

Summer 2001

## Ballast Quarterly Review, v16n4, Summer 2001

Roy R. Behrens  
University of Northern Iowa, sassoonorlater@gmail.com

*Let us know how access to this document benefits you*

Copyright ©2001 Roy R. Behrens

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/ballast>



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Behrens, Roy R., "Ballast Quarterly Review, v16n4, Summer 2001" (2001). *Ballast Quarterly Review*. 63.  
<https://scholarworks.uni.edu/ballast/63>

This Periodical is brought to you for free and open access by UNI ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Ballast Quarterly Review by an authorized administrator of UNI ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact [scholarworks@uni.edu](mailto:scholarworks@uni.edu).

**Offensive Materials Statement:** Materials located in UNI ScholarWorks come from a broad range of sources and time periods. Some of these materials may contain offensive stereotypes, ideas, visuals, or language.



*Ballast Quarterly Review* Volume 16 Number 4  
 Summer 2001. Copyright © 2001 by Roy R.  
 Behrens, editor, publisher and art director.  
 ISSN 1093-5789. E-mail <ballast@netins.net>.

**FINLEY  
 PETER  
 DUNNE**

"Tommy," says I,  
 "spell cat," I  
 says. "Go to th'  
 divvie," says the  
 cheerub. "Very  
 smartly answer-  
 ed," says Mary  
 Ellen. "Ye shud  
 not ask thim to  
 spell," she says.  
 "They don't larn  
 that till they get  
 to colledge," she  
 says "an'" she  
 says, "sometimes  
 not even thin,"  
 she says.

**OGDEN  
 NASH**

**I hope my  
 tongue in prune  
 juice smothers /  
 If I belittle dogs  
 and mothers.**

*Ballast* is an acronym for Books Art Language Logic Ambiguity Science and Teaching, as well as a distant allusion to *Blast*, the short-lived publication founded during World War I by Wyndham Lewis, the Vorticist artist and writer. *Ballast* is mainly a pastiche of astonishing passages from books, magazines, diaries and other writings. Put differently, it is a journal devoted to wit, the contents of which are intended to be insightful, amusing or thought provoking.

The purposes of *Ballast* are educational, apolitical and noncommercial. It does not carry advertisements, nor is it supposed to be purchased or sold. It is published approximately every three months, beginning in the fall (more or less) and ending in the summer.

To subscribe to *Ballast* or to order a gift subscription, simply send in a mailing address and five first class U.S. postage stamps for each single issue desired. In other words, to receive *Ballast* for one year (four issues), we ask that each reader contribute a total of twenty genuine unused postage stamps. Do not send postage meter slips, nor do we accept orders by phone or e-mail. When subscribing, self-adhesive stamps are preferred. Short of that, send good-looking, antique or unusual stamps. In general we do not accept requests from outside the U.S.

[In 1900, after Dard Hunter had painstakingly prepared all the apparatus for a Chautauqua chalk talk, it was undone accidentally by the famous orator William Jennings Bryan, who became entangled in the wires as he entered the stage for a lecture. When Bryan did not apologize, Hunter recalls,] I was aching for revenge...With my pocket knife I grated an entire piece of soft red chalk into the inside of Bryan's headpiece. It was a hot morning, and after the lecture Bryan placed the great broad hat on his perspiring head. The finely powdered red chalk mingled with the perspiration, and the classical face of William Jennings Bryan was literally streaked with bright-red pigment as he walked to his hotel.

**DARD HUNTER** *My Life with Paper: An Autobiography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 24.

## GERTRUDE STEIN AND WILLIAM COOK: Le Corbusier's Iowa Client

Copyright © 2001 by Roy R. Behrens



◀ News photograph of the arrival in New York of GERTRUDE STEIN (left) and ALICE B. TOKLAS, on October 24, 1934. For the next six months, they toured the U.S., promoting Stein's latest book, *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.

THE FRENCH WORD for crow is *le corbeau*. Around 1920, the Swiss-French architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret (1887-1965) adopted the pseudonym LE CORBUSIER as a way to allude to the annual task of his forebears during the Middle Ages of cleaning out crows' nests from the local church steeple.

Le Corbusier went on to become one of the most celebrated architects of the twentieth century. What is not commonly known is that one of his early clients was an Iowa-born artist named WILLIAM EDWARDS COOK (1881-1959), for whom he designed an innovative four-level home called Villa Cook (or Maison Cook) on the outskirts of Paris.

William Cook was born and raised in Independence, Iowa, the county seat of Buchanan County in the northeast section of the state. Inspired by the paintings of J.M.W. Turner and John Singer Sargent (whom he apparently knew personally), he left home at age 18 to study art, first in Chicago, and then in New York. In 1903, he moved on to Paris, where he studied

### ALICE B. TOKLAS

What is sauce for the goose may be sauce for the gander but it is not necessarily sauce for the chicken, the duck, the turkey, or the guinea hen.

### LE CORBUSIER

A house is a machine for living in.

## SALVADOR DALI

Karl Marx suffered from the same kind of illusions as poor Le Corbusier, whose recent death filled me with immense joy. Both of them were architects.



▲ Photograph of Swiss-French architect Charles-Edouard Jeanneret, better known as Le Corbusier.

## EDGAR TAFEL

[When one of Le Corbusier's buildings leaked profusely during a rainstorm, the owner demanded he come to the house.] Arriving, Corbu was asked what to do about the situation. The architect asked for "une piece of papier," which he took, folded it into a little boat, and pushed it into the water.

painting with Adolphe-William Bouguereau. Several years later, while visiting Rome, he became the first American artist to be invited to paint a portrait of Pope Pius X.

While living in Paris, Cook became acquainted with the American writer GERTRUDE STEIN, who invited him to the gatherings on Saturday evenings at her home at 27 rue de Fleurus. There he met dozens of now-famous Modernists, among them Stein's companion, ALICE B. TOKLAS, the dancer Isadora Duncan, the writer Ernest Hemingway, and the artists Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, and Jacques Lipchitz.

Over the years, Stein and Toklas became close friends with Cook and his French mistress (whom he eventually married), an artist's model named Jeanne Maollic, who also worked as a *femme de menage* or cleaning girl. As described in Stein's autobiographies (*The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas* and *Everybody's Autobiography*), they vacationed together several times on the Spanish island of Mallorca, where Stein and Cook were especially interested in the bullfights. The two couples delighted in each other's company, in part because of Jeanne's mistakes when she tried to speak English (for example, she referred to the two women as "Mlle. Tosca and Miss Steins," which, she said, as Cook explained to Stein, "is good enough as I know who she means, and you are both so charming that you are not the people to make the 'chichi' over a little matter of names").

While working as a taxi driver in Paris, Cook taught Gertrude Stein to drive, using his two-cylinder Renault taxi cab. As a result, Stein and Toklas as a team were able to contribute to World War I by driving a converted Ford van named "Auntie" (which Stein had purchased through relatives in the U.S.) as a medical supply truck for the American Fund for French Wounded. "Cook does and he says and he is kind to all," Stein wrote admiringly of her friend. "He understands all. He is so kind."

On March 2, 1922, Cook and Jeanne Maollic were married, with Stein and Toklas standing in as witnesses. Like many artists and intellectuals of the time, Cook was interested in Socialism and the Russian Revolution, and at the end of that month, he left for two and a half years on an American Red Cross relief mission to the

Caucasus region of the Soviet Union. His wife eventually joined him, but not before Stein had arranged for the photographer Man Ray to take photographs of her, to send to her Iowa in-laws.

While living in the Caucasus, the Cooks had tea in Georgia with the American dancer Isadora Duncan and attended her performance at the Tiflis Opera House. Cook wrote to Stein that "it was nice to see someone who had come from the land of the free and the home of the brave," but he thought her dancing was "a frost." At age 45, Duncan was loosing her figure, and Cook concluded that "there is a certain relation between waistlines and dancing that cannot be gotten away from..."

During those same years, at Stein's urging, Cook made repeated attempts to assist the family of Picasso's wife, the Russian ballerina Olga Khokhlova. Her family was living in Tiflis, and Cook had agreed to pass on money to them that Picasso had relayed to him through Gertrude Stein.

Meanwhile, Cook's father, an independence lawyer and landowner named Justin Cook, died in 1924. Cook used part of his substantial inheritance to buy land and to build a small, innovative home in Boulogne-sur-Seine. While searching for an architect, he was introduced to the then obscure Le Corbusier by the sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, who had just had a similar villa designed by the architect in the same neighborhood.

At the same time, with some hesitation, Le Corbusier also agreed to design a villa for Michael Stein, Gertude's older brother. He was hesitant because the Steins had furnished their previous home with Italian Renaissance antiques. "Don't buy anything but practical furniture and never decorative furniture," Le Corbusier advised; and, as he explained to Michael Stein, "I have to be very careful when I take [on] my clients so that they won't spoil my house with their furniture."

The first formal meeting between the Cooks and Le Corbusier took place April 28, 1926. They must have had few disagreements because the basic plan for the house was completed only three days later on May 1, and the layout was fundamentally unchanged when construction began in July of that year. In contrast, a series of major revisions were made in the design of the Stein villa, so that construction of that pro-

## PETER DE VRIES

I imagined asking her whether she liked Le Corbusier, and her replying, "Love some, with a little Benedictine if you've got it."



## FRANÇOISE GILOT

(*Life with Picasso*)

[Picasso] made a sculpture of a bull's head out of the seat and handlebars of a bicycle. He used to say that this sculpture was reversible. "I find a bicycle seat and handlebars in the street, and I say, 'Well, there's a bull,' until a cyclist comes along and says, 'Well, there's a bicycle seat' and he makes a seat and a pair of handlebars out of it again."

ject had still not begun when the Cooks moved into their finished home in March of 1927.

This is not to say that everything went smoothly in the construction of the Cook house. In early September, for example, Cook discovered that Le Corbusier (whom he described in a letter to Stein as a "temperamental genius") had mistakenly

► Self-portrait by William Cook, date and current location unknown.

**JACQUES LIPCHITZ**  
*(My Life in Sculpture)* [In a sculpture class] a girl had asked him [her teacher] what he thought of a sculpture of Lipchitz. The teacher had a lump of clay and let it fall on the floor, where it splattered, saying that that was a Lipchitz. I only said, "That is a rather interesting idea. I think I might try to make some such sculptures."



placed the house beyond his property line, fifty centimeters into his neighbor's land. "I thought this was a thing that was not according to Hoyle," Cook wrote to Gertrude Stein, "and he [Le Corbusier] told me I seemed to be a type absolutely without gratitude. Gratitude be damned says I—What I want is to have the thing fixed up. Well, it will cost me ten thousand francs before the thing is finished and he is mad because I have no appreciation of the fact that he got me fifty centimeters of land I didn't want."

Several months later, there was another misunderstanding between architect and client. The former may have deliberately underestimated the cost of the project at its outset, in part by allowing for certain details (such as the quality of window glass) to be decided later. While the architect was on vacation, it was Cook who apparently chose to install regular window glass in the windows on the street facade of the building, instead of more costly plate glass.

When the architect returned, he sent Cook a letter demanding a correction: "I

am convinced that you will readily agree to it so as to avoid a serious blemish to your property," wrote Le Corbusier, "For you we have made the best of our houses, and one with which we have taken particular trouble. Alas, I fear that you do not appreciate it for what it is, or the distressing incidents which you have caused us would not have happened." After all, he added, "A fine gentleman setting out for a ball would never wear a paper collar with his dinner jacket."

Le Corbusier's early buildings are often characterized as the architectural equivalent of cubist paintings, and he himself described Villa Cook as "the true cubic house" (*le vrai maison cubique*). The house is a literal cube in the sense that the plan and the elevation are both derived from the same square.

The ground level of Villa Cook is divided into a car port on one side, and a pedestrian entrance and walkway on the other. Raised above ground by *pilotis* (or stilts) and side walls, the living quarters are housed in a sculptural two-story box, with a curiously inverted room arrangement: The bedrooms, dressing room, bathroom, and the original maid's room are all on the first floor; while the kitchen, dining room, and living room are on the second. The height of the living room is double, so that it flows up into the fourth level, which contains a roof garden and library.

Shortly after his clients moved into their new home, Le Corbusier sent a vase of flowers to Jeanne Cook. "We are more and more pleased with the house day by day," William Cook wrote to the architect, "Mrs. Cook was delighted with the superb arrangement of flowers which she received yesterday evening. The living room is full of them, like a field in springtime." His wife added: "We are very happy and grateful that you have managed to produce not only a great house, but a very pretty one, with so much light and sunshine."

While evidently pleased with their home, the Cooks asked that it be modified several years later by the addition of a separate maid's quarters in the rear, with an outdoor bedroom and recreation area on the floor above. They recommended Le Corbusier to prospective clients, and occasionally showed the interior to acquaintances who were planning to build a house.

## A COOK AND STEIN CHRONOLOGY

**1874**

GERTRUDE STEIN born in Allegheny, Pennsylvania.

**1881**

WILLIAM COOK born in Independence, Iowa.

**1903**

Separately, both Stein and Cook settle in Paris, where Stein meets ALICE B. TOKLAS.

**1907**

Cook paints portrait of Pope Pius X. Meets Stein and Toklas. He falls in love with JEANNE MOALLIC, an artist's model.

**1917**

Cook teaches Stein to drive, so that she and Toklas can transport supplies during WWI.

**1922**

Cook and Maollic marry, with Stein and Toklas as witnesses.

**1924**

Cook commissions Le Corbusier to design a villa outside Paris.

**1933**

Stein and Toklas tour the U.S. to promote *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.

**1936**

Cook and Maollic leave Paris, settle on the Spanish island of Mallorca.

**1946**

Stein dies of cancer.

**1959**

Cook dies, and is buried on Mallorca.



## GERTRUDE STEIN

[simulating flamenco dance rhythms] Not so dots large dressed dots, big sizes, less laced, less laced diamonds, diamonds white, diamonds bright, diamonds in the in the light, diamonds lights diamonds door diamonds hanging to be four, two four, all before, go go go go go go, go. Go go. Not guessed. Go go.

A SHORTER VERSION of this essay was published in *Iowa Source* (February 1999), p. 9. In 1996, fourteen paintings by William and Jeanne Cook (lent by Cook's Iowa relatives) were exhibited at the Gallery of Art at the University of Northern Iowa. There are nearly 800 pages of correspondence between the Cooks and Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, spanning the years 1913-1941, in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

As Gertrude Stein's friend, William G. Rogers, remarked in his memoir, *When This You See Remember Me: Gertrude Stein In Person*, Cook was important at the time not as an artist but "largely as the occupant of a house built by Le Corbusier..."

The Cooks moved out of Villa Cook in 1934. They leased it when they moved to Rome and then settled permanently on Mallorca. "Have told Jeanne that if she prefers we can go and live in Iowa," Cook wrote to Gertrude Stein, but "she seems to have leanings toward Palma [de Mallorca], as I have myself." He went on: "She says she likes Iowa, but has the feeling that Paddy [their dog] would not be happy there..."

In October, Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas sailed to America for a six-month book promotion tour. Among their scheduled appearances was a lecture at the Times Literary Club in Iowa City, on the second floor of what is now the Prairie Lights Bookstore. "Is that anywhere near [his hometown of] Independence?" Stein asked Cook in a letter. "We would love to lecture in Independence but I am afraid it is too far away. It almost feels to us like a home tour." In the end, even her Iowa City lecture was cancelled when her plane was forced to land in Waukesha, Wisconsin, because of a snowstorm.

"I would like to have seen Iowa," Stein recalled later in *Everybody's Autobiography*, "Carl [Van Vechten, the music critic] and Cook come from Iowa, you are brilliant and subtle if you come from Iowa and really strange and you live as you live and you are always well taken care of if you come from Iowa."

William Cook died in Mallorca in 1959 at age 78, while Jeanne died two years later. They were buried in a small cemetery in Genova, adjacent to Palma de Mallorca. Surviving both is Villa Cook at 6 rue Denfert Rochereau in Boulogne-sur-Seine, which was described recently in an architectural directory as "almost in original state" and "slightly worn." The building's reputation has also survived: While never regarded as a major work by Le Corbusier, it is often cited as the first implementation of what he and his cousin and partner (Pierre Jeanneret) defined as the "Five Points of a New Architecture." ~

**GERTRUDE STEIN**

*(The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas)* She [Gertrude Stein] says that listening to the rhythm of his [her dog, Basket's] water drinking made her recognize the difference between sentences and paragraphs, that paragraphs are emotional and that sentences are not.

■ *Digital Book Design and Publishing* by Douglas Holleley. Clarendon and Cary Graphic Arts Press at Rochester Institute of Technology, Rochester, NY, U.S.A., 2001. ISBN 0-9707138-0-0.

DOZENS OF BOOKS are currently advertised as handbooks for publication designers. In many cases, these are not only unhelpful, they are confusing, largely because they attempt to appeal to all people for all purposes. Full of enticing technical tricks, the result is not a primer but a hodgepodge. Refreshingly, this book is not one of those, but is instead a legitimate handbook that identifies, demonstrates, and explains with unusual clarity the quintessential aspects of typography, page layout, illustration, image scanning, paper selection, printing, book binding, and copyright. For artists and illustrators, there is an especially valuable part on "Alternative Methods of Acquiring Images." The author is an Australian-born photographer and book artist, many of whose "artist's books" are reproduced here as examples. While his chief interest is in printed "digital books," the title is somewhat misleading because his attitude and the information presented are applicable to a far wider range of printed forms. Any digital artist or graphic designer, at any level, could gain from this book, in part because it itself is exemplary of the worthy things it recommends. For more information, see <[http://wally.rit.edu/cary/CP\\_pages/CPnewRelease.html](http://wally.rit.edu/cary/CP_pages/CPnewRelease.html)>.

[At the Cleveland Institute of Art in the 1920s, one of Frank Wilcox's] most unusual assignments was to fry eggs in the classroom and then make drawings of them. When the students were done, he would hold up one of the drawings and ask the class what it meant. "How far did the egg run out? How high did the yoke stand? How brown were the edges?" With a hot skillet the egg would flow out less far and have a smaller perimeter. If it was too hot the edges would burn. A fresh egg will stand up higher than a stale one. With a little practice one could look at the drawing and figure out the heat of the burner and the freshness of the egg. As Viktor recalls, "He taught us to see."

**ALDOUS HUXLEY**  
Facts are ventriloquist's dummies. Sitting on a wise man's knee they may be made to utter words of wisdom; elsewhere they say nothing, or talk nonsense.

**HENRY ADAMS** in *Victor Schreckengost and 20th-Century Design* (Cleveland OH: Cleveland Museum of Art / University of Washington Press, 2001), p. 10.

■ *Light, Darkness, and Colors* directed by Henrik Boetius, Marie Louise Lauridsen, and Marie Louise Lefevre. Produced by Lise Lense-Moller for Magic Hour Films, U.K., 1998. VHS color video. 52 minutes. Available from West Glen Communications, 1430 Broadway, New York NY 10018-3396.

THIS IS NOT MERELY an instructional video, it is an award-winning film, having received two prizes in international film competitions. It reinterprets the German poet Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's interesting and still radical book on the *Theory of Colors* [Zur Farbenlehre, 1810], but the film itself is so beautifully made—so precisely narrated, photographed, and edited—that, the subject matter is secondary. Whatever its topic, the film is a memorable lesson in very smart thinking and seeing. In subject, it speaks to the difference between Goethe's conclusions about everyday color experiences and Sir Issac Newton's isolated laboratory experiments in which sunlight was passed through a prism. In modern terms, Newton's investigations were atomistic (like looking through a telescope and thereby enlarging the details) while Goethe's were contextual or holistic (like looking through the wrong end of the telescope and thereby perceiving the overall plan, the big picture). To follow, Goethe is commonly said to have been the first person to popularize the word "gestalt." To Newton, colors were effects of light, events produced within the eye by light waves of differing physical lengths, while darkness was a mere negative, defined only as "the absence of light." In Goethe's theory (which looks and sounds like figure-ground in gestalt theory or ying-yang in Taoism), light and dark are inseparable and of equal importance, and color is a consequence not only of light but of a "light-darkness polarity." One cannot deny Goethe's poetic genius, but his writings on color are usually called "mystical," "subjective," and artistic digressions that wrongfully strayed into scientific territory. This delightful film, which uses time lapse photography and ingenious scientific proofs, strongly suggests that he may have been right after all.

Another of [drawing instructor Frank] Wilcox's exercises [at the Cleveland Institute of Art in the 1920s] was to go down to the Five and Ten on 105th Street and look at the objects in the window for 45 minutes. Back at the school, the students would make drawings of precisely what they had seen—the objects, the prices, and every other detail. After completing the drawings, they went back to the store window to make sure that everything was accurate.

**HENRY ADAMS** *Victor Schreckengost and 20th-Century Design* (Cleveland OH: Cleveland Museum of Art / University of Washington Press, 2001), p. 10.

[On a visit to Hammersmith, England, in 1912] I was only a few blocks from [Kelmscott House] where the famous modern edition of Chaucer had been printed, but the irregular streets had misled me. Upon inquiring the way to the old workshop of William Morris, I was surprised to be told by the young real estate agent that he did not know where William Morris had lived. He had never heard of Morris, and asked me if he had previously been the proprietor of a low roominghouse for mendicants.

**DARD HUNTER** *My Life with Paper: An Autobiography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 56.



◀ Photograph of Jane Burden (c. 1858), prior to her marriage to William Morris.

■ *Jane Morris: The Pre-Raphaelite Model of Beauty* by Debra N. Mancoff. Pomegranate Communications, San Francisco, CA, U.S.A., 2000. ISBN 0-7649-1337-9.

IN RECENT YEARS, there has been increased interest in Victorian-era designer and writer William Morris, protagonist of the British Arts and Crafts Movement. There is also a parallel interest in his wife, Jane (née Burden) Morris, a stableman's daughter, who, despite or maybe because of her strange, atypical beauty (tall and angular, with dark unruly hair, thick eyebrows, and a pouty upper lip) spent most of her miserable marriage sitting apart from the dinner guests, sans corset and crinoline, in handsewn shapeless velvet gowns. She seems always to have looked forlorn, and, for whatever reason, apparently said very little. In this new biography, there are so many portraits of her, whether paintings or photographs, that there are even one or two in which she doesn't look at all interesting. On the other hand, there are also some (page 6, for example) that clearly, convincingly show why she was (and still is) the Pre-Raphaelite paragon of exotic, unattainable beauty, the Arthurian damsel in distress. The painter and poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti, a close friend and business partner of Morris, must have thought of Morris as King Arthur, Jane as Guinevere, and himself a pudgy Lancelot. For more than a decade, as Rossetti's drug addiction grew and his reason deteriorated, he used her as his model, while they also engaged in romantic liaisons, which Morris was aware of but felt he could do nothing about. This and much more is discussed with restraint in this readable, solidly researched account of the life of someone who might be characterized today as a "supermodel."

**BARNETT  
NEWMAN**  
Esthetics is for  
artists as  
ornithology is for  
the birds.

**OLIVER  
WENDELL  
HOLMES**  
People who  
make puns are  
like wanton boys  
that put coppers  
on the railroad  
tracks. They  
amuse them-  
selves and other  
children, but  
their little trick  
may upset a  
freight train of  
conversation for  
the sake of a  
battered witti-  
cism.

**EZRA  
POUND**

And the days are  
not long  
enough, /  
And the nights  
are not long  
enough, /  
And life slips by  
like a field  
mouse, /  
Not shaking the  
grass.

**A N O N**  
People who live  
in Paris are  
Parisites.

■ *L'Esprit Nouveau: Purism in Paris 1918-1925* by Carol Eliel. Harry N. Abrams, New York, NY, U.S.A., 2001. ISBN 0-8109-6727-8.

THE TITLE OF this book ("the new spirit") is deliberately the same as that of a Paris-based art magazine that ran from 1920 to 1925. Founded by French painter Amédée Ozenfant and Swiss painter and architect Le Corbusier, it disseminated the ideas of Purism, a cleaned-up and machine-based brand of Cubism, to which the Purists gave credit for having restored "the ornamental esthetic." Geometric abstractionists and devout functionalists, the Purists denied any difference between "the esthetic of a carpet and that of a cubist painting." Their sometime associate was French painter Fernand Leger, who remembers when he first caught sight of Le Corbusier, on a bicycle in Montparnasse, "under a bowler hat, with the spectacles and overcoat of a clergyman." This is the catalog for an exhibition that premiered in April 2001 at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. It offers three interesting essays about Purism in the context of post-war Paris, Ozenfant (who later wrote *Foundations of Modern Art*), and Le Corbusier's famous pavilion (filled with paintings by Leger) at the 1925 International Exposition of Decorative Arts in Paris, from which the term Art Deco came. It includes the first English translation of Ozenfant's and Le Corbusier's 1918 manifesto, *After Cubism*. Illustrated by historic photographs and more than seventy-five paintings, this is a full-color feast of the art of the Purists, who declare at the end of a chapter: "Enough of games. We aspire to a serious rigor."

■ *Victor Schreckengost and 20th-Century Design* by Henry Adams. Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland OH, U.S.A., 2001. Distributed by the University of Washington Press. ISBN 0-940717-62-X.

THE NAME SCHRECKENGOST, which is German for "frightening guest" (apparently suggested by a Viking invasion), is not easily said nor remembered. That may be one of the reasons (if not a good one) for the almost total neglect of Victor Schreckengost in histories of American design, although the products he designed are both familiar and widely admired. As documented by this book, which is the first major account of his life, he assuredly deserves as much recognition as other industrial designers of the same period, such as Raymond Loewy, Norman Bel Geddes, Russell Wright, and Walter Dorwin Teague. It was he who founded the industrial design program at the Cleveland Institute of Art in 1933. As children, many people knew (and loved!) Schreckengost's famous child-sized vehicles from the 1940s and 50s, including streamlined pedal cars, tricycles, toy tractors, little red wagons, and bicycles, especially the Murray Mercury, and his Spaceliner and J.C. Higgins bikes for Sears. He also designed ceramics, stage sets, architectural sculpture, streetlights, lawn mowers, baby strollers, chairs, flashlights, fans, printing presses (including a 16-color offset press), trucks, and dinnerware sets. But the single piece that is reproduced most often is an Art Deco-style ceramic bowl, titled *Jazz Bowl*, commissioned by Eleanor Roosevelt in the early 1930s. This book was produced as the catalog for an exhibition in 2000 of the many accomplishments of Schreckengost, who had just turned 94.



■ *Eadweard Muybridge: The Father of the Motion Picture* by Gordon Hendricks. Dover Publications, Mineola, NY, U.S.A., 2001. ISBN 0-486-41535-X.

THIS IS A BIOGRAPHY of one of the oddest, most fascinating characters in art history. Born Edward James Muggeridge in England in 1830, he is remembered now as Eadweard Muybridge, the name he adopted after emigrating to the U.S. in his 20s, and setting up shop in California as a photographer. During his lifetime, and to great extent today, he was known for his panoramic views of the West, particularly the Yosemite Valley, Central America, and San Francisco, which could be bought as single prints or as spectacular stereo pairs. (In this book, he is shown seated on the edge of Contemplation Rock, a photo later used in court by his defense lawyer to suggest that he was mentally unstable.) As a prominent landscape photographer, Muybridge became acquainted with Leland Stanford, Governor of California, for whom Stanford University was named, a railroad tycoon and race horse owner, who hired Muybridge to record the movements of Occident, his finest horse, while trotting full speed. Muybridge spent his remaining life making sequential still photographs of animals and humans in motion (engaged in all sorts of activities), sometimes projecting them onto a screen as prototypical "moving pictures." There are several good books on Muybridge, but this one is especially fine because of its exhaustive detail, including 200 photographs, news articles, and engravings. An entire chapter is given to a scandalous period in Muybridge's life, which began with his discovery (c.1874) that a photograph of his infant son, Florado Helios, had "Little Harry" written on the back of it. Convinced (apparently correctly) that his young wife had been sleeping with a con man, one George Harry Larkyns, he tracked him, called him out, and shot him dead. At Muybridge's murder trial in 1875, he successfully pleaded "not guilty," claiming that the shooting was justified by the adultery. Leaving the courtroom, he was applauded by a crowd. His former wife, age 24, who was suddenly terribly ill, died a few months later, while his son (or was it Larkyns'?) was sent to an orphanage, then worked as a garden laborer until his death in a car accident in Sacramento in 1944.

## JAMES ELKINS

*(How To Use Your Eyes)* A

normal lifetime, for a person who lives in a developed nation, is about 30,000 days. Grass is in bloom for about 10,000 of those days, and certainly I could take one of them to sit down and get to know grass. But it is frightening how quickly life passes. I am a little over forty years old, and that means I have used up more than half of those 10,000 days that I have been given for viewing grass. If I'm lucky, I have about 30 summers left. Each summer has about 60 days of good weather, and maybe 20 days when I actually get outside and have time to spare. That adds up to a little over 600 chances to see grass. They can easily slip away.

■ *1000 Extra/Ordinary Objects* edited by Colors Magazine. Taschen America, New York, NY, U.S.A., 2001. ISBN 3-8228-5820-X.

## DONALD HALL

Gertrude Stein sometimes wrote parked in her Ford at a busy intersection in Paris where French law required all drivers to squeeze their klaxons as they approached cross streets—because, as she said, the clangor took the top of her mind away.

THIS BOOK WAS made for paging through, not for extended reading. It is a flashy catalog of bizarre yet believably functional stuff, such as an Ethiopian ear-cleaning spoon; paper made from recycled elephant dung; two mittens blending into one so that Norwegian lovers can hold hands even in winter; fried bull's testicles (a delicacy for males, this book claims, in South America); a scrap metal briefcase from Senegal, its surface decorated with flattened soda cans and old newspapers; Japanese toilet paper with English language lessons printed on it; and spiked boots for cowboy golfers. In addition to these, there are hundreds of other useful unfamiliar tools, curios, gadgets, and so on from throughout the world, each with a color illustration and a brief description. Appropriately, this baffling and often amusing array of "artifacts of cultural identity" was co-produced by *Colors* magazine (whose motto is "diversity is good"), and Taschen, a German book publisher known for the quality and affordability of its art- and design-related titles—books that, like the objects here, are both eccentric and extraordinary. For other books by Taschen, see <[www.taschen.com](http://www.taschen.com)>.

Everybody is an artist these days. Rock and roll singers are artists. So are movie directors, performance artists, make-up artists, tattoo artists, con artists, and rap artists. Movie stars are artists. Madonna is an artist, because she explores her own sexuality. Snoop Doggy Dogg is an artist because he explores other people's sexuality. Victims who express their pain are artists. So are guys in prison who express themselves on shirt cardboard. Even consumers are artists when they express themselves in their selection of commodities. The only people left in America who seem not to be artists are illustrators.

**BRAD HOLLAND** "Express Yourself—It's Later Than You Think" in Steven Heller and Marshall Arisman, eds., *The Education of an Illustrator* (New York: Alworth Press, 2000), p. 16.

## GROUCHO MARX

Outside a dog,  
a book is man's  
best friend;  
inside a dog,  
it's too dark to  
read.

Them that's got shall get,  
Them that's not shall lose,  
So the Bible said,  
And it still is news;  
Mama may have, papa may have,  
But God bless the child that's got his  
own!  
That's got his own.

**BILLIE HOLIDAY** Excerpt from the lyrics for "God Bless the Child" (1941), written with Arthur Herzog, Jr.

All subscriptions to *Ballast* (including gift subscriptions) must be mailed to the following address:

Ballast Quarterly Review  
Attn: Subscription Elf  
2022 X Avenue  
Dysart, Iowa 52224-9767

*Ballast* is published in a limited edition and back issues are not generally available. However, any issue may be xeroxed to provide copies to others, but the copies must never be altered or sold. Rarely do we use unsolicited submissions, but readers are always encouraged to send offbeat material, verbal or visual, of the sort that the journal might publish. Original material must be explicitly labeled as such. Material that is not original must clearly make note of its author and source. All submissions are unpaid, and unsolicited material will not be returned unless accompanied by a stamped self-addressed envelope.

*Ballast* does not have a budget as such. For nearly 16 years, it has operated at a loss. Such losses are currently offset by contributions from enlightened subscribers and generous deductions from the paycheck of the Subscription Elf. If anyone is foolishly philanthropic (foolish because such gifts are surely not tax deductible), we will sometimes accept a check.

*Ballast* has a collaborative affiliation with *Leonardo: Journal of the International Society of Arts, Sciences, and Technology* (MIT Press). As a result, some of the book reviews in *Ballast* are reprinted either on the *Leonardo* web site at <<http://mitpress.mit.edu/e-journals/leonardo/reviews/reviewlist.html>> and in the printed magazine.

A newspaper composing stick held about two inches of type—fifteen or sixteen lines. My father would always refer to the length of an editorial or any set matter as so many “sticks.” At noonday lunch I have often heard my mother ask about articles that were to appear in the paper that evening. For instance, my mother would say: “Did they have a large funeral for old Joe Basler?” and my father would answer: “One of the largest this year, about eight and a half sticks.”

**DARD HUNTER** *My Life with Paper: An Autobiography* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1958), p. 10.

#### COVER

Manipulated detail from a photograph by ARTHUR ROTHSTEIN (1941), from the Dover Pictorial Archives.

#### CHARLES KNEVITT

During William Morris' last visit to Paris, he spent much of his time in the restaurant of the Eiffel Tower, either eating or writing. When a friend observed that he must be very impressed by the tower to spend so much time there, Morris snorted, “Impressed! I remain here because it's the only place in Paris where I can avoid seeing the damn thing.”



**BALLAST QUARTERLY REVIEW 2022 X AVENUE DYSART IOWA 52224-9767 USA**