

# BOOK REVIEWS

## REFERENCE

**Joseph Cornell: Gifts of Desire** by Dickran Tashjian (Miami Beach, Grassfield Press, 1992, \$32.00) documents and analyzes Cornell's enchanting collages and boxes as personal homages to ballerinas, actresses, poets, and historic figures. In this way, Cornell who lived in Flushing, New York, connected his life with that of Emily Dickinson, Marianne Moore, Hedy Lamarr, Lauren Bacall and other he admired, often from afar. Offering simple gestures of love and affection was one way, but he also collaborated and exchanged with photographer Lee Miller, artists Leonor Fini and Dorothea Tanning—all connected with the Surrealists.

Tashjian did his research well, culling from the archives letters, photos and diary entries which support his analysis of Cornell's work in this specific area. Well illustrated with 26 color plates and 20 black and white, this volume adds a great deal in fathoming the enigmatic but magical art of a consummate alchemist.

**Reading Egyptian Art**, a hieroglyphic guide to Ancient Egyptian painting and sculpture by Richard H. Wilkinson (New York, Thames & Hudson, 1994, \$16.95 paperback) is a guidebook, a key, to Egypt's rich legacy of art from colossal statues to finely wrought jewelry and enigmatic charms. For the first time, this is an introduction to the symbolic language of hieroglyphs, a directory of the 100 signs used most often in Egyptian painting and sculpture. The hieroglyphs are arranged thematically, fully cross-referenced, and illustrated by several hundred newly commissioned drawings and photographs. This is a guidebook to the mysteries of Egyptian art, as well as a fascinating sourcebook for readers of all ages on an ancient language's hidden symbols and signs. Over 450 illustrations are packed into this 224 page volume.

**Angels: Messengers of the Gods** by Peter Lamborn Wilson (New York, Thames & Hudson, 1994, \$15.95 paperback) is another in the series of Art and Imagination which this publishing house has been issuing for the past 15 years. This is an abridged version of the original, which was published in 1980 in the United Kingdom. This is an iconographical study with 87 illustrations, 16 in color, which should serve as a reference tool for all art historical studies. From the Kabbala to Angelic Choirs, aspiring toward heaven should become a habit after reading this volume.

**Radio Rethink: Art, sound and transmission**, edited by Daina Augaitis and Dan Lander (Banff, Walter Phillips Gallery, Banff Center for the Arts, 1994, \$ ) is an anthology of articles about artists who make radio and radio programs which reflect aesthetic considerations, generated by an invitation to artists to create new radio works. The week-long symposium brought excitement and debate to the airwaves including talks, performances and workshops. As a companion to this week, a CD composed of selected portions of the commissioned radio works is also released concurrently, edited by Dan Lander.

Included are essays by Dan Lander, Jody Berland, Hank Bull & Patrick Ready, Tim Westbury, Coco Fusco & Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Paul Wong, Douglas Kahn, Carol Laing, Richard Kriesche, Tetsuo Kogawa and others. Yet this is not a history of the medium in Canada alone. It aims to consolidate and expand the question of radio and its persistence as a medium for art.

**Visions of the Modern** by John Golding (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1994, \$35.00) is an anthology of essays over the last three decades written by this brilliant art historian/painter, who seems to bring a balance of eye and mind to the subject matter of Modernism, including essays on Apollinaire, Matisse, Cubism, Picasso, Leger, Malevich, Brancusi, Surrealism, Futurism, Andre Breton, Duchamp's Large Glass, Gorky, Stella and others. An interview with Richard Wollheim rounds out his opinions on the origins and aims of abstract art. Includes bibliography and index.

## GENERAL

### AIDS

**Living with AIDS: A Photographic Journal** by Sal Lopes, with an introduction by Vicki Goldberg (Boston, Bulfinch/Little, Brown, 1994, \$24.95) tells three stories, which give encouragement and strength to anyone affected by the toll this disease has taken on humanity.

The photographic essays on "The Quilt", the AIDS Memorial quilt, each panel of which is created by people who have cared about and lost someone to this disease. In "The Buddies", Lopes documents the relationships between people with AIDS and volunteers who have become caregivers for them. Finally, "The Boyce Family" recounts the story of married couple who cared enough about children born with HIV antibodies, and a child with full-blown AIDS, to make them the core of their adoptive family.

Vicki Goldberg in her thoughtful introduction explores the way photographers have dealt with AIDS either from the physiological point of view, or from the political angle. On the flipside, Lopes deals through his masterful photographs with the human, compassionate, and courageous posture of most of the AIDS victims. These are human beings and it is the humane that Lopes explores.

**Living Proof: Courage in the Face of AIDS** by Carolyn Jones (New York, Abbeville Press, 1994, \$19.95 cloth) is a book of portraits of men and women who are challenging themselves in the face of the fatal disease which they are confronting each day—living with HIV and AIDS.

These faces will not be forgotten, for they are symbols of courage and dignity. These people are smiling, full of life, confronting the viewer usually full face or at least frontally. There is no grieving; rather, there is living. The documentation is not there. It is portraiture, it is people whom we see—neighbors and friends confronting with mortality but living their lives to the fullest.

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**Race, Sex, and Gender in Contemporary Art** by Edward Lucie-Smith (New York, Abrams, 1994, \$39.95) celebrates the rise to prominence of minority cultures in the 1980s and 1990s. It is also a daring look at works by African-Americans, feminists, Latino-Hispanics, and gays--all of whom were once considered marginal--who are and have been transforming today's art scene. The buzz word of the 1980s was "multiculturalism", but this book goes beyond that.

Lucie-Smith, a poet, art critic, lecturer and curator, breaks new ground by broadly approaching the subject of race, sex and gender in art, trying to find out how these different minority groups came to prominence, and how they have revolutionized the kinds of art currently featured in museums and galleries. Cindy Sherman, Robert Mapplethorpe, Basquiat, Judy Chicago, Hannah Wilke, Larry Fuente, and Sam Gilliam are among those artists whose work is illustrated and discussed as the author probes issues of racial identity, sexual orientation, and gender politics. The book has 130 illustrations, including 100 in full color, copious bibliography, index. This volume covers the world and adds to our understanding of world contemporary art today. Provocative, this volume includes statements by the artists themselves, as well as critics and theoreticians.

**Spine** by Jud Fine and Harry Reese (Los Angeles Library Association, 1994, \$35.00 paperback original) documents that "art plan" by the creators of the steps and fountains in front of the restored and rebuilt Los Angeles Public Library which was re-dedicated in late 1993. Commissioned by the LA Public Library, this permanent outdoor art installation, with assistance by Harry Reese, is handsomely documented to explain the cosmology, the use of typography on the steps and in the inscriptions, so that the theme of the book is writing, and simulates the structured pattern of a book in its physical presence; these 128 pages with over 100 illustrations, many in full color, help explain "What does it mean?" The Well of Scribes lists all the libraries in history which have been destroyed or damaged by natural or man-made phenomena. The Steps involve four stages of written communication--archaic, emergence of writing, growth of print, and the post-literate period in more than 80 different scripts. The next section deals with pools, wells and spouts which also have their own plan involving the evolutionary process. The Grotto Fountain provides a truncated history of the evolution of civil liberties, originally set to contain five texts of the Magna Carta, Frederick Douglass, First Woman's Rights Convention, First Amendment, and the Fourteenth Amendment, but only the Fourteenth Amendment and the Frederick Douglass quote remained in the final design.

This is a must for all libraries, both private and public; for all lovers of books and libraries; for all interested in public art projects!

**The World of Donald Evans** by Willy Eisenhart (New York, Abbeville Press, 1994, \$19.95) has been generously reprinted from the Harlin Quist original in 1980, including not only over 5,000 individual postage stamps representing 52 imaginary countries. As most of you know, some countries were named after friends, others were invented to help learn a foreign language or to commemorate a lovely

day. For each country, Evans, who died at 31 in a house fire in Amsterdam, Evans created a people, a history, a culture, even national products. This geographical invention allows anyone to enter this world of postage stamps, never created, but only painted.

Evans and a friend in New Jersey competed in building fantasy countries--in the sand, on the family pingpong table, on his bedroom floor. By the age of 15, Evans had made about 1,000 stamps from roughly 40 different countries, which he kept in a three volume set of composition books, entitled "The World-Wide Stamp Album." In the Netherlands, where he moved in 1972, he created some 2500 stamps from about 25 countries, all meticulously cataloged in a 250-page "Catalogue of the World", before he died in 1977.

This new edition has a new jacket, an updated chronology, list of exhibitions, and bibliography, an index, and four additional works of art by Evans--two previously unpublished color illustrations, his map of the world (which shows how all his countries fit together), and his census (which documents how many stamps he made from each of those countries). This softbound volume creates a world of magic, travel and imagination that will reach another generation. A must for everyone!

**Stone with text and photographs** by Andy Goldsworthy documents a body of work by the Scottish artist over the past three years. It reflects the artist's increasingly strong conviction that the places in which he works are as essential a part of his art as that which he creates. With an uncanny sensitivity toward nature, he uses slate, limestone, river boulders, sand, mud, and clay--a broad definition of stone--as materials to embody his vision. Concerned with the interaction of nature between its power, its delicacy, and its transience, Goldsworthy's photographs invite nature to change unceasingly whether it be falling down, or washed away, or mutated into strikingly different forms.

Stones and bones, whether they be in South Australia or Lake Tahoe, Nevada are placed in such a way that they become part of the environment, returning to nature. He is a poetic magician, using natural phenomena to create icicles, or edging a series of rocks with maple leaves, creating a light show in the stone of Ouchiyama-mura, Japan. Using beech leaves in Scotland, he creates an orange stream, while dandelions in May create a yellow topographical map. And oh, those cairns, especially in South Australia, catching the moonlight, or soaking in orange at the setting sun. He also paints with stone, creating a sculpted arch over rocks in Scotland with tree arches. A poet in stone, with stone, for nature.

The book contains Goldsworthy's own words in the prologue which explores his love of stone and his need to understand the nature in all things, as he must explore color which is "raw with energy." Goldsworthy moves the soul and the eye, and in his epilogue, he explains the importance of photography, since it is his way of "talking, writing and thinking about my art." The making of the art is "private", but a public dialogue must be done through photography, and it is essential. A masterful work, an artist's book. Published by Abrams, 1994, \$49.50.

**The Cats History of Western Art** by Susan Herbert (New York, Bulfinch Press/Little, Brown, 1994, \$16.95) is a witty

lampoon everything from Tutankhamun's sarcophagus to Blake's "Tiger, Tiger Burning Bright!" The artworks "caricatured" --Byzantine mosaics, medieval illuminated manuscripts, masterpieces by Botticelli, Whistler, Rembrandt, and Van Gogh--will be easily recognized by casual museumgoers as well as anyone who has ever read Janson's **History of Art**. Captioned with deadpan annotations by the eminent, real-life art historian, Prof. Genevieve McCahen, this book offers cat lovers and art buffs alike a slyly amusing survey of art through the centuries. 31 color illustrations make this a "cat-chy" gift item!

**Wonder Book of Fun** by Graham Rawle (New York, Harcourt Brace, 1994, \$11.95 paper) is one of the funniest books you can ever imagine by a combination of Lewis Carroll, Edward Lear, P.G. Wodehouse with a big dash of Monty Python--a strange surreal trip into the lost world of picture puzzles. Why is that woman shouting "Bomb Sombrero!?" Is it true that heaven is a million miles away? Meet the family with four red faces. And so it goes. Collage and bizarre and intriguing creations make this **Wonder Book of Fun** a conversation piece for months to come!

#### NEW PERIODICAL

**The Art Book Review**, a bimonthly, published by the International Publishing Review Ltd., is set to list the most important art books that have appeared over the preceding months in "The Index". "Fine Arts" means design, architecture, decorative arts, biography, autobiography, photography and graphics. The first issue, February 1994, features "Art & Artists' Books" with a profile of Deidre Kelly and Grainne Kelly, proprietors of Hardware Gallery, which is committed to at least one exhibition of artist books a year. In addition, critics and publishers in the field are covered. Available for only L10.00 England (L15.00 overseas) including postage to IPR Ltd., 9 Kingsway, London WC2B 6XF. The Index is coordinated by Shipley Books, 70 Charing Cross, London WC2.

#### PHOTOGRAPHY

##### REPRINTS

**Eudora Welty: Photographs** (Jackson, University of Mississippi Press, 1993, \$27.50) is a remarkable collection of black and white photographs of Mississippi's people--men, women and children--in their strength and beauty, in their triumphs against fate, time and human opposition. These proud people come to the lens with ease, strong within themselves and their convictions. Welty's photographs are universal and strong. Be sure to buy this volume for your collection--writers who are artists are not rare, but great writers who are great photographers are few.

**Matisse on Art**, edited by Jack Flam, has been reprinted in paperback by the University of California Press (Berkeley, 1994, \$12.00).

**Magritte/Torzzyner: Letters between Friends** (New York, Abrams, 1994, \$19.95) is the fortunate coalescence of Magritte's confidant, friend and attorney, Harry Torczyner cherishing the letters he received from the Belgian Surrealist between 1957 and 1967 and kept them all--along with duplicates of his responses. Ironically, Magritte never kept copies of his own letters, nor did he generally save the letters he received. Here, selections from this lively correspondence are reproduced and set in context by Torczyner's notes.

The daily concerns of his art are voiced in Magritte's letters, revealing the workings of his own creative process in words and, frequently, in drawings.

Although the two friends come from different worlds, they shared similar mental inclinations and a vivid curiosity. Boredom was one of their arch enemies, and although they were critical of each other in their letters, they remained friends.

The English translation is in the main body of each page, the French in italics in the outside margins. The texts are laced with reproductions of paintings mentioned in the letters, as well as with personal photographs of both men, containing fresh insights into the last 10 years of Magritte's life and work. Index of works by Magritte, index of names, as well as 50 black and white illustrations.

