

Fall 1989

## Ballast Quarterly Review, v05n1, Fall 1989

The Art Academy of Cincinnati

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# BYLLAS

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Review

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**BALLAST Quarterly Review**. Volume 5, Number 1, Autumn 1989. Edited by Roy R. Behrens. This issue was designed by Ann Elizabeth Small. Copyright 1989 by the Art Academy of Cincinnati.

*Catherine Lampert:* Are the models before you, in front of you physically in front of the easel where you are painting, rather than to one side?

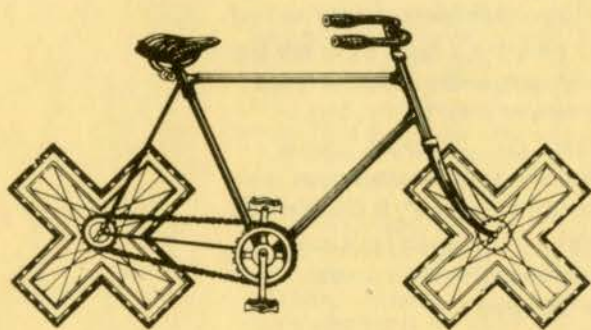
*Frank Auerbach:* I just don't know. I move my easel about a bit. There is no set pattern, but I notice that towards the end of the painting I tend to shove the thing across the room. I'm not certain of this, I don't know what I do. There's a line in Eliot about "to be conscious is not to be in time"; if one's really working one hasn't got any consciousness left for self-consciousness.

From Malborough Gallery exhibition catalog on British painter **Frank Auerbach** (1968), p. 12. Suggested by Joseph Podlesnik, a reader from Chicago.

**B.F. Skinner**  
*(Notebooks):* In looking at a menu, ask not what will taste good but what will feel good an hour or so from now.

**Highly recommended:** Edward M. Gottschall, *Typographic Communications Today* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 249 pp., illus. Large format, with hundreds of well-chosen illustrations (many in color), every aspect of this book (layout, printing, paper, text) is excellent. To our knowledge, there is no finer book about the history, theory and practice of typographic design. In the author's words (Editor of *U&lc* magazine and Vice Chairman of the International Typeface Corporation), "It aims to open eyes and minds to the potential power of typography when skillfully handled, and to do so by examining the roots of contemporary typographic design and the work of outstanding typographic designers all over the world."

Below: A bicycle for stairs. From, Jacques Carelman, *Catalogue of Unfindable Objects* (London, 1984), p. 56



How to remember the spectrum (Red orange yellow green blue indigo violet): **Richard Of York Greatly Battled In Vain.** As learned by Anthony Batchelor, a reader from Cincinnati, born in Yorkshire, England.

If you graduated from medical school today, the chances are nearly 100 percent that you would be employed as a doctor, if you wished, several years from now. If you graduated from law school, nearly 90 percent; if you graduated from a writing school or art school, even with an advanced degree in, say, fiction writing or painting, the chances are less than 1 percent that you would be living off your work as a fiction writer or painter several years hence. Surviving as a full-time writer or artist, apart from inheritance or other jobs, is a feat comparable to becoming a general in the army or the president of a corporation.

Richard Kostelanetz, *Autobiographies* (Santa Barbara, CA, and New York: Mudhorn Press and Future Press, 1981), pp. 192-193.





**P. B. Medawar:** The human mind treats a new idea the way the body treats a strange protein; it rejects it.

My father invented a submarine just before the First World War which had the world's record for staying underwater, and he dramatized this by making an experimental trip on Friday the thirteenth, with a crew of thirteen, staying underwater for thirteen hours. But it never entered his mind that the value of staying underneath water lay in being invisible to people above. Because his engine ran on gasoline it left bubbles on the surface of the water. So his sub wasn't used in the war, and Dad went bankrupt.

**John Cage**, quoted in Richard Kostelanetz, "From Conversing with Cage: Autobiography" in the *Chicago Review*, vol 36 no 2, Autumn 1988.

**Did you know?** That Aldous Huxley, the British novelist (*Brave New World*, *The Doors of Perception*) died on November 22, 1963, the day of John F. Kennedy's assassination.

Mary noticed that the Japanese dogs have Oriental faces; so do, she says, Eskimo dogs. Is this the result of selective breeding? Julian Huxley, in *New Bottles for New Wine*, has a photo of the Heike crab, which developed a distinct samurai face on its shell because the specimens showing the face were consistently thrown back into the water by superstitious fishermen. Thus, by selection, the face was bred in. Did something similar happen to dogs among Mongols? Or is the Oriental dog face more nearly the original one, and is it we who bred a Western look into our dogs?

**Rudolf Arnheim**, *Parables of Sun Light: Observations on Psychology, the Arts, and the Rest* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

The exposure to [Frank Lloyd] Wright at Taliesin was short-lived. He was soon chafing under the strictures of doing things the Wright way. An anecdote from his Taliesin visit has him being shown into a room and instructed to wait there for Wright. As he glanced around, Lustig noticed that there was a blue vase against a blue wall and a white vase against a white wall. He exchanged the blue vase and the white vase. Wright entered the room, and as he spoke his first words to Lustig, replaced the blue vase against the blue wall and the white vase against the white wall.

R. Roger Remington and Barbara J. Hodik (regarding the graphic designer Alvin Lustig), *Nine Pioneers in American Graphic Design* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), p. 124.

Color influences our manner of handling physical objects. On chilly days I reach for my red corduroy shirt. At the American Federation of Arts they used to stain their packing cases in pastel colors, baby blue or pink, to make sure that the freight handlers would treat them with care.

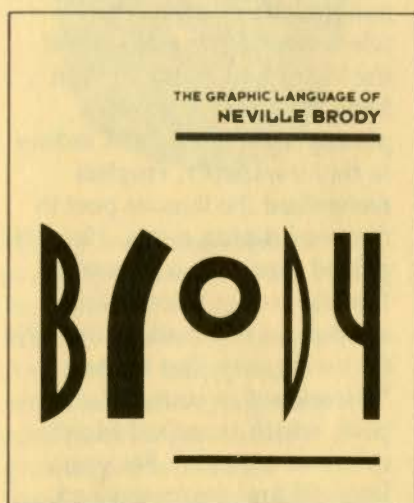
Rudolf Arnheim,  
*Parables of Sun Light*  
(Berkeley: University  
of California Press,  
1988), p. 98.

If you see two men coming towards you, and it turns out to be one, it's Mies.

Bauhaus student joke, referring to the rotund shape of **Mies van der Rohe**, who believed that "less is more," quoted in Elaine S. Hochman, *Architects of Fortune* (NY: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1989).

Thoroughly unprepared we take the step into the afternoon of life; worse still, we take this step with the false assumption that our truths and ideals will serve us as hitherto. But we cannot live the afternoon of life according to the program of life's morning; for what was great in the morning will be little at evening, and what in the morning was true will at evening have become a lie.

Carl Jung, "The Stages of Life" in Joseph Campbell, ed., *The Portable Jung* (NY: Viking, 1971), pp. 16-17.



**Left:** Cover Design for Jon Wozencraft, *The Graphic Language of Neville Brody* (New York: Rizzoli, 1989).

For five months during his first winter in London, [Thomas] Carlyle had been working on his history of the French Revolution. He wrote in a state of semi-possession. He read obsessively, filled his mind with the subject, then wrote it out in a dash, destroying his notes as he went along. There were, of course, no typewriters, no carbon papers, and no Xerox machines...When Carlyle finished the first volume of his ambitious work, he sent the manuscript to John Stuart Mill for comment.

On March 6, 1835, Mill arrived in the Carlyle's parlor white-faced and in a state of horrible agitation...Mill's maid, cleaning up, seeing the pile of papers in his parlor, had taken them for scrap and burned the lot. The first volume of the *French Revolution* was entirely gone.

Phyllis Rose, *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (NY: Vintage, 1984), pp. 99-100.

**Tucker Coe:** Life is ten per cent carrot and ninety per cent stick.





**Anon:** Cogito ergo  
spud. I think  
therefore I yam.

**Did you know?** That the American poet Langston Hughes initially received national attention in 1925 while working as a busboy at the Wardman Park Hotel in New York. Having seen a photograph of Vachel Lindsay in the newspaper, Hughes recognized the famous poet in the hotel dining room. He passed three of his poems to Lindsay at his table, who announced at a reading the following day that he had "discovered" a young Black poet, which launched Hughes' career as a writer. Six years later, ill and impoverished, Lindsay committed suicide by drinking Lysol.

**Collin Watson:** A  
needle is much  
simpler to find in a  
haystack than in a  
bin of other needles.

For example, in a restaurant (we even know its name: the Osteria del Moro), April 24, 1604, Caravaggio is served a plate of artichokes. He asks the waiter whether they have been cooked in oil or butter--and gets sass: "Smell them and find out." Speaking to the West's greatest artist of the paroxysmal moment, the *cameriere* has sassed the wrong man. In one flash of fury, as if in a Caravaggio, the plate, artichokes and all, is flung at the offender. Flung: We seem to glimpse every detail illuminated in one strobe of violence before the darkness closes again.

**Stephen Koch,** "Caravaggio and the Unseen" in Daniel Halpern, ed., *Writers on Artists* (San Francisco: North Point Press, 1988), p. 71. Suggested by Joseph Podlesnik, a reader from Chicago.



**Left:** Lance Hidy, portrait of John Brown, wood-engraving from Henry David Thoreau, *A Plea for Captain John Brown* (Lance Hidy, 1969).

**Highly recommended:** *My Life as a Dog*, a film by Lasse Hallstrom (Svensk Filmindustri Production, 1987). Available at major video rental stores. A tragically funny and eloquent view of growing up in Sweden. Suggested by Stephen Samerjan (arf! arf!) and Gordon Mennenga, readers from Milwaukee and Iowa City respectively.

I had met Einstein before my talk, first through Paul Oppenheim, in whose house we were staying. And although I was reluctant to take up Einstein's time, he made me come again. Altogether I met him three times. The main topic of our conversation was indeterminism. I tried to persuade him to give up his determinism, which amounted to the view that the world was a four-dimensional Parmenidean block universe in which change was a human illusion, or very nearly so. (He agreed that this had been his view, and while discussing it I called him "Parmenides.")

Karl Popper, "Autobiography" in Paul A. Schilpp, *The Philosophy of Karl Popper* (NY: Open Court Press, 1974), p. 162. Suggested by Joseph Podlesnik, a reader from Chicago.

**Robert Bloch** (author of *Psycho*): I have the heart of a small boy. I keep it in a jar on my desk.

**Tommy Cooper:** Last night I dreamed I ate a ten-pound marshmallow, and when I woke up the pillow was gone.

His socks compelled one's attention without losing one's respect.

**Saki** ("Ministers of Grace"). Suggested by Anne Miotke, a reader from Cincinnati.

In her childhood, she wanted to study Latin, as boys did. Her parents would not allow it. Furtively, Jane consulted a local scholar and managed to teach herself the declension of a Latin noun, choosing--with unerring emphasis--the word *penna*. One night, when she was presumed to have gone to bed, she hid herself under a table in the drawing room and surprised her parents by reciting the purloined declension. "*Penna*, the pen; *pennae*, of the pen." In conclusion, she said, "I want to learn Latin; please let me be a boy." Jane got her wish, at least to the extent that she was allowed to study Latin, but her pen envy did not diminish with the years.

Phyllis Rose (describing the childhood of Jane Welsh, the wife of Thomas Carlyle) in *Parallel Lives: Five Victorian Marriages* (NY: Vintage Books, 1984), p. 26.

**Thomas Perry**  
(*Mystery Lovers' Book of Quotations*):  
God, in his bounty and generosity, always creates more horses' asses than there are horses to attach them to.

Early one morning during this period he [Booth Tarkington] went for a walk after an unusually long writing session. He met the milkman coming up the walk and stopped to talk:

"You been up all night?" he [the milkman] asked.

"Yes," I [Tarkington] answered.

"What you been doin'?" he went on.

"Working," said I.

"Workin'!" said he. "What at?"

"Writing," said I.

"How long?" said he.

"Since yesterday noon," said I. "About sixteen hours."

"My God," said he. "You must have lots of time to waste!"

Conversation between American writer Booth Tarkington and an Indianapolis milkman, c. 1900, reported in Susanah Mayberry, *My Amiable Uncle: Recollections about Booth Tarkington* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1983), p. 4.



Delay is natural to a writer. He is like a surfer—he bides his time, waits for the perfect wave on which to ride in. Delay is instinctive with him. He waits for the surge (of emotion? of strength? of courage?) that will carry him along...I am apt to let something simmer for a while in my mind before trying to put it into words. I walk around, straightening pictures on the wall, rugs on the floor—as though not until everything in the world was lined up and perfectly true could anybody reasonably expect me to set a word down on paper.

E.B. White, interviewed in George Plimpton, ed., *Writers at Work: Eighth Series* (NY: Viking, 1988), p. 12.

Sandy is to be married. I saw him yesterday. I found him with a clothespin on his nose to which he had fastened a piece of cotton as he has a cold and couldn't take the time off for his hands to wipe his nose. He had bread and salami attached to his Bulletin Board by strings. When he wanted either he cut off a hunk.

William Stanley Hayter, British printmaker (describing a visit to the studio of Alexander (Sandy) Calder in 1930), quoted in Margaret Calder Hayes, *Three Alexander Calders: A Family Memoir* (NY: Universe Books, 1987), p. 241.

Frank Buckland and his father once visited a foreign cathedral "...where was exhibited a martyr's blood—dark spots on the pavement ever fresh and ineradicable." Dr. Buckland dropped to his knees and touched the spots with his tongue. "I can tell you what it is; it is bat's urine."

G.H.O. Burgess, *The Eccentric Ark: The Curious World of Frank Buckland* (NY: Horizon Press, 1968), p. 11.



Right: Eric Gill, Sir Thomas More's *Utopian Alphabet*. Wood-engraving, 1929, from Fiona MacCarthy's, *A Biography of Eric Gill, A Lover's Quest for Art and God* (New York: E. P. Dutton 1989), p. 216.



He once described the artist as a man standing in a crowd above the heads of which there are thick clouds. But above the artist's head there is a tiny hole through which he can look all the way up to the blue zenith and to God. The people about him, who cannot see through the hole, of course deny his report and call him crazy.

William James, Jr., "Remembering Abbott H. Thayer" in *The Christian Science Monitor*, 4 May 1951.

As Frank [Buckland] was buying a ticket at the railway station, Jacko [his pet monkey] popped out his head from the bag in which he was carried, much to the surprise of the booking clerk, who rapidly regained his presence of mind, however, and reminded Frank that a ticket was required for a dog. No amount of remonstrance, no display of the entire animal, would convince the clerk that it was a monkey and not a dog. At last, in good humored exasperation, Frank produced a tortoise from another pocket, and asked what he proposed to charge for that. After consulting his superior the man replied with a grave but determined manner: "No charge for them, sir; them be insects."

G.H.O. Burgess (regarding the life of Frank Buckland, 19th century British naturalist), *The Eccentric Ark: The Curious World of Frank Buckland* (NY: Horizon Press, 1968), p. 53.



The family home of Rock Hill was littered with snakes, especially cobras. The immediate garden was not so dangerous, but one step further and you would see several. The chickens that my father kept in later years were an even greater magnet. The snakes came for the eggs. The only deterrent my father discovered was ping-pong balls. He had crates of ping-pong balls shipped to Rock Hill and distributed them among the eggs. The snake would swallow the ball whole and be unable to digest it.

Michael Ondaatje, *Running in the Family* (NY: W.W. Norton, 1982), pp. 98-99.

My dentist tells me that sometimes when he runs into another person while trying to get through a door, he finds himself saying "Open, please!" instead of "Excuse me!"

Rudolf Arnheim, *Parables of Sun Light* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), p. 30.

Moholy was a friend of mine. As a matter of fact, I met him in 1938 in Chicago, and he is the guy who got me on the trail of reading. He said to me, "Do you read?" Just out of the blue. And I said, "No." And he said, "Pity." That's all he said. Unlike me. I sound like a guy trying to get everybody to join every library in the country. But he just said "pity," and that was enough.

Paul Rand (American graphic designer, remembering the Bauhaus artist and photographer Laszlo Moholy-Nagy), interviewed by Lou Danziger and James Miho in *Art Center Review* (Art Center College of Design, Pasadena), vol 2 no 1 (May 1989), p. 10. Suggested by Roger Williams, a reader from Terrace Park, Ohio.

In the ladies room of a Greenwich Village restaurant, underneath the standard EMPLOYEES MUST WASH HANDS signs, was the graffito I WAITED AND WAITED, BUT NO EMPLOYEE CAME, SO I FINALLY WASHED THEM MYSELF.

From *New York* magazine (12 June 1989), p. 33. Suggested by Arnold Adler, a reader from New York.

During a weekly gathering with friends for exchanges of thought, we came across Kandinsky's book, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*.

Coincidentally, I saw the first proclamation of a new art school at Weimar, called Bauhaus, and was told an interesting rumor about it by [the architect Emanuel]

Mangold: "During entrance examinations, the applicant is locked up in a dark room.

Thunder and lightning are let loose to get him into a state of agitation. His being admitted depends upon how well he expresses his experience by drawing and painting."

Herbert Bayer, *Herbert Bayer* (NY: Reinhold, 1967), p. 10.

**William Safire:** Is sloppiness in speech caused by ignorance or apathy? I don't know and I don't care.

**Recommended:** Walter Askin, *Another Art Book to Cross Off Your List* (1984), published by Nose Press, P.O. Box 50381, Pasadena, CA 91105. \$9.95 postpaid. Outrageous drawings and ludicrous puns by a California State University art professor, described as having come to art "via a series of subterfuges and coyote-like meanderings, holds the world record for breaking the picture plane more than 293 times in a 24 hour period...He was a four-letter man in high school--screen printing, bronze sculpture, oil painting, and figure drawing. (His school did not field a team in watercolor)...When his noodles are not on the side burner, he is especially proud of not being an Italian neo-expressionist." Suggested by Beauvais Lyons, a reader from Knoxville, Tennessee.


I'm gradually learning how to take care of myself. It has taken a long time. It seems to me that when I die, I'll be in perfect condition.

**John Cage**, in Richard Kostelanetz, "From Conversing with Cage: Autobiography" in *Chicago Review*, vol 36 no 2, Autumn 1988.

At one of the annual conventions of the American Society for Aesthetics much confusion arose when the Society for Anesthetics met at the same time in the same hotel.

**Rudolf Arnheim**, *Parables of Sun Light* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 39.

**Recommended:**  
Fiore MacCarthy, *Eric Gill: A Lover's Quest for Art and God* (NY: E.P. Dutton, 1989). 338 pp., illus. A life of the father of Gill Sans typeface ("the greatest English artist-craftsman of the 20th century") in which it is shown that earlier biographies have been more or less sans Gill in the sense that they did not provide an account of his sexual exploration of virtually all kinds.



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