

## UMBRELLA NEWS

**Contributions to the Umbrella Museum** have been made by Laura Davidson, Jennifer Henderson, Anna Banana, Lisa Moore, Tarzana Savannah, Tom Grothus, Claire Isaacs, Steven A. Moszkowski.

**Christo** reached a settlement in early September with the family of a Camarillo woman killed by one of the giant umbrellas he erected in the Tejon Pass in California last year. According to Christo's Chicago-based lawyer, Scott Hodes, "It has been settled to the satisfaction of everyone involved." Included in the agreement was a settlement for the woman's daughter by a previous marriage, who was 8 at the time of the accident.

Christo has said he will dedicate to the dead woman a book and film about his art project, in which 1,760 custom-made yellow umbrellas were erected for 19 miles along Interstate 5 in the pass about 65 miles north of Los Angeles. The woman, who was killed by one umbrella, torn from its concrete foundation by high winds, which flew across a road, struck her in the back and pushed her into nearby rocks, was known to have had a rare, incurable illness, pheochromocytoma, which caused serious imbalances in her hormonal system. According to doctors, she probably had only about 10 years to live at the most.

Under black umbrellas and faded Soviet flags, more than 3,000 Russians appalled by the results of nearly eight months of Yeltsin's market reforms braved a chilly, driving rain to mark the first anniversary of the banning of the Communist Party, gathering at the end of the work day outside the entrance to Gorky Park." (L.A. Times)

## OKLAHOMA UMBRELLAS

Chuck Tomlins lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In the 1960s, he was involved with Living Arts, an organization devoted to the merger of the disciplines of the fine arts, i.e. intermedia. (This was about the time that Dick Higgins, Rauschenberg and Cage were doing Inter-Media performance works via Fluxus, in the late 1960s. With Fluxus well in mind, he decided to develop a method whereby the arts council of Tulsa should raise some money by sponsoring a "Happening" this year. Using a black and white theme, the event was called **Harwelden Happening**, and umbrellas were the primary vehicle, since the "council serves as an umbrella for the arts in Tulsa." Various events were happening at the same time. For example, there was a poetry/performance going on while "Umbrella Throws" were taking place outside. A contemporary musician and composer, William Heinrichs, had his improvisational group "playing the building" while a group, The Tulsa Trio, made up of a violin, cello and piano, played some chamber music. Simultaneously, two of Chuck's sculpture students "danced" to the chamber sounds. There was noisy, crunchy food and fund had by all. Wine flowed freely, which helped to loosen up the more staid individuals.

And then came the processional. Almost all the participating patrons were involved. It seemed surreal! There was a 30 foot high inflatable--a castle, Norman style with parapets...no spires. The processional snaked down the

huge hill of Harwelden Manor, umbrellas popping, through the 10' opening of the inflatable. It was beautiful to see all those people dressed in black and white, with black and white umbrellas moving along, dance-like, oblivious to the scene they were creating, a definite high point in the afternoon.

The umbrellas became part of the happening throughout the day. They were opened and closed at times designed on a special "script", tossed into the air, used as performance props, and in, a grand finale, were all thrown at once off the roof overlooking the back terrace.

Another event was **The Living Book**, where many faculty read poetry while the students depicted the emotions expressed with a variety of masks. White masks with black umbrellas, black masks with white umbrellas. There were black umbrella pieces and white umbrella pieces.

In another area, visiting ceramic artist David Furman created works in clay after members of a ceramic workshop covered themselves in it during a sort of "mud slide" event.

A poignant part of the event was the discovery that the inks used on the umbrellas wash off. Being water soluble, they are not permanent--but then neither is anything else on this planet. It was quite an event, unforgettable for most, a truly inspiring umbrella/book event! A Happening for the 1990s!

## PHILADELPHIA UMBRELLAS

**Day Without Art**, 1 December, was commemorated in Philadelphia with a processional of mourners carrying black umbrellas. A silent march of three separate groups converged on JFK Plaza, with all participants hoisting black umbrellas. To the marchers, the black umbrellas had at least two symbolic meanings: it represents society's continued blindness to many AIDS issues. But it also represents a sign of hope and unity signaling protection and the collective power of all those under the "umbrella" of AIDS activism.

Poor Galileo! Once again, the stuck antenna intended to open like an inverted **umbrella**, has not yielded to alot of banging in order to dislodge it. The motors on the spacecraft in January were turned on and off more than 1,000 times in an attempt to force the jammed "umbrella" open, but it is still jammed. This would result in a loss of about 30% anticipated information. The mission will be modified to rely only on the probe's low-gain umbrella-like antenna.

**Ombrella, ombrella** is a work of art by Eva Mantell, consisting of seven umbrellas made from an assortment of materials such as plastic, paper, vinyl, fabric, tin and natural materials. These are sewn for the most part on frames that were broken and discarded. Three of the umbrellas have flaps that hang down and rustle or sway in the air currents of The Lobby Gallery in New York City, where the installation was on exhibition in January and February.

According to the artist, **ombrella, ombrella** is a meditation on the need for shelter from various extremes of weather. The piece is a visual prayer for protection from some of the dangerous conditions we have created and will created with our destruction of the environment.