

the something else NEWSLETTER

Volume 1, Number 12

February, 1970

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CAMILLE RAPS

Walking down 23rd Street with Vostell, Hanns Sohm, and Dick Higgins I realized it's only eleven weeks since the four of us were ambling around Cologne at the Kunstmarkt in the warmest fall in 30-something years, not just politically. The outdoor café's were still open, which is unheard of in Germany in October. And the Germans were really happy that the predicted shift to the right had been defeated, and someone said that these days the Germans were turning into Frenchmen, and the French were turning into Germans, and how maybe that wasn't a bad thing. For both of them.

The German (Droste Verlag) version of the Vostell/Higgins **Fantastic Architecture** was mentioned by London's **Times Literary Supplement** as one of the outstanding books at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Which makes us pretty happy, since we're publishing it in late Spring. Let's hope it stirs up the waters here as much as in Germany- things have been pretty dull up Architecture Alley lately. Except for Paolo Solieri (wish he were in the book).

At the Book Fair Dick Higgins was expecting to meet John Giorno. But couldn't find him. So Dick made a street piece of it and gave out 2000 pieces of paper at the Book Fair (and later, another 2000 at the Kunstmarkt in Cologne) asking people, if they found

John Giorno, to please tell him that Dick Higgins was looking for him. Well, it was like old Fluxus days. People ran around, up and down aisles, under trees and arches, under awnings and across patios, asking every American in sight if he was John Giorno (some said yes). All of which added to the confusion on those days of John Giorno Multiples. Unfortunately, John never made it to Europe. Somebody mailed him a package from Japan, with some marijuana glued on the outside, apparently as a prank, and the police arrested him for it. Ridiculous, but the kind of thing that happens when people have no sense of proportion. Some people say it happened because of John's anti-Vietnam stance, that somebody wanted to **get** him. Well, I hope it hasn't come to that.

Anyway his anthology of six poets only (most anthologies have too many people in them), **John Giorno's Anthology of New York Poetry** is off to be type-set, and bye'n bye we ought to have some pretty good reading matter around here, poetry-wise.

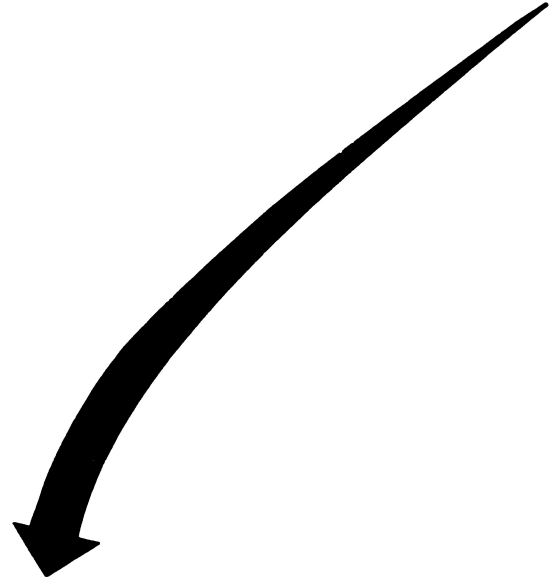
But don't let anybody ever talk you into going to the Cologne Kunstmarkt- unless you want to buy a book at Walter König's incredibly cosmopolitan stand (and you'd find a lot there that nobody else has). But the Kunstmarkt is mostly an overpriced **unbargain** basement for second rate USA poppy-oppy-moddies.

One Cologne gallery "dumped" 3½ million DM worth of stuff, which less fashionable collectors would have the good sense to confine to the bathroom. 3½ million DM, now let's see, that's almost \$1 million. In three days. Sounds like a fur auction. Meanwhile, there's quite a rebellion among dealers who don't make the Country Club Qualifications of the Kunstmarkt set. And talk of setting up a Bigger and Better Kunstmarkt downstream from Cologne, where the German equivalent of Mr. Bones, Messers. Strawy and Snowy, could go by work without getting taken.

Exciting major new gallery in Cologne: ART INTERMEDIA. Don't miss it if you get to Germany. It's at Domstrasse 81, in walking distance from the Cathedral. They seem to have the bestest and the newest in the Rhineland- Rot, Filliou, Vostell, Brecht, etc. They're among the galleries who are "nicht gestattet" at the Country Club Kunstmarkt. One hopes ART INTERMEDIA will get into the new fair, as should a certain nameless (but indisputably magnificent gallery in Milano) which was apparently excluded from the Kunstmarkt, even before its present limitation to German Galleries Only.

I'd never have imagined so much rubbish could be sold **simply** because it was American Art. All the collectors had to do was go around the corner to the Kunstverein to see good work by the same artists that were on sale- there was a big show of young American artists on, Peter Young and some surprisingly good Poonses. But they just ate it up, because it was their galleries selling them what was American and therefore modern, like our postal system.

If only one could deal in futures on the art market. I'd sell now, for future delivery. The poppy-oppies would be very attractive for delivery in, say, eight months time. Seriously, though, the Mr. Bones kind of policy, of dealing only with this or that gallery, of collecting this artist but not that one simply because he is represented by this gallery and not that, because one likes this dealer more than that or gets a better discount here than there, it just means it'll come out in the wash a lot harder, and one will get burned a lot more than if one played the field a little more. If one buys machine parts, does one want to get too dependent on one supplier? Doesn't one baker make good bread while another one makes the only decent pumpkin pie? Collectors should trust their eyes and heads a whole lot more than their discounts. After all,



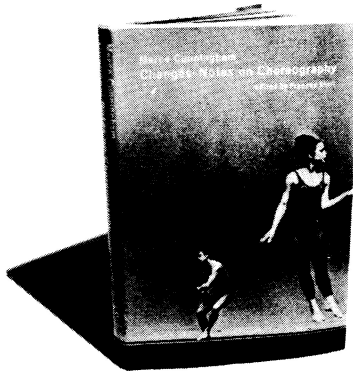
foew & ombwhnw

by dick higgins

the first multi-track sensibility book. in four columns, the farthest left with big theater experiments, reflecting the author's background as a founder of happenings. the next column with works in an indefinable format, natural enough for the author who coined the term "intermedia." the next column mostly with experiments in poetry and linguistics, which is a major part of higgins' corpus. and on the far right, the little essays originally published in the *something else newsletter*, the clearest and simplest statements of the theory underlying today's avant-garde, all bound together in prayer book format in this book with the incredible acrostic title (what it might stand for is given on page 8).

john gruen, writing in *vogue*, said "it's a m el e of avant-garde concepts that make clear higgins's incredibly inventive, not to say obsessive, mind . . . higgins is not an obscurist . . . he cajoles the mind." and jonas mekas, in *the village voice*: "i give it my book of the month award. all kinds of good and intelligent things in it, mostly on intermedia." *library journal*: "by all means buy." *lita eliscu* in *evo*: "what is inside is truthful and illuminating, and probably better for your constitution [than the bible]."

310 pages, 117 illustrations, 5-1/2 X 7-11/16, prayer book format, \$5.95. Order from Something Else Press, Inc., 276 Park Avenue South, New York, N.Y. 10010.



A dancer (for once, thank god) talking about the dance (and not biography). Pages from the notebooks of **Merce Cunningham**, edited by Frances Starr, a collage called **Changes: Notes on Choreography**. 176 pages, color, illustrated, 6 1/4 x 9 1/4, **\$8.95**.

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what good is a 15% discount if the value of a work falls 40%, compared with a fine work that slowly goes up and didn't cost a hell of a lot in the first place. This is not an age of prima donnas, but a rather rich one, with many artists and styles, one in which the work exists in great diversity and fashion is a very temporary illusion, created by the managers.

The flow of art ideas is very one-sided. America may not be much on exporting chemicals any more, but any art ideas and voices that drift here from Europe or Japan have their little loudspeakers drowned out by the amplified noise of coins arriving. Chauvinism is profitable, very profitable to the 77th Street Mafia. But sooner or later the German and Italian collectors are going to start resenting the oneness of the art flow. Of recent major artists, only Arman and Takis have had really major success here. Naturally this cuts us off from major tendencies, isolates us. By contrast, if you see the Ludwig collection at the Wallraff Richartz Museum in Cologne, there's no national quality at all, just work and ideas. The young German artists, as a result, seem so well informed, so fresh and serious compared to, at least, their New York counterparts. Actually, the European

public, as a whole, is beginning to take a jaundiced eye a little more. Seems to be harder to sell just anything that comes out of 57th or 77th street over in Paris: we note one of the major Paris galleries is opening a New York branch, apparently to cover anticipated losses in France. The Paris branch had taken to showing very silly second-generation earthworks sculptures, suitable for use as coffee tables.

Actually, nowadays we can say
nationalism = provincialism

and the New York chauvinism that (justly) irks Americans from elsewhere in the country is even more startling and insane in Europe. Galleries should be for showing and selling important art, regardless of whether the artists are local people or not. Well, enough of that for now. The Press is clearing out of here. New York provincialism is not for us. We're going to Los Angeles, leaving only the sales office here- Small Publishers Company, at 276 Park Avenue South, New York, NY 10010. We don't have a West Coast address yet, but we'll let you know about it all in one of the next Newsletters, where we'll tell you **why** Los Angeles and what's going on there. Half the good artists that were in New York just got disgusted and left. The reasons why, well that's a story in its own right, but I don't like to say unkind or negative things, so I'll cool it for now.

Sohm and Vostell are here to get together Happenings and Fluxus things for a huge show in both Stuttgart and Cologne. We wish it'd go to England and Scandinavia too.

Sveriges Radio has a honey of a new sound poetry record out, number four in their sound poetry series (that's the Spoken Word equivalent of Concrete Poetry), with a long piece by Bernhard Heidsieck on it, **en français**. Should be required listening for all French lit courses in colleges, since there's such a strong tradition of sound poetry in France- Henri Chopin, François Dûfrène, etc. You can pester your local record shop into ordering it, or do so yourself, from Sveriges Radio, Postbus 105/10, Stockholm, Sweden. So far, there's five records in the series and each costs 16 Swedish Croner, which is about \$3.10. Get a bank money order and prepay in Croner - it'll mean you avoid any customs hassle.

Speaking of sound poetry, we were thinking of doing a couple of records of it. Any number of poets seem to be doing it, and since they have no outlet so

far here besides readings, they might like to send us stuff suitable for an anthology of short things. Let's hear tapes, shorties, preferably technological but not necessarily, and we'll consider them and send back the ones we can't use. It should be a marvelous double album.

Daniel Spoerri isn't running his Chez Daniel hamburger place in Düsseldorf any more. He's living in a villa in the Ticino, Switzerland. We hope he'll be happy with our brand new paperback of the **Anecdoted Topography** . . . And of course with our edition, the complete one, of the book that he and Emmett Williams put together at Nantes, **The Mythological Travels of a modern Sir John Mandeville, being an account of the Magic, Meatballs and other Monkey Business Peculiar to the Sojourn of Daniel Spoerri upon the Isle of Symi, together with divers speculations thereon**. In case you haven't seen it yet, it's a beauty. Black cloth, with Daniel's picture stamped in silver on the front cover, in an acetate jacket. Costs only \$6.95 and has lots of pretties in it.

A german publisher is doing a big part of the new Spoerri book — without our blessings incidentally — and calling it a cook book. The same publisher got Diter Rot to translate our edition of the **Topo** and to add some very fine new notes of his own. Then when everything was set for the best **Topo** ever, they dropped all Topor's beautiful illustrations, squeezed the expanded text into 155 pages (ours is 218) and put the thing on the market at \$1.00 more than our paperback costs in Germany! Poor Daniel, poor Diter. Even that isn't the most extreme thing they've done. Our Clacketty Mousetrap Award of the Month goes to

their edition of John Cage's **Silence**, which has only a few of Cage's essays in 92 pages, compared with the 276 pages of the original US edition! And which costs more than \$4.00! If I were a German reader, I'd be furious at their expensive, extremely short editions.

There's 15,000 copies in print, now, of Emmett Williams' **An Anthology of Concrete Poetry**. Not bad, huh, for a book of a new kind of work?

In Emmett's anthology, one of the strongest contributions comes from Mary Ellen Solt — the flower poems. As a matter of fact, Bowker's even picked one up to use as an ad this Christmas! But be that as it may, it's a beautiful series, called **Flowers in Concrete** and now Mary Ellen's done it as a honey of a portfolio, in an edition of 40 copies, at \$75 each, eleven large, signed silk screen prints. Order them direct from her — Mrs. Leo F. Solt, 836 Sheridan Road, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.

And oh yes. Send mail, ales or nails to Ray Johnson at 65 Landing Road, Glen Cove, NY 11542. He's magic, as you know from his book which we did of his smaller work, **The Paper Snake**, still in print, clothbound and in gorgeous color, for only \$3.47.

Anything else we suggest reading particularly? Yes. Dick Higgins' **Computers for the Arts** (95¢ from Abyss Publications, P. O. Box C, Somerville, Mass. 02143) — it's technical but worth it. And Kenneth Gangemi's **Olt** (\$3.95 from The Orion Press, 125a East 19th Street, New York, NY 10003) — the first modern novel to reflect the mental changes and stylistic ones in the last ten years, sort of the first novel of the 1970's.

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