

MAIL ART - MY DREAM OF FREEDOM AND LOVE

by Henning Mittendorf

If one wants to foresee the shape of "super-mankind" by means of science, one will not find it in a "super-brain" but in a "super-socialized" group.
Teilhard de Chardin

A long time ago I read about an anthropologist who studied some North American Indians of quite a primitive stage. From time to time they would get around in a circle, everybody, and just talk and talk, as equals. They made no decisions or anything and at some point they just stopped. Then everybody seemed to know what to do.
David Bohm

Mail artists have the - one could say "oecological" - vision that all things are parts of a whole, called cosmos or world. All parts in their turn have a dialogical character that is they have an inviting, asking, answering, signaling quality. And because of their immanent insatiable longing for the you, the other, the strange, called love, they are combined by lively relations in form of dialogues and interactions to each other: men, women, children and all the other creatures; all creatures are combined with each other forming the active whole, totality. They all are participating, i.e. communicating and interacting, thus perpetually changing themselves, living.

Within the participation-process men are not determined at all. They are in a certain extend free for their contributions to the big process of participation.

In the mail art's net of participation and in its expressions - works, actions etc., mostly visual, verbal or acoustic signs and transmitted by mail or internet - one can find the reflected images of man's exclusive one-sided and narrow-minded referring to ratio and violence more and more pushing away the language that fits for man and includes love as a substantial part. The adoration of ratio and violence is culminating in man's endless and various catastrophes' productions, in his growing inability in solving the self-made existential problems of mankind, nature and world, in the barbarous and bloody aims and methods of his controlling the behaviour of his fellow-creatures, including the pacifying of man's mind and ending in the perversity of mankind enjoying through the massmedia, especially through television, the coming to an end of its own automatical accelerating self-destruction.

To stop this development the mail artists interfere for and express life within their participation's process. It becomes one of the opposite and defying power of man's spirit to force open the one-sided adoration of ratio and ego by nearly the whole mankind. As the danger of destruction has grown in the meantime to a global, a total dimension, the mail artists try to overcome the spatial and temporal locations of the "oecological" participation of ideas, especially in art-making, by combining the individual points of creative art through individual and at every time solvable quasi barter's relations to a global unit, yet an eternal net of all the participating mail artists, to the immensely growing participation's process of mail art, of mail art.

In front of the intricate world the mail artists don't want to be anymore separated in thinking and feeling when living. They strive to come to a clear-sighted feeling, to a clear-feeling thinking to make out sense with all their qualities and possibilities.

They want to reconcile the irrational and rational, the trespass and the prohibition, the chaos and the order, the self and the nothingness. The mail artists search for the wholesome natural language fitting for the whole and its parts, including man, as supplement to the language of ratio, of exact knowledge. They try to find it by seeing, hearing, dreaming, revaluing, by fancy, by thinking with imagination and intuition, by searching to participate in the whole.

The mail artists's love aims at the melting into one another with the chosen beloved object, his love intends to bring the object in its essence and existence into his self, finding at the same time the way of correspondence between different things within an unstable difficult balance full of presence, happiness and fullness. While living this procedure is repeated and the mail-artists are changing and evolving themselves, trying to realize the infinite task of love in a final man, and by growing experience and feeling for life's values they get conviction about their place in the world, get their identity.

The mail artists therefore attempt to combine the common and the different, the similar and the unlike, the fragments to the whole, the opposite to the unity, the resisting to the harmony, the subject to the object and the separate to identity to become at the same time ego and you, time and eternity, this and that, unity and totality, fulness and substance. With their structures of an irregular aesthetics they want to break open the colloquial language, including traditional art, both once full of meanings like life, but nowadays mutilated by analytical reduction, to refer to the whole. They oppose the jerking of human inner life against the happy-making, but wretched lie, against the artificial honey of polished functionalism and handsome articles of commerce, against art as a handsome article of commerce. And they do all this in anti-hierarchical that is democratic dialogues independent of status and style of the participants who don't want to determine, to decide, to regulate the process of participation's art. They only like to contribute their individual impulses to initiate new aspects in the process, changes, evolution with regard to the whole and its parts. Driven by their love the mail artists - always keeping their individualities - dip into the process of participation of mail art, into the process of participation to appease their insatiable love in somewhat bigger and greater, in art and at the same time in life, knowing and not knowing where the way will lead. The way becomes the aim.

Besides the existential dangers in the world, the mail artists start recognizing and experiencing signs of growing solidarity in the world, too, its other face. It is illuminated by participation and its expressions.

The mail artists notice that they work together with other similar movements, but they with artistic-aesthetic expressions, to overcome the one-sidedness of man's believing in ratio culminating in his various attempts of final and definite destruction of all nature and life in a chain, respectively net, of tradition for life in all its richness and mystery, a net to preserve the creating power of life including the one of mankind.

It doesn't matter if this is an utopian scheme or not. Mail art itself is a part of life, and therefore it stands for the never ending struggle for liberation of the individual from outer and inner pressures and misunderstandings. In mail art life in form of participation and its - mostly artistic-aesthetic - expressions, in the changing and the evolution, including the one to give birth to identity, is only obliged to freedom for love. It is thus turned against stupidity in the form of the dissolving and the stiffness trying to control in bloody one-sidedness all the world.

Mail art in so far is much more than established, traditional art. It is an attempt to create a "super-socialized" group, trying to bring more friendship, individualism, sensibility, freedom, love, hope, confidence, tolerance, pluralism, democracy, social balance, peace, harmony and much more into the world and into every man (1985/2000).

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HeMi/P.F. 500365/D-60393 Frankfurt am Main/Germany