

BOOK REVIEWS

REFERENCE

The Form of the Book: Essays on the Morality of Good Design by Jan Tschichold (Point Roberts, WA, Hartley & Marks, 1991, \$24.95) is the first English translation of Tschichold's important last essays on typography and book design. As a lifelong student, teacher and practitioner of typography whose typographic style became legendary in the English-speaking world as the design director at Penguin Books in the 1940s, Tschichold plotted the course of fine design for much of the 20th century.

Like most of his work, there is a degree of dogmatism in his opinions, but they are unfailingly of great value and interest. The subjects vary from what is good taste, harmony of elements, symmetrical and asymmetrical typography; the architectural proportions of the perfect page; the art of integrating text and image; legibility and other fine points of typeface; good typographical aspects from bad; and the art and science of mixing typefaces and developing a healthy title page. Yet there is a list of "Ten Common Mistakes in the Production of Books" which should make some readers smile. He was always in command, but he was always a master too, so you can bear his opinionated stance. Meanwhile, this book is handsomely designed, probably using all the rules as gospel.

Typography for the great master, Jan Tschichold (1902-1974), was not just metal, ink and paper but the history of literature, of letterforms, and the potential of books as a force for cultural conservation and change. He really cared about the book, and thus this one should be an enduring reference to all people devoted to books. Order from Hartley & Marks, Inc., P.O. Box 147, Point Roberts, WA 98281.

The Lost World of the Craft Printer by Maggie Holtzberg-Call (Champaign, IL, University of Illinois Press, 1992, \$27.50)

Five years ago I was asked to design a broadside for Fine Print magazine, a journal of reviews and articles devoted to letterpress printed books and typography. The journal itself was still being printed letterpress out of devotion to the craft it served and hoped to save. For me, it was an opportunity to work with two printers in the Bay Area who were carrying on the traditions of letterpress. Like me, they'd come to printing through the nineteen sixties. We'd all entered the trade just as it was approaching its final decline. The last of the skilled letterpress printers, compositors, and punch cutters were either out of a job or about to be. Technology had been changing rapidly since the turn of the century. In the nineteen sixties it was clear that "cold type" and offset printing was the way of the future. The industry managed to be commercially viable for two more decades, but by the late eighties, death or retirement or the shift to photo-based and then computer-aided printing had changed the face of the industry. At the time I went to San Francisco, Holtzberg-Call's book informs me, the International Typographical Union was about to merge with the Communication Workers of America, ending a 134-year history and signaling the end

of letterpress as a viable trade in the popular sense of the word. There were still people like me, Will Powers and Wesley Tanner who were carrying on the "craft" although we had not come up through the printing unions, had not endured the foul conditions of job shops, but we all had been hooked by the printing bug, the metal type printing bug.

My broadside was called **Growing Up in the Dying Printing Industry**. I was painfully aware that the craft I cherished was on its way out. The broadside was a resume of my learning printing in Los Angeles at a time the craft was waning. "I've been to wakes where they couldn't get the ink off the corpse's fingers," says Ed Jacob at the beginning of this book. Now it was the whole industry we were holding the wake for, each in our own way. The broadside was my tribute to the craft. We spent four days printing several thousand in three colors. I was amazed at the way Tanner and Powers worked together. I felt I was a witness to a microcosmic scene of the industry I had chronicled in my broadside. As we worked that week, we received news that Hayle Mill, a paper mill in England, was closing after a long and productive history. We handset that name and sadly added it to the names of deceased individuals and institutions printed on the margin of my broadside. One lunch break, we drove over to see the computer operations at **Emigre** magazine, an innovative tabloid-size publication displaying the experimental computer-generated typography of Zuzana Licko and Rudy VanderLans. As Powers and VanderLans shook hands, I realized that I was watching Stoneman (Powers, who combined "type matter, illustration material, and furniture--the blocks of wood or metal spacing material used to hold type matter in position--...in an aesthetic arrangement to make up a page" in letterpress) meet Computer-man (VanderLans, in the vanguard with his design of new typography for the new technology, all done on a computer screen).

Holtzberg-Call's book chronicles the demise of the craft printer through oral histories of the compositors and printers who are the last of this dying breed. Along with a brief overview of the old technology, she writes of consequences of the new technology: the offset revolution threw so many men out of work (and they mostly were men) and with them went a way of life that evolved since the days of Gutenberg. The print shop is world unto itself, with trade secrets, apprenticeship system, folklore: where once an apprentice spent his first day on the job looking for a "paper stretcher" or sent off to a corner to kill "type lice" (you know, those pesky insects, a figment of some printer's imagination, that feed off of metal type) now a newcomer might be sent to the basement to fetch a bucket of halftone dots. Once inculcated into the world of printing, through years of hard work and dedication, the apprentice might rise to become the head of the printing Chapel, in modern days a designation of "the union shop to which printers belong, but in the olden before the seventeenth century as described by Moxon): "Every **Printing-house**; is by the Custom of Time out of mind called a **Chappell**: and all the Workmen that

belong to it are **Members of the Chappell**: and the Oldest Freeman is **Father of the Chappell**." The author states, "The chapel originally functioned both as an association of self-government and as a subscription fund for treats....Swearing, fighting, singing, drunkenness, and the use of abusive language were offenses, for which penalties were imposed. "Dropping your composing stick or three letters and a space on the floor was an offense as well. The fines collected were often used to buy beer. "In London, chapel meetings are still frequently held in pubs."

Although the customs of the trade are fascinating, at the heart of this book are the stories of men who came up through the printing industry, and who, at the end of their lives, see their way of life replaced by an offset and computer technology where, in their opinion, less skill is required, the end product is mediocre, and most importantly, there is no pride in the work. Holtzberg-Call discovered the Union Printer's Home in Colorado, and conducted many of her interviews there. Worth the price of the book is a photograph taken on the lawn of the Printer's Home in 1925 of a hand typesetting contest of residents (former compositors). The winner had the honor of being called a "Swift," ("someone who can set type very accurately and very fast").

Holtzberg-Call wastes too much space explicating her perspective and rhetoric. Calling these old printers "informants", and using terminology such as "metacommunicative queries" seemed out of place. Some things she gets wrong. Don't try to set type using her photo on page 88 as an example. She doesn't write about the revival of book arts and the explosion of artist's books that have sparked interest in these techniques and history (those of us bitten by the printing bug have the best chance of helping it continue as a living craft). But she does capture the poignancy of the end of this era in commercial printing through the stories of the men who saw themselves connected to something larger than themselves (the "brotherhood"[sic] of printing) and who prided themselves in doing quality work everyday for years and year.

Susan E. King

Paradise Press, Los Angeles

Art in Seattle's Public Places: An Illustrated Guide by James Rupp, with photographs by Mary Randlett (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1992, \$40 hardback, \$19.95 paper) documents the leading city in the U.S. known for over 300 publicly and privately owned artworks that are readily accessible for viewing in buildings, plazas, parks, and other spaces within the Seattle city limits and at Sea-Tac Airport.

Divided into 22 touring zones, with accompanying maps, this book, with stunning photographs, provides basic data on materials, dimensions, and donors. Background is given to the creation of the art, much garnered from interviews with the artists. An historical overview traces the evolution of Seattle's collection of urban artworks, spurred by world's fairs in 1909 and 1962, and 1% for art ordinances set up in the 1970s.

An appendix gives short biographies of the artists, who include Louise Nevelson, Jacob Lawrence, Henry Moore, Alexander Calder, as well as Siah Armajani, Bill Bell, Sam Francis, Michael Heizer, Robert Irwin, Alexander Liberman, Noguchi, Norie Sato, George Trakas, among others.

MONOGRAPHS

Audrey Flack, a Retrospective, 1950-1990 (New York, Abrams, 1992, \$39.95) is the first monograph on the artist, with 132 illustrations, half in full color, revealing a startling range of works from each of Flack's major stylistic periods, beginning with the large Abstract Expressionist compositions, small figurative still lifes, portraits, and little-known self-portraits of the 1950s. From the symbolic realism to self-portraits, she turned to photo realism, which marked her most resonant years of recognition in the 1970s. Then breaking any rules of "normality", she turned to three dimensions, creating huge bronze sculptures of goddess figures that reflect the artist's use of 19th-century and ancient precedents--and at the same time represent thoroughly modern and personal interpretations of female power and divinity.

Art historians Thalia Gouma-Peterson, Patricia Hills, Susan P. Casteras, and the late Lawrence Alloway examine the chronological development of Flack's art and place the works within their socio-cultural contexts. The volume contains a catalogue raisonné of paintings and sculptures. With 132 illustrations, including 65 plates in full color, and lucid prose by several art historians, this catalog to a travelling exhibition which recently opened at UCLA's Wight Gallery in March is a tribute to an artist who has marked four decades of solid and extraordinary work.

Lewis Carroll: Looking-Glass Letters, selected and introduced by Thomas Hinde, (New York, Rizzoli, 1992, \$27.50) is the product of a most Renaissance man, not just a mathematician and logician, but a photographer, political theorist, as well as fictional writing. But most of all, Carroll was an inveterate letter writer, one who sent thousands of them to friends and acquaintances, to papers, to his family including his ten brothers and sisters, and to little girls like Alice Liddell who became the focus of his emotional life. It has been noted that he wrote over 100,000 letters between the age of 29 and his death. It led him to say that "The proper definition of "man" is an animal that writes letters."

A true "mail artist", he had twelve rules for letter writing, written in an essay towards the end of his life: The first began, "Write legibly". The last read, "When you take your letters to the Post, carry them in your hand. If you put them into your pocket, you will take a long country walk--I speak from experience--passing the Post-Office twice, going and returning, and, when you get home again, will find them still in your pocket!"

His letters read like Alice, but sometimes with much more freedom. The selection here tells the story of his life in his own words, not only to "little friends", but about his family, his Oxford academic life, his dealings with publishers, etc.

This epistolary autobiography is a delight. Not only did he write looking-glass letters which required a mirror to read them, or circular letters, but he wrote about every aspect of his life in such a charming manner. If you don't know about Alice in Wonderland, you'll meet the real Alice, and the fictitious Alice, who become more real with these letters. Yet his private life was always his own--his letters were always signed Charles L. Dodgson, and the life of Lewis Carroll was not for public eyes. This is a delightful book with beautiful illustrations of prints, paintings, photographs, car-

toons and letters, most of them by Carroll. You will know Alie and her real father a great deal better. .

Doris Chase, Artist in Motion by Patricia Failing (Seattle, University of Washington Press, 1991 \$35.00) documents the career of this internationally recognized pioneer in the field of video art. Born in Seattle, she moved from interactive sculpture to large-scale kinetic sculptures in collaboration with choreographers. In 1972, she moved to New York where her innovative work in videodance, featuring some of the most sophisticated use of video technology by an artist of the 1970s led to her work in video theater in 1980s.

Chase uses the intimacy of the video screen to achieve a new synthesis of visual and dramatic art. She has utilized scripts by various writers such as A. Lee Breuer, Thulani Davis, and Jessica Hagedorn, as well as collaborating with older actresses, focusing on the viewpoints and experiences of older women.

She has now returned to Seattle, exploring a renewed interest in painting and sculpture as well as in the modernist aesthetic she never really stopped exploring. This book is now a celebration of her long career and a historical documentation of the development of video as an art form from its incipient explorations in the 1970s to its full-blown maturation in the 1990s. There are 93 illustrations, 30 in color. A videotape and film selected list, work in public collections, and a selected bibliography complete this important monograph.

In addition, a 30-minute video gallery tour, narrated by the artist, is available for \$5.00 from the University of Washington Press. The videotape costs \$45.00.

Miss O'Keeffe by Christine Taylor Patten and Alvaro Cardona-Hine tells the story of the year in which Patten took care of Georgia O'Keeffe in New Mexico when she was 96. Christine Taylor Patten was an artist, and this is the story of one artist taking care of another, with the voice of author Cardona-Hine as another. With these two voices, we see the private life of Georgia O'Keeffe in the late years, a peaceful time. Taylor Patten served as nurse, cook, companion, and friend to the formidable artist. Unable to paint since she could not see well enough, O'Keeffe still delighted in being read to from Kandinsky's Concerning the Spiritual in Art. Juan Hamilton's allusions are merely that--no deep thoughts about the role of Hamilton in the last years, the move to the house in Santa Fe, the differences of the environments on the artist, and Christine Patten's impressions of the troubling times in the relationship with Juan Hamilton. This is a sensitive, thoughtful book about a most important American original. Published by University of New Mexico Press, 1992, 1992, \$16.95.

Pop Art: An International Perspective, edited by Marco Livingstone (New York, Rizzoli, 1992, \$60 hardback, \$35 paper) is a new survey of one of the most influential of all modern art movements. In this pioneering reexamination, nine leading scholars present Pop not just an exclusively American phenomenon, but as a movement which spread across Europe. Artists such as Sigmar Polke and Christo are presented alongside more familiar American and British contemporaries, such as Andy Warhol and David Hockney.

From New York and London, as the twin capitals, Richard Hamilton called for an art which should be "Popular, young, witty, sexy, gimmicky, glamorous, big business", while Claes Oldenburg in New York in the early 1960s advocated an art as "heavy and coarse and blunt and sweet and stupid as life itself." Using flags, hamburgers, electric chairs, movie stars as subject matter, Pop Art set out to challenge preconceived ideas about artistic originality and invention. Not only was the interest in what people ate, or what they watched, but also what they dreamed about. Pop art, therefore, spoke directly to a larger cross-section of society, attempting to bridge the gap between high art and mass culture. Constance Glenn traces American pop art by tracing 12 exhibitions which explain it all, according to this art historian and curator.

"Pop Art in America: An Anthology of Sources" is worth the whole volume, for it includes original statements by most of the artists in question, with interviews, statements and original essays. It is enlightening in reading this material in retrospect. It is a rich sourcebook for future research and new perspectives. What follows are 101 illustrations in luscious color to delight the eye and explain the texts even further.

We find the same richness in UK Pop, with full illustrations as well. And then we come to "Euro Pop", where there are new perspectives on the "Nouveaux Realistes" and Thomas Kellein's introduction of Fluxus into the discussion, while German Pop is dealt with as a liaison between Warhol and Beuys. The volume ends with a chapter by Dan Cameron about neo-this and neo-that, trying to justify and explain the Pop-influenced art of the 1980s.

Biographies, chronology, and selected bibliography complete this most important volume. If you want to understand Pop, read this book, keep this book, use it as a reference tool, as a wonderful resource. This is a major reassessment of a movement that still holds sway over the art of our time.

The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c. 1500-c.1800 by Nigel Llewellyn (London, Reaktion Books, dist. by University of Washington Press, 1992, \$22.95 paper) is a demonstration of how death is a ritualized process, at least in pre-industrial England where the process of dying was deliberately stretched out in time. While in our own time rituals of death are usually brief and reclusive, people in earlier days not only surrounded themselves with symbols and devices which warned them to "remember their end," but they also sought strenuously to keep alive memories of those who had gone before them. Thus, the continual confrontation with death in actuality was enhanced by a rich culture of visual artifacts ranging from little-known objects and images such as death's-head spoons, jewels and swords, mourning rings and fans, wax effigies, church monuments, Dance of Death prints, funeral invitations and ephemera, as well as works by well-known artists like Holbein, Hogarth and Blake.

This is a ground-breaking interpretation, providing fascinating insights into social and art history, and inviting readers to re-examine our attitudes to our own death rituals. The iconography of death has been enhanced by this volume. There are 101 illustrations, 10 in full color, notes, bibliography and index.

Recycled Papers: An Essential Guide by Claudia G. Thompson (Cambridge, MA, MIT Press, 1992, \$25.00 paper, \$40 cloth) is a major new resource for designers, printers, publishers and all those who want to make responsible decisions about the papers they use.

Because there are no uniform standards for the generic term "recycled," it is still difficult for papers users to make environmentally responsible purchasing decisions. Myths, misinformation and confusion abound. Thus, this first comprehensive guide to recycled print and writing papers is an invaluable resource, itself printed on four different types of recycled paper, demonstrating the quality that informed designers and publishers can achieve.

The language is basically nontechnical, concise and even poetic at times, while Claude Thompson explains the dimensions of the solid waste problem, the history of papermaking, the elements of recycled paper production (including current definitions and standards), the physical properties and printing characteristics of recycled papers, the potential impact on designers of recycling, and possibilities for the future. Although oversize, the book is comfortable in the hand and beautifully designed as well.

The book covers the science and technology, the business and the politics of recycled paper, allowing the user to select the proper paper to meet individual needs. The Appendices include a glossary, pulping and papermaking processes, a bibliography and resources for further information, recycled papers available with a list of manufacturers, and designer impact analysis form. The AIGA sponsored this study which has been ongoing since 1988. It is exhaustive as of this date and should stand as a basis for selection for several years to come. 200 pages, 50 illustrations. A must for any printer, publisher, librarian, designer, and environmentally aware bookmaker and book reader!

Anyone, a new annual, documents a conference held in Southern California in May of 1991, sponsored by the Anyone Corporation of Japan and by the Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

Included are the line drawing portraits of 22 of the participants, two pages of their autographs, and an explanation of this series of 11 journals proposed, in which the participants intend to examine the state of architecture at the end of the millennium through a multidisciplinary discourse.

Designed by Massimo Vignelli, the talks are printed, including the time it took to present them. From Frank Gehry to Arata Isozaki, the dialogue is formidable. 10 more interdisciplinary conferences are to be held before 2001. \$45.00 for this post-modern synthesis of a post-modern conference from Rizzoli.

Flair: Fashion Collected by Tina Chow (New York, Rizzoli, 1992, \$40) by Richard Martin and Harold Koda with 150 illustrations, 40 in color represents a posthumous tribute to Tina Chow, who died of AIDS on 24 January 1992.

Known as a woman of style, Tina Chow amassed a collection of hundreds of 20th century couture fashions. Included are Fortuny, Balenciaga, Chanel, Dior, Lanvin, Schiaparelli, Cardin, Givenchy, Lagerfeld, Rhodes, Miyake, among others. This exhibition selects over 50 of the best examples. Accompanying the 110 duotones and 40 color photos are many images of the clothing worn by Chow, taken

by some of the most famous fashion photographers over the past decades. Drawings, patterns, and sketches are also presented to illustrate fully the technical and creative achievements that some of these masterpieces represent. Index and bibliography.

PORTMANTEAU PRESS SERIES

Portmanteau Press, located in New York City, has begun a new series bringing together writers and artists from Europe and America who complement and illuminate each other's work. The first in the series is:

Donald Sultan: Appoggiaturas with writings by Philippe Sergeant, who comments on the paradoxes and their resolutions that surface in Sultan's work. One volume of the two-volume boxed set is a portfolio of 109 color and black and white prints produced by the artist. The second volume is the five "appoggiatura" (points of support) about Sultan's work. It will be interesting to see the future titles in this series. Most of the artists will definitely have a strong European following.

Distributed by MIT Press, 1992, \$29.95 softcover, 2 volumes boxed.

The New Museum in New York City has begun a series of publications, which is now being distributed by MIT Press in Cambridge, MA:

Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Cultures, edited by Russell Ferguson, Martha Gever, Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Cornel West, with images selected by Felix Gonzales-Torres, addresses the question of cultural marginalization--the process through which various groups are excluded from access to and participation in the dominant culture. This wide-ranging anthology juxtaposes diverse points of view on issues of race, class, sexual preference and gender. Its essays take up the fundamental questions raised when we attempt to define concepts such as "mainstream" and "minority." \$16.95 paper

Discourses: Conversations in Postmodern Art and Culture, edited by Russell Ferguson, William Olander, Marcia Tucker and Karen Fiss, with a photographic sketchbook by John Baldessari, engages nearly 100 artists, theorists, and critics from a wide variety of fields in conversation, focusing on the most contested areas within contemporary critical debate: the relationship between theory and artistic production, the role of art in the community, the meaning of postmodernism, the effects of representation on racial and sexual stereotypes, and more. \$16.95 paper

SCREEN BOOKS

Chronicle Books has published two folding screen books, the first of a new series. Unusual, but affordable books containing 12 panels illustrated in full color. When extended, these compact accordion-style books become versatile art objects.

Frida Kahlo featured 12 evocative and powerfully rendered self-portraits, while **Animal Alphabet** unfolds to reveal a charming array of twelve antique animal illustrations including alligator, frog, dragon-fly, dog, etc. Priced at \$12.95.