

FROM THE EDITOR

Well, here we are at the end of our 25th year, a year of war, some peace; a year of global warming (California with its fires, the Northeast now with its snow so early in the season, the rest of the world trying to explain to itself why there is drought or floods when there shouldn't be), more fears than hopes with leaders who do not understand that diplomacy works, and war doesn't) and a digital and electronic world that is feeding curiosities with too much information, too much news, too much talk. Let's think about the year of 2004 as the year of silence. John Cage, where are you when I need you! Shine down upon us, John, with your beaming smile and teach us to be silent and to listen quietly. Perhaps we will solve some of the problems of the world with silence.

I have been writing for weeks and it is time to get this out to you. Too many books, too little time, but we include all the trade book reviews we left out of the last issue because of size and postage expenses, and so this is a major review issue for Christmas and collection purchases. And yet we are selective. And in selecting, we found out that mapping has been the theme of several of the books reviewed, and when we received the cover from Spain for this issue, we knew synchronicity really works. There was this beautiful print with an Umbrella River, and I was stunned. It is in the air, I believe, and when I remember that Douglas Beube curated a show called, "Mapping it Out" at the Work Space on Spring Street in New York City from August 1st through 26 September, well, it is in the air. Mapping our own personal lives is the reason for making art, for art is always personal and especially artist books, which are narratives for the mind and the soul!

This issue appeals to many readers, because it covers a bookshow in Lithuania, bookbinding in Bolivia, mall artists in New York City and lots more. I know you are all busy with work, holiday shopping, and making art or buying art, but remember the homeless, the ill with AIDS, your friends and relatives who need your love at this time of year and all year round. Remember the children, who are getting such a raw deal out of politicians these days with educational cuts that are monumental from kindergarten to university cuts. It borders on madness in this day and age and every age. Remember that the year 2004 is a leap year as well as a

major political year. Use your vote to speak your mind. It's the only way to be a good citizen of any country.

This is a reminder that College Art Association's Annual Conference is being held at the Washington State Convention Center in Seattle from 18 to 21 February and it sounds like a very good one. I'll be there and participating as a respondent on a panel, and we look forward to seeing as many of you as can come. It may be wet, but people who live in Seattle are great hosts!

And we look forward to the Fifth Edible Book High/Low Tea occurring during the first week of April, so don't forget to start planning now for a delectable event!

And for you who are movie buffs, don't miss *Les Triplets de Belleville*. Whatever the critics say, it's an amazing animated film for adults (not for children), an homage to parents who probably educated the Montreal film maker into loving films as I do. Don't miss it! Or the new documentary on Mr. McNamara, *Soul on Ice*, by Errol Morris. As John Maeda says, "The arts are the science of enjoying life." So enjoy this end of the year and let's hope we have a better year in 2004, one of peace.

Please do not forget to renew your subscription. The form is in this issue. Copy it and send it in with your check and keep Umbrella coming!

-jah

Cover: *Umbrella River (Rio)* by José Emilio Antón, distinguished Spanish artist with 17 one-person shows and 200 group shows, specializing in unique artist books since 1980. He also does visual and experimental poetry, as well as Mail Art. He resides in Madrid. He will have a one-person show of artist books in Granada in February 2004.

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