

Winter 1988

Ballast Quarterly Review, v03n2, Winter 1988

The Art Academy of Cincinnati

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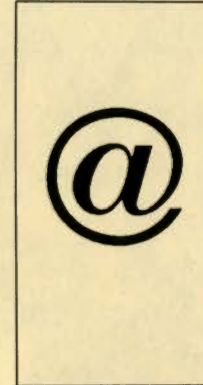
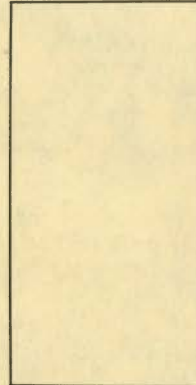
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Fear is a slinking cat I find
Beneath the lilacs of my mind.

Sophie Tunnell.

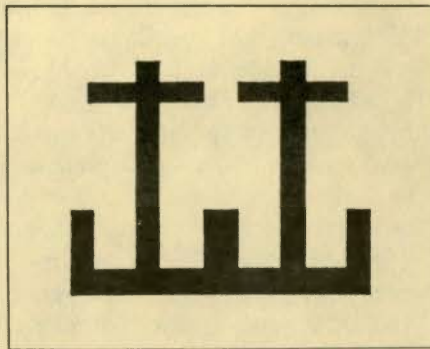


Phyllis Diller:
Cleaning your
house while
your kids are
still growing is
like shoveling
the walk be-
fore it stops
snowing.

August Strindberg...peered through his microscope into a walnut and saw, perfectly formed, "two tiny white hands, white as alabaster, raised and clasped as though in prayer." In his book, *Inferno*...Strindberg describes how the rumpled pillow on his bed began to figure marble heads in the style of Michelangelo. Once in the half-shadow he saw on his bed the form of a recumbent Zeus, and his companion, a painter, exclaimed: "A great vanished art of the past born again! I tell you there's a whole school of drawing here!" On another occasion he admired a drawing of a Madonna in a friend's studio, and was told that it had been copied from a pattern of weeds on the surface of a lake; and when Strindberg raked some coals out of his fireplace, he found that they had taken on the shapes of gnomes, goblins and writhing human figures. A visiting friend took them for the work of a Norwegian sculptor famous for his illustrations of folk tales, and they were so life-like that when Strindberg put them out on the roof they frightened away the sparrows!

John Michell, *Natural Likeness: Faces and Figures in Nature* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1979), p. 8.

Alfred Jarry:
Art is a stuffed
crocodile.



Logo Variations for Anchor Bank-corporation. Paula Laib, Cincinnati, Ohio 1986.

Vera Gauditas
*[immigrant
from Czecho-
slovakia]*: And
in the city you
walk between
people like you
walk in the
woods.

Alberto Giaco-
metti: In a
burning build-
ing, I would
save a cat be-
fore a Rem-
brandt.

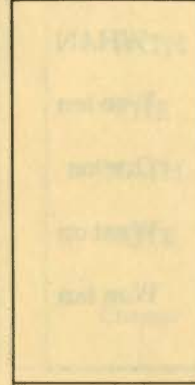
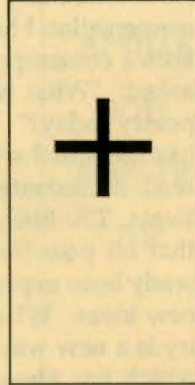
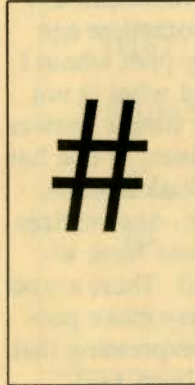
J.B. Morton:
Wagner is the
Puccini of mu-
sic.

When I was a child my mother said to me, "If you become a soldier you'll be a general. If you become a monk you'll end up as the pope." Instead I became a painter and wound up as Picasso.

Pablo Picasso, quoted in Barbara Rowes, editor, *The Book of Quotes* (New York: Ballantine, 1979), p. 304.

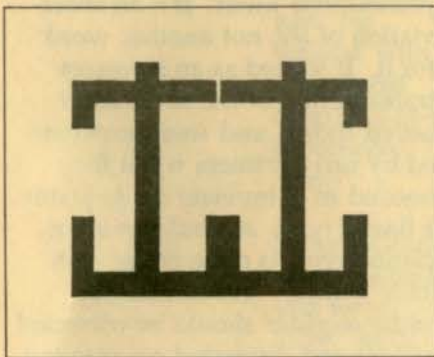
In cases of extreme necessity, and when the preservation of human life depends on the obtainment of water, the supply to be found in the stomach of the camel should not be overlooked or forgotten. During the Algerian campaign the French made some investigations in order to find out the quantity of water a dead camel's stomach would contain, and the result was that about 15 pints was the average arrived at. This water, although green and turbid, had no offensive smell.

W.B. Lord and Thomas Baines, *Shifts and Expedients of Camp Life, Travel and Exploration* (London: 1876).



Recommended: *Ecstatic Occasions, Expedient Forms: 65 Leading Contemporary Poets Select and Comment on Their Poems*, edited by David Lehman (New York: Macmillan, 1987). An invitational anthology of brief, introspective, sometimes insightful glimpses at the process of designing poems, with works (and commentary) by Joyce Carol Oates, Robert Creeley, John Cage, John Updike, Amy Clampitt, John Ashberry and fifty-nine others.

We go through the world...discovering differences in the like, and likenesses in the different...But when all is said and done about the conditions which favor our perception of resemblance and our abstraction of its ground, the crude fact remains, that some people are far more sensitive to resemblances, and far more ready to point out wherein they consist, than others are. They are the wits, the poets, the inventors, the scientific men, the practical geniuses. A native talent for perceiving analogies is reckoned...as the leading fact in genius in every order.



Paula Laib, 1986.

Spike Milligan: Are you going to come quietly or do I have to use earplugs?

H.H. Munro (Saki): In baiting a mousetrap with cheese, always leave room for the mouse.

William James, *Principles of Psychology* (New York: Dover Publications, 1950), vol 1, pp. 529-530.

Where did ideas come from anyway? This one had leaped at him when he'd been exhausted, AWOL from his search.

Laura Z. Hobson, *Gentlemen's Agreement* (1946).

WHAN

Won ton

One ton

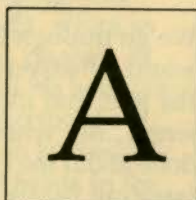
Want on

Won tan

As I write this I am reminded of a conversation I had sometime ago with a contemporary poet whom I asked: "What is and what is not poetry today?" The simple answer has remained with me: "If one has read Ecclesiastes, Shakespeare, Keats, T.S. Eliot, etc., one realizes that all possible ideas have already been expressed. There are no new ideas. What may make poetry is a new way of expressing that which has already been said."

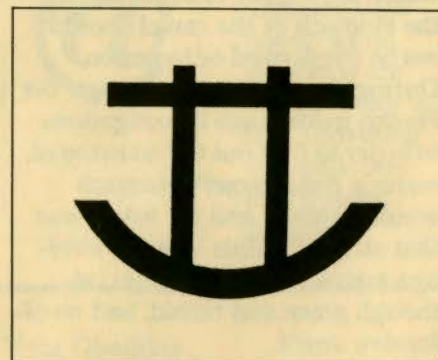
Raphael Soyer, *Diary of an Artist* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1977), p. 127.

Jorge Luis Borges: Lost, as water is lost in water.



In his native Hungary, Max Kiss was a practicing pharmacist, familiar with a chemical, phenolphthalein, that local wine merchants were adding to their products. The practice was at first thought to be innocuous. But soon the merchants, and the wine-drinking public, discovered that a night's overindulgence in wine created more than a hangover in the morning. The chemical additive turned out to be an effective laxative. And when Max Kiss emigrated to New York in 1905, he began combining phenolphthalein with chocolate as a commercial laxative. He initially named the product Bo-Bo, a name inadvisably close to the slang expression for the laxative's target. Kiss reconsidered and came up with Ex-Lax, his contraction for "Excellent Laxative."

Charles Panati, *Extraordinary Origins of Everyday Things* (New York: Harper and Row, 1987), p. 264.



Paula Laib, 1986.

Ye, as in Ye Old Antique Shoppe, is no more pronounced 'yee' than 'lb' is pronounced 'ulb' or 'cwt' is pronounced 'kwut'. It is an abbreviation of *the*, not another word for it. It started as an incorrect transcription of the runic letter called thorn...and was perpetuated by early printers when they needed to abbreviate *the* to justify a line of type. A similar pronunciation error is often made with 'olde worlde'. Those who say 'oldie worldie' should be corrected at once and instructed never to say it again.

Bill Bryson, *Dictionary of Troublesome Words* (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, 1984), p. 156.

Recommended: *Dynamic Airbrush* by David Miller and James M. Efler (Cincinnati, OH: North Light Books, 1987).

John Lennon:
Yea, though I
wart through
the valet of
thy shadowy
hut I will feed
no norman.

THAT
SHOURES
OF
TO

APRILLE
SOTE
MARCHE
THE

WITH
THE
HATH
ROTE
Chaucer

HIS
DROGHTE
PERCED

W.H. Auden:
A professor is
someone who
talks in some-
one else's
sleep.

Spike Milli-
gan: He
walked with a
pronounced
limp, L-I-M-P,
pronounced
'limp'.

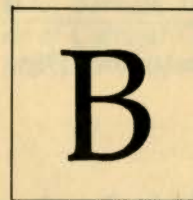
Samuel Gold-
wyn: If Roose-
velt were
alive, he'd
turn over in his
grave.

Roger Fry: Art
is significant
deformity.

The Bauhaus school of design and
my early experiences left me with
the impression that I could solve
anything. This attitude was as
natural as breathing. I was al-
ways sure that there was an an-
swer to any question, if one kept an
open mind.

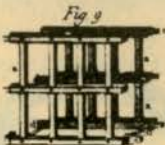
Primo Angeli, quoted in Ed Gold,
The Business of Graphic Design
(New York: Watson-Guption,
1985), p. 90.

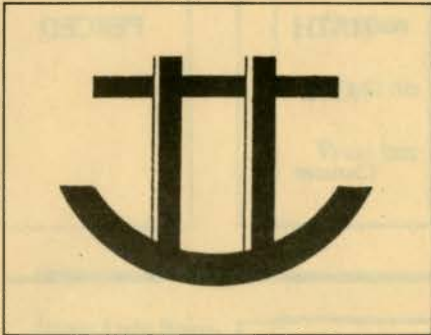
Recommended: *Vision in Motion* by
Laszlo Moholy-Nagy (Chicago:
Paul Theobald, 1947). Published
more than four decades ago, this
chock-full manifesto by the Bau-
haus photographer, foundations
professor, and founder of the New
Bauhaus still seems strangely up-
to-date.



The Composition Class instructor,
Henry J. Thouron, sought to stimu-
late the creativity of his students.
He would draw a rectangular area,
then locate within it a few free-
hand lines and a dot. "Now I want
a picture where this dot is the lobe
of a man's ear and these lines are
incorporated," he would advise.
All of the elements would have to
become part of the composition;
that was the challenge. Each stu-
dent then evolved an original pic-
ture where the design was con-
trolled by the novice artist, rather
than by happenstance.

Bennard B. Perlman, *The Golden
Age of American Illustration: F.R.
Gruger and His Circle* (Westport,
CT: North Light Publishers, 1977),
p. 294.





Paula Laib, 1986.

Blaise Pascal:
If you want people to think well of you, do not speak well of yourself.

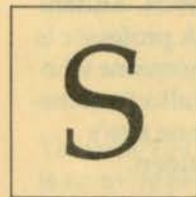
Nubar Gulbenkian: The best number for a dinner party is two: myself and a damned good cook.

Dr. Seuss, who claims to be a self-taught artist, had a drawing lesson once. When he turned his paper upside down to study the composition, the teacher walked by and said, "Ted, real artists don't turn their paper upside down." He never returned to class.

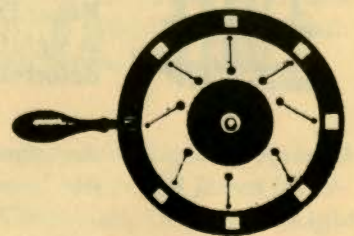
Mary Stofflet in San Diego Museum of Art exhibition catalog, *Dr. Seuss from Then to Now* (New York: Random House, 1986), p. 19.

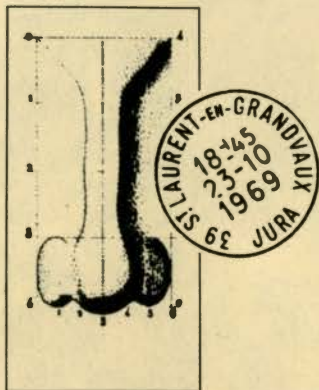
Crossing the country, every piece of machinery I seen in the field, I thought I seen a lot of airplanes. The farmer had a piece of machinery in the field and it had paddles on it and I thought, 'There's an airplane.' I had never seen an airplane at that time, you know. In fact, it was quite a while before we seen airplanes in this country, until after the war.

Charles Bartunek, Czechoslovakian immigrant, recalling his arrival in America, quoted in David M. Brownstone, et al, editors, *Island of Hope, Island of Tears* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986), p. 263.



Recommended: "Celebrating the Shaker Vision" by Guy Davenport with photographs by Jacques Di-
rand in *House and Garden*, vol 158 no 7 (July 1986), pp. 138-148. For other recent essays by Professor Davenport (University of Kentucky, Lexington), see his book of twenty essays, *Every Force Evolves a Form* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1987).





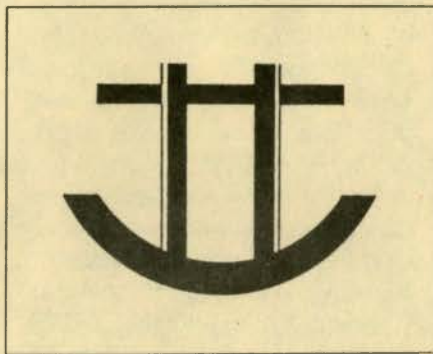
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I write because, exacting as it may be to do so, it is still more difficult to refrain, and because—however conscious of one's limitations one may be—there is always at the back of one's mind an irrational hope that this next book will be different: it will be the rounded achievement, the complete fulfillment. It never has been: yet I am still writing.

Iris Origo, *Images and Shadows* (1970).

The whole secret lies in arbitrariness... You go to see the middle of a play, you read the third part of a book. By this means you insure yourself a very different kind of enjoyment from that which the author has been so kind as to plan for you. You enjoy something entirely accidental; you consider the whole of existence from this standpoint...

Soren Kierkegaard, "The Rotation Method" in *Either/Or* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1959). Suggested by Harriet Taggard, a reader from Happy Corner, New Hampshire.



Paula Laib, 1986.

Frank Muir and Dennis Norden: *What are you--a sorcerer? Only at home. In company I drink out of a cup.*

They strive deliberately to transcend the commonplace—that is to say, the habitual—configurations rather than to conform to them. In this, artists do not differ from inventors; and they are similarly constrained by the number of available configurations within their cultural tradition and the degree to which the internal cohesion of these habitual configurations resists their efforts to break them down and reintegrate them into new units.

H.G. Barnett, *Innovation: The Basis of Cultural Change* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1953), p. 421.

Moses [*his identical twin brother*] once appeared in a TV interview. Next day a woman, passing me in the street, said: "I saw you on TV yesterday." "It was Moses, not I," I said. Looking at me closely, she questioned, "Are you sure?"

Raphael Soyfer, *Diary of an Artist* (Washington, D.C.: New Republic Books, 1977), p. 294.

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JAMES	JOYCE
JOYCE	CARY
WILLIAM	JAMES
JESSE	JAMES
MAX	

Recommended: *The Arts at Black Mountain College* by Mary Emma Harris (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987). An illustrated, thoroughly researched account of a highly unusual school of the arts, formerly located 18 miles east of Asheville in North Carolina, founded in 1933 (coincident with the closing of the German Bauhaus) and dissolved 23 years later. Among its students and faculty were Josef Albers (who later taught at the Art Academy of Cincinnati), Anni Albers, Eric Bentley, Paul Goodman, Elaine de Kooning, Willem de Kooning, Charles Olson, Marguerite Wildenhain, Marcel Breuer, Robert Motherwell, Robert Rauschenberg, Robert Creeley, Jack Tworikov, Franz Kline, Merce Cunningham, John Cage, Buckminster Fuller, and many others.

Samuel Goldwyn: Anybody who would go to a psychiatrist ought to have his head examined.

Henny Youngman: Did y'hear about the time they crossed a mink with a gorilla? They got a real nice coat but the sleeves were too long.

Virginia Woolfe: Art is not an imitation of life. One of the damned things is enough.

By memorable events are understood, in the murky bell jar of prison, things like getting potato soup instead of bean soup for the midday meal, a few privately exchanged words with the warder or the orderly, a cigarette given one by the warder, a spider in the window, or a bug in the bed. These are breath-taking experiences, they employ and stimulate the free-running mechanism of thought for hours at a time. They are substitutes for visits to the movies, making love, reading the newspapers and the cares of daily life. Storms in teacups are, for those whose horizon extends no farther than the rim of the cup, quite as real as storms at sea.

Arthur Koestler [in his prison journal], *Dialogue With Death* (New York: Macmillan, 1966), pp. 117-118.