

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

In Iceland at the Living Art Museum in Reykjavik, there was an Experimental Environment II show in which there was Nordic experimental art from 45 artists from the Scandinavian countries including land art, performance, films, lectures, etc.

● This summer in Italy, reports circulated that a deep crack had opened in the 500-year-old brick wall that bears the *Last Supper* by Leonardo da Vinci. The Italian Government then took a new interest in the masterpiece.

Italy then told the superintendents and experts that the Culture Ministry would spend all the money needed to assure the survival of the painting. The crack that had widened is one of many, and its fissure is not of great concern right now.

Now the wall will be studied and certain conclusions will be possible after the year it will take. "The most loved and the most mistreated work of art in history" is once again under medical surveillance.

● The artist's book in Japan is commonly known as the comic book—from children to grown men, the comic book culture is an ever-growing one. There are four main comics with a combined circulation of 8 million, with weekly publications running up to 360 pages. They contain 10 to 20 serialized comics, plus occasional short strips.

The comic book really continues an old Japanese tradition—that of *kami shibai* (paper plays) in which colorful drawings were used to accompany the narration of children's stories.

● CAIRN was founded in 1976 as a cooperative gallery in Paris, by way of an ad published in a magazine which asked: "Artists wanted. . .". The founding members agreed on the following points:

1) They wanted a strong legal structure as a basis for the experiment; therefore a new set-up had to be designed, with regard to French law.

2) CAIRN would not follow any general line, be it on ideological, political, and least of all, aesthetic grounds. (Most groups of artists started because they agreed on a common aesthetics, using it thereafter to penetrate the art world/art market, this leading eventually to the disintegration of the group.)

3) CAIRN was to remain an open structure: members would not be selected according to any committee whatsoever. Individuals had to decide whether they considered themselves fit to join the group. This remains the case today: no selection.

4) CAIRN was to be self-financed. Proceeds from sales of works would be split 20% for the Cooperative, 80% for the artist.

The Cooperative then started with 20 members, possibly the first French real artists' space, in a very hostile environment: powerful Paris art market, total lack of interest on the part of the State or the city of Paris (there are no French counterparts to the NEA, or the British Arts Councils).

The gallery was used in the beginning basically as a common outlet for artists willing to show their work outside

the art system for individual shows. This evolved towards more complex formulas: individual works/show interacting, either in the same space or through a certain time span; thematic shows took place, such as "Lectures" (Readings) dealing with the concept of the book as an art object, or the process of reading. Environments were conceived individually by the 20 participating artists). The "mirror" theme came next: *Miroirs*, 10 participating artists. At the same time, the Cooperative started organizing debates, held publicly, such as "Economic alternatives for artists," "Computer art," "The Art Press", etc. A magazine was launched in January 1979, first thought of as a calendar of coming activities, evolving very quickly towards an "expanded" exhibition space and then, as it stands today, a medium of creativity in itself, an instrument allowing the development of a critical-analytical theory, thoughts on art, art systems, art criticism, a way of getting in touch with other similar groups, exchanging ideas, and informing the public about the existence of such a network. The newspaper CAIRN comes out 4 times a year and has 16 pages.

CAIRN is today more and more growing away from the traditional cooperative image and is attempting to exploit the full potential of a social unit, as far as exchange of ideas, works, etc. within the group and with outside groups, to deal directly with the processes of creativity themselves (collectively and individually) and therefore transformation of the nature of Art itself.

Every member of CAIRN pays about 230 francs monthly, the rest comes from the sale of prints, rental of shows, etc. The exhibition space of about 80 square meters, a small studio and an 80 square meter studio used by some of the members, as well as two Carousel projectors, one super-8 projector, one half-inch black and white video equipment (open reel), and a few sound tape decks make up this cooperative.

If you want to write to CAIRN about exchanges of shows, exchanges of slides, video and sound tapes, texts and journals, and exchanges of space, write to CAIRN, 152 Faubourg St. Antoine, 75011 Paris, FRANCE.

MOST OF THE BOOKS REVIEWED IN THE ARTISTS' BOOK SECTION OF UMBRELLA ARE AVAILABLE AT ARTWORKS, 66 Windward Avenue, Venice, CA 90291.

The forecasted death of the book in the 60's and the proposition that it would be superseded by electronic media, stirred people like me to look at book as I knew it, with a detached and critical eye. Book offered, from the point of view of an artist, an open field in its formal make up, in its dualities and in its sequential form. Stripping book of its content, the printers dummy was a receptacle to receive scattered ideas which had to be linked and structured to become a cohesive whole, with a beginning, a middle, and an end.

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