

*AUTO-INTERVIEW

VITTORE BARONI

- V.B.:VITTORE,WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE "DECENTRALIZED WORLDWIDE MAIL ART CONGRESS" ?
- B.V.:I WAS TOO BUSY SELLING JEWELS TO ATTEND ANY OF THE 1986 MEETINGS, AND IF I'M LUCKY I'LL MISS THE PARTIES OF 1987 TOO. I THINK THE IDEA OF MANY DECENTRALIZED "CONGRESSES" HAPPENING AT THE SAME TIME ALL OVER THE WORLD IS VERY NICE, AND MUCH IN TUNING WITH THE SPIRIT OF MA. SO I HAVE REALLY NOTHING TO OBJECT TO THE PROJECT, FRICKER AND RUCH ARE TWO TRULY DEVOTED AND CAPABLE MAIL ARTISTS,BUT I DO NOT EXPECT MUCH GOOD TO TURN OUT OF SUCH MEETINGS. I HAVE HAD MANY SIMILAR EXPERIENCES, I STARTED MEETING GROUPS OF ITALIAN MAIL-ARTISTS IN THE 70-ES AND I PARTICIPATED TO A COUPLE OF MA-"FESTIVALS",BUT THE OUTCOME WAS ALWAYS A LOT OF CHAT AND NO PRACTICAL RESULTS.
- V.B.:YOU SEEM TO BE A BIT CYNICAL AND GLOOMY,AREN'T YOU ?
- B.V.:AS A MATTER OF FACT, I THINK I'M ONLY TOO REALISTIC. MA IS A POTENTIALLY WONDERFUL WEAPON, A CREATIVE MACHINE, IT IS LIKE A COMPUTER YOU MUST KNOW HOW IT WORKS AND YOU MUST KNOW ITS LIMITS TO MAKE THE MOST OF IT,BUT A LOT OF MAIL-ARTISTS JUST PUNCH THE BUTTONS AT RANDOM, IT'S PURE WISHFUL THINKING. I CAN DEAL WITH TRASH MAIL BY DISPOSING OF IT IN A SECOND,BUT I WOULD NOT LIKE TO GO THROUGH INTERMINABLE ROUND-TABLES AND EGO-PERFORMANCES. I HAVE NOTHING AGAINST WHO DOES IT, I AM JUST PERSONALLY TOO SHY AND SOLITARY, I HATE TALKING IN PUBLIC. I WOULD PREFER ONE-TO-ONE RELAXED MEETINGS, IN FACT MANY PEOPLE VISITED ME IN THE PAST FEW YEARS...
- V.B.:CAN YOU GIVE SOME NAMES ?
- B.V.:IT'S VERY EASILY DONE (GRABS AUTOGRAPHES-BOOK AND READS): LISA BAUNGARDNER/ LARA VINCY/ GRUPO TEXTO POETICO/ NAIF ORCHESTRA/ RICHARD H.KIRK/ CHRISTOPHER WATSON/ STEPHEN MALLINDER/ GINNY LLOYD/ PIERO SINONI/ BUSTER CLEVELAND/ TONY BRADLEY/ PETE HOROBIN/ CARLO PITTORE/ NOCTURNAL EMISSIONS/ ISTVAN KANTOR/ MONTY CANTSIN/ ACHILLE CAVELLINI/ GYORGY & JULIA GALANTAI/ HENRYK BZDOK/ MARCO PACHETTI/ ROMANO PELI/ MAURIZIO BIANCHI/ ED HIGGINS/ NEAL TAYLOR/ ENRICO STURANI/ MASSIMO GIACON/ PIERMARIO CIANI/ DANIELE CIULLINI/ PETER R.MEYER & YVONNE MARCUS/ ANGELO PRETOLANI/ ROBERTO ROSSINI/ GRAEME REVELL & SINAN, MASAMI AKITA/ EMMETT WALSH/ BOURBONESE QUALK/ KLING KLONG/ IGWIT & SIGRID/ JACQUES JUIN/ ANGELA RIETMANN/ MAURIZIO MARSICO/ PAOLO CESARETTI GILBERT OF FRONT DE L'EST/ MIDGE FELD/ PASCAL CONELADE & CATHY CLARET/ PHILIPPE BILLE/ RICHARD MEADE/ PIERLUIGI VANOZZI/ MARK PAWSON/ CRAG HILL & LAURIE SCHNEIDER/ KARL SCHMIEDER/ ROSEMARY'S BABY/ CHUCK STAKE/ STILETTO/ MARK BLOCH/ KATE & ALEX HIRKA... I AM SURE THAT I HAVE FORGOTTEN A FEW, WELL, THIS IS MY DECENTRALIZED CONGRESS IN PROGRESS.
- V.B.:IF YOU THINK THAT MEETINGS ARE STERILE, WHAT ARE THE PRACTICAL RESULTS THAT ARE MISSING ?
- B.V.:THERE HAVE BEEN PROPOSALS FOR A TRULY INTERNATIONAL AND COOPERATIVE MA-MAGAZINE, FOR INSTANCE OR DATA-BANKS TO HELP CIRCULATION OF INFORMATION, BUT TO NO EFFECT. THE PROBLEM IS THAT WHILE MANY MAIL-ARTISTS ARE WILLING TO RISK SOME MONEY AND ENERGY IN A PERSONAL PROJECT, IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO POOL FORCES FOR A COLLECTIVE PROJECT. DIFFICULTIES SEEM TO BE INSURMOUNTABLE, BUT IT'S NOT REALLY LIKE THAT WITH A LITTLE SINCERE GOOD WILL. TO GIVE YOU AN EXAMPLE, I OFFER YOU TO START RIGHT NOW A HISTORY OPEN LIBRARY: IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PHOTOCOPIES OF RARE ARTICLES OR ESSAYS ABOUT MA, JUST SEND ME A LIST OF THE ARTICLES IN YOUR POSSESSION AND I WILL SEND YOU A LIST OF THE MATERIAL IN MY ARCHIVE, SO WE CAN ARRANGE AN EXCHANGE (OR I WILL SEND THE ARTICLES AND YOU WILL COVER MY EXPENSE).THIS LIBRARY CAN PROVIDE USEFUL AND HARD-TO-GET INFORMATION AT MINIMUM COST, IT'S A SERVICE FOR THE MA-COMMUNITY AND IT ONLY TOOK ME FIVE MINUTES TO

DEVISE THE SCHEME (IT'S NOT A JOKE): EFFECTIVE FROM NOW... THERE ARE INFINITE SIMILAR PROJECTS THAT COULD BE EASILY PERFECTED IN A MEETING, IF PEOPLE FORGETS ABOUT DOING ANOTHER ROUND OF PERFORMANCES AND GOSSIPS: INTERNATIONAL TREASURE HUNTS, SPERM BANKS, MASS WEDDINGS, FEATURE MOVIES, HOLIDAY CAMPS...

- V.B.:DO YOU BELIEVE THAT MA CAN CHANGE THE (ART)WORLD ?
- B.V.:NOBODY IS SO NAIF ANYMORE. MA WILL BE REGARDED BY ART HISTORIENS AS A FRINGE MOVEMENT, JUST LIKE VISUAL POETRY OR FLUXUS, THEY WILL TOTALLY MISS THE POINT. ON THE OTHER HAND, EVEN VERY SERIOUS NETWORKING EXPERIMENTS (LIKE THE ANNUAL MEETINGS IN ERICE OF LEADING SCIENTISTS OF ALL THE DIFFERENT NATIONS TO DISCUSS OF NUCLEAR POWER AND WORLD PEACE) OR FLAMBOYANT INTERNATIONAL VENTURES LIKE THE LIVE AID CONCERT CLEARLY SHOWED THE LIMITS OF SUCH ACTIONS. IT'S THE OLD QUESTION, YOU CAN'T HAVE A NEW AND BETTER MAN IN THE SAME VIOLENT SOCIETY. BUT YOU TRY TO CHANGE YOURSELF ANYWAY.

POSTSCRIPT - One Year Later.

I wrote the preceding auto-interview for issue 55 of my mail art magazine Arte Postale!. It was intended as my contribution to the "Decentralized Worldwide MA Congress" project: a bit disenchanted and sour, but also calling for new practical actions, to leave the tunnel of invite/hurried contributions/catalogues that MA today seems to run through with blinkers on. I am happy to add here as a foot-note that some of the actions I foreshadowed in that short text are now becoming reality. Together with Volker Hamann (W.Germany) and CrackerJack Kid (USA) I am now working on the first issue of a truly international magazine about "Networking theories and Postal Art", with texts from the different corners of Networkland, completely self-published through collective effort. The magazine is still without a name, and the long-distance editorial work surely is a challenging and laboursome task. Anyway, we hope that the "creature" will materialize sometimes in 1988, and if you are active in the network you will notice it when it finally hits the postmen's bags. I was also pleased to learn that my extemporary hint of a possible "Open Library of MA History" inspired John Held Jr., long-time correspondent from Texas, to organize a project that will function as data-bank of everything that has been published about MA till today. "An Annotated Bibliography of Mail Art" functions like a MA show, but participants are asked to send copies of articles they have written on MA, or articles in which they are mentioned. Full with correct bibliographical data (send to John Held Jr., Fine Arts Division, Dallas Public Library,1515 Young St., Dallas TX 75201 USA - deadline March 1, 1988). There are many other imaginative and never-heard-of ideas hanging there in thin air: so just grab yours & shake some action!

Arte Postale! magazine never dissa, so if you want details about latest issues and projects just write to Vittore Baroni, Via Raffaelli 2, 55042 Forte dei Marmi, Italy.

Officiel

DECENTRALIZED WORLDWIDE MAIL-ART CONGRESS



FLYER