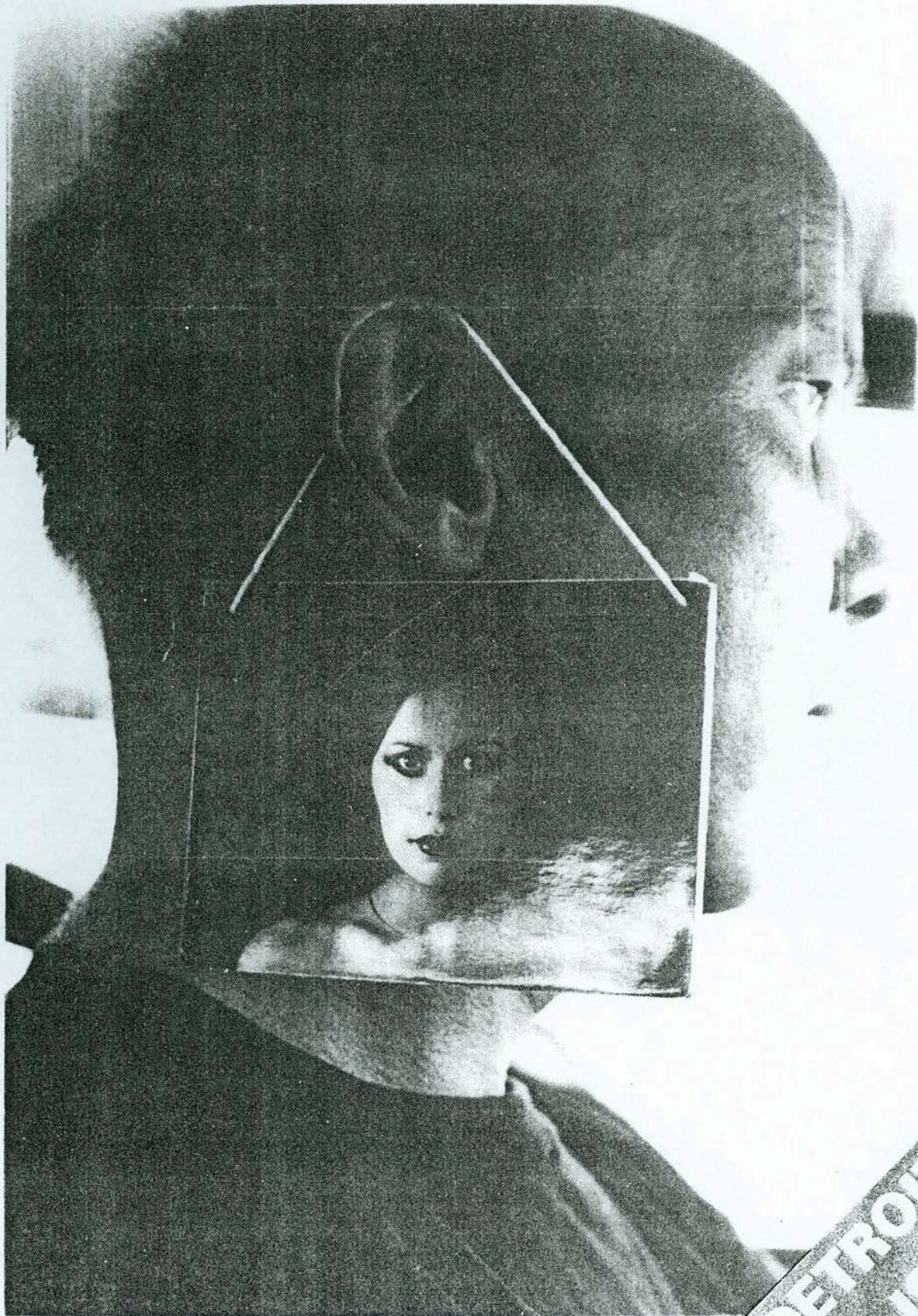


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# detroit artists monthly

february nineteen-seventy-eight

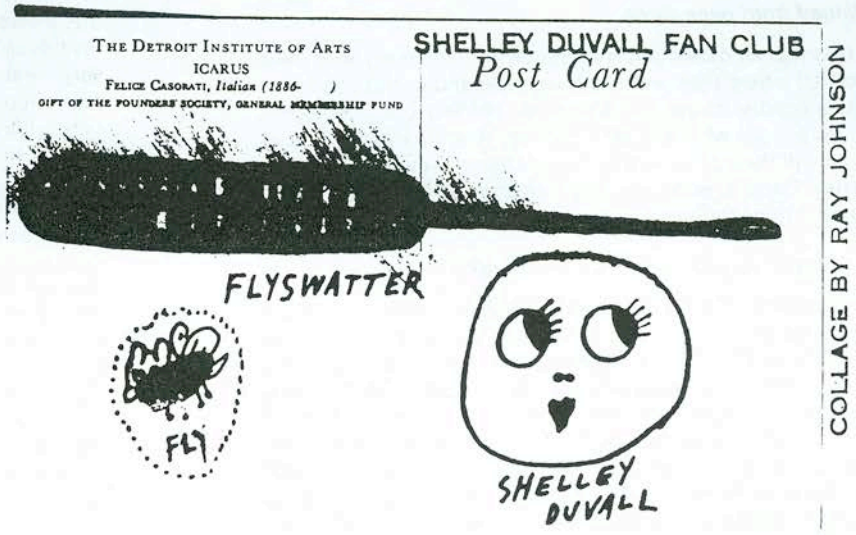
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DETROIT CITY  
ISSUE



# RAY JOHNSON



On September 26, 1977, Ray Johnson was in Detroit. The following conversation with Johnson and Diane Spodarek and Randy Delbeke took place at the Detroit Artists Monthly offices. Ray Johnson, who lives in New York, is originally from Detroit. He received an Artist's Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts this year and is the founder and director of the New York Correspondence School. The following was approved by Ray Johnson.

Let's start by talking about the Grant you received from the National Endowment for the Arts.

The interesting thing about the Grant is that my friend Nam June Paik and I have grants for the sum of \$10,000 and I have it in painting and other painting and sculpture Grants are 7,500 or 2,000, they had some juggling around with funding, and 10,000 is what I requested. This is the second NEA Grant I have. There was one a year previously for 5,000 to document the New York Correspondence School and then I got the New York State CAPS Grant of \$3,500 to document the Correspondence School. All of my works overlap and relate and integrate; the documentation involved the use of a Minolta copying machine so that in doing silhouettes I document any visual information which is then available in envelopes to people concerned with getting such information.

Are these part of that same project? [reproductions in October 6, 1977 issue of Rolling Stone Magazine]

Yes, they fit into a time sequence of one year. I have the Grant in painting and I will proceed to do portraiture similar to this although the scale may change, the paintings may get larger. The first Grant was to document the New York Correspondence School and I had declared my house and studio a twenty-five year accumulation Archive of papers which is in cardboard boxes, no very clear filing system at all. It's a repository of materials which I recirculate, recycle, send on to other people, add to, go through; it's a kind of archeological situation in papers and rearrangement of papers.

When did it first become called the New York Correspondence School?

Well, that's documented in the spring, 1977 issue of the **College Art Journal** by Ed Plunkett, teacher and artist, who coined the term 'New York Correspondence School:' he writes about it in the **College Art Journal**; it's an interesting short essay on the history of the various correspondence schools and the influences, and activity. . . . I've been labeled as the Father of Correspondence Mail Art, which I probably am because of the number of years of activity in the distribution, through mailing processes, of art works, information and material in an international network of daily free distribution. Since the 1940's I have freely distributed, through my own funding, papers. I had a show in the North Carolina Museum last November of letters from about a hundred various lenders of Ray Johnson boxfuls of material

*continued on page four...*

**Feigenson-  
Rosenstein  
Gallery**

310 Fisher Bldg.  
Detroit, Mich. 48202  
313-873-7322

Hours: Tues.-Sat.  
11:00 am-5:00 pm

**Brenda  
Goodman**

Sat., February 18 thru  
Wed., March 15, 1978



continued from page three . . . .

and this was all cataloged and displayed. I'm on my way back to Cornell where they want to have a second correspondence show, a smaller show, not a hundred lenders but maybe five specific people who will lend papers. And this exhibition at Cornell will then go to two or three other museums, Houston, Orberlin, Detroit, whatever, the terms are at Cornell, it's in a state of organization.

#### How long have you been in New York?

Since the early 50's. I've been in the house I live in now eight to ten years which is in Locust Valley which is an hour's drive to New York City. But the house is merely a shell; it's a structure which houses these cardboard boxes. In applying for grants I have had to declare my own history in a fashion of stating what I've done. Somehow I had to clarify the confusion of all these papers, the history of correspondence art — there is no history — it hasn't been written; it exists as magazine articles, newspaper things, private experiences. Lucy Lippard's book entitled, *Six Years*, mentions the painter Arakawa and myself in her forward. I can't quote her exactly, but she says what we do is difficult to describe because it hasn't been historically or critically written about — it has happened but it hasn't been analyzed or described. And in the spring issue of the *College Art Journal* a friend of mine attempted to write a chronology of occurrences in the New York Correspondence School because I have held events and meetings involving the participation of people, and she attempts to write the chronology but she doesn't put in any dates. At the very beginning is April 1, 1968, 'this thing happened in a quaker historic church,' and all the other events don't have the years so it requires someone to come in and actually track down what year this happened or what year that happened. So historically it is interesting because of the phenomenon of *File* magazine which is an offshoot of the correspondence school, not that I published a magazine. In labeling me Dada Daddy they have in every issue a picture of me as their father, this is what they proclaim. But *File* magazine was then parodied by *Vile* magazine in San Francisco and since *File* was a parody of *Life* and *Time* and *Vile* a parody of *File*, I then invented *Smile* magazine.

#### Where's that?

I deal with invisible things, like *Smile* is the cheshire cat in the tree: my magazine doesn't exist. I also send out in the Correspondence School an advertisement: "Ray Johnson's new books, send for *Fragrant Hitchhikers*, please send for your free copy." People fall for this joke and say, 'please send me your free copy' — well, this book does not exist, you think it exists because you've seen an advertisement.

#### What do you do with the requests?

Methodically every day I open my mail and respond to every letter and postcard. I have a whole process, of a steak knife which I use to open my letters, it's like prayer, it's a ritual for

me, a ceremony. I'll go out to the mail box, bring the mail into my house, I have a very good mailman, he sort of piles things very neatly. I put them on my work table; I turn on the television set; I have my cup of coffee; I turn on the overhead light; it's like a corpse on the table. It's really my prayer; I start at the top, I perhaps see there is some very juicy interesting things here at the bottom. It's like archeology. It's like if you discovered a tomb and you have your little brushes and you brush away the dust of years and you don't want to destroy an urn handle so to speak. And then I surgically insert the knife in these envelopes, open them, quick look at the contents and then I do sorting: bills go here, new people go here, I get new people every single day which is very exciting because here's some new person, and I'm very interested in what is absolutely new. Like a name or address on a postcard, or whatever, from someone I've never heard of, it means I get to do a little detective work to try to figure out. . . . like the card you said you received. For instance when I have to give a lecture I can be pretty sure that I will receive something in the mail that morning that I can wear at my lecture: a T-shirt, a ring, it's magical, I'm dealing with magic. I provoke the mail box to provide me with. . . . or I will use what is in the mail for the subject of my lecture; I will read what appeared that day. To me that's very important because that's the concentration because I'm possessed by letters and correspondence.

#### You obviously send mail out all over.

Oh yes, and since I'm running the Dead Pan Club. . . .

#### What's that?

Well, it's a kind of humor where you don't smile and you simply say something terribly funny.

It says, "Dada sucks — first of the red hot dadas, [referring to a post card that Diane Spodarek received a few months earlier].

Oh, Buster Cleveland.

#### You know who he is?

If it says, dada sucks, it's Buster Cleveland.

But I don't know where he got my name.

Let me see if I can do some detective work here.

Maybe he saw the publication.

No, this is before the publication

The post card says, "Diane, did you know Ray Johnson is from Detroit?"

It isn't cancelled.

No, it's not — that's what confused me, it wasn't cancelled.

I always notice things like that.

But he must have mailed it.

continued on page five . . . .

# Hans Hofmann

February 18 thru March 18

**Susanne Hilberry Gallery**  
555 S. Woodward  
Birmingham, Michigan 48011

Gallery hours: 11 to 6 pm, Tuesday through Saturday  
Telephone: 313-642-8250



continued from page four . . . .

**It did come with the mail.**

I know him. I've drawn. . . . in fact he pleaded and begged me to draw his silhouette which I did in the back room of the O.K. Harris Gallery and Buster was involved with the Christo fence and Buster's group performed atrocious, audacious acts like spray canning the beautiful Christo fence with red spray paint and doing things with outdoor toilets there. . . .

Hmmmmmm

. . . . doing dreadful things which you and I find shocking (laughter) and I don't shock easy because I was recently a guest of Edie Beale in Gray Gardens. Did you see that movie?

**No, I read a lot about it.**

She's a very eccentric lady. It's really interesting. . . . personality changes. . . . you know three faces of Eve, and that other one. . . . 20 different faces; Edie Beale was a very good actress. She locked the door five times when I went into the house at Gray Gardens where she lived with her mother who recently died, and then she went into a pitiful whispering thing which is in the movie, and she would whisper when mother was upstairs, when she didn't want mother to hear, but mother was dead so it was as if mother was a ghost and still there. She then went from her whispering, and I think she was trying to frighten me, she went into the Snow White witch with the red lipstick and long black fingernails, and she suddenly went into that and I didn't flinch an eyelash because I placed trust in her and because I was telling her how beautiful she was and what a great actress she was, and she is. We went to this little upstairs porch. . . . well, it's a very long story but I said to her, "Edie, this place is like Cambodia," and she replied, "Jackie was once in Cambodia," she's a relative of Jackie Onassis, she's like the poor relative in East Hampton living in an area of manicured lawns and mansions and her house is covered with weeds, they're twenty feet high and the whole thing is falling down. She opened a door and said, "this is the ballroom," the whole ceiling had collapsed, there was plaster all over the floor; she said, "That's mother's — telephone — piano in the corner," and here was this piano covered with gray mold. I loved it when I said, 'telephone,' which regressed from your original question.

**I think you were talking about opening your mail.**

But actually the way I'm talking is pretty much the way I lecture, it's exactly the way I work and live my life. I'm one constant babble of going from this to that, to this, which is the way I compose my paintings, letters, my life is. . . .

**But your paintings look so. . . . magazines are different from actually seeing the work but they just seem to be so "clean."**

It's interesting that you say that because they were even cleaner before. They're hygienically clean and these were deliberately scumbled paint surfaces for East Hampton because in the show they are very very painterly in their deliberate smudginess and they are also masonite abraded with sandpaper so that they become like pastels; because there is a great pulverization and dust, you can sort of see it in there. That's very abraded with sandpaper.

**This little figure is something I've seen before.**

It's a rabbit or a mouse or something.

**Do you use it often?**

Yeah, sometimes it's Mickey Mouse, sometimes it's a rabbit with longer ears. I'm the President of the Shelley Duvall Fan Club and sometimes it's a round head with round eyes, Shelley Duvall eyes, that are neither here nor there, it's sort of like doll eyes that roll. I was just telling Jim Crawford that I'm going up to Stamford, Connecticut to interview Ernie

February 5 - March 4

Mixed Media Paintings

Priscilla Garn

gallery one

113 S. FOURTH AVENUE ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN 48104  
TUES. - SAT. 11 - 5:30, SUN. 2 - 5 (313) 662-8914

Bushmiller, the creator of Nancy, Sluggo and Aunt Fritz comic strip, who is about 70 years old and has had a great influence on pop art, like there are a lot of early Warhol canvases of Nancy saying, 'Brrr it's cold,' and Roy Lichtenstein is a great admirer of. . . . although he hasn't used, lifted, Nancy the way Warhol or Joe Brainard have and I've also done . . . well, it's a liftable theme of a lot of people doing correspondence art, people always. . . .

**What will you do with that interview?**

Hopefully publish it in *Art In America* because I did a feature article for *Art In America* on the theme of artists' childhood toys for a Christmas issue which was six pages in length and I did ten interviews with Willem deKooning, Marisol, Lynda Benglis, Morris Graves, Jim Rosenquist, Les Levine, I forget who else and my investigation involved their childhood memories of toys. This was for Christmas based on the Orson Welles' "Citizen Kane" rosebud sled idea of forgotten childhood objects or memories and Marisol gave me a beautiful photograph of her and her brother with a doll, Lynda Benglis came up with an extraordinary photograph of her standing on the grass with her back to the camera which I placed next to the Lynda Benglis naked derriere postcard which came out years later so it was an interesting kind of connection.

**Did this appear about 1973?**

No, it would have been 1975 or '74, I just can't possibly carry

continued on page six . . . .

Detroit Public Library

5201 Woodward at Kirby

PHOTOGALLERY

3rd Floor near Fine Arts Dept.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY

KENNETH RAYNOR

February 16 - March 8

Mon. - Sat. 9:30 - 5:30

Wed. 9:00 - 9:00

Sun. 1:00 - 5:00



continued from page five . . . .

that information around with me in my head. I've sort of cultivated an unclarity of history, I always say, this or that time.

**Specifics are not important?**

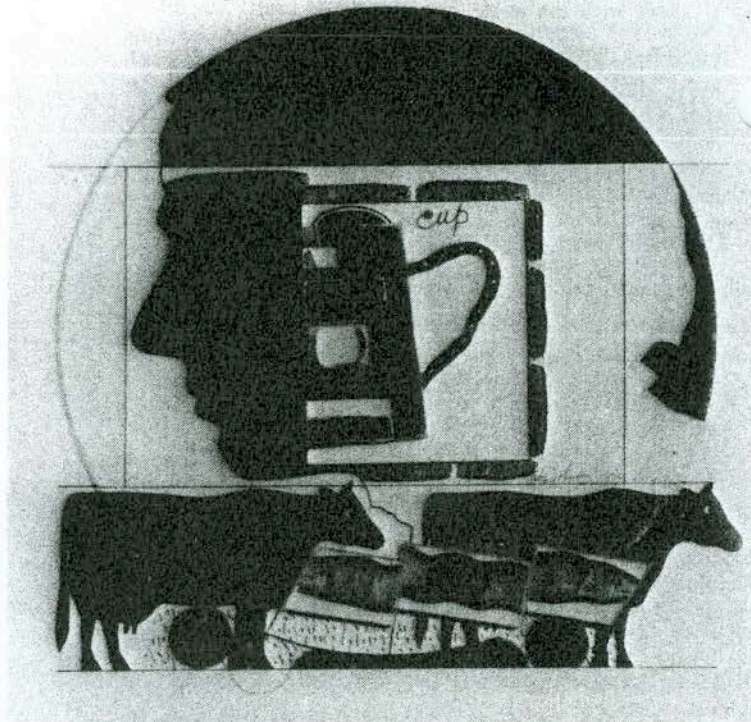
I try to be clear but there's something about me, in going back to **Fragrant Hitchikers** and cheshire cats and sort of. . . .

**But you communicate this information when you're lecturing and communicating to. . . . .**

I lecture when I'm asked to talk, wherever it comes out. I don't go out of my way to send out resumes or to state that I'm available, people sort of ask me to do things.

**What are you in town for now?**

I'm here to visit my mother and father and in driving here I began getting all kinds of ideas and came up with the portraiture of Detroit personalities. I'm trying to work with journalists and photographers in a kind of conceptual art piece of writers writing about what I do from the initial scale to the finished portrait, and photographers documenting the writer and myself as a little Hollywood set that we're all involved in a cooperative thing, and one of the ideas I have is to have Hans Namuth, the photographer, who had done all those historic photos of Jackson Pollock painting and who has photographed artists over the years, for Hans Namuth to photograph me doing a drawing of Joe Namath, football star, and another photographer would be photographing Hans Namuth photographing me drawing Joe Namath and then a writer would write about what had happened — a sort of theater piece. I'm involved with a sort of introduction of people. Another possibility of having. . . . what I'm doing in silhouettes is the Warhol "Kiss" movies, is it a face or is it a vase, have two people confronting each other in a kind of smooch, they could either be husband or wife or two people that are enemies. I have the ability like in a puppet play to put people together and Marisol stated, which is in my article, that when she was a child one of her favorite games, I just remembered this now, she said she would make these little dolls and they would do this little sex play together. She said she would make them kiss and do things to each other, I made notes, and she was telling me all these childhood



**Ray Johnson. ANDY WITH TWO COWS, drawing-collage, 1976, 15 x 15". Photograph by Eric Pollitzer.**

memories of how she played with dolls. I'm going to want to stop after ten minutes, I don't want to do anymore because I have to leave, okay?

**Okay. I was thinking of your lecturing and painting.**

I'm coming back to lecture at the Society of Arts and Craft they asked me about two years ago and I never got here and I'm sure I'm probably going to come back.

**Is that soon?**

I don't know, I think I'm serious about the Detroit portraiture thing — I'm apt to get home and get involved with. . . . what will get the thing going will be my drawing Lily Tomlin, Diana Ross, Jane Forth, and Taylor Mead and Ellen Burstyn. Those five people are on my New York list who are available to me.

**The thing in Detroit, which just occurred to you on the way in, will this be part of the whole painting project?**

No, what I would do for Detroit is portraits of Detroit people who are from here or have something to do with Detroit. And I'm doing historical people like Henry Ford, finding something from the 1920's — he must have been done in silhouette for some newspaper or as a trade mark, and I want to make some kind of statement about my art work coming from Michigan. In the portraits I like to put words onto the things. I write onto the people's faces, I write a letter across the face, none of those four show that but my correspondence gets into the paintings, doing poems onto the face of this.

**Are these poems that you have written?**

By poems I mean writings, things that I write which are often poetic, nature-like, like, I killed another ant today. I'm doing a full documentation of carpenter ants which are eating my house which I ruthlessly kill, put them under strapping tape and record the time of their death.

**You do?**

continued on page seven

detroit artists monthly

## DANIEL ROACHE

### Recent Paintings and Watercolours

February 3 to 28  
Opening Reception:  
February 3, 7:00 to 10:00pm

The Artists' Guild  
32647 Franklin Road  
Franklin Village, Michigan 48025  
(313) 855-2142



*continued from page six*

Oh yes. I began by picking them up and putting them out on the front lawn and then one day I realized that they were eating my house and it's a . . . . .

**Torture and murder?**

My Philadelphia lecture is going to be a heavy death presentation, sort of a surprise, not a surprise but it was a decision after my Franklin Furnace reading after a few years ago.

**Where?**

In New York there is a new book store called Franklin Furnace, in fact you should know about Franklin Furnace. Franklin Furnace is run by Jackie Apple who is the wife of Bill Apple who's an artist, and Martha Wilson who is from New Brunswick, Canada, and it's a space with artists books, that have gotten a lot of attention and publicity recently and one can go there and look at or buy books; it's not like a book store because they are specialized in dealing with artists books and things that one generally can't. . . . it's very up-to-date and they have had a series of artists' readings. I read, Richard Kostelanetz, John Cage, and people that I've never heard of are reading in a series. I attempt in the correspondence school to be a sort of free clearing house of people and information and objects, and I spend a great deal of time just bopping around and meeting people, old people and new people, and finding out about things and distributing information since I don't do this as a business, but I've been applying for grants.

**Is that how you live?**

No, it's not how I live, it's something that I'm just getting into. I've always lived very precariously — I'm not a business man, I'm an artist and a . . . . well, I shouldn't call myself a poet but other people have. What I do is classify the words as poetry. Something Else Press published a book in 1965 called the **Paper Snake** which is all my writings, rubbings, plays, things that I had given to the publisher, Dick Higgins, editor and publisher, which I mailed to him or brought to him in cardboard boxes or shoved under his door, or left in his sink, or whatever, over a period of years. He saved all these things and designed and published a book, and I simply as an artist did what I did without classification. So when the book appeared the book stated, "Ray Johnson is a poet," but I never said, 'this is a poem,' I simply wrote what I wrote and it later became classified

**When did you start painting or have you always painted?**

Always. I visited one of my Saturday morning art school teachers from the Detroit Art Institute. . . . when I was a little kid, every Saturday morning I would go off to art classes, I was a very productive, prolific student. I was always doing something.

**Why did you go to New York?**

I went to New York by way of Black Mountain College in North Carolina where I was for about three years and then to New York.

**Were you a student there or a teacher?**

No, I was a student. I went to New York to be a painter and have succeeded in doing so. I was very pleased to be classified as an American Surrealist at the Whitney Museum's permanent collection recently. A work of mine hangs on the wall next to Joseph Cornell in a room with Lucas Samaras, H.C. Westerman, and it places me as an American, like here is a work of mine that is signed and dated and framed and lit and museumized. It was my childhood dream in Detroit to be an artist and have one work on a museum wall, it looks good. I'm in many museum and private collections.

**Do you try to keep track of the things you send out? Or do you know how many things you send out in a day or a week or a month?**

I send out what is most necessary and essential — I'm very frugal. . . . I described my method before of intake and the process of receiving the mail and it's the same thing of things that go out — I just don't slap things in envelopes. Everything I make is made for the person I'm writing to — there is a whole daily process of what the envelope enclosure is to be, how it is folded, what is enclosed, what the envelope is, what the style is, whether it is very casual or very formal. I go to a lot of trouble hand lettering, or scribbling. . . . it's a whole variety of styles. It's as though I'm here speaking to you, this is the way I compose a letter; when I'm alone I think of who I'm writing to so it can be lengthy or I can be very simple.

**But you said earlier that you are getting so much mail and that you respond to all of it.**

I attempt to, I try to.

**Do you ever throw away any mail?**

Oh yeah, I've had to; yes, for survival. And it all becomes an art work, at one point I created about a dozen large green garbage bags, big garbage bags full of correspondence and I went through and sort of tore it into pieces so it couldn't be used by anyone and put them into bags and drove them into the city two at a time, because that's all I could get into the back of my Volkswagon, and placed them in trash cans in some part of the city where I didn't want scavengers finding them because I didn't want these to be. . . .

**Why did you take those bags into the city?**

Because it was like an art work, I believe in pilgrimage, I have pilgrimage stories. When the art director of **Rolling Stone** and his wife came to visit me, they loved my paintings, and when they were leaving I said to them, 'how many visitors in a year

*continued on page eight*

The Alternative Space - Detroit presents  
Michigan Artists Lectures  
**JIM HART**  
Thurs., February 24, 7:30 p.m.  
THE DETROIT ARTISTS MARKET  
1452 Randolph Detroit, Michigan

An Outdoor Sculpture By  
**KEITH AOKI**  
To Be Erected in Detroit  
February, 1978



continued from page seven

do you think I have out here,' and they said, "probably about 200 people come out here a year," and I replied, 'no, usually about two.' And I said quite seriously, 'truthfully, I have maybe two visitors about a year, no one is invited, no one dares to come out.' I was telling Jim Crawford who has his windows half covered with white tissue paper that mine are covered with brown paper and when one newspaper reporter left she said, "you wouldn't know from the outside what was going on in the inside," which I like very much.

That's what these portraits are all about. They are all the interior of the head. I'm trying to depict what goes on in the interior of the head: thoughts, images or ideas.

**If you said twenty visitors a year that would sound pretty private in itself, but two is pretty eccentric.**

Well, another answer to that. . . .see I'm a great put-on artist, I'm the Dead Pan Club and you really shouldn't take everything I say too seriously although I'm very soberly serious but I'm also a put-on person. Someone who thought they were going to get a rather interesting answer asked me that question, "how many letters do I mail per day," and I gave it a great deal of thought, and I said, 'one.' I think there was one day when there was nothing in the box and I almost had a heart attack. One day I got one awful cheap postcard and an advertisement, that was a long time ago. Every day I write or I have specific things or objects or images for each person, like Betty Small gets chopsticks, John Evans gets reports on the days when my mailbox is very low, Grace Glueck of the **New York Times** gets pictures of giraffes, although Susan Subtle of California is now going to get all the pictures of the giraffe, Lucy Lippard use to get slips, slips of paper or undergarments, Henry Martin of Italy use to get pictures of lobsters. I don't deal with people's requests, I certainly do it with my demands from people, like my phone call to you this evening was a demand upon you.

**Were you happy with the Art In America layout?**

Oh, very much so, yes, I was two feet off the ground: I was published in an international magazine and it was my writing, my drawing, my dumb writing, I write it like comic strip style.

**"My dumb writing?"**

Yeah, my dumb writing.

**Is that because it doesn't follow formal writing. . . .**

No, I'm not very well schooled in grammar or paragraph structure. I don't know how to write, I only know how to say what I have to say. It's what I believe in. I read William Carlos Williams throughly years and years ago and I believe in American talk.

**Who is William Carlos Williams?**

Well, he's a very important American poet, I'm very surprised you don't know who he is.

February 27  
Montieth Nursery School Benefit  
February 19 thru 25  
First Anniversary Celebration  
"a unique schedule of events"

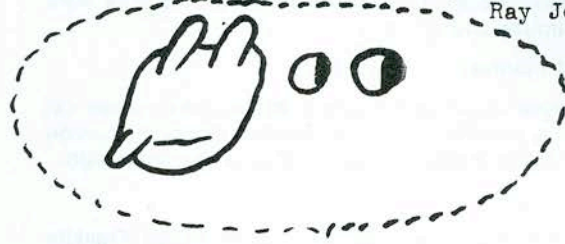
truly remarkable entertainment until 2:00 A.M.

Nov. 29

Got the last Monthly. Thanks.

Love that Largest flag postcard, I had Thanksgiving dinner with Jasper Johns & John Cage.

Ray Johnson



**Living?**

No, he was a doctor and published. . . . .

**Someone just told me about him today.**

Shame shame shame on you for not knowing who he was. I'm delighted that you don't know who he is.

**So that I can now know him?**

Right, you can discover him and enjoy his writing and his essays and poetry.

**If I had to stop, during every interview, and ask everyone to explain everything I didn't understand, I would never finish an interview.**

You must be having a marvelous time with it. Do you see the Warhol Interview at all?

**Yes.**

Because I followed it right from the beginning and find it interesting with great low and highpoints.

**I know people who don't like it.**

**I don't think it's publicized, it's still a new thing here.**

**Maybe you could answer a question for me about this book of Andy Warhol's. [The Philosophy of Andy Warhol [From A to B and Back Again].]**

Yes, I will be glad to answer your question and then I have to leave in three minutes.

**If you can tell me what that is.**

Well, it's Andy's autograph book to you and it's a Campbell soup can.

**Is that what that is?**

Yes, that says 'Campbells', and that says, 'soup', and that little round thing is the design on the soup label, and this line is the definition of the red and gold part of the Campbells soup. He autographed the very same thing for me. He does this consistently all through the country at autograph parties. He did this for practically everybody.

continued on page nine . . . .



The New Miami Bar

3930 Cass Ave

Detroit



continued from page eight. . . .

Who receives your mail when you're not at home?

Oh, the post office is holding it for me.

When you go back there must be lots. . . .

I go to the post office. . . .no, there won't be that much, I've only been gone a week. I was mentioning before when I lecture I depend on the mail to provide my workload or my props or my text or whatever, and when I went to the East Hampton opening. . . .this hatchet reporter who had written this thing about me that said, "Ray Johnson always wears an earring and a black T-shirt," and I called her up and said, 'what is this earring I'm always wearing', and she claims that when I came to her house to visit her the first time I was wearing an erring which is highly possible but I have forgotten, so I thought at my opening I thought I would have to wear my black. . . .I have eight of these. . . .I have to wear one of my black T-shirts with an earring and I got in the mail a color photograph of a very beautiful woman with an intense look on her face, sort of Spanish with red lipstick and makeup, and she was leering at the camera, it was a photograph of a stamp addressed to me, but I don't know who it is from, I don't know who the woman is, I don't know why it was sent to me. So I glued the photograph to a piece of cardboard and put a piece of string on it and wore it on my ear. I had this object hanging from my left ear and some friends of mine came to the opening and brought me a gift which was a flat seashell because of the Shelley Duvall Fan Club and they had drawn a head that was suppose to look like me on the seashell and had written, 'Ray Johnson Fan Club' and it had this tiny little roach on the seashell like an ashtray, it was presented as a gift. Is this still taping?

Oh, because I have one story that is sort of interesting. I had to decide recently that there would be one person whose silhouette I couldn't or wouldn't or shouldn't do and that was Valerie Solanis.

Who?

Valerie Solanis, the one who shot Andy Warhol, who is back in town and I somehow got the idea, because she got an interview printed in the **Village Voice**, she wanted some publicity about her new book. I don't know, I still may do her, I think it would be very interesting in my book to do a portrait of a murderess, or attempted murderess.

In your pornography book?

It's not a pornography book.

Oh, that was a section of the book.

Yes, that was a section but actually it might be interesting to do a pornography book, I hadn't thought about it before, you see people supply me with ideas but then I would have to do Charlie Manson which means when I get home I have a thing to mail to you which has references to Charlie Manson but not to Valerie Solanis; it's an article that appeared in the **Village Voice** about the Correspondence School which attempted to be a very shocking reportage, they wanted to



*A San Franciscan Bistro*  
*Food & Spirits*

## Sunday Brunch and Jazz

Open Noon to 2 a.m.

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Entertainment Nightly

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(Near Wayne State U. and Detroit Medical Center)

make it very juicy and racey and they called me up and said, "what were the ten most atrocious objects you received in the mail," they wanted to make it like **Vile**, it's not what I'm dealing with, what I'm dealing with is like utter boredom. . . .you don't believe that do you?

Did you supply ten things?

Oh sure, always in this kind of exchange, if someone wants that, I'll try. . . .I gave them a list of things like icicles, lunchmeat, it's a good list, I worked very hard on it, it's pretty funny.

Was there anything on that list that they expected?

No. Actually someone sent me a dead squirrel from Cambridge, Massachusetts in a shoe box once. That was the smelliest thing I have ever encountered, that was on the list. I can't remember all of them. But I have, because I've had to write my history, been doing this for a long time.

It has to be the longest of anyone in correspondence art, right?

I'm the maniac of correspondence, I'm sure. I have to take **Rolling Stone** with me, it's the only copy I have, they just came out last week, so I have my car keys and I have my **Rolling Stone** and I had a very nice visit.

Yeah, thanks for stopping by.

So let's shake hands.

I hope to see both of you again.

We're coming to New York in January for the College Art Conference.

Where is that going to be held?

The Hilton. It's always at the Hilton.

Well, I'll reply with correspondence, do with it what you want.

The door sticks, you can't get out.

Bye Bye.

That was a strange interview.

Yeah. ■

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