The Invention of the unknown demands new forms. —Arthur Rimbaud

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In the poem this very lighted room is dark, and the dark alight with love’s intentions. It is striving to come into existence... a poetry of all poetries, grand collage, I name It, having only the immediate event of words to speak for it. In the room we’re aware or unaware, are the event of ourselves in It.” — Robert Duncan

Viz. Inter-Arts publishes work that explores the relationship between the arts. In the spirit of inter-arts communities ranging from the Dadaists through the New York School, Black Mountain College, Poet’s Theater, New Narrative writers and others, Viz. Inter-Arts publishes trans-genre work and encourages the transgression of boundaries between genres. Viz. means “namely” or “that is.” Aside from resonating with the word “visual,” the title seeks to establish a correspondence between genres through collaboration, juxtaposition, and hybridization. For example, poetry, viz., painting. As Jerome Rothenberg has written about contemporary practices, “the arts themselves begin to merge and lose their old distinctions. The action hereafter is ‘between’ and ‘among,’ the forms hybrid and vigorous and pushing always toward an actual and new completeness.”

**Introduction**

Painting and poetry, as Jerome Rothenberg has written about contemporary practices, “the arts themselves begin to merge and lose their old distinctions. The action hereafter is ‘between’ and ‘among,’ the forms hybrid and vigorous and pushing always toward an actual and new completeness.”

**Broadsides included.** You will find broadsides—digitally reproduced “art posters” combining the work of writers and artists—in an envelope attached to the back cover. Inter-arts work should be liberated and given space to breathe outside the confines of the book. In each envelope, there will be a unique selection of broadsides—kind of like baseball cards, only bigger—by artists and writers such as George Hitchcock; Kenneth Patchen; Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Momo; Joe Brainard and Ron Padgett; Jerome Rothenberg and Nancy Tobin; and Clarence Major. We hope you collect them all.

The theme of the book is EVENT. We sought submissions that elaborate on this theme in either transparent or unexpected ways, or that document, muse on, or are events themselves. The treatment of this theme was entirely up to the artists and writers. We wanted everyone to make an event of it.

Viz. Inter-Arts was inspired by a University of California, Santa Cruz event series I organize entitled “Trans-Genre: Poetry and the Inter-Arts” supported by the Porter College Hitchcock Poetry Fund. The first “Trans-Genre” event included Poet’s Theater, a panel on New Narrative, films, live music, and the first-ever college web cast “Transcontinental Poetry Reading” honoring Kenneth Koch. From this event, we include readings by David Antin, Anselm Hollo, Anne Waldman, Ron Padgett, and Andrei Codrescu, as well as Bay Area artists and thinkers prospecting at the edge of genre territories, including a Poet’s Theater production by Kevin Killian and a New Narrative writers’ panel. We also present material from another UCSC event from April 2004: “Is Poetry enough? Poetry in a Time of Crisis,” an event that explores what Juliana Spahr has called the special role of poetry in times of crisis, such as the crises evoked by the so-called “war on terror” and the next wave of the “culture war” against queers.

More than an archive of individual events, Viz. Inter-Arts: EVENT is a print publication that seeks to be an event. Though you will find documentation of wonderful inter-arts events, such as The Poetry Center’s landmark 2005 “Poetry and Its Arts” event, there are many other “galleries” to explore, including the following: EVENT — a collection of Fluxus Event Scores and descriptive essays; Painters and Poets includes the work of poet-painter George Hitchcock and collaborations by Jerome Rothenberg and Nancy Tobin; New York School Collaborations features work by New York School poets Ron Padgett, Bill Berkson, Anne Waldman, Ted Berrigan, and Alice Notley and visual artists, Joe Brainard and George Schneeman; Screen: A Multiplex gathers collaborations between poets and filmmakers, an excerpt from Situationist Guy Debord’s groundbreaking film, The Society as Spectacle, and many other filmic forms, including an introduction to “Neo-Benshi.” An energetic mix of cinema and theater innovated by Bay Area writers, Neo-Benshi draws on the revered art of Japanese Benshi: silent film narration. There are other small galleries, including writers and artists from Bolinas, CA.; collaborations between the visual artist, Jess, and the poet, Robert Duncan; and a gathering of young writers and inter-artists. Throughout, you will find inter-arts galleries that mix up the forms and present a wide range of new work and some older pieces by established and emerging writers, artists, and inter-artists.

While organizing a lot of inter-arts events, I’ve been thinking about the concept of event and how an event—which is, by definition, ephemeral and speech-based—could occur in printed language. How can writing be an event beyond a mere representation of it? The Situationists International were perhaps the most eloquent in speaking of events and situations. Henri Lefebvre, a Situationist, wrote: “Events belie forecasts... they upset calculations... Movement flares up where it was least expected; it completely changes the situation... Events pull thinkers out of their comfortable seats and plunge them headlong into a wave of contradictions.”

Much artistic work about political events faithfully represent the event without shifting our usual repertoire of feelings about a crisis as obviously horrific as 9/11 or the US invasion of Iraq. Sometimes writing that attempts to “make sense” of catastrophe can blunt the edge of the events’ actual incomprehensibility. When language plunges us back into the mess or unintelligibility of actual events, the impulse should be to question the calm language of political rationalization. Some language, some poetry, can be a “preemptive strike” on the real terrorism of a rational façade and expose the distance between comforting words and uncomfortable reality.

Through juxtaposition, we hope to create a conversation between genres, themes, and design that conjures the event of their production through the event of reading and looking; as you walk through the inter-connected galleries, taking in the installations and live performances throughout the hallways and rooms of these pages, we hope you will forge new paths between these spaces and become the event of yourself walking through them.

Roxanne Power Hamilton
Founder and Editor, Viz. Inter-Arts