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The Career and Collection
of Judith A. Hoffberg

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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The thesis discusses the career of art librarian Judith A. Hoffberg (1934-2009), focusing on her co-founding of the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA), her publishing of the journal *Umbrella*, her artists' books collection, her participation in an international mail art community, and her relationship to feminist print culture. Hoffberg's career is situated within a history of artists' publications and information networks, the alternative press, the women's movement, and art librarianship.

The thesis of Anthony Marcus Leslie is approved.

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Introduction

Judith A. Hoffberg (1934-2009) was an art librarian, archivist, bibliographer, publisher, writer, lecturer and curator who became an influential figure in the fields of artists' books and correspondence art. She is also remembered as co-founder of the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA). Judith Hoffberg's personal collection of over 6,000 artists' books, periodicals, and catalogs is currently held at UCLA and UCSB. UCLA Special Collections also holds a large unprocessed collection of archival material related to this collection, mostly consisting of boxes of mail art and ephemera from Hoffberg's personal archive.

This study of Hoffberg, her professional activities and her collections, offers historical and theoretical contexts for materials from the collection, including an examination of the world of 1970s and 1980s correspondence art and the material traces of its communication network, as well as a look into the print culture of the feminist art movement, its expression in artists' books, little magazines, and visual poetry.

My approach to writing about Hoffberg is deliberately interdisciplinary, because I recognize her as a significant figure in both the art world and the library world, and because I also see in her collection an important history of feminist visual literature. My perspective is informed by information

studies, contemporary art history and criticism, and women's studies.

In the process of writing about Hoffberg, I hope to reveal something of what I have learned from her about librarianship. Although Hoffberg did not spend most of her career in traditional library settings, I do not hesitate to call her an innovative kind of librarian (although she may have preferred the term "information expert"). The active roles she assumed in the fields she specialized in, as publisher, as participant, as organizer and advocate, have important implications for librarianship.

There is a trend of thought in library and information studies (LIS) which sees the work of librarians as primarily concerned with techniques of information retrieval, based on principles of objective detachment and political neutrality. In this framework, the librarian is not concerned with the intellectual content of bibliographic resources but solely with methods of accessing the informational content; the librarian is furthermore impartial in regard to the social and political implications of the material production of bibliographic resources. Of course, this viewpoint is contested in the LIS literature, and oversimplified in my summary of it here, but there is still something undeniably striking, unexpected, and refreshing about encountering a figure like Judith Hoffberg, whose level of personal involvement, both intellectual and social, in her work as an information professional made such a

profound impact on the fields in which she participated and engaged. I do not think we, as librarians and information workers, can adequately develop, organize, understand, and provide access to collections from positions of detachment and neutrality, and part of the knowledge needed for information work involves direct intellectual and political participation in the ideas, communities, institutions, and modes of production represented in the bibliographic universes we seek to know.

LIS literature of recent years has shown a renewed interest in the writings of Jesse H. Shera, a library theorist who investigated the philosophy of librarianship and the effects of reading on culture. During the 1960s, in his regular *Wilson Library Bulletin* column titled "Without Reserve", he argued for the value of the librarian as scholar, for "the appreciation of the intellectual as well as the informational values of the book[.]"¹ In 1952, Shera and Margaret E. Egan, in a collaborative article for *Library Quarterly*, had suggested the new discipline of "social epistemology" to be studied by librarians. This would be a theory of knowledge that went beyond the individual's relation to knowing to consider the effect of knowledge on society, and society on knowledge; in Shera and Egan's vision of librarian as social epistemologist, the focus of study would include "analysis of the production, distribution,

¹ Shera, Jesse H. *"The Compleat Librarian" and Other Essays*. Cleveland: Case Western Reserve University Press, 1971.

and utilization of intellectual products[.]”² In later writings,³ Shera elaborated this concept of social epistemology to conceive of the library as an agency with a responsibility for social good. He writes that “if the librarian is to become an effective mediator between man [sic] and his [sic] graphic records [...] librarianship must be more than a bundle of tricks, taught in a trade school, for finding a particular book[.]”⁴ If this idea of social knowledge seems too abstract, we might look to practices such as those outlined in Lievrouw’s discussion of networked commons knowledge as new media activism for examples of such paths.⁵ This concept of social knowing will also be appropriate in our discussion of mail art communities.

In Habermas’s philosophical critique of positivism, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, he identifies an epistemological trend in modernity that he calls “scientism”, which refers to “science’s belief in itself: that is, the conviction that we can no longer understand science as one form of possible knowledge, but rather must identify knowledge with science.”⁶ A rigorous examination of a variety of thinkers from the philosophical tradition illustrates Habermas’s portrayal of how the progress of science came to supplant inquiries in the theory of knowledge.

² Egan, Margaret E. and Jesse H. Shera. “Foundations of a Theory of Bibliography” *Library Quarterly* 22 no. 2 (April, 1952) p.133-134.

³ see Shera, Jesse H. *Sociological Foundations of Librarianship*. New York: Asia Publishing House, 1970.

⁴ Ibid. p.88

⁵ Lievrouw, Leah A. *Alternative and Activist New Media*. Malden, MA: Polity, 2011.

⁶ Habermas, Jürgen. *Knowledge and Human Interests*. trans. Jeremy J. Shapiro. Boston: Beacon Press, 1971. p.4

He writes that "positivism assumes the prohibitive function of protecting scientific inquiry from epistemological self-reflection."⁷ In LIS, a similar disavowal of reflection in favor of more or less mechanical conceptions of information transfer can be traced; however, some writers in the field have followed Habermas's suggestion that knowledge is intimately connected to what Habermas calls "human interests", the drives and affects of the knowing subject.

John M. Budd, in *Knowledge and Knowing in Library and Information Science*, follows Habermas's critique of positivism, Shera and Egan's social epistemology, as well as Sandra Harding's feminist critique of science in order to argue that "we must continually remind ourselves that LIS has a social meaning as well as a technical application."⁸ Budd's work attempts to draw out a pragmatic epistemology for libraries which can tie critical thought to library praxis. Juris Dilevko's *The Politics of Professionalism* resists the spread of market-oriented models for libraries and the obsession with performance metrics contributing to what Dilevko calls an "audit culture". His program to "reintellectualize the practice of library work"⁹ would return the librarian to the model of Emerson's "professor of books", to one who attains a deepened understanding of subject fields

⁷ Ibid. p.67

⁸ Budd, John M. *Knowledge and Knowing in Library and Information Science: A Philosophical Framework*. Lanham, Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 2001.

⁹ Dilevko, Juris. *The Politics of Professionalism: A Retro-Progressive Proposal for Librarianship*. Duluth, Minnesota: Library Juice Press, 2009. p.3

through "extraordinary amounts of reading."¹⁰ While I do not necessarily agree with many of Dilevko's proposals for the reform of LIS education, his conception of librarianship as an art and a craft (and one that includes erudition and reflection at its foundation) appeals to my own sense of what bibliographic work requires.

André Cossette's *Humanism and Libraries* attempts to outline a philosophical foundation for librarianship, countering the claims by Richard Emery and others as to the impossibility of a philosophy of librarianship and countering the notion that librarians neither create nor apply their own knowledge, and that library work is pure technique.¹¹ Cossette, building on the work of Jesse H. Shera, sees librarianship as both art and science, as both practical and philosophical, and having as its ultimate aim "assuring a maximum of information access for the human community."¹²

Many writers in the LIS literature have taken issue with the persistent and longstanding notion of library neutrality.¹³ However, the position continues to be popular in the field of librarianship because of deep commitments in the profession to freedoms of speech, information and inquiry. My favorite writing on this debate comes from Rory Litwin, who claims that neutrality

¹⁰ Ibid. p.7

¹¹ Cossette, André *Humanism and Libraries: An Essay on the Philosophy of Librarianship*. trans. Rory Litwin. Duluth, Minnesota: Library Juice Press, 2009.

¹² Ibid. p.33

¹³ see Lewis, Alison (ed.) *Questioning Library Neutrality: Essays from Progressive Librarian*. Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2008.

for librarians should be about respecting the minds of readers, but not about withdrawing from political and social issues. He writes that when librarians choose "to be 'neutral' on an issue, to pretend that we don't have an opinion or that it doesn't count (because as librarians it is not our 'role' to have opinions), we are effectively supporting the existing balance of power. And that is, in effect, a significant position to take, and one that ought to be justified explicitly if it is to be chosen[.]"¹⁴

The Civil Rights and other social movements of the 1960s found expression in the library world in the form of a reinvigorated sense of activism in librarianship. In 1969, the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) was established within the ALA, and other activist library communities, including the Congress for Change (CFC), National Women's Liberation Front for Librarians, and the ALA Feminist Task Force, were quick to follow.¹⁵ During the 1960s, *Library Journal*, under the innovative editorship of Eric Moon, began publishing politically progressive articles and critiques, breaking with the tradition of neutrality characteristic of the library press. In 1971, Sanford Berman published his groundbreaking critique of the Library of Congress Subject Headings, revealing racist and sexist assumptions behind the supposedly objective categories of bibliographic

¹⁴ Litwin, Rory (ed.) *Library Juice Concentrate*. Duluth, MN: Library Juice Press, 2006. p.6

¹⁵ see Bundy, Mary Lee and Frederick J. Stielow (eds.) *Activism in American Librarianship, 1962-1973*. New York: Greenwood Press, 1987.

organization.¹⁶ Berman continued to publish widely on the politics of library practice, and in 1984, with James P. Danky, began publishing the series *Alternative Library Literature*, a forum for activist librarians. Following Berman's critique of LC subject headings, but with a stronger feminist focus, Joan K. Marshall compiled her thesaurus for nonsexist indexing and cataloging in 1977.¹⁷

Beyond the auspices of ALA, grassroots activist library periodicals like *Synergy* (out of San Francisco Public Library) began to appear in the 1960s. In 1972, Celeste West and Elizabeth Katz published their classic collection of activist and counter-culture writings on librarianship, *Revolting Librarians*.¹⁸ In her introduction to this volume, West asserts that "librarians can generate information. Why watch it congeal on a 3x5 world?"¹⁹

This idea of the librarian actively generating information is important to appreciating the work of someone like Judith Hoffberg. Her information files on California artists alone represent invaluable historical documentation of artistic production about which, in many cases, no publications may exist. And her advocacy of the artists' book as inexpensive multiple, in a form that I will argue shares many political and aesthetic characteristics with the radical small press tradition, worked to

¹⁶ Berman, Sanford. *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1971.

¹⁷ Marshall, Joan K. *On Equal Terms: A Thesaurus for Nonsexist Indexing and Cataloging*. New York: Neal-Schuman, 1977.

¹⁸ West, Celeste and Elizabeth Katz (eds.) *Revolting Librarians*. San Francisco: Booklegger Press, 1972.

¹⁹ *Ibid.* n.p.

actively bring marginal productions to the center. In order to do all this, Hoffberg had to become intellectually and socially immersed in the artistic communities she cared about, and I, in turn, had to learn as much as I could about these communities and about the intellectual contexts of their productions in order to know how to approach this unusual collection. In Walter Benjamin's well-known essay on book collecting, "Unpacking My Library", he observes, "if there is a counterpart to the confusion of a library, it is the order of its catalogue."²⁰ Transformative library work hinges on knowing how to navigate both sides of this dialectic.

²⁰ Benjamin, Walter. *Selected Writings* edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1996. Vol.2 p.487.

A Profile of Judith A. Hoffberg:
Art Librarianship, ARLIS/NA, and *Umbrella*



(photo from: Druett, Joan. *Fulbright in New Zealand*. Wellington, NZ:
New Zealand-United States Educational Foundation, 1988.)

Judith A. Hoffberg was an art librarian, archivist, editor/publisher, writer, traveler, and collector of artists' books, publications and ephemera. Her founding of ARLIS/NA (The Arts Libraries Society of North America) in 1972 provided a forum for art librarians to connect and to discuss a range of issues relating to visual information. Her newsletter, *Umbrella*, which she published from 1978-2008, strove to disseminate an ambitious amount of art information in a condensed format to a varied readership consisting mainly of artists, librarians, and collectors. Through this newsletter, and specifically through its prominently featured artists' book reviews and mail art announcements, Hoffberg developed her personal archive of bookworks, correspondence art, and art ephemera, which is now held in the art libraries of UCLA and UCSB.

My research into the professional and intellectual life of Judith Hoffberg focuses on the first five years of ARLIS/NA, when Hoffberg served as the first President of the Society, then as Executive Secretary, all while editing the *ARLIS/NA Newsletter*; and on the first decade of *Umbrella*. I have consulted Hoffberg's published writings from this time period, and I have also made serendipitous use of a quite large, as yet unprocessed collection at UCLA (YRL Special Collections) that includes Hoffberg's mail art archive and her collections of art ephemera, personal papers, etc. This collection has no finding aid, only a very loose sense of order; for my research I was able to look through 10 boxes of correspondences at UCLA and 3 boxes of personal papers at UCSB,

and these materials provided supplementary and contextual information for my study of the newsletters and related documents from 1972-88. Of particular concern to me in my project were the research goals of gleaning a biography of Hoffberg from these publications and materials, of relating her activities in the world of small press print culture to her ideas and practices in the field of librarianship, and of exploring the social, political, and philosophical aspects of the mail art circles she networked in, and how her involvement in these networks informed her career as an information professional.

Judith Hoffberg's activities as an "information expert" (as she sometimes referred to herself) in the field of contemporary art in the 1970s and 80s, through her self-published newsletter that simultaneously served the information needs of artists and librarians, were situated in a contemporary historical context that witnessed dynamic changes in art, in publishing, and in art librarianship. Conceptual art, book arts, and mail art were seeking to redefine the art object and how it could be experienced; the rise of mimeography, offset printing, and xerography were rapidly changing (and some would say democratizing) the scene of publishing, facilitating the development of a politically radical alternative press; and art librarians were struggling to organize and collaborate in defining what sorts of practices would be most effective and appropriate for collecting, preserving, and distributing information in this changing environment.

The field of art publishing during these years saw the rise of the editioned artists' book. Johanna Drucker writes of the proliferation of artists' books in large or unlimited offset editions in the midst of the social and political activism of the 1960s and 70s. Although Drucker investigates the paradoxes in the rhetoric about production costs related to "inexpensive" works that may have required more capital to produce than most independent artists would have had access to, the idea of the "democratic multiple", of the production of books as artworks in large, affordable editions, was important to the development of the genre of artists' books during these decades. In contrast to unique, hand-made books that fit into the tradition of rare, valuable art objects, and also in contrast to the outsourced production of trade publications, this type of artists' book is "a book which is able to pass into the world with the fewest obstacles between conception and production, production and distribution".²¹ Artists' books were connected to conceptual art in that they stressed the importance of the idea in art and explored the so-called "dematerialization" of the art object, but artists' books also engaged the materiality of books and texts through innovative production techniques, bindings, and experiments in sequence, seriality, and visual language. In the mid-1970s, two organizations were established in New York that specialized in the newly flourishing genre of editioned artists' books: Printed Matter, which focused on production and

²¹ Drucker, Johanna. *The Century of Artists' Books*. New York: Granary Books, 2004. p.88

distribution, and Franklin Furnace, which focused on exhibition and archiving²². From the start, these organizations "were interested in the mass produced multiple, books in editions of over 100 copies, which were not expensive, precious, or over-produced."²³

Len Fulton's article on "little magazines" in the 1960s²⁴ documents the "mimeograph revolution" from the perspective of a small press editor,²⁵ bibliographer of little magazines in a yearly directory, and participant in the organization of the 1968 Committee of Small Magazine Editors and Publishers (COSMEP). Géza Perneckzy's monograph²⁶ on artists' magazine networks in the two decades from 1968-1988 picks up where Fulton's overview left off. Perneckzy's history displaces the emphasis on mimeography in Fulton's history of 60's magazines with a new emphasis on the "xerox boom" in the 1980's which "made each individual a potential publisher", even in countries "where private publishing was forbidden"²⁷; however, both authors remain committed to the idea of the democratizing effect of the development of printing technologies and access to publishing resources. Perneckzy credits Umbrella as "perhaps the most comprehensive and most

²² see Sant, Toni. *Franklin Furnace and the Spirit of the Avant-Garde: A History of the Future*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011. and also Apple, Jacki. "A Different World: A Personal History of Franklin Furnace" in *TDR* vol.49 no.1 (Spring, 2005) p.36-54.

²³ Drucker. *The Century of Artists' Books*. p.81

²⁴ Fulton, Len. "Anima Rising: Little Magazines in the Sixties" in *American Libraries*, vol. 2 no. 1 (Jan., 1971) p.25-47.

²⁵ of the magazine *Dust*, 1964-71.

²⁶ Perneckzy, Géza. *The Magazine Network: The Trends of Alternative Art in the Light of Their Periodicals, 1968-88*. tr. Tibor Szendrei. Köln: Soft Geometry, 1993.

²⁷ *Ibid.* p.7

usable unofficial source of information" on mail art and artists' publications during the period from 1978 to 1984.²⁸

Keaveney's study of communication patterns and information-seeking in the arts reflects many of the concerns of art librarians in the 1980s, particularly those pertaining to the documentation and dissemination of contemporary art information. His research was based on interviews with librarians and artists, and analyses of collections and practices at fourteen major fine arts libraries in the early 80s. He writes that although traditional bibliographic channels have been sufficient for collecting authoritative books on the art of the past, "because of the transient, shifting nature of contemporary art, unique problems are posed for the researcher, bibliographer, and librarian."²⁹ Some of these unique problems centered around the collection of art ephemera, which included posters, pamphlets, small exhibition catalogs, artists' publications, correspondence and objects. At this time, some art librarians were turning their focus from collecting mostly secondary sources (writings about art, reproductions) to incorporating a greater emphasis on primary sources, including the collection of artists' books. However, Keaveney writes that this transition was not usually a smooth one, that cataloging departments in many institutions refused to catalog materials with fewer than 20 pages and maintained resistance to new media and items with unusual

²⁸ Ibid. p.12

²⁹ Keaveney, Sydney Starr. *Contemporary Art Documentation and Fine Arts Libraries*. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1986. p.xi

dimensions; many art librarians ended up leaving art ephemera uncataloged in vertical files, where they were not as accessible to patrons.

Art librarians at this time were also discussing ways to widen public access to art information; in a paper on "The Social Role of the Art Library" delivered at a 1983 IFLA conference, Clive Phillpot writes that "if one regards art libraries in the light of a more inclusive social role than is customary, not only are certain barriers to wider social use illuminated, but, in endeavoring to devise means to overcome these barriers, a new conception of the potential of the art library also emerges."³⁰

Keaveney writes that the most surprising finding of his study of art libraries in the 1980s "was the individuality of the library collections"³¹ which contained little overlap and a strong emphasis on regionally specific documentation. This trend made the development of interlibrary loan networks and document delivery systems especially promising, and it was this area of interlibrary communication and collaboration that ARLIS/NA came to specialize in.

Judith Hoffberg began attending UCLA shortly after moving from Hartford, Connecticut, to Los Angeles with her family in the 1950s; she earned her BA in Political Science in 1956, her MA in Italian Language and Literature in 1960, and, in 1964, her MLS from the UCLA School of Library Service. Her background in

³⁰ in Pacey, Philip (ed.) *A Reader in Art Librarianship*. New York: IFLA, 1985. p.112

³¹ Keaveney. *Contemporary Art Documentation*. p.102

Italian led to her first librarian position as a librarian at the John Hopkins University Bologna Center in Italy. Hoffberg's first publication in the library literature is a description of her work as an American librarian in Italy.³² The library at the John Hopkins University Bologna Center had only been established three years before Hoffberg's arrival in 1964; Hoffberg worked alongside one other American librarian and two Italian librarians in selection, acquisitions, serials and cataloging, for a library that served a center for international studies. Areas of focus for that collection included international relations, contemporary law, economics, diplomacy, politics and the labor movement, and materials were collected in English, French, Italian, German and Russian; in addition to serving the University Center, the library was also open to the Italian public. Although Hoffberg did not stay at this position for very long, this early position may have influenced and encouraged the strong sense of internationalism carried with her through her career. Hoffberg wrote in her column, "in looking back now at my first job as a librarian, I marvel at the passage of time and recall not only the professional experience but the enrichment of that professional experience by absorbing a different cultural world."³³

³² Hoffberg, Judith A. "Libraries, Lasagna, and Leaning Towers" *Wilson Library Bulletin*, vol. 40 no. 10 (June 1966) p.948-952. Incidentally, this piece was printed alongside Jesse H. Shera's "Without Reserve" column, discussed above.

³³ *Ibid.* p.952.

After the Bologna Center, Hoffberg held a series of librarian positions throughout the rest of the 1960s, as a cataloger for the Library of Congress, as fine arts librarian at the University of Pennsylvania, as a faculty member at the Buffalo Institute for Training in Librarianship, and as arts librarian and bibliographer at UCSD.

Hoffberg's decision to pursue a career in librarianship was highly influenced by her mentor, Kate T. Steinitz, whom she met while studying at UCLA. In an oral history on the early years of ARLIS/NA, Hoffberg said "I was floundering in 1963, didn't really know what I was going to do with myself" and that Steinitz's suggestion that Hoffberg go to library school "gave me a road to follow."³⁴ Kate Steinitz was an artist and typographer associated with the German Dada group. She collaborated with Kurt Schwitters on several bookworks and studied art with Käthe Kollwitz in 1910 at the School for Women Artists in Berlin.³⁵ During World War II, Steinitz fled to the United States and found employment as a librarian for Dr. Elmer Belt's personal library of Vinciana.³⁶ Steinitz consequently became a da Vinci scholar in her own right, and was also instrumental in forming the Committee for Simon Rodia's Towers in Watts that successfully overturned the City of Los Angeles's decision to demolish the towers in

³⁴ Ciccone, Amy Navratil. "Judith A. Hoffberg: The Early Years of ARLIS/NA" in *Art Documentation* vol.27 no.1 (Spring, 2008) p.44

³⁵ see Emboden, William. *Kate T. Steinitz: Art into Life into Art: A Retrospective of the Life and Art of One of the Most Diverse Bauhaus and Dada Artists*. Irvine, CA: Severin Wunderman Museum, 1994.

³⁶ the Elmer Belt Library of Vinciana is now held at UCLA, as are the personal papers of Steinitz.

1959.³⁷ Hoffberg, remembering Steinitz decades after her passing, said that "she was a wonderful woman and she was an inspiration to me and she still is, actually."³⁸ At the time of Steinitz's death in 1975, Hoffberg published an "In Memoriam" in the ARLIS/NA Newsletter, stating that "one of the reasons I am a librarian is because of Kate Steinitz, true friend, true mentor, true kook."³⁹

In 1971, Hoffberg became the Director of the Brand Art Center Library in Glendale.⁴⁰ During this time, Hoffberg also held leadership roles in the Art Subsection of the ALA and with the College Art Association, but her frustrations with these organizations led her to consider the need for a new organization specifically centered on visual librarianship. In a history of art library science written for the 1977 Scarecrow Press publication, *Comparative & International Library Science*, Hoffberg discusses the importance of the ALA Art Reference Round Table, established in 1924, but writes that "after World War II, art library science no longer held a special place and was submerged in the Specialized Libraries Division, later to become a subsection of the Special Libraries Section of ALA's Association of College and Research Libraries."⁴¹ With art librarians split between subsections of ACRL, SLA or CAA, and

³⁷ protection and restoration of the Watts Towers was a cause that was also taken up by Hoffberg during the early years of *Umbrella*.

³⁸ Ciccone p.45

³⁹ ARLIS/NA Newsletter vol.3 no.3 (Apr., 1975) p.59

⁴⁰ see "Of Note" in *American Libraries* vol.2 no.4 (Apr., 1971) p.337 and also Ciccone.

⁴¹ Harvey, John F. (ed.) *Comparative & International Library Science*. Metuche, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1977. p.271.

many others unable to afford dues and traveling expenses to participate in subsection meetings, a unifying organization was needed, through which art librarians could collaborate. ARLIS (Art Libraries Society) originated as an organization in the United Kingdom, established in 1969, and materials from this newly developed organization were circulating in the Art Subsection of the ALA by the early 1970s. Hoffberg took interest, applied for and was rewarded a small grant from the Kress Foundation to travel to England to learn more about ARLIS and art librarianship in the UK. She visited 58 libraries in two months in the Spring of 1972, learned as much as she could about the new organization, and came home with the determination to form a sister organization in the United States.⁴²

ARLIS/NA was established in the Summer of 1972, and Judith Hoffberg was the principle actor in the organization's formative months. The office for ARLIS/NA was Hoffberg's apartment and she served as the organization's President and Executive Secretary, and edited the ARLIS/NA Newsletter from 1972-77. Bill Walker, an early member of ARLIS/NA active during the Society's founding, said that "while we thought, Judy was acting. The following autumn [of 1972] she produced, virtually singlehandedly, the first ARLIS/NA newsletter and was acting as virtual executive secretary, editor, membership director, publicist, conference planner, and was taking on anything else that needed to be

⁴² see Ciccone.

done."⁴³ Firmly committed to the development of international contacts, the new Society became officially affiliated with ARLIS/UK soon after its founding, and, in 1974, with IFLA. In the first few months, the membership of the Society went from 6 to over 100, and Judith left her position at the Brand Library to embark on a nation-wide lecture tour in 1973 to recruit new members to ARLIS/NA.⁴⁴

At this point, Hoffberg was doing all of the Society's coordinating with only a typewriter and a rolodex. She did her own typesetting for the newsletter at a local printing company in Glendale, CA. The newsletter provided a forum for members of the Society to discuss issues related to visual librarianship, and focused specifically on the promotion of exchange and networking between art libraries, on the coordination and sharing of acquisitions, on the latest on new technologies affecting the field, and on making it a point to review the issue #1's of all new periodicals. Hoffberg also stated that "feminist issues were coming through loud and strong" in the newsletter.⁴⁵ This was true particularly of the reviews of reference works, which had their impact on the field of art publishing; Hoffberg remembered "we were highly critical [of reference works] and I think that [publishers] realized that we were the public that was going to use them, so why not work with us [...]"⁴⁶ One of the projected

⁴³ in Irvine, B.J. "A Tribute to Judith A. Hoffberg, May 19, 1934-January 16, 2009" in *Art Documentation* vol.28 no.2 (2009) p.65

⁴⁴ see Ciccone.

⁴⁵ Ibid. p.47

⁴⁶ Ibid. p.49

publications of ARLIS/NA that, sadly, seems not to have ever seen publication, was a reference work titled *Who's Not Who in American Art*, intended as both a critique of and a supplement to the *Who's Who* series, correcting that series' paucity of information on contemporary women artists.⁴⁷

Already in the early issues of the ARLIS/NA Newsletter, Hoffberg included reviews of contemporary artists' books, working to promote their collection by libraries. Hoffberg did not forget her librarian mentor, and Kate T. Steinitz was declared the first (and only) honorary member of ARLIS/NA in a 1973 issue of the newsletter. The impressive range of issues covered in the newsletter included cataloging, collecting, accessing, and preserving visual materials in a variety of media. Influenced by the media theory of Marshall McLuhan, Hoffberg began to be increasingly interested in new media and ephemera, publishing an article in *Library Trends* in 1975 titled "Ephemera in the Art Collection" that promoted the collection of nonbook materials, of posters, pamphlets, postcards, prints, announcements, photographs, of what Hoffberg refers to as "fugitive items."⁴⁸ Hoffberg discussed basic, low-cost preservation approaches for newspaper clippings and for various kinds of prints and photographs; and it is interesting that, as early as 1975, Hoffberg was already bringing up the issue of digital preservation for computer data banks.

⁴⁷ see Hoffberg, Judith A. "ARLIS/NA, The Art Libraries Society of North America" in *Inspel* vol.10 no.3/4 (1975) p.118-124.

⁴⁸ Hoffberg, Judith A. "Ephemera in the Art Collection" in *Library Trends*. vol.23 no.3 (Jan., 1975) p.483

In 1977, Hoffberg announced her decision to resign from her position as Executive Secretary of ARLIS/NA in the final issue of the newsletter that would appear under her editorship. In her interview with Amy Navratil Ciccone, Hoffberg explained that her resignation was "due to some irreconcilable issues with the board at that time"⁴⁹ and in the *ARLIS/NA Newsletter* Hoffberg mentioned differences of opinions and philosophy with the Executive Board, writing that "the decision to resign has been the most painful of my career."⁵⁰ Although Hoffberg does not plainly outline her specific reasons for resigning in either her announcement in the newsletter or in her interview with Ciccone, and the break with ARLIS/NA does not come up in any of the other publications by Hoffberg I have read, a closer look at the *ARLIS/NA Newsletter* in the months leading up to Hoffberg's resignation reveals some probable sources of conflict, most clearly the Executive Board's decision to cut the budget for the newsletter in early 1977. In the February 1977 issue, an announcement from Executive Chair Nancy R. Joh reveals that a newly formed "Publications Committee" had been "charged with preparing a report for the mid-year Board meeting outlining alternative philosophies of publishing and different ways open to the Society in pursuing these possibilities."⁵¹ Hoffberg's response, in a "From the Editor" column, is pained and urgent; she writes, "the communications items in the budget have been cut sorely, and I need your help

⁴⁹ Ciccone p.51

⁵⁰ *ARLIS/NA Newsletter* vol.5 no.6 (Oct. 1977) p.155

⁵¹ *ARLIS/NA Newsletter* vol.5 no.2 (Feb. 1977) p.65

[...] The argument on the part of some Board members was that most people do not read this Newsletter anymore since it is too big [...] I may have to truncate this Newsletter to a forum of news, rather than of ideas."⁵² Although letters from *ARLIS/NA Newsletter* readers poured in, calling out against the abridgement of the newsletter,⁵³ the Board's decision to cut funding to the newsletter held, and the size of the publication would have to be cut by 25%. Despite the differences that led to her resignation, Hoffberg was named the Society's first lifetime member, and continued to be active in *ARLIS/NA* as it developed over the following decades. By the time that Hoffberg left *ARLIS/NA* in 1978, the Society she had founded had become the largest art library association in the world.⁵⁴

The publication, in 1978, of the ambitious *Directory of Art Libraries and Visual Resource Collections in North America*⁵⁵, compiled by Hoffberg and Stanley W. Hess, which attempted to gather information on every art library in the U.S. and Canada, could be seen as a fitting culmination of Hoffberg's efforts during these years. A contemporary review in *Library Journal* pointed out a few omissions and mistakes (an addendum was in the works), but nonetheless promoted the reference work as a

⁵² Ibid. p.65

⁵³ a selection of readers' letters is included in *ARLIS/NA Newsletter* vol.5 no.3 (Apr. 1977) p.91-92.

⁵⁴ Dane, William J. "Review of *Directory of Art Libraries and Visual Resource Collections in North America*" in *Library Journal* vol.112 no.10 (July, 1979) p.1432

⁵⁵ co-edited by Judith A. Hoffberg and Stanley W. Hess as an *ARLIS/NA* publication

"pioneering compilation"⁵⁶ that, being the first of its kind, laid the groundwork for networking and exchange between art libraries on a scale that would not have been previously possible.

During the years Hoffberg spent with ARLIS/NA, she became acquainted with Joan Hugo, the head librarian at Otis Art Institute, a member herself of ARLIS/NA and a frequent contributor of reviews to the *Newsletter*. When *American Libraries* asked Judith to contribute a profile of an art librarian for a 1976 special issue of the journal, she decided to interview Hugo, who shared Hoffberg's passion for ephemera. During the interview, Hugo stated, "I see the librarian as a kind of Janus figure, looking to the past and future."⁵⁷ This statement was made in the context of a discussion of the librarian's task of anticipating future information needs by collecting ephemeral materials as historical documentation. Hugo pushed for all art librarians, even in small institutions with limited resources, to initiate documentation (in the form of collections of ephemera and of materials in new media) rather than passively receiving art monographs as they are published.

The dedication page of the *Umbrella Anthology* that celebrates the 20th anniversary of Hoffberg's arts newsletter reads: "To Joan Hugo, who gave Umbrella its name and told me to 'just do it!' so many years ago."⁵⁸ Hoffberg's decision to

⁵⁶ Dane. p.1432

⁵⁷ Hoffberg, Judith A. "Joan Hugo, Special (Art) Librarian: The Art of Anticipation" in *American Libraries* vol.7 no.6 (June, 1976) p.371

⁵⁸ Hoffberg, Judith A. (ed.) *Umbrella, The Anthology*. Santa Monica, CA: Umbrella Editions, 1999.

publish her own newsletter had already been reached by the time she announced her resignation in the pages of the *ARLIS/NA Newsletter*, and that announcement also mentions the forthcoming *Umbrella*. Concurrently with the initial publication of *Umbrella*, Hoffberg and Hugo were working together on curating an ambitious exhibition entitled *Artwords/Bookworks*. Although by 1978, exhibitions of artists' books were no longer such a rare phenomenon, most artists' book shows focused on unique or very limited edition books by established artists, so *Artwords/Bookworks* was innovative in its focus on editioned multiples. It also brought the democratic philosophy of unjuried mail art exhibitions into an artists' book context by making the exhibition open to all respondents; "entries were solicited openly, with no selection other than meeting the initial criteria of being inexpensive multiples: everything received is in the exhibition."⁵⁹ This resulted in an enormous gathering of over 1500 items by more than 600 artists, representing both contemporary and historic examples of editioned artists' books. Books that were not sold during the exhibition stocked the new artists' books store opened by Hoffberg and two other women in 1978. This bookshop operated under the names "Umbrella", "Artwords & Bookworks", and just "Bookworks" over the years.⁶⁰

Artwords/Bookworks was a notable event for both Hoffberg's personal history and for the recent history of the artists' book.

⁵⁹ Hoffberg, Judith A. and Hugo, Joan. *Artwords and Bookworks: An International Exhibition of Recent Artists' Books and Ephemera*. Los Angeles: LAICA, 1978. n.p.

⁶⁰ Hoffberg left the partnership in this bookstore in 1981.

This was the first major exhibition that Judith played a role in organizing, marking the beginning of her long involvement with curatorial work. It also provided a large and significant gathering for the still emerging field of artists' book production. Although the number of entries received for the exhibition attests to the amount of activity already happening in book arts in 1978, many of the artists in the exhibition were unaware of others like themselves exploring the form of the book, and *Artwords/Bookworks* helped to make connections in the book arts community. Hoffberg also writes that *Artwords/Bookworks* "allowed a large public to experience the bookwork in its totality—namely, by the use of white gloves."⁶¹ Artists' books have been notoriously difficult objects to exhibit, because all but purely sculptural bookworks are designed to be handled and paged through, experienced as time-based and tactile media, but since many artists' books are either rare, valuable, or fragile, they are commonly displayed under glass. Because Hoffberg and Hugo were exhibiting only inexpensive multiples, it allowed them the opportunity to turn the art gallery into a reading room where visitors could hold and turn the pages of any book that interested them.

Having developed extensive contacts with art librarians through ARLIS/NA and with artists through her interest in bookworks and mail art, Hoffberg began *Umbrella* by printing issue #1 and simply mailing it out to everyone she knew. "My

⁶¹ Hoffberg, Judith A. "The Art of the Artist's Book" in *Artweek*, vol.22 no.21 (June, 1991) p.17.

newsletter filled a gap," Judith explained in a 1995 interview⁶², "since there were very few English-language periodicals which listed mail art shows, talked about alternative spaces, discussed alternative media such as books, new periodicals by artists, videotapes and audiotapes, and interviewed fascinating people throughout the world about what they were creating [...]" The first issue featured a profile of Ulises Carrión's "Other Books & So" artist-run bookshop in Amsterdam and included the message: "We feel that we are presenting you with an information resource that appeals to art historians, artists, librarians, and anyone else who is interested in what is happening in this most explosive period of art development."⁶³ In addition to the mail art, book arts, artists' periodicals and new media arts that Hoffberg mentioned in the 1995 interview, *Umbrella* covered concrete poetry, performance art, xerox art, all manner of Fluxus activity, issues related to censorship, feminism, preservation, libraries, art reference and new technology. *Umbrella* strove to be international in its coverage, and subscriptions from all over the world quickly began to accumulate. In the first issue of *Umbrella*, Hoffberg announced the "Info Exchange" column which she offered as a communication service for her readers, and by the second issue there was already an artist from Japan taking advantage of "Info Exchange" to seek international collaborators for an art project.

⁶² Janssen, Ruud. "The Mail-Interview with Judith A. Hoffberg" (1995-1997) <www.iuoma.org/hoffberg.html>

⁶³ *Umbrella* vol.1 no.1 p.1

In the early years of *Umbrella*, Hoffberg used an IBM Selectric Composer, a machine similar to an electric typewriter, but with a very small amount of memory that allowed it to produce justified copy (each line had to be typed twice) which would be ready for photo offset printing.⁶⁴ As with the early days ARLIS/NA, Hoffberg was again working out of her apartment, where she received books and mail, typed letters and newsletter copy, and scoured art periodicals for the most relevant information for her readership. Italian correspondence artist Guglielmo Achille Cavellini described Hoffberg's apartment after visiting her in 1980⁶⁵, writing that "books and catalogs were on the shelves, on the window sills, piled up on the floor"⁶⁶, and her method for managing the incredible amount of mail she received—by tacking all unanswered correspondence to the walls around her apartment.

In Craig Saper's monograph on correspondence art, he describes mail artists' use of the trappings of bureaucracy as a form of political subversion, parody, and sociopoetics.⁶⁷ This kind of aesthetic, which Saper terms "intimate bureaucracy", is in abundant evidence in Hoffberg's mail art archive, from the parodic Encyclopaedia Bananica and degrees in Bananology of Anna Banana, to the dozens of artists using homemade cancellation stamps, mass-mailed surveys and forms, and corresponding under

⁶⁴ see the introduction to *Umbrella, the Anthology*.

⁶⁵ Hoffberg, fluent in Italian, served as Cavellini's official interpreter during his trip to California for the 'Inter-Dada 80' festival.

⁶⁶ Cavellini, Guglielmo Achille. *Cavellini in California and Budapest*. Brescia, Italy: 1980. p.67

⁶⁷ Saper, Craig J. *Networked Art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001.

the auspices of fictional institutions, corporations, schools and associations. While a few publications like *Vile* magazine's "Fe-Mail Art" issue (to which Hoffberg contributed an Umbrella postcard in support) or Ginny Lloyd's *The Monthly: An Irregular Periodical* (which featured an interview with Hoffberg on women in mail art), the literature on correspondence art tends to be male-dominated. I became interested, while exploring Hoffberg's mail archive, in the ways in which that tendency for the manipulation of bureaucratic trappings in mail art could be applied to a feminist agenda. Ferguson's *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy* identifies the modern bureaucratization of labor in the United States as a point of division in the feminist movement, separating liberal feminists focused on gaining access to institutions from radical feminists aiming to transform those institutions and to reject their foundations.⁶⁸ Ferguson identifies the bureaucratic principles of modern organizations as antithetical to feminist goals in and of themselves, and writes that "the radical feminist hostility to bureaucracy is based on a well-founded, if not yet well articulated, opposition to the consequences of hierarchical domination for both individuals and the collective."⁶⁹ Ferguson's definition of the bureaucratic organization of work as necessarily involving a "separation of conception from execution"⁷⁰ is interesting in the context of Hoffberg's career, which focused on books and publications that

⁶⁸ Ferguson, Kathy E. *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1984.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.* p.83

⁷⁰ *Ibid.* p.11

closed this gap between conception, production and distribution, and which traced a path from involvement with established institutions and with organizations mirroring such formal institutions towards more self-directed endeavors carried out in relative independence from such institutions.

The feminist concerns that informed the reference reviews in the *ARLIS/NA Newsletter* became more overt and central in *Umbrella*, which strove to provide an equitable space for the coverage of art news and publications. In 1974, while Hoffberg was promoting the expansion of the new ARLIS/NA, she became involved with the Women's Caucus for Art and helped this group become established as an independent organization with tax-free status after the College Art Association informed the Caucus that they could no longer be affiliated with CAA.⁷¹ Hoffberg served on the board for the Caucus and continued to be a member and a supporter for many years.⁷² The Caucus dealt with issues relating to discrimination against women in college art departments, and with the visibility of both historic and contemporary women artists, and frequently collaborated on projects and exhibitions with the Woman's Building in Los Angeles. The Woman's Building was founded by Judy Chicago, Arlene Raven, and Sheila de Bretteville in 1973, prompted in part by the LACMA exhibition "Art and Technology" for which no women artists were invited to

⁷¹ see Brodsky, Judith K. "The Women's Caucus for Art" in *Women's Studies Newsletter* vol.5 no.1/2 (Winter/Spring, 1977) p.13-15 and also Ciccone.

⁷² the most recent roster for the Caucus that I could locate, for 1992-93, still listed Hoffberg's name and address in the directory of members.

participate, and served as an alternative space, educational center, and supportive community for women artists in the 1970s and 80s.⁷³ The Women's Graphic Center, which operated in the Woman's Building, trained women in the printing techniques of letterpress, silkscreen, and offset, and offered women artists the training and shared resources to produce their own publications, which included a number of important artists' books. In 1977, the founders of the Woman's Building became involved in editing and printing *Chrysalis*, a feminist culture periodical. Judith Hoffberg, by then recognized as a foremost expert on artists' books, was invited to compile a bibliography of women artists' books to accompany an essay by Lucy Lippard on the artists' book in an early issue of *Chrysalis*.⁷⁴ Lippard, writing on the efforts of the Women's Graphic Center, writes that "the next step is mass distribution. The feminist art movement has evolved from talking to oneself (knowledge of self and source being an entirely valid and necessary beginning) to talking about oneself to others (communication on an interpersonal basis) and is now becoming increasingly concerned with talking to an economically broader-based audience [...]"⁷⁵

Hoffberg shared Lippard's concern for mass distribution; each year Hoffberg compiled a bibliography of *Artists'*

⁷³ see Woman's Building. *The First Decade: Celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of the Woman's Building*. Los Angeles: The Woman's Building, 1983.

⁷⁴ Hoffberg, Judith A. "The Women Artists' Books: A Select Bibliography" in *Chrysalis* no.5 (1978) p.85-88.

⁷⁵ Lippard, Lucy R. "Surprises: An Anthological Introduction to Some Women Artists' Books" in *Chrysalis* no.5 (1978) p.84

Publications in Print to send to an ever-growing mailing list of museums, libraries, and private collectors, in order to make such publications visible. *Umbrella* also served to extend the opportunities for distribution for artists' books and publications through its reviews section. After years of thinking and lecturing about small press distribution, Hoffberg published an essay in *Art Papers* in which she writes that "for as long as I can remember, the most pervasive problem about artists' books has been that of distribution."⁷⁶ The article advocates for libraries as important points of dissemination for artists' publications.

Hoffberg promoted production techniques that were new, unusual, or marginalized; *Umbrella* often ran special columns on rubber stamp art and on copy art, and in 1979, Hoffberg spoke at a Copy Art Symposium, delivering a lecture titled "The Artist, the Publisher, and the Copy Machine."⁷⁷

Hoffberg traveled extensively during the first decade of *Umbrella*, and wherever she went, she sought out not only artists' publications but innovative bookstores, archives, libraries, and presses to be featured in the pages of her newsletter. Some of these features included the Documenta archives at the public library in Kassel, the personal archives of German and Italian book and mail artists, Russian samizdat publications, and a profile of Toronto's Coach House Press. In 1982, Hoffberg was

⁷⁶ Hoffberg, Judith A. "Distribution and Its Discontents" in *Art Papers* vol.14 no.3 (June, 1990) p.2

⁷⁷ *Umbrella* vol.2 no.6 (Nov.1979)

invited by the Visual Arts Board of Australia to give a lecture series at the Sydney Biennale; from Sydney, Hoffberg flew straight to Holland to begin a comparative study of Dutch subsidies to artists and the NEA under Reaganomics, her study funded by a research grant from the Dutch Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Welfare.⁷⁸ Due to Hoffberg's international correspondence art activity (even the relatively small portion of her archive that I was able to look through contained letters from Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada, Holland, and Poland), she was able to meet and stay with friends wherever she went.

In 1984, Hoffberg was awarded a Fulbright research grant and lectureship in New Zealand in order to organize and archive the papers of Len Lye, a filmmaker and sculptor who had recently passed.⁷⁹ Upon her return from New Zealand, Hoffberg found that Lon Spiegelman, a friend whom she had left with the task of redistributing mail art information to *Umbrella* subscribers who needed timely announcements of deadlines for collaborative projects, had printed and distributed an unauthorized issue of *Umbrella*. There are varying accounts of what transpired, and I have not seen Spiegelman's issue, but Hoffberg was clearly upset by the unauthorized issue; she officially retracted that issue in the following number of *Umbrella*. That number, however, Hoffberg informed readers, was printed "courtesy of a bank loan."⁸⁰ When Judith returned from her archival work in New Zealand, she

⁷⁸ *Umbrella* vol.5 no.1 (Jan. 1982)

⁷⁹ see *Umbrella* vol.7 no.1 (Jan. 1984) and also "Currents" in *American Libraries* vol.15 no.2 (Feb., 1984) p.120

⁸⁰ *Umbrella* vol.7 no.2-5 (Autumn, 1984).

returned to financial debts that had been building for some time. Although for its first two years, *Umbrella* received NEA funding, and was even awarded a "Service to the Field Grant", all NEA funding was dropped in the early 80s when spending on the Endowment was severely cut. In the 1980s, *Umbrella* was not generating enough revenue from subscriptions to support its own printing and distribution, and by 1984 Hoffberg was "selling [her] books to eat."⁸¹

After a brief suspension of publication altogether in 1984-85, *Umbrella* resurfaced as an irregular (no longer bimonthly) publication with a narrower focus on artists' books and publications, to the partial neglect of trade publications and mail art. Hoffberg's move to narrow the scope of *Umbrella* seems to have been partially influenced by her activities as an archivist in New Zealand; "Concentration on one subject at one time is what I have learned during my sojourn in New Zealand."⁸² As a result of the halt in publication, Hoffberg said "I lost many subscribers, who never came back when I resumed publication in 1985."⁸³ During the *Umbrella* hiatus, Hoffberg began publishing an artists' book reviews column in *High Performance*, the performance art magazine edited by Linda Frye Burnham, and

⁸¹ in a telegram to Rachel Romero (Sept. 1984) in unprocessed Judith A. Hoffberg Papers.

⁸² *Umbrella* vol.7 no.2-5 (Autumn, 1984). For more on Judith Hoffberg's experience in New Zealand, see Druett, Joan. *Fulbright in New Zealand*. Wellington, NZ: New Zealand-United States Educational Foundation, 1988. p.89-90.

⁸³ Janssen (1995).

many *Umbrella* subscribers switched to *High Performance* in order to follow Hoffberg's reviews.⁸⁴

In 1985, Hoffberg followed the example of Jean Brown, who had recently sold her archive of Fluxus materials and mail art to the Getty; Hoffberg sold her collection of artists' books, periodicals, catalogs, mail art, ephemera and personal information files to the University of California. The archive was slated to become part of the UCLA Arts Library collection in 1990.⁸⁵

Although 1986 was a difficult year for Judith personally, her father passing in the Spring of that year, *Umbrella* began to come into its own again during this time. Now there were fewer issues per year, and the coverage was not as ambitious as it was in the early years of the newsletter, but *Umbrella* remained dedicated to covering artists' publications in a magazine that became increasingly visual, now with covers and inserts designed by book artists. In a 1987 review of *Umbrella* in *Library Journal*, Bill Katz called Hoffberg's magazine "required reading for anyone remotely involved with art."⁸⁶ In the first issue of 1986, *Umbrella* displayed its continued commitment to feminist politics by running a news feature on the newly formed Guerrilla

⁸⁴ several correspondents tell Hoffberg so in letters from 1984-85 (unprocessed Judith A. Hoffberg Papers). Hoffberg continued to publish this column, titled "Books in my Baggage" through to the early 1990s.

⁸⁵ *Umbrella* vol.8 no.1 (June, 1985).

⁸⁶ Katz, Bill "Review of *Umbrella*" in *Library Journal* vol.112 no.10 (June, 1987) p.92

Girls⁸⁷ complete with a full-page spread of one of the Girls' statistical protest posters.

In 1987, Judith Hoffberg was very active, curating several exhibitions of artists' books, including a collection of visual diaries, an exhibit of bookworks from the Pacific Rim, and a large traveling exhibition of artists' books by 45 California women artists titled "Undercover: Book as Format".

Umbrella stayed in publication through the 1990s, migrated online, and continued until 2008. In the early 1990s, Hoffberg began publishing monograph titles by like-minded art writers under the imprint, Umbrella Associates. In 1992, Judith Hoffberg curated her largest mail art exhibition at the Armory Center for the Arts in Pasadena. In 1997, she curated an important artists' book exhibition, *Women of the Book: Jewish Artists, Jewish Themes*, which opened at the Bernard Milken Jewish Community Center in West Hills, CA, and traveled to eight other venues across the U.S. in the following year. This exhibition included work by 90 Jewish women artists from the U.S., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, England, Italy, Israel, and South Africa. The books, ranging from the editioned multiple to the handmade one-of-a-kind, from the textual to the sculptural, and dealing with a variety of aspects of Jewish identity, tradition, history, and life, prompted Judith to write, "I, a Jew, also re-lived my life

⁸⁷ "Guerrilla Girls wage war on sexism in the art world" in *Umbrella* vol.9 no.1 (Apr., 1986). The Guerrilla Girls were an influential, anonymous group of feminist artists that protested the exclusion of women artists and artists of color from museum and gallery exhibitions, often while wearing gorilla masks.

through these bookworks and questioned cultural identity in art that dealt with the difficulties of Jewish life in America, the haunting pain of the Holocaust, and the cherished aspects of Jewish tradition.”⁸⁸ Hoffberg called the experience of curating this exhibition, surely a highlight in her long career, a “remarkable journey”⁸⁹ and “a significant chapter in my life.”⁹⁰

Judith Hoffberg died of leukemia in 2009. She announced her diagnosis in a farewell editorial in an electronic issue of *Umbrella* published just a few months before her death. A memorial service held at Track 16 Gallery at Bergamot Station in Santa Monica attracted two to three hundred visitors. Diane Calder, a photographer who worked out of the Woman’s Building in the 1970s, wrote in remembrance of Judith, “as I scan through the hundreds of emails from ‘jumbrella’ that I don’t have the heart to delete, I see in the quantity and variety of her posts clear evidence of the breadth of her knowledge and concerns in areas ranging from political activism, books, mail art and collecting umbrellas to suggestions for living a rewarding life on limited funds.”⁹¹ Charles Bernstein, influential poet and theorist, remembered Hoffberg on his blog as “one of the great activist/archivists for artists’ books and the visual text.”⁹² Before her death, Hoffberg saw that all of the back issues of

⁸⁸ Hoffberg, Judith A. *Women of the Book: Jewish Artists, Jewish Themes*. Boca Raton, Fla: Friends of the Libraries, FAU Library, 2001. p.6

⁸⁹ Ibid. p.15

⁹⁰ Ibid. p.96

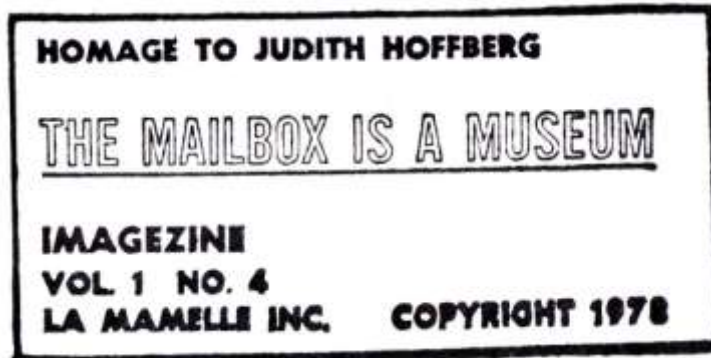
⁹¹ Calder, Diane. “Judith Hoffberg, May 19, 1934-January 16, 2009” in *X-Tra* vol.12 no.1 (Fall, 2009) p.62

⁹² Web Log—Charles Bernstein: Archive 2009 <
<http://epc.buffalo.edu/authors/bernstein/blog/archive-2009.html>>

Umbrella were digitized and made available online, in a full-text searchable database, in order to facilitate future research. Her activities as an editor, writer, lecturer, and information expert had a great influence on the development of contemporary artists' books, as well as on an entire generation of correspondence artists who were guided and connected by the nexus that was *Umbrella*.

The Mailbox is in the Library:

Correspondence Art as Information Network



(La Mamelles, Inc., rubber stamp from Imagezine 1978.)

image from: Crane and Stofflet (eds.) *Correspondence Art.*)

One of the lessons in John Baldessari's artist's book *Ingres and Other Parables* tells of a young artist studying Cézanne in art school. On a visit to a museum, this artist sees a real Cézanne painting for the first time and is disappointed.

He hated it. It was nothing like the Cézannes he had studied in the books. From that time on, he made all of his paintings the sizes of paintings reproduced in books and he painted them in black and white. He also printed captions and explanations on the paintings as in books. Often he just used words.

And one day he realized that very few people went to art galleries and museums but many people looked at books and magazines as he did and they got them through the mail as he did.

Moral: it's difficult to put a painting in a mailbox.⁹³

Baldessari's parable playfully outlines a history of his generation of artists' move towards new modes of distribution and

⁹³ Baldessari quoted in Lippard, Lucy R. *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*. New York: Praeger, 1973. p.254.

new relations of image to language, experimenting with books and the postal system as methods of art communication in the 'Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. Ulises Carrión writes that "one of the decisive factors for the world-wide proliferation of artists' books (and of artists' books shows) was their ability to be distributed by means of the mail."⁹⁴ Judith Hoffberg's collection of artists' books at UCLA displays an interesting intersection of book art and mail art, and her collection of artists' books can be seen, in certain ways, to be shaped by her mail art network, as the majority of the materials in the collection were mailed to her as review copies for her *Umbrella* newsletter, which came to specialize in just this kind of intersection.

Judith Hoffberg began to be aware of the mail art network through her interest in Fluxus in the early 1970's⁹⁵ and by the late 70's she had become involved in an international network of contacts. In 1978, when Hoffberg began publishing *Umbrella*, the newsletter quickly became a vital nexus of world-wide art information for mail artists. Mail artist Anna Banana characterized Hoffberg as "the best all-around source of information we know [...] [H]er newsletter *Umbrella* [...] spans the art and literary worlds with apparent ease and agility [...]"

⁹⁴ Carrión, Ulises. *Second Thoughts*. Amsterdam: VOID Distributors, 1980. p.27

⁹⁵ see Janssen, Ruud. "The Mail-Interview with Judith Hoffberg" 1995-1997. <<http://www.iuoma.org/hoffberg.html>>

An insomniac and avid reader, she's in touch with what's going on in more circles than anyone I have ever met or read."⁹⁶

The materials in the Hoffberg collection at UCLA are from a particularly exciting period in the history of mail art. When correspondence art is remembered at all, it is generally remembered for Ray Johnson's New York Correspondence School and related activity in the 1960's, but mail artist Ken Friedman, who was himself active in this older generation, characterizes the mail art scene of the 1980's (of which Hoffberg has left us with an abundant accumulation of materials) as vastly more interesting and successful. "The network", he writes, "had become a community, characterized by genuine leaders each speaking for different visions and ideas."⁹⁷ Carlo Pittore, who identifies this later period as the "third generation", notes that this was the time when the international artists' network grew beyond the center of New York to become "an open, world-wide phenomenon of self-sustaining, multiple centers of vitality."⁹⁸ It is in this often overlooked phase that Friedman considers mail art to have come into its own as a form. And in this wave, Judith Hoffberg is identified as one of its primary "historian-artist[s]".

Lucy Lippard, writing on the 'dematerialization' of the art object, describes two related trajectories in the visual arts of the period from 1966-1972; "in the first case, matter is denied,

⁹⁶ in Crane, Michael and Mary Stofflet (eds.) *Correspondence Art: Source Book for the Network of International Postal Art Activity*. San Francisco: Contemporary Arts Press, 1984. p.287.

⁹⁷ in Welch, Chuck (ed.) *Eternal Network: A Mail Art Anthology*. Calgary, Alta: University of Calgary Press, 1995. p.15.

⁹⁸ Ibid. p.59.

as sensation has been converted into concept; in the second case, matter has been transformed into energy and time-motion."⁹⁹ Many conceptual artists took the first path of the denial of matter, from the columns and other quantities of air 'shown' at Willoughby Sharp's "Air Art" show in 1968 to Joseph Kosuth's Wittgensteinian investigations, which bore the collective title "Art as Idea as Idea" and which claim to serve only as models for the immaterial works/ideas. Mail artists, however, generally fell into Lippard's second case, in that their work was more performative, did not deny matter but stressed its ability to change hands, to travel over space and time and to be experienced from more than one perspective.

While some writers on mail art consider anything that is sent through the mail to be potential mail art, Ulises Carrión writes that "Mail Art is any postal sending that incorporates one, several or all the elements of the actual mailing as part of the transmitted message."¹⁰⁰ Likewise, Jean-Marc Poinot underlines mail art's initiative to allow "the symbolic mechanisms of an exchange [to] take precedence on its objects."¹⁰¹ In this way, many mail artists use the postal system itself as material for art, and, from this position, are able to comment on interpersonal communication, identity, and the acts of sending and addressing.

⁹⁹ Lippard, *Six Years*. p.43.

¹⁰⁰ Carrión, *Second Thoughts*. p.25

¹⁰¹ Poinot, Jean-Marc. *Mail Art, Communication á distance concept*. Paris: C.E.D.I.C., 1971. p.14

In Bernhard Siegert's history of literature and the postal system, he credits the post with creating the conditions for the modern cognitive subject, but also with the development of a networked state in which "'people' did not communicate through the postal system; on the contrary, the postal system communicated through people."¹⁰² When self-reflexive mail art projects use the network to comment on itself, the identity of the subject is complicated, put in question.

The various definitions of "correspondence" suggest agreement, congruity, sympathetic response, concordance, and mirroring; to correspond is to be as another, to move as another moves. Many mail artists follow this notion to renegotiate the identity of the artist and the artwork in relation to communities. The 'neoist' faction of politically radical mail artists used the shared pseudonym of "Monty Cantsin" for several years as a collective identity that any artist was encouraged to adopt.¹⁰³ Plinio Mesciulam, Italian mail artist and archivist, organized a collaborative mail art project under the name "Mohammed", adopting a shared alternate identity that seems to be something of a mixture of prophet and vampire. He writes that "In Mohammed and through Mohammed, the artist can rid himself of the slavery imposed on him of becoming recognizable through his

¹⁰² Siegert, Bernhard. *Relays: Literature as an Epoch of the Postal System*. tr. Kevin Repp. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999. p.6

¹⁰³ see Saper, Craig J. *Networked Art*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001. p.50

own identity: he can, finally, allow himself his perhaps unconfessed desire: not to be himself."¹⁰⁴

Ulises Carrión, in his 1978 essay "Mail Art and the Big Monster", positions mail art in relation to an unidentifiable beast. "To tell you the truth," Carrión writes, "I do not know exactly what or whom I am talking about. All I know is, that there is a Monster. And that by posting all sorts of mail pieces I am knocking at his door."¹⁰⁵ In Judith Hoffberg's copy of Carrión's book, *Second Thoughts*, in which this essay appears, there is a handwritten inscription: "To Judith, who knows what I'm talking about." What is this Big Monster, about which it would seem Judith Hoffberg knew something? Did she indeed know what Ulises was talking about, even as he himself did not? If mail art in 1978 was situated before an obscure and formidable door, what has come of all this knocking? These are questions I must try to keep in mind as I sift through the letters, postcards, and books of Hoffberg's correspondence art network.

Thomas De Quincey's "The English Mail-Coach", his poetic essay on the postal network in the days of John Palmer's mail coach, moves from a glorification of motion and speed, through hallucinatory meditations on death, and into a final "dream fugue" set to the tempo of "*Tumultuosissimamente*". This is the pace of the mail service even in the early 19th century, that

¹⁰⁴ Mesciulam, Plinio. *Discourse on Mohammed*. Genoa: Edizioni Rinaldo Rotta, 1977. n.p.

¹⁰⁵ Carrión, *Second Thoughts*. p.44-45

"mighty orchestra" whose "perfection of harmony" is ever "in danger of discord."¹⁰⁶ The function of the post in literary modernism can be traced from here to the "Lotus Eaters" chapter of *Ulysses*, where a trip to the post office becomes a scene of disorientation of time and space, of language and identity. In Leopold Bloom's walk to pick up his mail, Joyce overlays Bloom's stream of consciousness with impressions of the Far East, of the Western fantasy of a land of "big lazy leaves to float about on" that recalls the sleepy delirium of Tennyson's "Lotos-Eaters"; shamrocks and chopsticks appear together in the same line, spatial geographies are superimposed, and a Dublin housecat becomes the proverbial little sphinx of Mohammed, for whom he would cut the sleeve of his cloak before he would disrupt its nap. In the love-letter Bloom receives from Martha, tenses are confused in an instance of language in deferral, speaking always ahead of itself: "So now you know what I will do to you, you naughty boy, if you do not wrote [sic]."¹⁰⁷ Bloom himself is transformed into a flower by his becoming absorbed into the network of language, for he is addressed in the letter as "Henry Flower", his romantic pseudonym, which echoes, of course, his proper name "Bloom". Through a meditation on the "language of flowers"¹⁰⁸, on alchemy and communion, in which the eating of the flower is wrapped up in suggestions of the body becoming

¹⁰⁶ De Quincey, Thomas. *The English Mail-Coach, and Other Essays*. New York: Dutton, 1961. p.1-2

¹⁰⁷ Joyce, James. *Ulysses*. New York: Vintage Books, 1986. p.64

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.* p.64

language, Bloom/Flower arrives at the thought: "This is my body [...] languid floating flower."¹⁰⁹



(Eleanor Antin, 100 Boots Facing the Sea. postcard, 1971.

image from: Antin, *100 Boots*.)

Eleanor Antin's classic mail art project *100 Boots* began in 1971 with a photographic postcard of "100 Boots Facing the Sea", an absurd gesture of photographing nothing from behind, in the tradition, perhaps, of the *Rückenfigur*, that reminds me of nothing more than Caspar David Friedrich's *der Mönch am Meer*, only in Antin's work, the sense of contemplation traditionally expressed by the figure at the sea-side is first disrupted by the presence of the crowd, and then nullified by the absence of the figure. The boots are at once a plurality and a non-entity, and yet in her writings on them, Antin consistently refers to them

¹⁰⁹ Ibid. p.71

with the masculine, singular "he". "100 Boots Facing the Sea" was the first of many postcards, mailed to hundreds of recipients from '71 to '73, depicting the adventures and journeys of the boots on their unflagging anabasis from the sea of the postal network into their inevitable center, the Museum of Modern Art.

The 100 boots are metonymic place-holders for Antin's heroic subject, and it is interesting that she refers to classic novels to situate this hero. First, she compares the pacing of her serial mailings to the serial publishing of the novels of Dickens and Dostoyevsky, and next she compares her *100 Boots* to heroes from fiction: D'Artagnan, Tom Jones, Don Quixote.¹¹⁰

Antin's work is truly novelistic, not only in the sense of its narrative that unfolds in time, but also in Bakhtin's dialogic sense of the novel, as that discourse which, speaking in a plurality of voices, constitutes itself through unbounded dialogue. Mail art represents an exercise in what Grant Kester, arriving out of Bakhtinian criticism, calls "dialogical aesthetics" and defines, with reference to the socially engaged work of Adrian Piper, as "a decentering, a movement outside self (and self-interest) through dialogue extended over time."¹¹¹

Dialogical aesthetics could be said to exemplify Piper's own model for an art production system: (I)→(C;Pa)← in which the final art product (Pa) exists only as part of an active

¹¹⁰ see Antin, Eleanor. *100 Boots*. Philadelphia: Running, 1999.

¹¹¹ Kester, Grant H. *Conversation Pieces: Community and Communication in Modern Art*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004. p.85

consciousness (C) that "discriminates, qualifies, adds to, interprets, alters and utilizes" the information input (I).¹¹²

Julia Kristeva's concept of intertextuality, developed in the late 1960's out of the theories of Bakhtin, of structural linguistics and of speech act theory, was concerned with the links (in the form of genre, quotation, allusion, appropriation, etc.) that connect written texts and complicate their boundaries, dissolve their self-containment. As Kristeva taught us how writing can be viewed as the performance of an author/actor in a network of texts, where meaning is located in a social sphere that requires the active contribution of a reader, mail art positions the idea of the work of art within the realm of a social, interconnected structure that extends beyond the contributions of any single artist.

Craig Saper writes of the gradual turn towards sociopoetic experimentation in concrete poetry, and of visual poets' use of the postal network. George Brecht and Robert Filliou were able to playfully extend the scope of concrete poetry to a poetry embodied by actual physical objects as well as social relations through the mailing of their "suspense-poems by subscription".¹¹³ These "verse-objects" were mailed in installments (hence the element of "suspense") and, when reassembled, revealed a sculptural rebus of concrete puns and rhymes in a project that commented on the materiality of language by substituting objects

¹¹² see Meyer, Ursula. *Conceptual Art*. New York: Dutton, 1972. p.202-203

¹¹³ see Brecht, George and Robert Filliou. *Games at the Cedilla, or the Cedilla Takes Off*. New York: Something Else Press, 1967.

for words (one is reminded of Gulliver's visit to the academy of Lagado, wherein the professors of language are working to abolish words by learning to converse directly with objects.)

A wonderful example of the merging of visual poetry with mail art, that resulted in an artists' book, is Japanese Fluxus artist Mieko Shiomi's *Spatial Poem*. This work consists of a series of "global events" organized through the post (between 1965 and 1975) as Shiomi mailed instructions to participants chosen from her international network of contacts. The first poem in the series is a "word event" which simply asks participants to "write a word or words on the enclosed card and place it somewhere." These words are then plotted on a map of the world, resulting in a collaborative visual poem that is its own map of its material existence in the world, the spatial structure of which has not been determined by any of its authors but by the fact of their coordinates in space. Participants of *Spatial Poem* seemed to realize the possibilities for collaborative art-making in a networked community; one of my favorite nodes in the "word event" is Ludwig Gosewitz's placement of "und" in an exhibition-room of Situationen 60 Galerie in Berlin, a gesture pointing to the work of art as coordinating conjunction. Other participants sought to complicate the concrete existence of the spatial poem by tearing up or burning their cards; composer György Ligeti wrote "Merd[r]e" on a card and flushed it down a toilet in Vienna, quoting the scatological

opening utterance of Jarry's *Ubu Roi*. At the turn of each page, a new map of the world is presented (with Tokyo at its center) and the contingencies are reshuffled into another poem of many authors, each connected to the others through the mail network, but each blind to the language and structure of the poem they are composing.

Artists have been using mailings as meta-linguistic investigations as early as Marcel Duchamp's set of postcards titled *Rendez-vous du dimanche 6 fevrier 1916*. In this mail piece, Duchamp sent correctly formed but ultimately meaningless texts (precursors to Chomsky's "colorless green ideas") to his neighbors. The absurd delay of a message sent through the post that could have been more easily delivered to a neighbor in person, combined with the loss of coherent meaning in the text of the message, suggests the endless deferral of meaning along the signifying chain that has become a focus of certain spheres of post-Saussurean linguistics and philosophy.

In 1962, Ray Johnson sent a letter to Dick Higgins with the text: "Dear Max Ernst, At the Central Park Zoo, a sign misidentifies a crow."¹¹⁴ This brief correspondence opens up a whole set of questions about the arbitrary nature of signs. Could a crow ever be properly (that is, 'naturally') identified by a sign? Is this sign intended for the crow, or has the crow

¹¹⁴ Johnson, Ray. *The Paper Snake*. New York: Something Else Press, 1965. n.p.

flown to it? And what do we make of Johnson 'misidentifying' Higgins as Ernst?

Direct or indirect references to Max Ernst are common in mail art, owing, it would seem, to his collage techniques having had such a profound influence on the genre. For example, mail artist FaGaGaGa's pseudonym is a play on the title of Ernst and Arp's fatagaga collaborative collage series. The presence of the crow in Johnson's letter seems to call upon Ernst's elusive, avian alter-ego, Loplop. Werner Spies traces the emergence of Loplop, "le supérieur des oiseaux", in the collages of Ernst, and notes that the arrival of this bird phantom in the work coincided with a marked shift in the techniques of Ernst's collages. In the earliest of Ernst's collage work, the composite images were often reprinted and overpainted in order to disguise the cut edges of the collage elements, and to create the appearance of a continuous, seamless image. But by the 1930's, the cut edges were beginning to be visible, even obvious, and the medium of "collage was allowed to speak with its own voice."¹¹⁵ Loplop came to represent the removal of the 'hand of the artist' from Ernst's collages, which became self-reflexive works of appropriation and 'presentation' with the Loplop series of collages, many bearing the title Loplop présente or some variation thereof.

One important transitional Ernst collage involves an allusion to the famous myth of Zeuxis and his *trompe-l'oeil* painting of grapes, a myth that may stand in as a symbol for a

¹¹⁵ Spies, Werner. *Max Ernst, Loplop: The Artist in the Third Person*. New York: G. Brazillier, 1983. p.16

whole history of representational painting. In Ernst's version of the painting of Zeuxis, the grapes are not painted but lifted directly from a manual of botany. In the context of this contest of illusionary skill, will this new art of (re)presentation still fool the birds? Johnson's letter presents a problematic communication, where signifier and signified do not meet, where the arbitrary sign is disrupted by a confrontation with the natural world, and where this disruption bleeds into the realm of the proper name, of the identity of the addressee. Ernst's collage marks a move from realistic representation to semiotic referentiality, using the myth of Zeuxis to expose the illusion of the natural sign, that linguistic dream wherein the crow (not a crow) perches on our very chin and eats this vocable "grapes" right out of the mouth of the winner.

Coco Gordon, mail and book artist about whom Judith Hoffberg has written an essay in appreciation¹¹⁶, has made sculptural bookworks that invite physical contact with the viewer by presenting themselves as wearable paper garments. The handmade paper used in these works takes on many of the qualities of skin, and several of her paper-works have been molded into the shapes of bodily forms, suggesting breasts or legs. But in both her books and her mailings, Gordon has a tendency to blend the sensual with the impersonal, the unique with the mechanically

¹¹⁶ see introduction to Gordon, Coco. *The ___ Reader: 160+ Books to be Read with Eyes, Ears, Mind, Body, Use*. Pari & Dispari, 1988.

reproduced, in her juxtaposition of handmade paper pages with Xerox art.

Craig Saper coined the term "intimate bureaucracies" to describe the aesthetic of certain mail art activity. I encountered an example of such activity early on in my inventory of the Judith Hoffberg collection when I came across a copy of Jo-Anne Echevarria Myers' *Fingerprints*. This book was the result of a mail art project with a simple enough premise (a selected list of artists were asked to mail in their fingerprints) but with rather more complex implications. Fingerprints, in our culture, function as both symbols of personal individuality (it is said that no one will ever have the same fingerprints as another person) and as factual, bureaucratic information pertaining to legal proof of identity. There is something of the tactile, human presence, and there is also something of the scannable barcode. Vaughan Rachel's artist's book *Family Business* uses the postal system together with some of the trappings of bureaucracy to assemble a kind of dossier on her marriage, divorce, and some of its aftermath, in an example of "intimate bureaucracy" that could be read alongside Kathy Ferguson's *The Feminist Case Against Bureaucracy*, a radical critique of the logic of bureaucratic organizations that resonates with the kind of artistic production examined in this

paper in its rejection of the "separation of conception from execution."¹¹⁷

One trajectory of conceptual art is represented in a turn towards 'pure information' and information networks in the arts, exemplified by such works as N.E. Thing Co.'s "sensitivity information", Bernar Venet's curation of lectures on the sciences, Mario Merz's mapping of the Fibonacci recursive number series, or Kynaston McShine's "Information" exhibition at MOMA in 1970. One work demonstrating an investment in art-as-information *par excellence* is Agnes Denes's *Book of Dust*. Denes, concerned about the state of over-specialization in the fields of human knowledge, attempts to sketch an interdisciplinary "cross section of existence."¹¹⁸ Her project bears resemblances both to Vannevar Bush's proposal for the "memex" to keep up with the accumulation of scientific knowledge by means of associative indexing¹¹⁹, and to George Maciunas's proposal for "learning machines" and Fluxus charts to aid in multidimensional, non-specialized pedagogy.¹²⁰ Denes fears the "octopus" of specialization—this rather odd metaphor of hers which involves tentacles extending and bifurcating without limit and without communication to the main body (unlike any octopus I have encountered but perhaps not so

¹¹⁷ Ferguson, p.11

¹¹⁸ Denes, Agnes. *Book of Dust: The Beginning and the End of Time and Thereafter*. Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1989. p.6

¹¹⁹ Bush, Vannevar. "As We May Think" *The Atlantic Monthly* (July 1945): 101-108.

¹²⁰ see Schmidt-Burkhardt, Astrit. *Maciunas' Learning Machines: From Art History to a Chronology of Fluxus*. Detroit: Gilbert and Lisa Silverman Fluxus Collection, 2003.

very unlike the progress of empirical knowledge across the divides of discourses).

Robert Filliou coined the phrase "Eternal Network" in 1973 (the same year that Ray Johnson announced the death of the New York Correspondence School) and in the text in which this oft-quoted term appears Filliou evokes Henri Poincaré (1854-1912) as the last research mathematician to know all the mathematics of his time. "If it is true" Filliou writes, "that information about knowledge of all modern art research is more than any one artist could comprehend, then the concept of the 'avant-garde' is obsolete."¹²¹ Both Denes's scientific-discourse-as-art and Filliou's Eternal Network emphasize the new role of networked communication in the art of the Information Age.

The limits imposed on the size and weight of materials sent through the post may suggest to certain mail artists a desire to explore the limits of the miniature. Artists' postage stamps and rubber stamps are two popular mail art forms that work within the limits of very small scales; In 1973-74, Terry Reid even assembled "The Original One Inch Art Show" to showcase such tiny mailings. While participating in an inventory of some of Judith Hoffberg's uncataloged materials in the UCLA collection, I discovered a box full of dozens and dozens of miniature books.

After the rather overwhelming experience of encountering and describing such a plenitude of tiny books, I began to think

¹²¹ quoted in Welch, p.21

about the significance of scale in bookworks and mailings. In order to better understand the miniature, I went to the research library to look at Robert Hooke's *Micrographia* of 1665 (that classic treatise on microscopy) on—well, yes, of course!—on microform.

Susan Stewart traces the history of the miniature book back as early as Pliny's claim to have known of a nut-sized *Iliad*. In the twentieth century, librarians—and especially European documentalists—were enthusiastic about the development of microfilm and microfiche, a fulfillment of this ancient desire for books in nutshells, or for information without spatial limitations. Like Agnes Denes's project of understanding the universe by examining dust, there is a common impulse, in both the documentalists' excitement over microfilm and in 17th century scientists' wonder at the microscope, to better understand the infinite through the infinitesimal.

It is interesting that in the introduction to *Micrographia*, Hooke is as concerned with the topic of memory as he is with optics. His vision of microscopy involves the building of a new "superstructure" of human thought, that reinforces the chain leading from perception to understanding to philosophy by hyperfocusing visual perception on objects beyond the scope of the visible. Hooke is both fascinated and disoriented by the hidden 'truths' he discovers in his microscope—that, for instance, the point of a pin is impossibly blunt, that the marks of even the most uniform handwriting appear "rugged and

deformed", and that any point is indeed no point at all, but something amorphous and strange. Hooke is amazed by the beauty of the microscopic, by the warp and woof of a ribbon of taffeta or by the hexangular snowflakes found in a frozen drop of urine. And his observations lead him back to Pliny's theme of Homer in the nutshell, only in Hooke's rather confused version, the nut, magnified as powerfully as the microscope magnifies the seeds of thyme he reproduces in his book, would become so spacious that we might see the Iliad and even Homer himself "cramm'd into a Nut-Shell"(!)

A miniature box in the Hoffberg collection (I have not identified it positively but my best guess is that it comes from the Galerie Ecart in Geneva) contains twenty-four tiles representing pieces of a landscape that can be combined in 1,686,533,615,927,922,354,187,720 distinct arrangements. Printed on the box, in German and French, is a statement claiming that if all the people on earth made a combination of these cards every second it would take 16 million years to exhaust all possibilities. The box containing this infinity is scarcely large enough to hold a book of matches.

Stewart sees the miniature book as a symbol of interiority, and of a desire to represent the world as microcosm, to fit all of life in something that can relate to the body, fit in the palm of a hand. The miniature can suggest infinity, but it is always an infinity paradoxically contained. "This is the daydream of the microscope: the daydream of life inside life, of significance

multiplied infinitely within significance."¹²² An untitled Ray DiPalma mini-book from the Hoffberg collection uses a miniaturized reproduction of the *New York Times* front page featuring the sinking of the Titanic as its cover. The psychological impact of such a distortion of scale is unsettling, and yet it also relates to a desire to place the contingencies of life (where catastrophic disaster is always possible) within the grasp of the subject, in our palm or pocket.

Lucy Lippard, writing on scale in sculpture, calls our attention to the personal, subjective experience of scale: "scale is felt, and cannot be communicated either by photographic reproduction or by description."¹²³ She rightly differentiates between scale and size; size refers to basic, measurable dimensions whereas scale involves an experiential relation to a viewer and a representation of physical space. Carrie Stettheimer, the Stettheimer sister about whom we know the least, spent decades of her life building the "Stettheimer Dollhouse";¹²⁴ it is sometimes written off as a whimsical curiosity, but I tend to view Stettheimer's dollhouse as a remarkable exploration of interiority and symbolic representation, and I am not surprised that it attracted the attention of Duchamp, who hung a miniature painting of his *Nude Descending a Staircase* in the gallery-room

¹²² Stewart, Susan. *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection*. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1984. p.54

¹²³ Lippard, Lucy R. *Changing: Essays in Art Criticism*. New York: Dutton, 1971. p.238

¹²⁴ Clark, Sheila W. *The Stettheimer Dollhouse*. Petulama, CA: Pomegranate Communications, 2009.

of the dollhouse. The place for Duchamp's artwork was on the walls of another artwork, which was the representation of an outer life expressed in the life's work of an inner life, spent on the work of the life of the work ad infinitum...

"I become through my relation to the Thou; as I become I,
I say Thou. All real living is meeting."

-Martin Buber, *I and Thou*

Fluxus artist Ken Friedman, who organized the largest mail art exhibition to date with his Omaha Flow Systems project in 1972, understands his mail art activity as "restoring the 'I-Thou' relationship between artist and viewer."¹²⁵ This 'I-Thou' refers to the religious philosophy of Martin Buber, whose ideas about the "mutuality" of existence have been highly influential in 20th century thought. For Buber, "there is no I taken in itself"¹²⁶, and each of us can only ever constitute an I in relation to either an "it" or a "Thou". This 'Thou' is perhaps hard to situate in English, because it is , for us, an antiquated pronoun and because it never had quite the same connotation as the German 'du', which is not normally capitalized, but which Buber consistently presents as "Du", suggesting both the intimacy of 'du' together with the respect proper to 'Sie'. Buber's philosophy relates to the serious investigation that some mail

¹²⁵ in Crane and Stofflet, p.215

¹²⁶ Buber, Martin. *I and Thou*. tr. Ronald Gregor Smith. Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1959. p.4

artists undergo into finding a proper means of addressing another. For Friedman, mail art can encompass both irreverent, neo-Dada jests as well as all the religious and poetic inquiry of one of Dickinson's "Master" letters.

Dick Higgins defines the intermedia, that term which has come to be associated with many works in postal art and artists' books, in contradistinction to mixed media, such as opera, where it is clear what is the text, the music, or the mise-en-scène; "in an intermedium, on the other hand," writes Higgins, "there is a conceptual fusion" of media elements.¹²⁷ When discussing the intermedia, Higgins employs Hans-Georg Gadamer's term for the "fusion of horizons" (*Horizontverschmelzung*), and this is applied not only to the fusion of the horizons of media elements, but also to a merging of the "range of information, feelings, experiences, and imaginings" of the artist and the audience.¹²⁸ In Higgins' theory of the intermedia, a viewer or reader is integral to the work of art, and a kind of hermeneutics is needed to follow the merging paths of the audience and the artwork, whereby the artist's identity loses predominance, becomes only a metaphor.

In Gadamer's writings on the poetry of Paul Celan, he investigates the role of the poetic "I" in Celan, which is complicated by a kind of indeterminacy not found in earlier lyric poetry, even though he characterizes Celan's poetic project as a

¹²⁷ Higgins, Dick. *Horizons: The Poetics and the Theory of the Intermedia*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1984. p.15-16

¹²⁸ Ibid. p.137

sort of "message in a bottle"¹²⁹ that is concerned first and foremost with questions of communication. He points to a term from Celan's "Meridian" speech, *Ichvergessenheit* (or "I-forgetting"), as a key to the blurring of identities between the speaker and the "you" in Celan's verse.¹³⁰ It is interesting that in the introduction to Gadamer's book, Gerald Bruns explains Gadamer's poetic hermeneutics with reference to Duchamp's readymades, outlining a project for the "reconceptualization of aesthetics (and of beauty) to include what cannot be comprehended within the limits of intelligibility."¹³¹

In the Fluxus publication organized by La Monte Young, *An Anthology*, a text by Walter de Maria facetiously proclaims that "meaningless work is obviously the most important and significant art form today."¹³² Fluxus as a movement seems to me to have inherited a ludic and chaotic irreverence from Dada (Fluxus is indeed sometimes called neo-Dada) as well as an interest in the life of an artwork beyond its objecthood from concept art, but Fluxus introduced a turn away from intentionality that disrupted the sense of "meaning" in art. For all the German Dadaists' railing against Expressionism, in Tzara's "Dada Manifesto" of 1918, we still find that "art is a private thing, the artist

¹²⁹ Gadamer, Hans-Georg. *Gadamer on Celan: "Who Am I and Who Are You?" and Other Essays*. ed. and tr. Richard Heinemann and Bruce Krajewski. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1997. p.63

¹³⁰ Ibid. p.118

¹³¹ Ibid. p.2

¹³² Young, La Monte (ed.) *An Anthology*. H. Friedrich, 1970. n.p.

makes it for himself"¹³³ and that Dada is born "out of a need for independence, out of mistrust for the community."¹³⁴ Decades later, conceptual artists were also "defin[ing] the intentions of their work as part of their art"¹³⁵, creating works that were in certain senses self-contained, because they functioned as art and theory together, inviting no outside critical discourse. But in John Cage's collection of writings, *Silence*, a characteristically Fluxus call for the abandonment of the artist as individual is expressed, and the artist's intention is replaced by the chance operation. A disruption of intentionality is explored in Ben Vautier's postcard titled "Postman's Choice" which is stamped and addressed to two different addresses on either side on the card, so that the final destination of the card is not determined at the moment of its mailing.

Mail art is full of references to Dada-Dadaland, Dada West, Canadada, "Sugar Dada", etc. Many of these mail art invocations of the Dada spirit involve the assumption of a peculiarly infantile aesthetic that follows Tzara's instruction to "destroy the drawers of the brain."¹³⁶ Understanding the Dada mentality is not easy, because it eludes intelligibility, tending towards mindlessness but not quite puerility. Robert Filliou's Fluxus book *Ample Food for Stupid Thought*, originally an unbound set of cards with postcard dimensions, reproduces simple questions in

¹³³ in Huelsenbeck, Richard (ed.) *The Dada Almanac*. ed. and tr. Malcolm Green. London: Atlas Press, 1993. p.129

¹³⁴ Ibid. p.124

¹³⁵ Meyer, p.viii

¹³⁶ in Huelsenbeck, p.126

large type that vacillate between complete inanity and a peculiar kind of unexpected inquiry: "What's the big idea?", "No kidding?", "Is everybody in the same boat?", or my favorite, "If your aunt were a man would she be your uncle?" From the Kolkhoz "avant-garbage" junk mailings to the follies of the New York Corres-Sponge Dance School of Vancouver and Dadaland's general "obsanity", mail art has inherited from Dada a particular view of art in relation to nonsense. Robert C. Morgan calls Fluxus "the worship of the inane"¹³⁷ and we must not overlook the religiosity of that devotion. Huelsenbeck, in 1918, describes the "true Dadaist" as "half Pantagruel, half St. Francis, laughing and laughing"¹³⁸ and it is here, between the carnivalesque deluge of piss and the golden ray of religious inspiration, that I look for Dada.

For a brief digression, let's turn to an ancient antecedent to the Dada spirit that (I think) I find in that most curious of Seneca's writings, the *Apocolocyntosis* (contestedly translated as the "Pumpkinification"), Seneca's burlesque on the apotheosis of Claudius Caesar, wherein the dead emperor, transformed into a gourd at the moment of a rather ambiguous death ("he became known to be dead"), meets immortal deification and his own stupidity at the same time. While a comparative study of Stoicism and Dada would be very interesting, here I only wish to call forth these Menippean proceedings to listen for an early example of that

¹³⁷ Morgan, Robert C. *Commentaries on the New Media Arts: Fluxus & Conceptual Art, Artists' Books, Correspondence Art, Audio & Video Art*. Pasadena: Umbrella Associates, 1992. p.1

¹³⁸ Huelsenbeck, p.49

voice that laughs from beyond the intellect. Seneca's text, full of wordplay, shows us that when language opens up on itself, the ridiculous and the eternal can commingle.

In Lacan's "Seminar on 'The Purloined Letter'", the Poe tale is used as a starting point for a study of desire in relation to "the itinerary of a signifier."¹³⁹ For Lacan, the purloined letter is an emblem of language, and the power it possesses indicates an "intersubjective complex" operating around displaced desire. In the Poe story, Dupin must identify with the thief (like the schoolboy playing 'even and odd' who must be sensitive to the thoughts of his opponents) in order to discover the secret of the thief. It is this intersubjectivity in language to which Lacan attaches importance: "the unconscious" he insists, "is the discourse of the Other."¹⁴⁰

The Prefect in Poe's tale microscopically scrutinizes every square inch of the house in which we know the purloined letter must materially exist, and does not find the letter; this detail of the story leads Lacan to remark that "the signifier is a unit in its very uniqueness, being by nature symbol only of an absence which is why we cannot say of the purloined letter, that, like other objects, it must be or not be in a particular place but that unlike them it will be and not be where it is, wherever it

¹³⁹ Lacan, Jacques. "Seminar on the Purloined Letter" tr. Jeffrey Mehlman. *Yale French Studies* no.48 (1972) p.40

¹⁴⁰ Ibid. p.45

goes."¹⁴¹ This ties into Lacan's insistence on the 'odd' relation between language and place, because language relates to both the real which is always in its place and the symbolic which can be missing from its place.

I introduce Lacan's seminar with Anna Banana in mind—Anna Banana, who assumes the Name-Of-The-Daughter for performances as Anna Freud Banana, and who, in an interview with Craig Saper, relates her correspondence art and performance art to "a networked psychoanalysis of sociopoetic systems."¹⁴² This is a more direct statement on her own work than we are likely to get elsewhere with Anna Banana, who is characteristically elusive about the meaning of her banana-themed mail art. Her response to the question "Why Bananas?" (the title of one of her booklets) is likely to be "Why not?"

What is Anna up to with all these bananas? Obvious phallic symbols—so obvious that it is perhaps facile to call them such—these endless bananas also inevitably lead to hysteria ("going bananas"). Anna acquired her name after an incident when she slipped and fell on a box of bananas¹⁴³, replaying a comic Fall of Man with slapstick sound effects, slipping on the peel of the unbidden fruit, a slippage of *glissement*, but no thank you, Anna has never answered any chain letters. If the banana is phallic it is just as much anal—let us not forget Beckett's Krapp and his

¹⁴¹ Ibid. p.54

¹⁴² Chandler, Annmarie and Norie Neumark (eds.) *At a Distance: Precursors to Art and Activism on the Internet*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005. p.248

¹⁴³ see Sztuka Fabryka. "Anna Banana" entry in the Mail Art Encyclopedia. <<http://www.sztuka-fabryka.be/encyclopaedia/items/banana.htm>>

drawers of bananas, horded alongside reels of recorded time. Anna Banana is still collecting banana-related art and information for her *Encyclopaedia Bananica*, which has been in the works for 40 years. Is this activity simply a gathering of fetish objects, an interminable harvest of the 'Maternal Banana'? Or is it rather a meaningless recital of a bad joke, baby food for hungry Dadas—*numnums qua numnums??* I do not think so. I rather see Anna's activity as a move in the direction of a public unveiling of the phallus, an event of many hands coming together in a peeling of the banana.

Feminist thinkers have come into conflict with Lacanian psychoanalysis over Lacan's insistence on the phallus as the 'privileged signifier' and his dubious claim that the phallus is not the penis. Jane Gallop argues that "as long as psychoanalysts maintain the separability of 'phallus' from 'penis', they can hold on to their 'phallus' in the belief that their discourse has no relation to sexual inequality, no relation to politics."¹⁴⁴ She also quotes Lacan's dictum that the phallus "can play its role only when veiled" much like the purloined letter in the hands of its thief.

Anna Banana, not in the position of hysteric analysand but rather of master and pedagogue, Professor of Bananology (a subject in which she awards Master's degrees to qualified students), unveils the everyday phallus of popular imagination in all its bananality, in a multidirectional flow of information

¹⁴⁴ Gallop, Jane. *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982. p.97

that upsets exchange value with its indiscriminant, Irigarayan fluid mechanics.

In a 1980 interview with Judith Hoffberg, physicist, poet, book artist and mail artist Bern Porter recounted his earliest attempts at bookmaking in childhood. In 1920 (at the age of nine) he began making handmade books, and he recalls that his "audience was a woman who lived down the street about four blocks, and when I completed a book I would take it down to her, and she would give me a dozen eggs which I would take back to my mother."¹⁴⁵ This early memory of the exchange of books for eggs foreshadows a theme that Porter would continue to develop throughout his lifetime of artistic production and that would also concern many of the artists and writers involved in mail art, book arts and alternative publishing—that is, the search for new systems of distribution that center on ideals of open sharing and barter exchange.

Hervé Fischer, in his study of rubber stamp art and other "marginal media", writes that "the use of the Post Office, with its enforced conditions of format and weight, outside the circuit of galleries and museums, implies a link with the rhythm of everyday life."¹⁴⁶ In many ways, the project of mail art is an extension beyond the "blurring of art and life" in Allan Kaprow's theory of Happenings, to a conception of art-making that places

¹⁴⁵ in Hoffberg, Judith A. *Umbrella, the Anthology*. Santa Monica: Umbrella Editions, 1999. p.63

¹⁴⁶ Fischer, Hervé. *Art and Marginal Communication: Rubber Art, Stamp Activity*. tr. Róselyne Fischer and Erna Ferran. Paris: Balland, 1974. p.25

life before and above art. Estera Milman, a mail artist skeptical of Dada's claims on the merging of art and life, writes that "the proposed marriage lacked prerequisite reciprocity. Life, after all, did not ask to be integrated with art."¹⁴⁷ It is clear that for many mail artists, drawing distinct lines between correspondence as art and 'ordinary' letter-writing is not desired, nor perhaps possible. Upon first encountering Judith Hoffberg's mail art archive, I was pleased to discover Christmas cards from friends and family filed alongside work by well-known mail artists.



(Freya Zabitsky, rubber stamp. 1987[?])

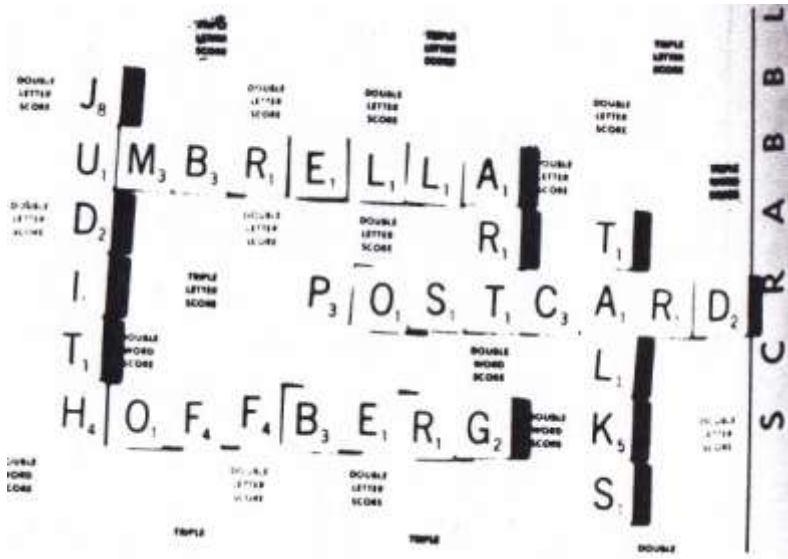
image from: Crane and Stofflet (eds.), *Correspondence Art.*)

¹⁴⁷ in Welch, p.77

When Anna Banana and Bill Gaglione organized *Vile* magazine's 1978 "Fe-Mail Art" issue (to which Judith Hoffberg contributed with her "ART SPOKEN HERE" logo) May Wilson is named as an example of how age restrictions do not apply in mail art. Wilson, one of the most legendary figures in mail art circles, began her art career at age 61, after living in Baltimore as a stay-at-home mother of three. She was introduced to mail art by her friend Ray Johnson, who was thrilled, of course, to learn that Wilson completed her art education entirely through the mail.¹⁴⁸ Mail art exhibitions have been, almost as a rule, unjuried; spaces where, in the name of democratic access, anything received is shown. Although some women artists have found mail art networks to be less sexist and easier to enter than traditional art institutions, Leavenworth Jackson reports that "certain circles within the mail art network are overwhelmingly male insofar as they faithfully mirror so many aspects of the mainstream art world."¹⁴⁹ Perhaps this reveals one face of the elusive Big Monster, that these networked communities are always in danger of simply being absorbed into the bureaucratic systems and hegemonic institutions that they seek to divert.

¹⁴⁸ see McCarthy, Gerard. "May Wilson: Homespun Rebel" *Art in America*. vol. 96 no.8 (Sept. 2008) p.142-147

¹⁴⁹ in Welch, p.219



(Judith Hoffberg, Umbrella Mail Art Show announcement, from *Umbrella* 1979.)

When, I would like to know, is On Kawara still alive? Much of Kawara's work has centered on 'objective' recordings of information relating to the temporal and spatial facts of his existence (his well-known "date paintings" or his lists of the coordinates of his travels) and to the communication of this information in the form of telegrams assuring an addressee that he, Kawara, is still alive, or postcards recording the time that he woke up that day (and, by doing so, that he woke up at all).

Derrida's post cards, his "Envois", through which he responds to Lacan's assertion that "a letter always arrives at its destination"¹⁵⁰ return again and again to "the possibility,

¹⁵⁰ Lacan, p.72

and therefore the fatal necessity of going astray."¹⁵¹ Derrida's post cards, his investigations into the possibility of sending a message to another, that the message sent and the message received might ever correspond, are always in danger of becoming cards "lost in a bag, that a strike, or even a sorting accident, can always delay indefinitely, lose without return."¹⁵² In each of Kawara's sendings, in which the proof of his existence is put on the line, there is the possibility of going astray, that same possibility of sudden death that De Quincey encounters aboard the mail-coach.

In an interview with Lucy Lippard, Kawara remarks that "I die once so I have only one life. Literally speaking, continuing means nothing and discontinuing means existence. The Today series started and has not ended, so one could describe it as existing and not existing work."¹⁵³ When Kawara's work/life has come to a close, will this ongoing "exercise in continuing to be" (as Lippard calls it) be paradoxically complete? Or will we be left with nothing?

John Held, Jr. opens his discussion of the problems of archiving mail art with a reproduction of a postcard from Carol Schneck titled "Mail Art is Disposable Art" which contains the

¹⁵¹ Derrida, Jacques. *The Post Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. tr. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. o,66

¹⁵² Ibid. p.67

¹⁵³ see Kawara, On. *On Kawara 1967, Otis Art Institute Gallery, October 27 to December 4, 1977*. Los Angeles: Otis Art Institute, 1977.

text "STOP SAVING GARBAGE!"¹⁵⁴ (this postcard has ironically been archived in Held, Jr.'s papers in the Archives of American Art.)

Judith Hoffberg faced a similar dilemma in her 1984 essay "Mail Art Today: Self-Sustaining of Self-Destructing?" where she claims that "a 'mail art gallery' is a contradiction in terms as well as in fact";¹⁵⁵ and yet, only five years prior she had exuberantly announced in the pages of *Umbrella* the opening of her own *Umbrella Mail Art Show* at the University of California, Riverside. She was clearly caught in a conflict between a desire to celebrate an art form she felt was underappreciated and a need to protect this alternative distribution network from being institutionalized by traditional gallery systems.

It is by no means certain that the archiving of mail art is any sure way of preserving its message, its moment or its aesthetic. My research into the movement has convinced me of the importance of this overlooked art form, and not only in the context of today's networked Internet art, but also in a larger context of art movements that call for a radical reconceptualization of the art expression itself, of where the work of art resides and of how it is to be received. In 1981, Hoffberg interviewed Paula Claire who maintained an archive of concrete poetry and mail art materials in England. Claire described the ideal situation she imagined for her collection as

¹⁵⁴ see Held, John, Jr. "A Living Thing in Flight: Contributions and Liabilities of Collecting and Preparing Contemporary Avant-Garde Materials for an Archive" *Archives of American Art Journal* vol. 40 no.3/4 (2000) p.10-16

¹⁵⁵ in Crane and Stofflet, p.xx

"a living archive" that would allow "a whole group of people [to] use the material and create themselves."¹⁵⁶ I am interested in the potential for mail art archives like Judith Hoffberg's (or like Jean Brown's at the Getty Research Institute) to become "living archives", to allow the traces of past communication to resound in new conversations, new babble.

¹⁵⁶ Hoffberg, *Umbrella Anthology*, p.87

Feminist Artists' Books, Little Magazines, and Visual Poetry:
Radical Print Media in the 1970s and 1980s



(Women's Graphic Center, image from Woman's Building, *First Decade*.)

"... in the 1970s you could change,
and a lot of people did, and
you had all the tools for change."

-Judith Hoffberg, interviewed by Betty Bright¹⁵⁷

Judith Hoffberg had been writing about artists' books and little magazines in the *ARLIS/NA Newsletter* during the Art Libraries Society's forming years, but when she left her position as Executive Secretary of the Society to begin publishing her own periodical, *Umbrella*, in 1978, she entered into a more direct engagement with the alternative art press; her readership continued to include librarians and collectors, but also included producers of artists' books and periodicals, a publishing scene in which Hoffberg was a vital connector (in terms of distribution and networking), historian, critic, as well as direct participant. In order to outline a social/political context for *Umbrella*, I want to examine some aspects of the alternative print culture of the 1970s and 80s (particularly, independent periodicals, visual poetry, and artists' books) as they intersected in the productions of artists and poets engaging with feminist politics. As the means of production for offset printing, mimeography, letterpress, and xerography became more affordable and more widely available, a generation of feminist artists and poets not only found access to print media, but were able to oversee printed works from the first stages of conception

¹⁵⁷ Bright, Betty. *No Longer Innocent: Book Art in America 1960-1980*. New York: Granary Books, 2005. p.185

to every detail of production and distribution. The proliferation of a feminist small press enabled the publication of politically radical materials, and it also gave artists, printers, and poets space to experiment with the materiality of language, opening the space of language up to both visual play and to feminist critique.

Howardena Pindell's essay "Artists' Periodicals as Alternative Spaces" makes the case for noncommercial, artist-run periodicals as spaces for exhibiting work and ideas that are too radical, aesthetically or politically, for mainstream art periodicals. Although Pindell acknowledges the tendency for some of these artists' periodicals to become vehicles for self-promotion, she identifies feminist periodicals and the periodicals of the Bay Area neo-Dadaists and mail artists (the publications of La Mabelle are highlighted and called a "modern counterpart to *Der Sturm*"¹⁵⁸) as more inclined towards social interaction and community. In the 1970s, artist-produced periodicals like *Artery* and *Praxis* were engaging with politics much more directly than mainstream art periodicals, which tended to simply reflect the commercial trends of the art market. Other little magazines, like Vito Acconci and Bernadette Mayer's *0 to 9*, were printing experimental poetry and *avant garde* writings on art using office mimeograph printers. Victor Brand characterizes artists' periodicals at this time as "networking tools for

¹⁵⁸ Pindell, Howardena. *The Heart of the Question: The Writings and Paintings of Howardena Pindell*. New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1997. p.90

outsiders" which tended to exhibit "not the aggressive mushrooming growth of a business model so much as the slow accumulation of kindred spirits."¹⁵⁹ One important area of art publishing, still operating outside the mainstream, but experiencing, in the 1970s, a rapid growth in audience, participation and impact were feminist artists' periodicals. Major publications during this time included the *Feminist Art Journal*, which grew out of the more marxist-leaning *Women and Art* and which focused mainly on the status of women artists in the art world; *Chrysalis*, a cross-disciplinary journal of "women's culture" that brought together New York and Los Angeles-based feminist artists, writers and thinkers; and *Heresies*, a loosely organized and rotating collective of radical voices that spoke passionately on themed issues, to name only a few of the more prominent feminist art periodicals.

In the late 1960's, Women's Movement activist and consciousness-raising groups, from the large organization NOW to the small but influential lesbian collective "The Furies", were using printed newsletters and pamphlets to disseminate information and organize; mimeographed broadsheets like the Radicalesbians' manifesto "The Woman-Identified Woman" became classic documents in the history of radical feminism. Art historian Linda Nochlin writes about her first major exposure to the radical politics of the Women's Movement, which arrived when

¹⁵⁹ in Aarons, Philip E. and Roth, Andrew (eds.) *In Numbers: Serial Publications by Artists since 1955*. Zurich, Switzerland: PPP Editions, 2009. p.29

a friend handed her a stack of periodicals--"She thrust her hand into her bulging briefcase and brought forth a heap of roughly printed, crudely illustrated journals on coarse paper"¹⁶⁰—these were feminist journals like *Redstockings Newsletter*, *Off Our Backs*, and *Everywoman*, and this was 1969, just two years before Nochlin published her groundbreaking essay "Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?".

Mary D. Garrard wrote that "the near-simultaneous explosions across the country of feminist activism in the arts (as in the movement in general) can only be explained by the special phenomenon of women's networks."¹⁶¹ By the late 1960's, women's networks specifically for women in the arts were beginning to organize, Women Artists in Revolution (WAR) forming in 1969. In 1970, Lucy Lippard and Faith Ringgold organized the Ad Hoc Women Artists' Group that was thoroughly grassroots and non-institutionalized, characterized by its having no formal rules, no officers, and no members list.¹⁶² Contemporaneous with the Ad Hoc Group, the West-East Bag (W.E.B.) was created "as a liaison network to inform women artists' groups internationally of each other's actions, legal maneuvers, methodology, discussion topics, and techniques[.]"¹⁶³ The W.E.B.'s main medium of communication was a newsletter, produced with typewriters and

¹⁶⁰ in Broude, Norma and Garrard, Mary D. (eds.) *The Power of Feminist Art: The American Movement of the 1970s, History and Impact*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994. p.130

¹⁶¹ Ibid. p.92

¹⁶² Garrard "Feminist Politics: Networks and Organizations" in Broude and Garrard, 1994.

¹⁶³ Lippard, Lucy. *From the Center: Feminist Essays on Women's Art*. New York: Dutton, 1976. p.29

photocopy machines by a different editor in a different city each month.¹⁶⁴ Artists Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz were responsible for initiating "Ariadne: A Social Art Network" in 1977, which served to connect women in the arts, mass media, politics, and larger women's community and to coordinate media interventions and public information campaigns about feminist issues like violence against women.¹⁶⁵ Professional organizations also began to be established within existing institutional structures, but fully professionalized activities did not necessarily follow; as Garrard writes about the Women's Caucus for Art, originally formed as a subsection of the College Art Association, "in marked contrast to 'normal' professional behavior both before the feminist seventies and in the decade that followed, many feminists put their reputations on the line, taking professionally risky stands."¹⁶⁶

In 1973, Kirsten Grimstad and Susan Rennie (who would both go on to edit the journal *Chrysalis*) published the *New Women's Survival Sourcebook*, a kind of feminist *Whole Earth Catalog* that provided information on resources for women, presented as survival tools for an alternative woman's culture. In the *Sourcebook*, one finds information about women's presses, art collectives, health clinics, child care cooperatives, feminist education, self-defense, lesbian resources, grant opportunities,

¹⁶⁴ Broude and Garrard, p.122

¹⁶⁵ Lacy, Suzanne. *Leaving Art: Writings on Performance, Politics, and Publics, 1974-2007*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

¹⁶⁶ in Broude and Garrard, p.94

legal resources and a national listing of women's centers.¹⁶⁷

Terry Wolverton, an active participant at the Woman's Building for 13 years and co-founder of the Building's Lesbian Art Project, originally decided to move to Los Angeles after reading about the Woman's Building in the *New Women's Survival Sourcebook*.¹⁶⁸

One of the characteristics common to many feminist art journals, both in the 1970s and 1980s, was the open, collaborative, and heterogenous editorial policy found in both the ever-shifting editorial collective of *Heresies* and in the forum format used in the art theory journal *M/E/A/N/I/N/G*. Founded in 1986 by artists and writers Mira Schor and Susan Bee, initially in order to publish essays like Schor's "Appropriated Sexuality" (which no established art journal would publish because it unapologetically speaks out against the blatant misogyny in the work of an art star like David Salle), *M/E/A/N/I/N/G* soon became an exciting new forum for dissident voices in art, showing that, in the words of Bee and Schor, "it is possible for artists to fly beneath the radar and still make themselves heard."¹⁶⁹ The periodical as panel discussion was also

¹⁶⁷ Grimstad, Kirsten and Rennie, Susan (eds.) *The New Woman's Survival Catalog*. New York: Coward, McGann & Geoghegan, 1973.

¹⁶⁸ see Wolverton, Terry. *Insurgent Muse: Life and Art at the Woman's Building*. San

Francisco: City Lights, 2002.

¹⁶⁹ Bee, Susan and Schor, Mira (eds.) *M/E/A/N/I/N/G: An Anthology of Artists' Writings, Theory, and Criticism*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2000. p.4

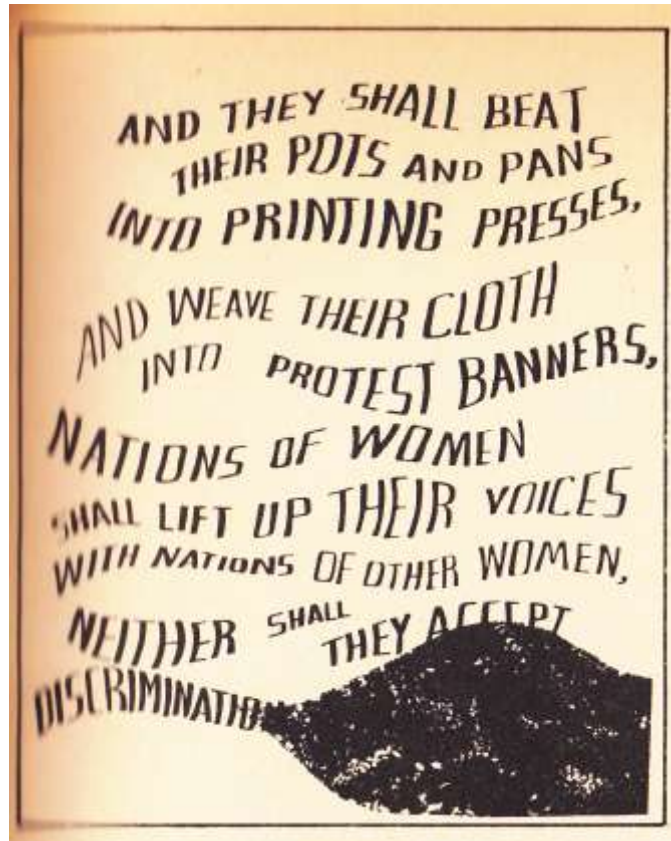
explored in the earlier *Women Artists Newsletter*, founded in the early 70s by Cynthia Navaretta and Judy Seigel.¹⁷⁰

In 1981, the Australian feminist arts journal *Lip* profiled a Sydney-based alternative distribution network called Womanwrite that delivered feminist literature to readers around Australia by means of a travelling van, offering workshops on cheap methods of printing and book production along the way. But even as that issue of *Lip* went to press, the editors received a letter from the women behind Womanwrite, Pearlie and Marie, that they would be closing their operations.¹⁷¹ Distribution has been one of the most difficult aspects of small press publishing, and countless little magazines, presses, and book artists have had to cease publishing due to insufficient distribution. Press cooperatives like the Associated Women's Press began to combine distribution efforts in the 1970s, setting up clearing houses, information resource centers, and cooperative distribution networks. The feminist press KNOW, Inc., responsible for a series of inexpensive reprints of historical and contemporary feminist articles and pamphlets, also produced a *Women in Print* newsletter that aimed "to set up a desperately needed feminist distribution system"¹⁷² by keeping librarians informed about new publications and reprints from a growing network of small presses.

¹⁷⁰ see the book *Mutiny and the Mainstream: Talk That Changed Art, 1975-1990* for a collection of the panel talks printed in *Women Artists Newsletter*.

¹⁷¹ Freiberg, Freda. "Womanwrite: A Feminist Enterprise" in *Lip* no.2 (1981) p.54-55.

¹⁷² Grimstad and Rennie, p.15



(from Grimstad and Rennie, *New Women's Survival Sourcebook*.)

The Women's Graphic Center at the Woman's Building in Los Angeles functioned both as a commercial press, as an educational facility where women learned typesetting, printing, and design through the Feminist Studio Workshop, and as a cooperatively owned means of production for printing posters, pamphlets, and artists' books. Terry Wolverton's description of how she produced her first self-published book of poetry, *Blue Moon*, depicts the kind of creative environment that existed at the Woman's Building: "I typeset the text myself. Under the guidance of Sheila de Bretteville, I ordered paper samples, made a dummy copy of the book, and located a bindery to assemble the

pages. Nancy Fried volunteered to test her newfound letterpress skills by printing the cover. Meridee Mandio, a second-year student, agreed to print the inside pages on the Building's ancient, cranky offset press. Friends contributed illustrations and cheered me on. I was experiencing the FSW [Feminist Studio Workshop] philosophy in action: a community of women eager to support one of its members to produce her art."¹⁷³

Other alternative art education centers existed contemporaneous with the Feminist Studio Workshop. For example, printmaker June Wayne conducted a series of "Joan of Art" seminars intended to teach women artists practical skills for functioning in the art world; Wayne also founded the Tamarind Lithography Workshop, where an influential statistical study was conducted and published under the title *Sex Differentials in Art Exhibition Reviews*, prefiguring the no-nonsense statistical presentations of the Guerrilla Girls.

The form of the book offered the writers and artists of the Women's Movement an appropriate and rich medium for collapsing the space between the public and the private, as the book form engages both spheres at once, functioning as a public medium of mass communication and as an object encountered intimately, through the mostly solitary and reflective act of reading. Drucker outlines a history of this "public-private paradox" that explores women's relationship to the form of the book, from women

¹⁷³ Wolverton, p.53

printers in the early years of movable type to the innovative bookworks from the artists' books collection at the National Museum of Women in the Arts.¹⁷⁴

In *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*, Rita Felski argues against postmodern literary theory that would ignore or deprecate women's realist autobiographical narratives. I do not entirely agree with her assessment of French theory's "overestimation of the revolutionary potential of experimental form."¹⁷⁵ And although I am somewhat more receptive to Felski's claim that "the defamiliarizing capacity of literary language and form does not in itself bear any necessary relationship to the political and social goals of feminism,"¹⁷⁶ I differ from Felski in that I will still argue for the political potential of poetic language, and for its relevance to feminism, even without constituting a necessary, predetermined relationship. However, Felski's book offers what she calls "an examination of the historically specific frameworks of textual production and reception generated within the feminist public sphere"¹⁷⁷ that takes into serious consideration the easily dismissed fact that realistic autobiographical narratives were the mainstays of the feminist presses like Virago and The Women's Press that flourished during

¹⁷⁴ See Drucker's "Intimate Authority" in Wasserman, Krystyna. *The Book as Art: Artists' Books from the National Museum of Women in the Arts*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007. P.14-17.

¹⁷⁵ Felski, Rita. *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989. p.50 Felski is here primarily referring to Kristeva, Cixous, and Irigaray.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid. p.6

¹⁷⁷ Ibid. p.10

the 1970's Women's Movement. Felski's intelligent study looks at popular works of autobiography, confession, and women's *Bildungsroman*; works like Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* (1972), Kate Millett's *Flying* (1974), and Audre Lorde's *The Cancer Journals* (1980); and examines the representation of the self, the stylistic qualities, assumptions about truth, history, and storytelling. Felski remarks that "the shift towards a conception of communal identity which has emerged with new social movements such as feminism brings with it a modification of the notion of individualism as it is exemplified in the male bourgeois autobiography."¹⁷⁸ What I like so much about Felski's argument here is how she shifts her focus away from a political writing practice so often commented upon, to the emergence of new readerships, suggesting that the audience established by the Women's Movement has profoundly changed its literature by initiating a shift from the assumed universal significance of the traditional male autobiographer to a situation of feminist autobiographers entering into a specified relationship with the particular readership of the new feminist counter-public sphere.

Autobiography marks the site of an interesting tension in feminist thought, where some feminist critical theorists follow a postmodern critique of identity and authorship, and where others stress the need to assert identity and agency, and to give voice to lived experiences that have been absent from history. Autobiography is also an important genre for feminist writing

¹⁷⁸ Ibid. p.93-94

because of its relationship to ethics, not only in the sense of life-writing considering questions of how one should live, but also in the sense that the form enacts what Philippe Lejeune has called the "autobiographical pact" between author and reader, under which autobiography separates itself from other forms of writing by insisting on the truth of the account of the author's life. Innovative women's writings that engage autobiography have worked to open a space to renegotiate this pact and to question its assumptions about writing and truth.

In an oral history conducted at Columbia University, Judith Hoffberg told her interviewer that "the women's movement made a difference in bookmaking. The women's movement said, 'I can talk about myself and there are going to be some people who are going to listen, because I have something to say that may be shared.' And so a lot of books like diaries and journals were starting to come out [...] people were talking about feminist problems in relationship to their own lives [...]"¹⁷⁹ Barbara Rose Haum's dissertation on women artists' books examines, through readings of books from the Franklin Furnace collection of artists' books, the use of autobiography in women's bookworks; Haum selects books that use autobiography as a means of ideological critique, and that do not simply reproduce counterparts to the traditional male autobiographical subject. Autobiography was central to the feminist culture of this time period; the consciousness-raising groups that facilitated the sharing of experiences, the voicing

¹⁷⁹ p.70 of typed transcript in Judith A. Hoffberg Papers at UCSB Special Collections.

of historically silenced subjectivities, and the era's primary slogan that "the personal is political" all contributed to the importance and proliferation of autobiographical narratives. But these narratives were seldom conventional (after all, what "conventions" really existed for telling these kinds of histories?), the Women's Movement produced some of the most exciting experiments with the form of autobiography, and many of the most exploratory works were being produced in the emerging, largely as yet unnamed, field of artists' books.

Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document* is one of the most striking artists' books to employ autobiographical narrative as rigorous ideological critique. Kelly, in her involvement as a leader in Britain's Artists' Union and chairperson of its Women's Workshop, and in her 1970s work leading up to *PPD* (most notably the film *Nightcleaners* and the installation *Women and Work*), was thoroughly engaged in a marxist-feminist analysis of the conditions of women's paid and unpaid labor. Out of this context, and out of readings in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, Kelly approaches the *Document*, which functions as a highly unconventional narrative of motherhood, documenting with fetishized artifacts her relationship with her son from birth to his acquisition of language. The work was assembled from 1973 to 1979, and first displayed as a gallery exhibition, then published as an artists' book in 1983. While some would question my calling the *Document* an artists' book because it was not made specifically for the book form, I want to argue that it is in the

book that the *Document* finds its form, and it has had its most lasting impact through being read as book.



(images from Kelly, *Post-Partum Document*.)

Feminists have questioned Kelly's engagement with the work of Lacan; he is often perceived as a patriarchal figure, and psychoanalysis in general is positioned as dubious, if not hostile, in relation to feminism. I think to question Kelly's use of Lacan is warranted, but to reject the work outright for its use of theory is no better than the tabloid press's initial dismissal of the exhibition as mere "dirty nappies". I like Kelly's response, in an interview with art critic Hal Foster, to the charge of being "devoted to the work of Freud and Lacan"—her answer that "devoted would not be the appropriate term as far as I'm concerned. I have a rather mercenary attitude toward the

texts[.]”¹⁸⁰ Kelly’s focus is on the texts (not their mythologized authors) and what political use she can derive from them, and her approach to psychoanalytic theory tends to be in line with Althusser’s overtly Marxist readings of Lacan and Freud.

Lucy Lippard, in her introduction to *PPD*, has characterized the reciprocal interaction between what she describes as the work’s “sensual immediacy” and its theoretical subtext, or the “prosaic biological/autobiographical level that Kelly manipulates to subvert.”¹⁸¹ Reflecting on *PPD*, Kelly has written that “the *Document* reiterates, at one level, the unique contribution that consciousness-raising made to political practice in general by emphasizing the subjective moment of women’s oppression. But, at another level, it argues against the supposed self-sufficiency of lived experience and for a theoretical elaboration of the social relations in which femininity is formed.”¹⁸² Griselda Pollock has written about *PPD* that “meaning is produced at the point of production by its viewers/readers who in deciphering the documents, come to recognize and understand femininity as social process, founded in historically specific social practices.”¹⁸³ In its examination of the socialization of both the infant into the discursive order of language and the mother into the

¹⁸⁰ Kelly, Mary. *Imaging Desire*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996. p.171

¹⁸¹ in Kelly, Mary. *Post-Partum Document*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985. p.ix

¹⁸² Kelly. *Imaging Desire*. p.23

¹⁸³ in Parker, Roszika and Pollock, Griselda (eds.) *Framing Feminism: Art and the Women’s Movement, 1970-85*. New York: Pandora, 1987. p.98

institution of motherhood, Kelly's work denaturalizes the sexual division of labor by pointing to its construction in discursive practice, and, importantly, it organizes such claims from the perspective of personal, maternal experience. Although the *Document* is quite a visual text, and although it relates, in its way, the personal lived experience of motherhood, there are no images of Kelly in the work. And yet, Kelly is in no sense absent from the work. In its exploration of the possibility of "female fetishism" and desire, the *Document* aspires "to 'picture' the woman as subject of her own desire,"¹⁸⁴ not as an object of representation. When Kelly focuses on the primary process of language acquisition, most notably through her deciphering of the child's "hieroglyphics", Kelly is enacting the distinction she draws between feminist practice and a feminist 'problematic', by laying a meta-discursive groundwork for the articulation of feminist ideological critique; she writes, in an essay on "Art and Sexual Politics", that this notion of a feminist problematic "requires formulating the problem of representation as the product of a practice of signification which will generate questions like 'How do the means of signification in a given art practice function?' and only then 'What is signified and with what political consequences?'"¹⁸⁵

Lyn Hejinian published an influential series of chapbooks through her Tuumba Press, co-edited (with Barrett Watten) *Poetics Journal*, and from 1978 to 1981, served on the National Endowment

¹⁸⁴ Kelly. *Post-Partum Document*. p.xviii

¹⁸⁵ Kelly. *Imaging Desire*. p.19

for the Arts Literature panel, becoming "a significant force in calling attention to bi-coastal writing projects from both new and established poets not part of the American mainstream."¹⁸⁶ Hejinian is best known today for her fascinating experiment in autobiography, *My Life*. First published in 1980 when Hejinian was 37 years old, *My Life* consisted of a prose-poem in 37 sections, each containing 37 sentences; republished in 1987, when Hejinian was 45 years old, the updated version expanded to 45 sections of 45 sentences each. This expanding structure offers an interesting alternative to the linear narrative of individual development characteristic of traditional autobiography. The writing itself is playfully experimental and yet retains the intimacy of the best autobiography, and for a book of unconventional poetry it has been extraordinarily popular, continuing to go through several reprintings and countering the notion that such poetry can reach only an 'elite' audience. Lisa Samuels cites, among her justifications for the literary canonization of *My Life*, the work's understandability and its inhabitability.¹⁸⁷ Megan Simpson's study of women's "poetic epistemologies" praises *My Life* for its decentralized approach to self-presentation and the process of memory; "in Hejinian's writing, the 'I' is disunified and rendered slightly incoherent

¹⁸⁶ Fraser, Kathleen. *Translating the Unspeakable: Poetry and the Innovative Necessity*. Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2000. p.73

¹⁸⁷ see Samuels, Lisa. "Eight Justifications for Canonizing Lyn Hejinian's *My Life*" *Modern Language Studies*. vol. 27 no.2 (Spring, 1997) p.103-119

by this very process of 'recollection', which demands that 'I' exist in at least two places and two times simultaneously."¹⁸⁸

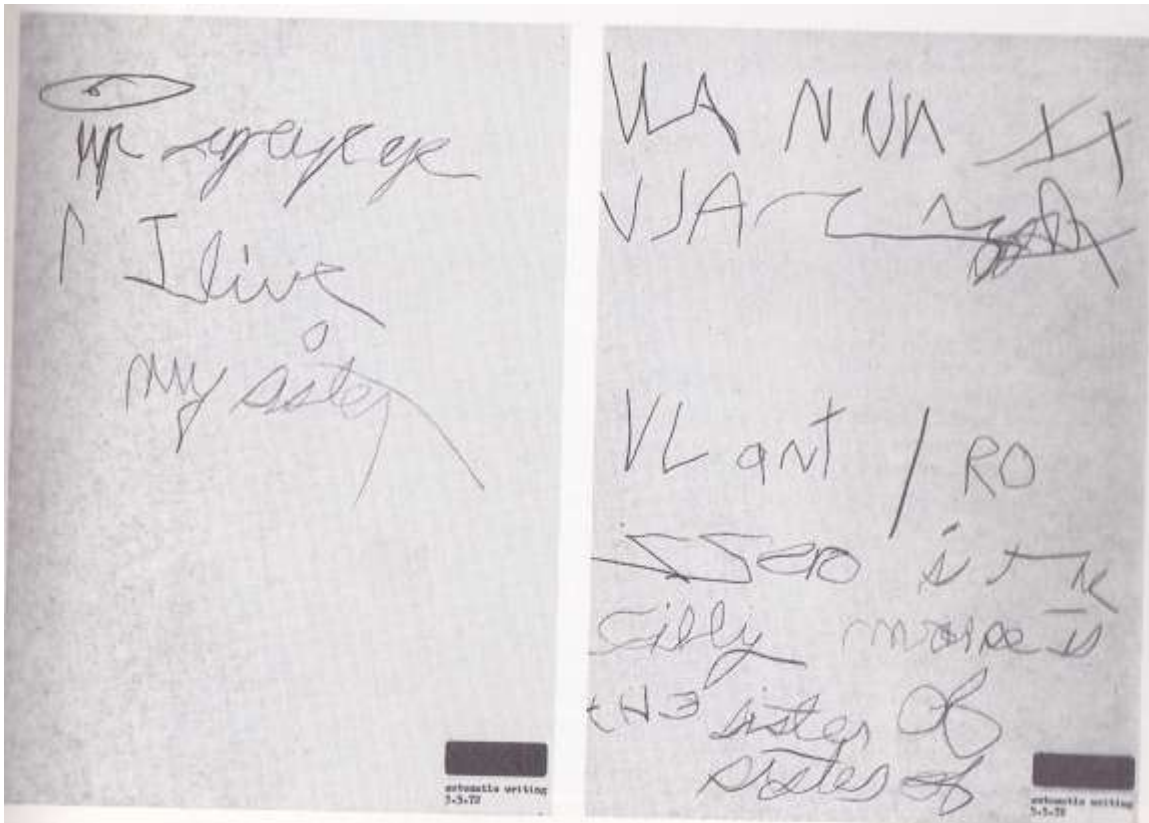
In the early 1970s, conceptual artist Susan Hiller began experimenting with automatic writing, and in 1983 collected pages of this script together with notes and decipherings in an artists' book, *Sisters of Menon*. In the notes in this book, Hiller acknowledges the precedence of Surrealist automatic writings, but establishes a distance from these earlier practices with her statement that, "this activity, that could be viewed as evidence of some 'primitive' urge to self-expression, or as a revelation of the artist's secret life, or as some sort of 'occult' phenomenon... addresses itself to the question it poses: 'Who is this one?'"¹⁸⁹ On one level, *Sisters of Menon* explores a form of mark-making situated between writing and drawing, calling to mind the ideograms of Henri Michaux. But this project is also clearly directed at an investigation of the writing self, particularly with the self after the collective identity of feminist consciousness-raising. Among the notes in the book, a collection of theoretical as well as personal commentaries, Hiller provides this striking statement: "MESSAGES SUPPRESSED BY THE SELF DO NOT CEASE TO EXIST. MESSAGES SUPPRESSED BY THE CULTURE DO NOT CEASE TO EXIST."¹⁹⁰ Here, the project of automatic writing as tool for accessing the subconscious of the writing

¹⁸⁸ Simpson, Megan. *Poetic Epistemologies: Gender and Knowing in Women's Language-Oriented Writing*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2000. p.19

¹⁸⁹ Hiller, Susan. *Sisters of Menon*. London: Coracle Press, 1983. n.p.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid. n.p.

subject, with the familiar Freudian account of the return of the repressed, is recast as a project of accessing the messages of silenced cultural material, where 'suppression' assumes political rather than purely psychoanalytic connotations. Hiller's meditative, exploratory writing at the edges of the self uncover a gendered voice of collectivity: "I am the sister of Menon / I am your sister / the sister of - of everyone's sister [...] We are the Sisters of Menon / everyone is the sister." Neither aligned with the tradition of Surrealist self-analysis nor quite with the tradition of channeling as practiced by spiritual mediums, *Sisters of Menon* enacts a hybrid form of automatic script that is a poetic investigation of 'sisterhood'.



(from Hiller, *Sisters of Menon*.)

Susan Hiller was trained as an anthropologist, and practiced anthropology in Mexico in the 1960s, but her faith in scientific objectivity underwent a profound change, partly precipitated by her outrage at the U.S. government's use of scientific data to justify the war in Vietnam. Hiller writes, "I made the decision when I left anthropology that I never wanted to be again an observer, that I didn't believe there was anything called 'objective truth', and I didn't want to be anything but a participant in my own experience[.]"¹⁹¹ Although Hiller's work as an artist is informed by anthropology, and most often discussed in that disciplinary context, her approach to study without detachment has more in common with the ethnographic study of Maya Deren than with the traditions of anthropology in which Hiller was educated. Hiller's art practice is particularly concerned with the myth of primitivism in Western culture, and her approach to an art informed by anthropology "interrogates categories and brings 'the primitive' back into view as a site of need and fantasy essential to the construction of Western identity, thus freeing it from its projection onto real other people who have been burdened by us with essentialist, timeless qualities."¹⁹² Hiller's work often takes the form of an ethnographic investigation of the dominant cultures of the West, from her creating ethnographic displays from the archives of the Freud Museum to her collections of popular postcard imagery, and

¹⁹¹ Hiller, Susan. *Thinking About Art: Conversations With Susan Hiller*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996. p.62

¹⁹² *Ibid.* p.33

Sisters of Menon can be read as such an investigation into the formation of the gendered subject in writing. What the text seems to attempt in its evasion of authorship through automatism, is the achievement of language that forms in the process of mark-making, not through the inscription of pre-formed (in the mind as well as in the culture) ideas, thus creating what Hiller refers to as "fruitful inchoherence" [sic].

Hiller mentions W. B. Yeats' use of automatic writing briefly in the introductory notes to *Sisters of Menon*, so there is no doubt she was familiar with *A Vision*. This peculiar book by Yeats constructs a kind of occult cosmology out of the automatic writings of his wife, who began experimenting with automatic writing after their marriage in 1917. In the notes to *Sisters of Menon*, and elsewhere in Hiller's discussions of automatic writing, there are references to the culturally constructed dichotomy of inspired male poet and madwoman in the attic, and it is interesting to see how these categories play out in *A Vision*. Margaret Mills Harper's article on George Hyde-Lees Yeats seems to have been the first study of *A Vision* to sufficiently consider the contributions of William Butler Yeats' wife to what is clearly a collaborative literary work.¹⁹³ W. B. Yeats' introductory notes to *A Vision* outline his role as something of an organizer, "piecing together those scattered sentences";¹⁹⁴ he writes of "the unknown writer" operating through

¹⁹³ Harper, Margaret Mills. "George Yeats and Her Automatic Script" *New Literary History*. vol. 33 no. 2 (Spring, 2002). p.291-314

¹⁹⁴ Yeats, William Butler. *A Vision*. New York: Macmillan, 1956. p.8

his wife with masculine pronouns, and refers to this male figure's adoption of themes from his (W. B. Yeats') poetry. These characterizations of the writing process are all the more troubling given the inclusion of Yeats' poem "Leda and the Swan" (setting the mythical rape to verse) in the fifth section of *A Vision*, with its concluding lines "Did she put on his knowledge with his power / Before the indifferent beak could let her drop?" Mills Harper's study discusses the chosen ritual name of George Hyde-Lees, who was known in the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn as Nemo.¹⁹⁵ Mills Harper points out that this name is Latin for *no one*, or, suggestively, *no man*, and sketches out the possibility of Hyde-Lees' cunning uses of anonymity, reflecting on Odysseus's naming himself *no one* to escape Polyphemus. In the notes to *Sisters of Menon*, Hiller points out that the mysterious word *Menon* in her text is an anagram for *nomen* (to name) and also *no men*. I read a certain acknowledging gesture here to the automatic writing of George Yeats, and a move to reject the cultural positioning of this figure of the mad woman poet by claiming a women's poetic tradition. From Hiller's pencil, which seems to her to be writing of its own accord, comes a message of opposition: "I AM NOT A CONTAINER."

¹⁹⁵ for a fascinating history of women's assumed names (from George Eliot to Judy Chicago) and their relationship to alphabetic writing and patrilineage, see Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's "Ceremonies of the Alphabet"

Kate Millett's groundbreaking book *Sexual Politics* introduced new critical methods into a literary criticism that could avoid both the traditional way of writing about literature solely within the framework of literary history and also the "New Criticism" which tended to isolate texts from history in order for closer readings of aesthetic considerations; Millett, believing in the inseparability of literature from social realities and working from the site of literature to construct a theory of patriarchy, introduced feminist politics to the critical discourse by examining the relations of power in works by Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, and others. Millett's book became an inspiration to a generation of feminist writers who believed in the power of literature to affect social change. In line with Audre Lorde's aphorism that "poetry is not a luxury"¹⁹⁶, there was a move to reclaim poetry as something more than a Romantic bourgeois pastime—as a powerful medium for voicing political dissent. Joan Retallack coined the term "poethics", arguing that "a poetics thickened by an *h* launches an exploration of art's significance *as*, not just *about*, a form of living in the real world"¹⁹⁷ and that a "poethical wager" in experimental writing would risk unintelligibility but would provoke both *gender* and *genre* trouble by disrupting the transparency of syntax and offering linguistic structures as objects of critique.

¹⁹⁶ see Lorde, Audre. *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches*. Trumansburg, NY: Crossing Press, 1984.

¹⁹⁷ Retallack, Joan. *The Poethical Wager*. Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2003. p.26

Women during an earlier era of feminism had established an important tradition in the poetry press. Harriet Monroe founded the groundbreaking *Poetry, A Magazine of Verse* in Chicago in 1912, which, although it published a largely male-dominated poetry scene, also found support in the women's literary circles that formed around Jane Addams and Hull House, and published early work by Amy Lowell and Marianne Moore. Other women-run literary little magazines at that time, like Margaret Anderson and Jane Heap's *Little Review*, were publishing avant-garde writing and fighting censorship.¹⁹⁸ Although discussions of the democratization of print culture in the 1960s tend to focus on the availability of offset printing presses, letterpress printing also flourished, especially in small press poetry. And while offset printing is often characterized as "fast and cheap", Brad Freeman points out the sometimes overlooked fact that offset printing requires highly technical skills that may take years to learn;¹⁹⁹ setting type for letterpress requires more time and labor, but it is often the case that the means of production are far less expensive to acquire. Kathy Walkup, of the 1970s letterpress poetry presses Five Trees Press and Matrix Press, identifies Jane Grabhorn as a major influence on her approach to printing; Grabhorn was a printer in the California fine press tradition of the early- to mid-twentieth century who introduced

¹⁹⁸ see Albertine, Susan (ed.) *A Living of Words: American Women in Print Culture*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1995 (for histories of *Poetry, Little Review*, and other American women's publishing endeavors.

¹⁹⁹ Freeman, Brad. "JAB Journeys Before the Glue Factory: Theorizing Production" *Journal of Artists' Books* no.3 (Spring, 1995)

experimentation and humor into the comparatively conservative aesthetic and production values of fine press printing, and whom Walkup refers to as a "renegade."²⁰⁰

Suzanne Lacy and Leslie Labowitz, in their call for action, "Feminist Artists: Developing a Media Strategy for the Movement", write that "any change in the structure of a society will be accompanied by a change in our visual, as well as verbal, culture."²⁰¹ The most radical feminist art and poetry worked in opposition to a patriarchy that extended far beyond the gatekeepers of institutions and called for a comprehensive reevaluation of culture; it is from this context of fundamental cultural critique that feminist poets approached the concept of language as *material*. Like Kelly's *Post-Partum Document*, which sought to denaturalize the sexual division of labor by locating the emergence of the discursive relations that sustain it, poetry that insists on the material qualities of the signifier and on the visual qualities of poetic composition as mark-making, denies the transparent relationship between language and thought, interrupting the logic that would 'naturalize' patriarchal assumptions in dominant linguistic relations as prediscursive. Concrete and visual poetries' insistence on the materiality of language, on the signifying value of typography and the space of the page, rejects transparency by allowing the visual experience

²⁰⁰ see Walkup's interview in Courtney, Cathy. *Speaking of Book Art: Interviews with British and American Book Artists*. Los Altos Hills, CA: Anderson-Lovelace, 1999.

²⁰¹ Lacy, Suzanne. *Leaving Art: Writings on Performance, Politics, and Publics, 1974-2007*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010. p.83

of reading and writing to take precedence over content or meaning. Susi R. Bloch locates the modern expressive significance of typography in Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés*, "a book in which typography and even the foldings of the pages achieve an ideational, analytic, and expressive significance."²⁰² In Marjorie Perloff's reading of Oppen's verse, she observes the supplanting of imagistic nouns and adjectives with a profusion of deictics²⁰³; this is another opposition to transparency, another way of using language as material, because this kind of writing does not seek to *describe* an experience (visual or otherwise), but *presents the poem itself* as experience, and as material artifact. When Megan Simpson discusses "poetic epistemologies" in the work of language-oriented women writers, she refers to an approach to writing in which "language plays more than a (merely) descriptive role in knowing, but itself functions as the horizon of an encounter in knowing situations, not a fixed point but an ever-shifting continuum along which the knowing subject and 'the world' meet and construct one another."²⁰⁴ New ideas about the nature of language have resulted in new ideas about *poiesis*, about the *making* of poetry, in which the poet participates in a dynamic process of knowing.

²⁰² in Lyons, Joan (ed.) *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*. Rochester, NY: The Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985. p.133

²⁰³ Perloff, Marjorie. *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1991.

²⁰⁴ Simpson. p.122

THE MANNER OF LIVING
 WITH
 and bright to insult me
 GREAT MEN
 Led I used not to see
 take it to be their privilege
 "what delicate irony
 Life deceives us
 Whose life was spent
 naturally
 in going from one house
 Magnanimity cannot
 to another
 Those who have been wronged
 now in literature

(page from Susan Howe's *Nonconformist's Memorial*)

Beatrice Warde's influential essay on typography, "The Crystal Goblet", makes the case for the transparency of type and the invisibility of design. The metaphor of the crystal goblet likens the finest typographical design to a clear glass, the design of which would be "calculated to reveal rather than to hide the beautiful thing which it was meant to contain."²⁰⁵

Although Warde seriously considers the idea that printed language consists of "black marks on paper" and that human speech amounts to "arbitrary sounds,"²⁰⁶ she ultimately considers writing to serve as a representation of, and container for, ideas. Shelley Hoyt, Susan King, Joan Lyons, and Sue Ann Robinson, in a collaborative, accordion-fold artists' book appropriately titled *Fragments for a Body of Knowledge*, explore "issues germane to

²⁰⁵ Warde, Beatrice. *The Crystal Goblet: Sixteen Essays on Typography*. New York: The World Publishing Company, 1956. p.11

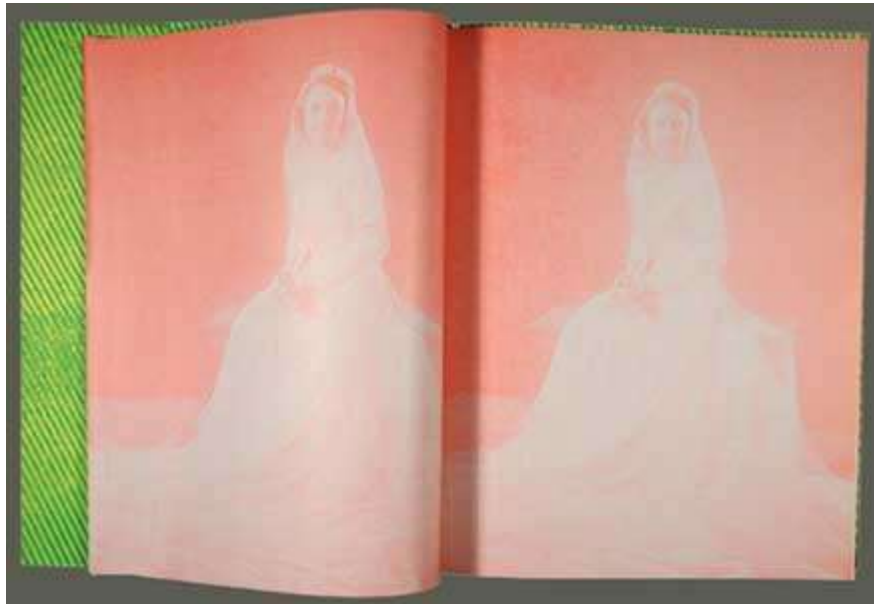
²⁰⁶ Ibid. p.12

their lives as women, artists and printers",²⁰⁷ including a critique of "The Crystal Goblet." For Susan King, one of the more successful book artists to come out of the Feminist Studio Workshop at the Woman's Building, and known for the innovative design of books like *Women and Cars* and *Treading the Maze*, the notion that design should be invisible has troubling consequences for feminist art, and she traces the metaphor of the "crystal goblet" back to the patriarchal designation of women as vessels or receptacle (the Platonic tradition of the *chora* that has been critiqued by feminist philosophers like Luce Irigaray and Judith Butler), which Joan Lyons then relates to her work on the history of gynecology and medical literature on the womb. Although *Fragments* is, perhaps facetiously, neatly set in Eric Gill's "Joanna" typeface, it argues for a rejection of typographic transparency, and for innovative printing and design that offers ideas as print and design, not only as containing elements for some metaphysical transfer of thought.

Davids and Petrillo outline the emergence of the artist-printer out of the relatively conservative tradition of typography, focusing on contemporary book artists who, instead of outsourcing printing labor to commercial presses with conventional reproduction techniques, have taken on the process of printing as part of the overall artistic production, and, in doing so, have introduced innovative methods into the process. They write, "Watching Frances Butler on the press is an education

²⁰⁷ Hoyt, S., King, S., Lyons, J., and Robinson, S.A. *Fragments for a Body of Knowledge*. Long Beach, CA: FHP Hippodrome Gallery, 1992. n.p.

in the value of a more permissive attitude toward presses. She is an energetic, enthusiastic, ink-slinging, sloppy, spirited printer who achieves surprise results that would be impossible through the meticulous restraint more commonly practiced by printers."²⁰⁸



(from Lyons, *Bride Book, Red to Green.*)

Joan Lyons, co-founder with Nathan Lyons of the Visual Studies Workshop Press, where over 400 artists' books have been produced, spoke about her process-oriented approach to offset printing: "In 1975 I made *Bride Book, Red to Green* using a 'found' bride (looking very unhappy) and explored what I could do with the plates on the offset press if I turned the ink off and kept running paper through. The 'bride' faded. When the pages were run through in reverse order overprinted with a negative image, she slowly re-emerged in negative in a new color. Many of

²⁰⁸ Davids and Petrillo in Lyons. p.158

my books at this time were concerned with ideas that evolved out of the process of making them as well as being based on feminist/political ideas."²⁰⁹ Lyons relates the feminist perspective of the *Bride Book* to its approach to the printing process, suggesting parallels to the postminimalist movement of process art (an example of which would be the poured paintings and latex floor pieces of Lynda Benglis), which promoted, in its practices, feminist critiques of the status of the art object by shifting the focus to an interaction with materials in time.

Kathleen Fraser began publishing the poetry and poetics journal *HOW(ever)* with Frances Jaffer and Beverly Dahlen in 1983 in order to create a forum for feminist poets who felt excluded by both the male-dominated scene of poetry and by feminist publications that were only interested in direct, accessible language and narrative. While Fraser recognizes the political need for plain, unambiguous language, she and her circle of writers also felt the need for a space in which to experiment with (and call into question) the basic structures and functions of the language of the dominant culture. In an editorial in the first issue of *HOW(ever)*, Jaffer writes that "the myths of a culture are embodied in its language, its lexicon, its very syntactic structure."²¹⁰ *HOW(ever)* published the works (and often works-in-progress) of contemporary women poets as well as appreciations of under-recognized modernist innovators like

²⁰⁹ in Courtney. p.47

²¹⁰ *HOW(ever)* vol.1 no.1 May, 1983

Lorine Niedecker, Mina Loy, Laura (Riding) Jackson, and Dorothy Richardson. A space in each issue was reserved for a column titled "alerts(" which contained informal, diaristic notes on reading, offering both a forum for criticism that eschewed academic formality and an ongoing conversation on the act and process of reading itself (one further explored throughout Dahlen's long poem *A Reading*).

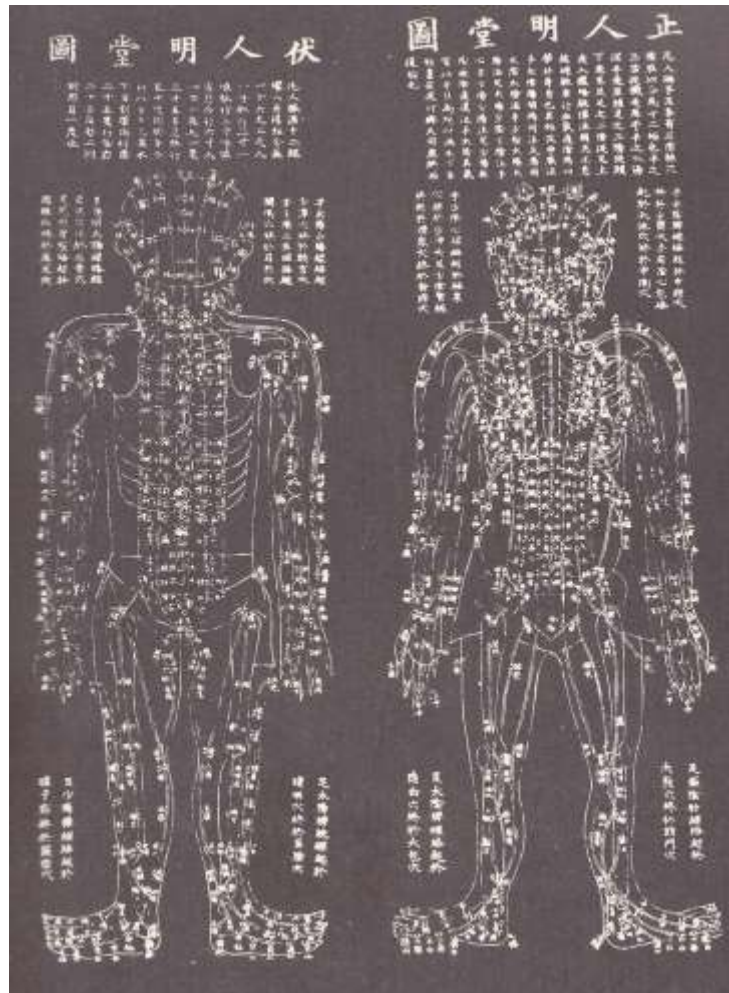
Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée* (1982) is an extraordinary visual bookwork that uses poetry, prose, translation, photography, and calligraphy to investigate the material of language in relation to a multilingual Korean-American subject. A returning theme in this work is the act of annunciation, of utterance, the physicality of speech, the movements of the mouth, throat, and tongue, and the work is particularly concerned with obstacles to speech, stutters and struggles, the inability to speak. *Dictée* opens with a textual representation of the taking of dictation, in French and English, where the text and punctuation of a statement are rendered as spoken, the English exercise beginning: "Open paragraph It was the first day period [...]"²¹¹ Lowe uses the site of this opening exercise in dictation to relate Cha's work to Althusser's concept of "interpellation", the process by which a subject internalizes ideology, and to explore the possibilities for alterity that *Dictée* opens up here in this pedagogical grammar and elsewhere throughout the text, as

²¹¹ Cha, Theresa Hak Kyung. *Dictée*. New York: Tanam Press, 1982. p.1

in the enactments of the rituals of "naturalization" and citizenship.²¹² The curious rendering of punctuation in this opening section also plays with the boundaries between speech and writing, recalling Derrida's scrutiny of the *logos* in *Of Grammatology* with its reversal of the terms of *presence*, in which speech is here posited as a representation of writing. The text features a recurring wordplay on *disease/disuse*, in which the French term for the female dramatic monologist, or lyrical teller, runs up against the loss and death of languages from "disuse", with particular reference to the forbidden use of the Korean language under Japanese occupation. The book offers a postcolonial perspective on the displaced position of women in relation to language ("The tongue that is forbidden is your own mother tongue"²¹³) that is rendered all the more urgent in the light of Cha's death in New York, shortly after *Dictée's* publication, as the victim of gender-based violence.

²¹² see Lowe, Lisa. "Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of *Dictée*" in *Writing Self, Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha*. edited by Elaine H. Kim and Norma Alarcón. Berkeley: Third Woman Press, 1994.

²¹³ Cha. p.45



(image from Cha, *Dictée*.)

The small press is sometimes praised for its perceived willingness to take risks in publishing, because small presses have historically published materials that larger, commercial presses would not touch. Although small press publishers surely have risked political consequences and financial ruin, the value of the small press goes beyond risk-taking. After all, commercial publishers do take risks also, when there is the perceived chance of a profit. But many small presses publish knowing the title has no chance of drawing a profit of any

significance, guided by political and/or artistic commitments. Many feminist presses in the 1970s offered commercial services to generate profits to fund publications that no one expected to see any profit from. I see this as work towards social and cultural change; it is bad business, deliberately.

Most of the periodicals and publications I have discussed could not have existed on subscriptions and sales alone, without an outside source of funding. The short-lived but highly influential periodical *Chrysalis* provides a representative history of a feminist art journal. Poet Adrienne Rich provided the initial funding to start the journal in 1977, donating proceeds from her book on the institution of motherhood, *Of Woman Born*; referring to this funding source, managing editor Kirsten Grimstad humorously refers to *Chrysalis* as a "parthenogenically conceived magazine."²¹⁴ However, this funding source could not last for long, and although *Chrysalis* quickly found a comparatively large readership (13,000 at its height), by the early 1980s the publication was running on unpaid labor and high-interest bank loans. Grimstad writes that "the gracious visual aesthetics of *Chrysalis* completely belied the economic realities of our operation."²¹⁵

In the 1980s NEA funding became increasingly scarce, and federal funding programs like CETA (The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act), which subsidized the staff salaries of workers

²¹⁴ in Moore, Sylvia (ed.) *Yesterday and Tomorrow: California Women Artists*. New York: Midmarch Arts Press, 1989. p.370

²¹⁵ Ibid. p.372

at the Woman's Building,²¹⁶ were eliminated from the federal budget. The Women's Graphic Center survived funding cuts by offering commercial typesetting services, but continued to struggle financially until the eventual closure of the Woman's Building in 1991. Terry Wolverton described the process of applying for grants for the Woman's Building in the 1980s, when courting donors meant presenting an assimilationist public face; "no longer did we promote an alternative to the mainstream but instead claimed to provide a way for those who'd been marginalized to enter it. This was a very eighties message."²¹⁷ Wolverton also sadly recounts how any overt lesbian content in the history of the Woman's Building had to be erased in such public presentations for funding opportunities.

A debate arose in the pages of the *Journal of Artists' Books* in 1997 as to the pedagogical value of what Laurel Beckman refers to as "femartbooks".²¹⁸ Beckman's article, a response to a previous piece in *JAB* (by Alisa Scudamore) on artists' books from the Women's Graphic Center, raises many issues about the changing genre of book arts, but seems to center on the question of art as utility, frustrated with the privileging of political use over aesthetic design in 1970s femartbooks. While I agree with some of Beckman's judgments, I do not agree that the historical specificity of the books in question at all degrades their value

²¹⁶ see Wolverton. p.170

²¹⁷ Ibid. p.182

²¹⁸ Beckman, Laurel. "The Problem with Role Models: Contextualizing So Cal 1970's Femartbooks and the Matter with Contemporary Practice" *Journal of Artists' Books* 8 (Fall, 1997) p.28-30

as learning tools, but rather think that these books are invaluable documents of the social and cultural conditions and conversations of the time, many of which continue today. The most powerful of the femartbooks, books like Suzanne Lacy's *Rape Is*, have lost none of their impact. I agree with Scudamore's position that "the historical and cultural circumstances of the Woman's Building are essential in considering the books produced at the Feminist Studio Workshop, yet these books achieve a level of significance in both the book arts and feminist arts that allows them to stand on their own."²¹⁹

The flourishing of a heterogenous small press and little magazine print culture developed concurrently with the increasing consolidation of large publishers; publishing saw a simultaneous limiting and widening of its potentialities. In Serebnick's 1992 study of OCLC libraries' holdings of small publishers' books, the influence of reviews was discovered to be quite powerful in the selection of small press books. However, Serebnick also found that many librarians still relied solely on a comparatively small core of journals for book reviews, one in which large trade publications tended to grossly outweigh small press materials.²²⁰ Linda Zoeckler found, in her 1985 UCLA MLS thesis on the significance of artists' books, that libraries have been quicker to acknowledge the importance of collecting, and of considering

²¹⁹ Scudamore, Alisa. "Feminism and the Book Arts at the Woman's Building, Los Angeles" *Journal of Artists' Books* 7 (Spring, 1997) p.27

²²⁰ Serebnick, Judith. "Selection and Holdings of Small Publishers' Books in OCLC Libraries: A Study of the Influence of Reviews, Publishers, and Vendors" in *The Library Quarterly* vol.62 no.3 (July, 1992) p.259-294.

strategies for access, than have museums. She also found that conventional sources for gathering bibliographical information for art materials (like *Artbibliographies Modern*, *Worldwide Art Catalogue Bulletin*, and *Art Index*) did not offer sufficient listings for artist-produced publications. For artists' books, Zoekler states that "*Umbrella* is generally recognized as their preeminent art periodical."²²¹ She found references to *Umbrella* as a major source for art school library acquisitions in the library literature, citing articles in the periodical *Library Acquisitions: Practice and Theory*. Distribution was perhaps the most persistent barrier between the small press and a larger audience, and endeavors like Hoffberg's *Umbrella* were vital to the dissemination of alternative publications like artists' books, visual poetry, little magazines, and print ephemera, and each of these genres of print culture offered valuable space for the expression of feminist art, theory, and poetry.

Hoffberg's collection documents a time when new perspectives on print media were emerging. I have tried to highlight books, presses, and endeavors that, although they may come from different traditions and scenes (I consider artists' books alongside experimental poetry and feminist political writings) share an ability to turn a new self-reflexivity in book-making and information production into ideological critique.

²²¹ Zoekler, Linda K.D. *Artists' Books: Their Significance, Acquisition, Cataloging, and Curatorial Care in Libraries and Museums*. Master's thesis. University of California, Los Angeles, 1985. p.19

Conclusion

Betty Bright, in her history of artists' books in the 1960s and 70s, reflects on the role that librarians like Judith Hoffberg and Clive Phillpot (at the MOMA New York Library) played in the development of the genre. She remarks on the status of the artists' book, even the inexpensive multiple, as itself representing a work of contemporary art and not a book *about* art, and the implications that this had for librarians who dealt with such works. "Choosing to collect contemporary art involved librarians in debates about artistsic intent, and moved their institutions from reflective repositories to active art-world participants."²²² While Bright argues that there is something about artists' books that is responsible for transforming librarians into art critics and curators, I see such transformations as the result of the work of remarkable librarians who have developed extensive knowledge about, and a sociopolitical investment in, particular modes of production and communities of reading.

The idea of "social epistemology" introduced to library theory by Jesse H. Shera and Margaret E. Egan has also been explored by feminist philosophers. Lynn Hankinson Nelson writes of "epistemological communities" and posits the claim that "communities are the primary epistemological agents,"²²³ in the

²²² Bright, *No Longer Innocent*. p.197

²²³ in Alcoff, Linda and Elizabeth Potter (eds.) *Feminist Epistemologies*. New York: Routledge, 1993. p.123

sense of being prior to individuals who know. Nelson sees this as a path out of the postmodern conundrum of epistemological relativism, in which "no truths are privileged in the sense of being 'more true' [.]"²²⁴ While she views such critiques of knowledge as necessary beginnings for feminist epistemology, she points out that such relativism remains committed to the *terms* of the Cartesian epistemology it criticizes, and that it does not consider what 'truths' might emerge from the kinds of social knowing she elaborates. For librarians, understanding the bibliographic materials we deal in, as well as the needs of the patrons we serve, requires a knowledge of communities, and it does not seem to me that communities can be known from without. Our professional skills are only a starting point, and it is "extra-professional" knowledge—knowledge that is social, erudite, political, and situated—that can transform library practice into an active and participatory endeavor. Judith Hoffberg left behind a remarkable collection of books and ephemera that tell a history of a moment in art and print culture that she was herself actively involved in. This study has been an attempt to draw out some of that history in a manner that is true to the spirit of Hoffberg's curiosity and conviction.

²²⁴ Ibid. p.128

APPENDIX A:

Chronology

- 1964—Hoffberg receives MLS from UCLA School of Library Service
- 1969—Arts Libraries Society (ARLIS) founded in UK.
- 1971—Hoffberg served as Vice President of the Art Subsection of
the College Art Association
—Hoffberg appointed director of the Brand Art Center
Library
- 1972—Hoffberg co-founds ARLIS/NA and serves as the first
president of the organization.
- 1973—Other Books & So established in Amsterdam, a bookstore
specializing in artists' books; it was to become the
subject of the first article in *Umbrella*. The founder,
Ulises Carrion, became a friend and correspondent of
Hoffberg.
—The Woman's Building established in Los Angeles.
- 1974-76—Hoffberg appointed archivist/bibliographer at
Smithsonian.
- 1975—Hoffberg publishes the article "Ephemera in the Art
Collection" in *Library Trends*.
- 1976 (June)—Hoffberg publishes an interview with Joan Hugo in
American Libraries that discusses Hugo's role as an art
librarian.
—Franklin Furnace and Printed Matter, two arts
organizations in New York that focused on artists' books

and art ephemera, founded.

1978—Hoffberg publishes the first issue of her newsletter *Umbrella*.

—Hoffberg co-curates “Artwords and Bookworks: an international exhibition of recent artists’ books and ephemera” with Joan Hugo at the Los Angeles Institute of Contemporary Art

—Hoffberg publishes *Directory of Art Libraries and Visual Resource Collections in North America* with Stanley W. Hess for ARLIS/NA.

1979—Hoffberg curates the “Umbrella Mail Art Show” at the University of California, Riverside.

1981—Hoffberg writes news column for the first volume of the arts journal *Artxpress* but leaves the journal due to problems with the publisher.

1983—Hoffberg receives a 1983/84 Fulbright grant to organize the records of Len Lye, a New Zealand sculptor and filmmaker.

1984–88—Hoffberg publishes a series of reviews in the arts journal *High Performance*.

1987–88—Hoffberg curates several artists’ book exhibitions

1997–98—Hoffberg curates *Women of the Book: Jewish artists, Jewish themes*

2000—Hoffberg establishes the International Edible Book Festival.

APPENDIX B:

30 Years of *Umbrella*

A Selected Visual History

(all images from *Umbrella*, 1978-2008)

ART SPOKEN HERE

UMBRELLA
P.O. Box 3692
Glendale, CA 91201

BULK MAILING
U.S. Postage
PAID
Glendale, CA
Permit No. 1013

DATED MATERIAL – DO NOT DELAY

umbrella

VOL. 4, NO. 1

January 1978

PROFILE: other books and so

It is a pleasure to read a book of poems in a time of such rapid technological change, a time of a global, and a general sense of "other" books for us. We have a sense of a new and larger world which seems to us a vast and new landscape, with "other" books, poetry, and a general sense of "other" books for us. We have a sense of a new and larger world which seems to us a vast and new landscape, with "other" books, poetry, and a general sense of "other" books for us.

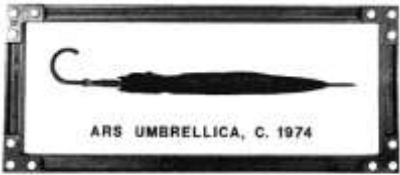


AN INTERVIEW

This is the first book of UMBRELLA, which is a collection of all things, poems and stories, and so on. We know that we cannot be completely, but we are trying to get it all in front of you, for your own sake.

And let me say something to you with a feeling of respect for the people who are involved in what is happening in the world, and in the world of art.

And let me say something to you with a feeling of respect for the people who are involved in what is happening in the world, and in the world of art.



UMBRELLA MAIL ART EXHIBITION CATALOG

Pre-Publication Price: \$5.00 for artists in exhibition, \$2.50 for readers of UMBRELLA
 After Publication Price: \$3.50
 Send check or money order to UMBRELLA, P.O. Box 2282, Glendale, CA 91201

umbrella

VOL. 4, NO. 1

January 1979

WALLACE BERMAN: A SEMINAL INFLUENCE

WALLACE BERMAN, whose name is so important to a certain kind of art, and who has been so important to many of us, is a man whose name is so important to a certain kind of art, and who has been so important to many of us.



It is a pleasure to read a book of poems in a time of such rapid technological change, a time of a global, and a general sense of "other" books for us. We have a sense of a new and larger world which seems to us a vast and new landscape, with "other" books, poetry, and a general sense of "other" books for us.

M.A.O.

MULTI-NATIONAL ART OFFICE
 REGISTERED IN CALIFORNIA

YOU ARE INVITED: TWO SHOWS!!

① **EXHIBITION BY ARTISTS**
 PLEASE PRINT YOUR NUMBER ON A SHEET(S) OF PAPER NOT BIGGER THAN 8 1/2" x 11" AND SEND IT TO US TOGETHER WITH A PHOTO OF YOU WHEN YOU WEAR THIS T-SHIRT!
 DEADLINE: 30 APRIL 79 (NO RETURN)

② **PLEASE HAVE A T-SHIRT MADE**
 ON IT, DRAW ON IT, PRINT ON IT AND SEND IT TO US TOGETHER WITH A PHOTO OF YOU WHEN YOU WEAR THIS T-SHIRT!
 DEADLINE: 30 APRIL 79 (NO RETURN)

ALL T-SHIRTS TO: AMERICA GALLERY, 1001 16TH ST., SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94103



ADDRESS TO: 1001 16th St., San Francisco, CA 94103

ARTISTS INVITED to see one of the Shows on American Art and Culture. Produced by Wallace Berman. 1001 16th St., San Francisco, CA 94103

INSIDE: performance art, performances books

umbrella

WILEY-INTERSCIENCE MARCH 1980

CAVELLINI COMES TO CALIFORNIA IN MAY INTER-DADA 80 UPDATE

Cavellini visits the artists of California every day with news, events, and information. This month he will be in California with a publication of DADA 80.

By the time you receive this issue of Umbrella, you will be able to order the new DADA 80 publication from Cavellini at a special price of \$10.00 (plus shipping and handling).

The article will include information about the Theater Club, DADA, and an evening of local events. On Friday, 2 May there will be a performance by the artist, and on Saturday there will be a performance by the artist, and on Sunday there will be a performance by the artist. All will be in the name of DADA.

Among those who have exhibited their work in the past are: John Cage, Ed Ruscha, Bruce Nauman, and many others.

Umbrella is a journal of contemporary art and performance. It is published by Wiley-Interscience.

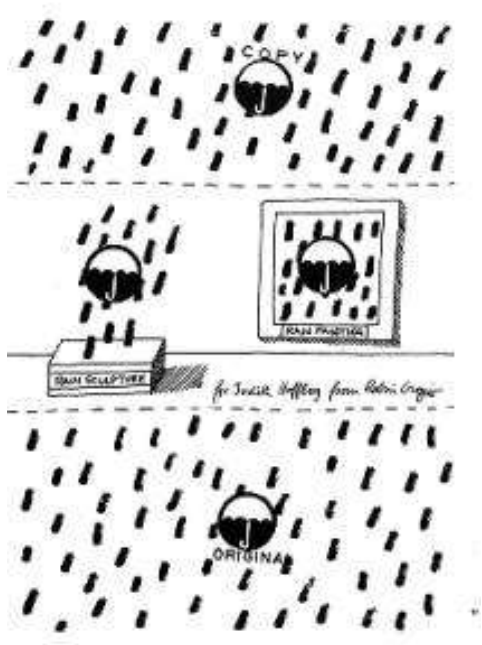
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President Bill Clinton, President Jimmy Carter, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, President John F. Kennedy, President Lyndon B. Johnson, President Gerald R. Ford, President Richard M. Nixon, President Ronald Reagan, President George H.W. Bush, President George W. Bush, President Joe Biden, President Kamala Harris, President Barack Obama, President Bill Clinton, President George W. Bush, President Barack Obama, President Kamala Harris, President Joe Biden, President Donald Trump.

UMBRELLA ITEMS IN THE NEWS AND IN THE MAIL



umbrella

WILEY-INTERSCIENCE MAY 1981

AN INTERVIEW WITH WOLF VOSTELL: Fluxus risen

Wolf Vostell, Fluxus, Fluxus, Fluxus. This is the name of the Fluxus movement, the name of the Fluxus movement, the name of the Fluxus movement.



Wolf Vostell is a Fluxus artist. He is a Fluxus artist. He is a Fluxus artist.

Wolf Vostell is a Fluxus artist. He is a Fluxus artist. He is a Fluxus artist.

Wolf Vostell is a Fluxus artist. He is a Fluxus artist. He is a Fluxus artist.

Wolf Vostell is a Fluxus artist. He is a Fluxus artist. He is a Fluxus artist.

When you find your old friend back...
When you find your old friend back...
When you find your old friend back...



from the artist's hand. The artist's hand is the only one that can create the work of art. The artist's hand is the only one that can create the work of art. The artist's hand is the only one that can create the work of art.



UMBRELLA is a monthly journal of art, culture and contemporary life. It is published by the artist's hand. The artist's hand is the only one that can create the work of art. The artist's hand is the only one that can create the work of art.

NEW
Contemporary Artists 1982
 A comprehensive guide to the work of contemporary artists. Includes names, addresses, and contact information for over 100 artists. Available for \$15.00.

ACTIVITIES MODERN
 A collection of modern art activities for children. Includes drawing, painting, and sculpture projects. Available for \$10.00.

Where to Buy
 A list of bookstores and art galleries where the book can be purchased. Includes addresses and phone numbers for various locations.

UMBRELLA ITEMS IN THE NEWS AND IN THE MAIL

Umbrellas: Drenched in History

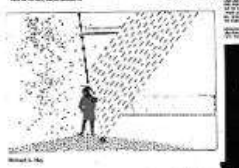
By [Name]

Umbrellas have a long and colorful history. From the simple wooden poles of ancient times to the modern, lightweight fabric umbrellas of today, they have evolved over centuries. The umbrella is a symbol of protection and shelter, and its design has changed to meet the needs of different climates and cultures.



Where to Fix Your Umbrella

For more information on where to fix your umbrella, contact the following companies. They offer repair services for all types of umbrellas, including folding, straight, and golf umbrellas. Contact information includes phone numbers and addresses.



UMBRELLA

STAMP UNTIL YOU FEEL GUILTY

Let your guilt be your ally. Buy a stamp that says "I'm sorry" and use it to apologize to someone you've wronged. It's a simple way to show that you care and that you're willing to make amends.



CHEW

Another way to show your guilt is to buy a pack of chewing gum. The gum is a symbol of refreshment and renewal, and it's a simple way to show that you're willing to start over and do better.

VIA U.S. MAIL
Support Easy Art



For more information on the television set, contact the following company. They offer a wide variety of television sets, including color and black and white models. Contact information includes phone numbers and addresses.



BILL WHORRALL
RURAL REALTY CO.
SHOALS, IND. 47881
HOOSIEROID

1982

OFF

2-HITS

SET BY KEVIN COSBORN
JANUARY 1982

Advertisement for a magazine or book titled "OFF" by Kevin Cosborn, dated January 1982. The advertisement features a large, stylized graphic of a building or structure with various lines and shapes. The text is arranged in a grid-like pattern, with the word "OFF" prominently displayed in a large, bold font.



Advertisement for an umbrella.



Advertisement for an umbrella.



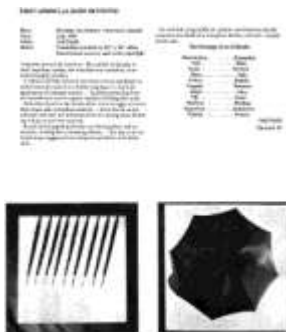
Advertisement for an umbrella.



Acid Rain Plagues U.S.

Acid rain is a serious environmental problem that is plaguing the United States. It is caused by pollutants in the air that combine with water to form acidic rain. Acid rain can damage buildings, cars, and the environment. It is important to take action to reduce acid rain.

1983



1984



1985

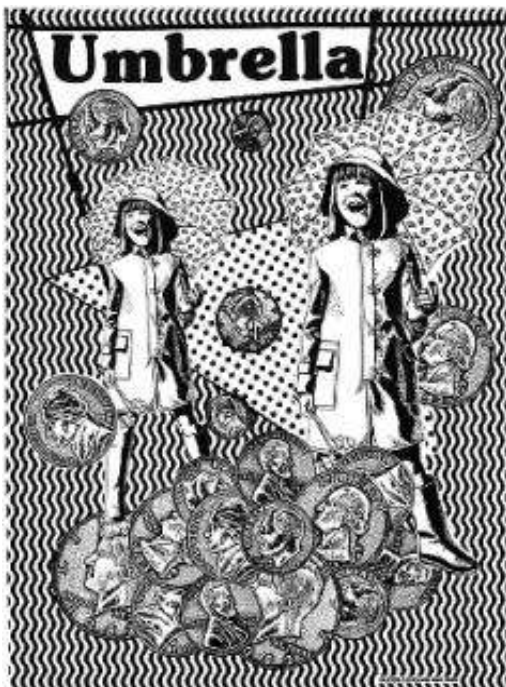


CHRISTO ANNOUNCES UMBRELLAS PROJECT

Christo has just announced his latest project, which will be the covering of umbrellas, 10-foot high and 24 inches across, which will resemble in the landscape the umbrellas, traditionally in Japan and the western part of the United States, in a new way.

The original design of the umbrellas will be arranged in rows and columns, covering road ways, fields and mountains. In addition, there will be a few umbrellas in the middle of the road, one at a time or several together.

The umbrellas themselves will slightly tilt according to the slope of the terrain in which they are set. The project will last for two weeks, approximately, and will be held in the area of the Umbrella Project in the mountains of the United States. At the end of the project, the umbrellas will be removed and the terrain will be left as it was.



GUERRILLA GIRLS
CONSCIENCE OF THE ART WORLD

WHAT DO THESE ARTISTS HAVE IN COMMON?

- | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Barbara Krueger | Ellen West | Barbara Krueger | Ellen West |
| Michelle Kwan | Jenny Holzer | Michelle Kwan | Jenny Holzer |
| Barbara Krueger | Ellen West | Barbara Krueger | Ellen West |
- ONLY VISIT THE WEBSITE TO SEE THE ORIGINAL LISTINGS. THEY ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR SALE. VISIT US AT WWW.GUERRILLA-GIRLS.COM

THESE GALLERIES SHOW NO MORE THAN 10% WOMEN ARTISTS OR NONE AT ALL.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------|
| Blum Helman | Fort |
| Martine Rothblatt | Neuberger |
| Greenberg | Perls |
| Levy | Stamps |
| Charles Young | Wentworth |
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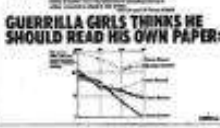
HOW MANY WOMEN HAD ONE-PERSON EXHIBITIONS AT NYC MUSEUMS LAST YEAR?

Guggenheim 0
Metropolitan 0
Modern 1
Whitney 0

THESE CRITICS DON'T WRITE ENOUGH ABOUT WOMEN ARTISTS:

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------------|
| John Lichner | Robert Rauschenberg |
| Norman Lurie | Richard Serra |
| Michael Sussman | Richard Serra |
| John Lichner | Richard Serra |
| John Lichner | Richard Serra |
| John Lichner | Richard Serra |
| John Lichner | Richard Serra |
| John Lichner | Richard Serra |
- WWW.GUERRILLA-GIRLS.COM

JOHN RUSSELL THINKS THINGS ARE GETTING BETTER FOR WOMEN ARTISTS!



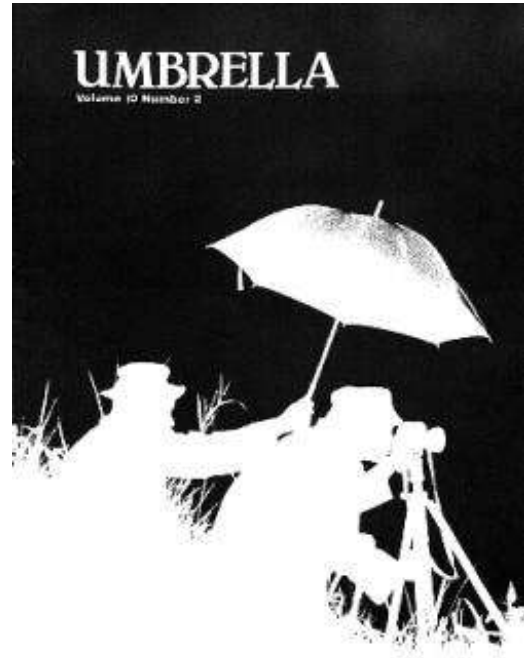
YOUR FAVORITE ARTIST IS A WOMAN!



1987



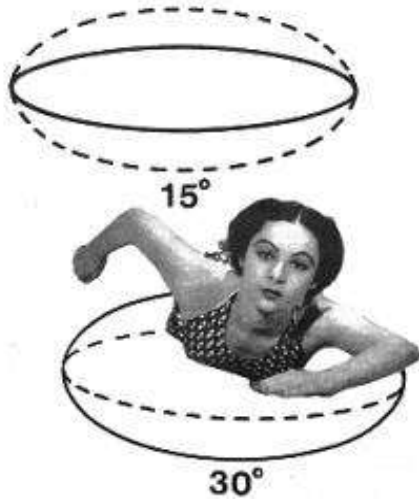
MARK & PHILIP JOHNSON, The Museum of Modern Art
New York, NY, October 1987. Photo: Mark Johnson



1988



1989



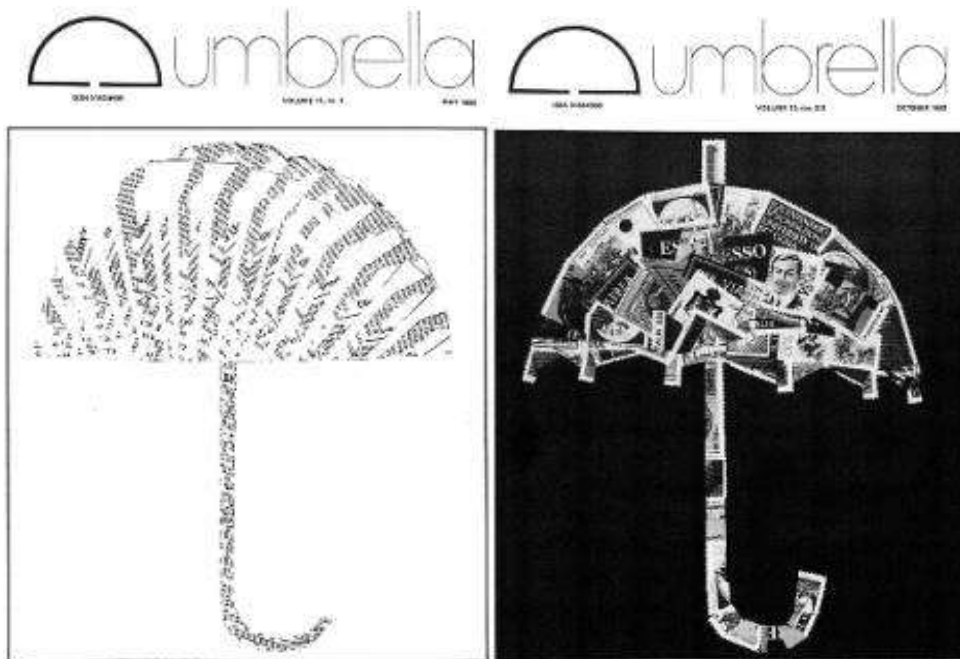
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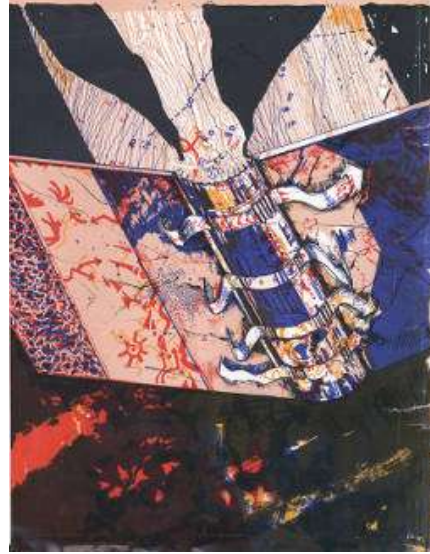
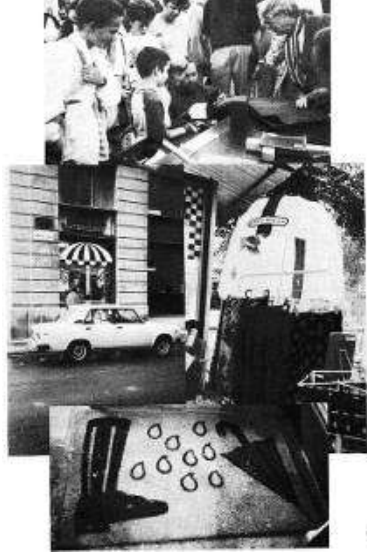


1991

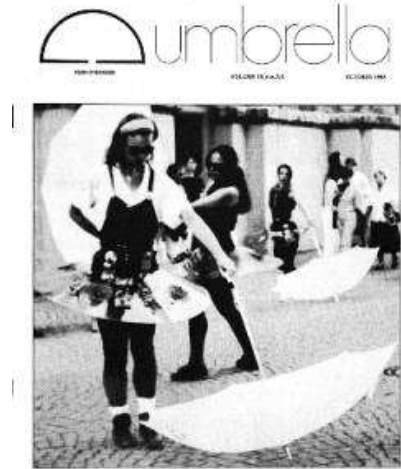


1992





1993

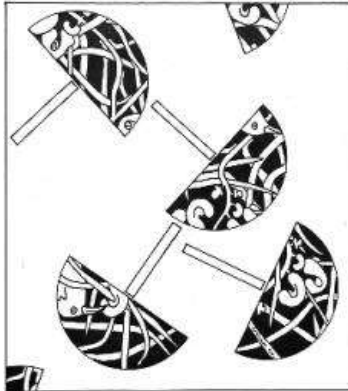


1994

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VOLUME 17, no. 1
FEBRUARY 1994



umbrella
VOLUME 17, no. 2
JUNE 1994



umbrella
VOLUME 17, no. 3
OCTOBER 1994



1995

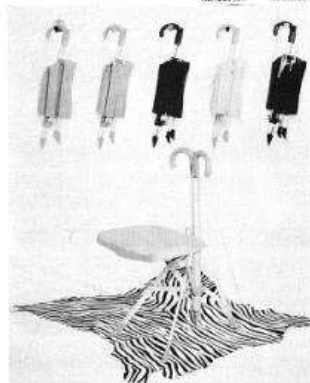
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VOLUME 18, no. 1
MAY 1995



umbrella
VOLUME 18, no. 2
AUGUST 1995



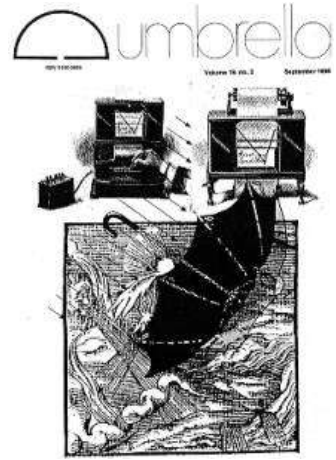
umbrella
VOLUME 18, no. 3
NOVEMBER 1995



1996



North Dakota, who illustrated the life of Carter in
 University of Pittsburgh and in London. And in
 honor of the 50th anniversary of the magazine, we
 are making special anniversary issues. The first is
 the 50th anniversary issue of the magazine, which
 is a double issue, as well as a double issue of the
 magazine, which is a double issue of the magazine.
 Susan Kupper, 46, founder of the New York City
 AIDS Memorial Quilt, died on June 1, 1996, after
 a long illness. She was 46 years old and was the
 first person to die of AIDS in New York City.
 Susan Kupper, 46, founder of the New York City
 AIDS Memorial Quilt, died on June 1, 1996, after
 a long illness. She was 46 years old and was the
 first person to die of AIDS in New York City.



1997



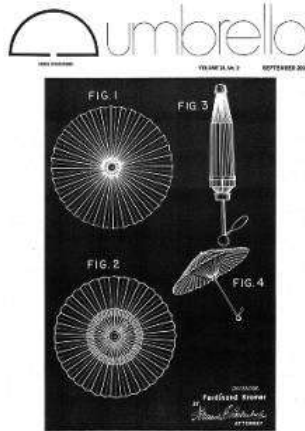
1998



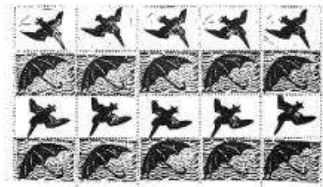
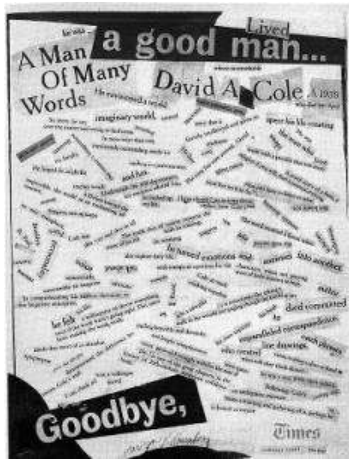
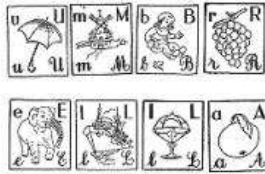
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2000



2001



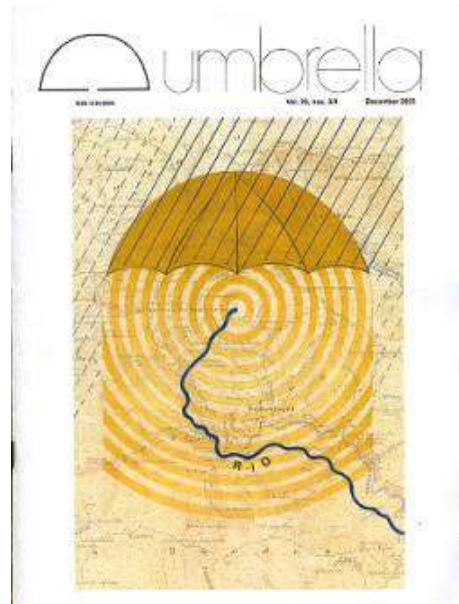
2002



King of Dreams, volume 1 no. 18



2003



2004





2005



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Umbrella
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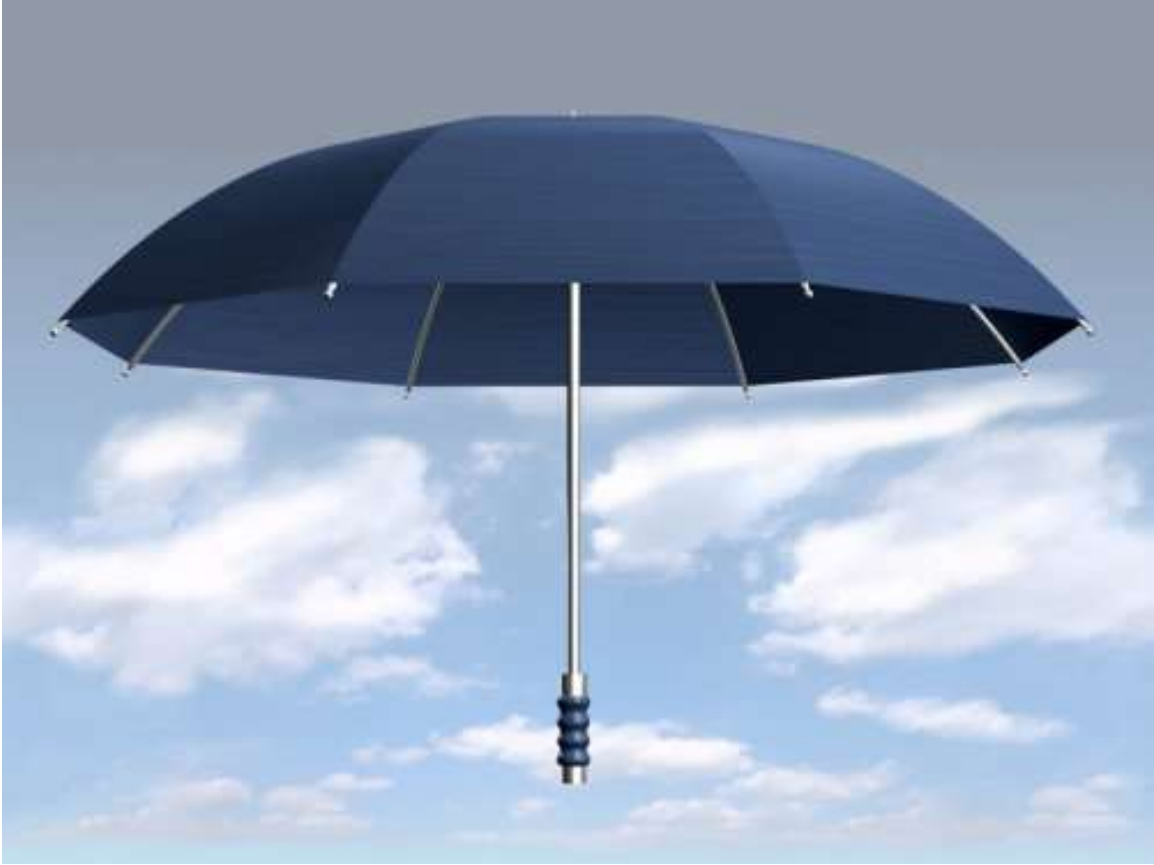
2006



2007



2008



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