of an inventory of the entire collection along with a retrospective cataloging project. The catalog will include books, periodicals, audio work and significant ephemera published or distributed between 1960 and 1970. The tentative date of publication is the winter of 1985.

S Resnik
S Richards
L Ripple
W Robinson
W Ropiecki
L Rosbotham
M Rosenberg
D Rot
B Roth
J Ross
B Ruhe
A Ruppertsberg
P Rutkovsky
R Ruston
J A Ryan
E Sauselen
J Schwendenwien
L Seastone
G Serpa (Stampola)
K Sevcik
B Shapiro
K Shaw
I Shwachman
D Silk
J Slöte
J Snyder
C Sokal
B Spector (White Walls)
S Spera
Station Hill Press
G Starks
C Stetsen
R Storr
A Stowe
G Storks
St Scarlatina
P M Summer
B Sussler
T Svnningesen
Swedish Information Service
O Tallinger
Tanam Press
P Thomes
TKO
A Tombellini
F Truck
A Turyn (Top Stories)
Tyler Offset Workshop
U-TURN
Vanity Press/Kupferberg
B Vautier
Video Data Bank
E Vimercati, et al
Visual Studies Workshop
A Vizents
Void Distributors

T Voigt
Vomix
M Wagner
D Walsak
Washington Review
Wedge
T Weigel
L Weiner
G Widmer
S Willats
R Williams
W O Williams
A Wilson
M Wilson
A Wittels
B Wolf
T Wolski
World Works
H Wright
M Yoshida
A Young
A Zahn
J Zaleski
S Zaurian
P Zelevansky
ZONA
R Zybert

SOUTH AMERICAN ARTISTS

Algo Pasa Impresos
M de Aratnha
A Barrios
G Bleus
C Boullosa
P Bruscky
U Carrion
CAYC
C Cross
A De Campos & J Plaza
I De Freitas
G Deisler
R del Llano
E Dittborn
C Echeverry
L Ferrari
A Ferro
B Fonteles
R Franca
Chaves Galeria
A B Geiger
S Genilson
J Glusberg
J Gonzalez
Marco Grupo

R Gusmao
G Gutierrez
Hudnilson, Jr
Inter-Comunicavel
International Assoc of Art Critics
L Katz
R Kay
M Lara
R P Leal
J Marin
M Marin
R Marroquin
A Matuck
A Medieta
C Meirelles
Ogaz & Damaso
H Olea
C Padin
G B Pons
A Parte Do Fogo
G Perez
M C Perlingeiro
E Quorpo
J C Romero
M L Saddi
R Silveira
T Jungle
F G Torres
I Vargas
R Vater
Verhoeven
E Vigo
C Zerpa

MAJOR DONATIONS MADE BY NON-ARTISTS:

Alexandra Anderson
Jeffery Biddle
Quinton Fiore
Jon Hendricks
Ruth and Marvin Sackner
Printed Matter
Arnold Weinberger

Proposals

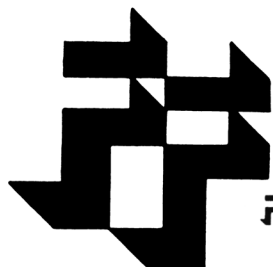
Franklin Furnace welcomes performance and exhibition proposals for the 1984-85 season. We are also interested in collaborative exhibition proposals and hope you will send us your ideas for such projects. PROPOSAL DEADLINE: APRIL 30, 1984. Include a description of what you would like to do here and documentation of past work (slides, cassette tapes, videotapes). Address proposals to Performance / Exhibition Panel, Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin St., NY, NY 10013.

Artists who would like to perform in our monthly Sunday Night at the Performances program are welcome to send an informal letter/proposal to curators Ann Rosenthal and Bill Gordh at Franklin Furnace. Four short performances (under 20 minutes) are presented at each SNAP. Proposals are accepted anytime.

FOUND Language

FOUND LANGUAGE, an exhibition of artworks in which quotation of spoken or written language from other sources is a primary element will be held at Franklin Furnace in May of 1984. The show will include recent work in any two- or three-D medium, music/audio works, and video works. If you do work in which language or text from other sources is a primary element, please send 5 slides, resume, brief statement regarding your use of language in your art, an SASE, and/or any other pertinent documentation to: Larry List, 303 Park Avenue South, N.Y., N.Y. 10010 on or before 29th, 1984. Materials sent without an SASE cannot be returned.

BECOME AN INTERN AT

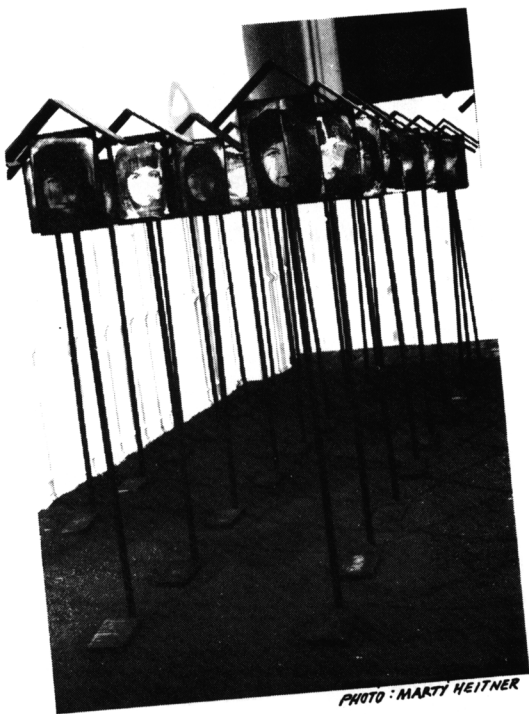


**F R A N K L I N
F U R N A C E**



PERFORMANCE

Franklin Furnace, a museum in Lower Manhattan, offers students an opportunity to work closely with the staff of an exciting arts organization. An alternative space for emerging artists, Franklin Furnace exhibits installation work and book art, presents two performance series, and houses the largest collection of artists' books in the United States. We are also proud recipients of a recent challenge grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.



INSTALLATION

Students may work within several areas of this contemporary art museum, including: Exhibition installation, technical assistance with performance, cataloguing, publications, and general administration.

For further information, please contact:

Internship Coordinator
Franklin Furnace
112 Franklin Street
New York, N.Y. 10013



ARTISTS' BOOKS

In addition to publishing the FLUE, Franklin Furnace presents weekly performances and multi-media installations by international artists, mounts historical and/or thematic exhibition related to the page as art, and holds the largest public collection of published artworks in the U.S. and perhaps in the world. Become a member and become involved! To find out about the benefits you could be enjoying as a Franklin Furnace member, write to: Membership, Franklin Furnace, 112 Franklin Street, New York, NY 10013.

Franklin Furnace is proud to announce the award in September, 1983, of an Advancement II grant from the Challenge Grant Program of the National Endowment for the Arts. We welcome your contributions which help us meet our goal of matching every Federal dollar with \$3 from the private sector.

Franklin Furnace programs are made possible in part with public funds from the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. Additional program support has been received from the Icelandic Ministry of Culture, Japan Foundation, Jerome Foundation, Morgan Guarantee Trust Co. of New York, New York Community Trust, and Tortuga Foundation.

Franklin Furnace would like to thank the following individuals for their vital support:

*Alexandra Anderson
Jeffery Biddle
Anita F. Contini & Stephen Van Anden
Catherine Curran
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Marjorie & Robert Graff
Ruth Green
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Richard Kempe*

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Linda Lindroth
R. T. Livingston
Jean K. Pettibone
Shelley Rice
Ruth & Marvin Sackner
Jeannette W. Sanger
Sara Seagull
Willard & Frederieke Taylor
Anne Tucker
Barbara Wilson
Callie Wilson
Paul E. Wilson
Ira G. Wool, M.D.*

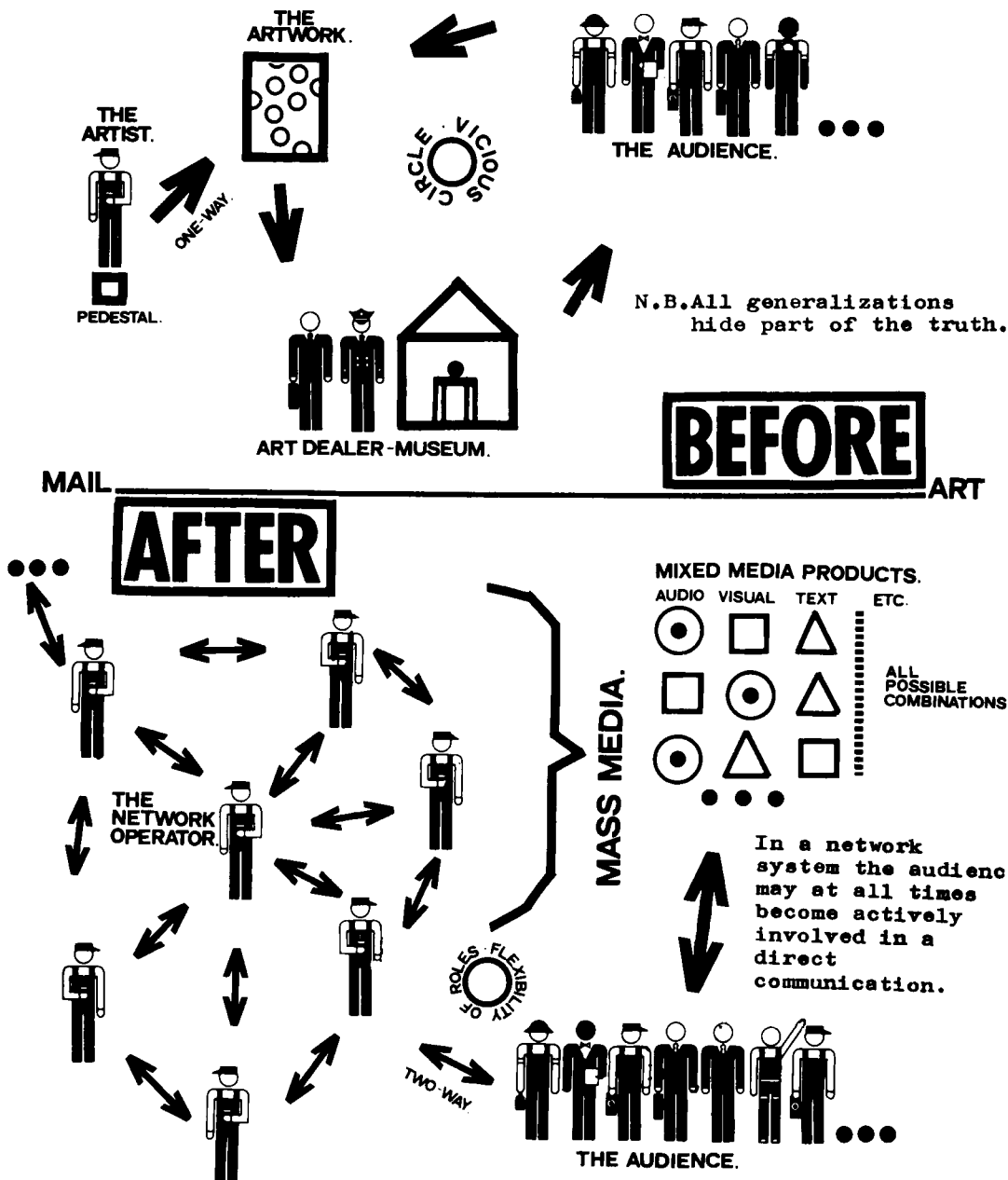
Franklin Furnace Archive's Board of Directors mourns the passing of its member, Arnold Weinberger. He was a supporter and friend to artists and books, and will be sorely missed by the Tribeca art community. His colleagues on the board extend their sympathy to Mary and the Weinberger family.

Real Correspondence – Six

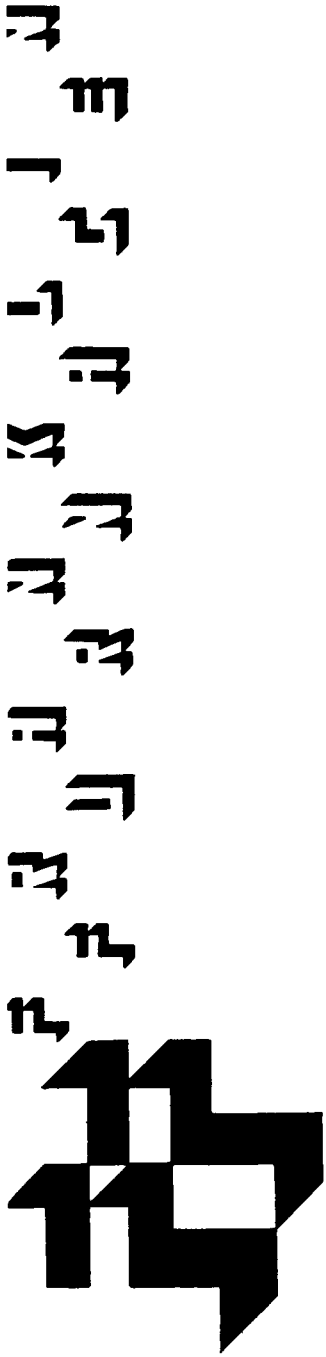
CORRESPONDENCE CLUB, INC.

MA TACTICS

- Notwithstanding the wide range of old and new visual topics covered (e.g. rubber stamp, stamp, postcard, photocopy, audiocassette, etc.) Mail Art is not just another art trend. Mail Art affects firstly the structure of cultural work, the way art and information is produced and circulated. This is an INTRODUCTORY SCHEME to Mail Art tactics.



● Scheme one devised by Vittore Baroni. Send corrections and suggestions.



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