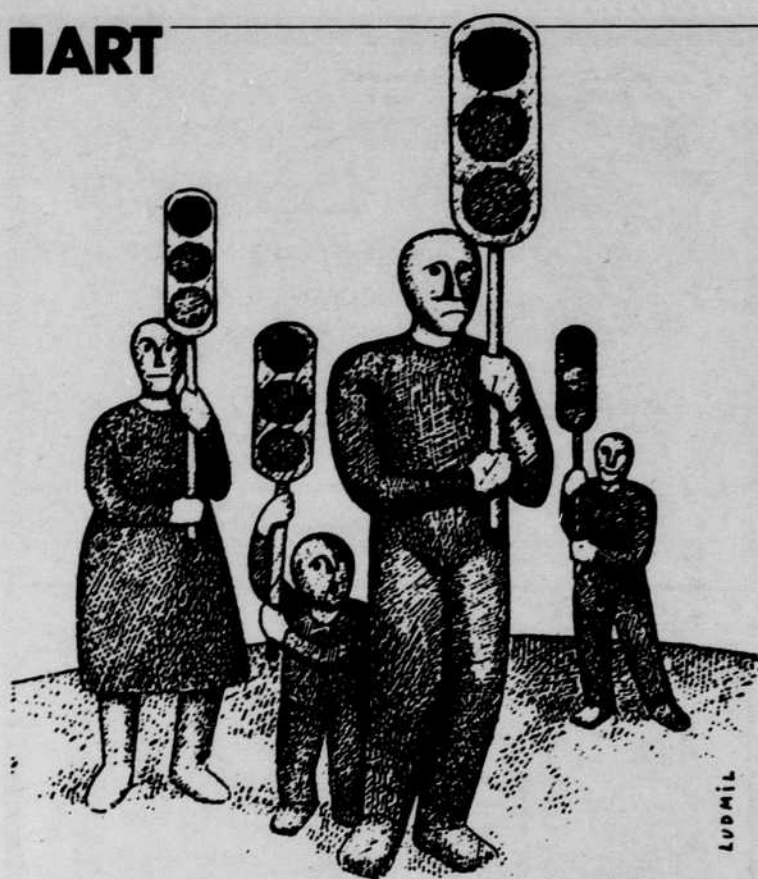




Forbidden—pen and ink on paper by Ludmil Dimitrov, Los Angeles.

International Mailart Exhibit at New Zone is “FORBIDDEN”

by Mike E. Walsh

Contemporary art idioms, from performance art, to conceptual and mailart, are notorious for stupefying the public; however, the current exhibit *Forbidden* at the New Zone Gallery clears up a good deal of confusion regarding “mailart,” a term especially widespread in the last couple of years.

Here the confusion is healthy, even mandatory: mailart is nothing if not unregulated. This is apparent when viewing Eugene mail artist MPB's *Madonnas of the Forbidden Zone*, which irreverently makes reference to a religious symbol and depicts two women making love. Her series of 28 postcards are assembled into this pro-

vocative pen and ink drawing.

Absolutely everyone was welcome to join this international exhibit; it was unbounded by any conventions save for the fact that it traveled through the mail and was relevant to the theme. At best, mailart is an attempt to regain the magic quotient in the process of making art.

The show comprises more than 200 entries by over 100 artists from the United States, Canada, Mexico and West Germany. The array of articles, artifacts, postcards, stamps, paintings, collage and more is testimony to the broad parameters involved.

In this time, when the entire system of art dealership has become suspect, somehow irreversibly corrupted, mailart assumes an almost utopian promise of salvation. The very concept of mailart carries with it a delicious taste of defiance, a sort of dadaistic individuality that refuses to take itself (either the “mail” or the “art”) seriously.

Petra and Hok Wai Lee, West Germany, in the process of charging an *Artweek* subscription to the “Forbidden New Zone Gallery,” committed a mail fraud. But who is going to Germany and prosecute?

Numerous other mail artists articulate their work through the postal process itself. Mary Cain, Cloquet, MN, sent an unwrapped fabric artifact successfully by mail, while Eugene artist Molly's Mardi Gras celebration is a colorfully-painted envelope with a large see-through window. Their safe arrival for the show speaks well of the benign valor and patience of our postal workers. Through rain, sleet and eccentricity. . .

While many of the artists take wit to the postal modus operandi, as many take advantage of the relative ease and rapidity of the idiom. The flippancy and satirical sting of

much mailart stems from the central desire for quick communication. Not investment potential.

Thus we have a plethora of imagery rooted in the surreal melding of visual materials, from advertising and all manner of rubber stamps to odd interpretations of the “Forbidden theme” as a usable concept. Robin Saxton's colorful witty, off-the-top-of-the-head arabesques composed of magazine and newspaper clippings comment on political, sexual and religious issues. Arizona mail artist, Mike Andric's *Falling Toilets* is a personal and worldly metaphor for chaos.

Viewers could easily spend an hour viewing the materials on hand; and then visit the upper gallery and view *Forbidden Themes* in painting, sculpture, photography, mixed media, pastel, assemblage, video and site-specific installation by Oregon artists: Ardas, Pam Baker, Mike Bukowski, Pam Cohen, Larry Cwik, Bob DeVine, Tina Dworakowski, Frank Fox, Aaron Friedman, Carol Gates, Robert Gibney, Katherine Gorham, Harold Hoy, Philo, Dick Pickering, Virginia Taylor, David Vala, Mike E. Walsh, Carol Westlake, and Glen Diseth. A special video presentation by Jon Lewis includes *Fat Boy Prince of Darkness*, *Dead Nazi* and *Regulation Terrors*.

One of the delights of the New Zone show, above and beyond the work on hand, is its challenge to viewers. Like the implicit threat of a chain letter, the unedited, non-denominational bulk of forbidden ideas on view inspires visitors to jump on the bandwagon, to use the mail service in new and different ways. The New Zone Gallery is located at 411 High Street. The exhibit will continue through Feb. 26 during regular gallery hours, 11 am-4 pm, Monday through Saturday.

Great goings on!

February



FEBRUARY

Oregon Repertory Theatre: “Betrayal”
Feb. 17, 7:30 pm
Sunday Matinee 2:00pm
\$8.00 to \$14.00

Joffrey II Dancers
Sunday, Feb. 1, 2:30pm
\$7.00 to \$15.00

Eugene Symphony SuperPops: “Film Favorites”
Saturday, Feb. 7, 8:00pm
\$7.00 to \$19.00

***Lazar Berman, Russian Pianist**
Wednesday, Feb. 11, 8:00pm
\$15.00, \$10.00, \$7.50

***Marcel Marceau**
Saturday, Feb. 14, 8:00pm
\$15.00, \$13.50, \$10.50

Oregon Mozart Players
Saturday, Feb. 14, 8:30pm
\$9.50, \$7.50, \$6.00

Arleen Auger In Concert
Sunday, Feb. 15, 8:00pm
\$7.50 to \$14.00

Liz Magnes, Jazz Piano
Sunday, Feb. 15, 7:30pm
\$6.50, \$5.50

Eugene Symphony Classical IV: Mahler's Resurrection Symphony
Thursday, Feb. 19, 8:00pm
\$7.00 to \$19.00

The Neville Brothers
Friday, Feb. 20, 8:00pm
\$11.50

Eugene Opera: “The Medium”
Feb. 20-28, 7:30pm
Sunday Matinee, 2:00pm
\$14.50, \$12.50, \$7.50

George Carlin
Saturday, Feb. 21, 8:00pm
\$15.50, \$13.50

John Doan, Harp Guitar
Saturday, Feb. 21, 7:30pm
\$10.00, \$8.00

Windham Hill Artists: Will Ackerman, Interiors, The Montreux Band
Saturday, Feb. 28, 8:00pm
\$15.00, \$13.00, \$10.50

For more show information, check the current issue of *FRONT ROW* magazine.
*Limited number of student/senior tickets available at 35% off!

FOR KIDS

PINOCCHIO
Children's Matinee Feb. 8 2pm \$3.50

KID'S KALEIDOSCOPE
Children's Matinee Mar. 7 2pm \$3.50

ANDROCLES & THE LION
Children's Matinee Apr. 12 2pm \$3.50

THE WIZARD OF OZ
brought to you by McDonald's
Children's Matinee May 16, 17 2 & 7pm \$3.50

All seats reserved.



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