

III. Commonpress - Retrospective : 1977 -
1984

III.1. What is Commonpress? (about common-
press) (CP)

CP is not a "common" art-magazine. It is a special one, because it is "common". Created, produced and distributed by and to its participants each edition has a different editor.

This almost seven years young artists-magazine has its own origin and evolution. The father and motor of CP is the Polish artist Pawel Petasz, who started this new art-medium, this remarkable art-forum and art-form in December 1977 (publication of the first edition). The short history of the magazine is closely related to the fast development of Mail-Art as a global movement. As the first threads of the Mail-Art-Web, CP started small.

But this international small-press magazine with only 17 participants in the first edition had a solid concept. One can read

in the first issues the participating rules which e.g. "obliged" every contributor to print and distribute an edition once. This sounds severe, but is was a democratic principle, necessary for the survival of the alternative magazine and not insuperable to fix with only a decade of participating artists.

The succession of the different editions passed off quickly: almost sixty planned editions in seven years. But personal and social complications sometimes hampered the publications. Some artists with personal problems could not edit the planned issue yet. Besides there was (and is) the enormous growth of the number of contributors to each edition which increases the problems of financing and sponsorship.

On the other hand the sinister political climate in Poland in 1981 (with military censorship of the mail) obliged Pawel Petasz to transfer the coordination of CP to Gerald X. Jupiter-Larsen in Canada. And today he is still doing so. His address for information and assignment (if you

wish to do an issue) is: P.O. BOX 48 - 184, Vancouver, BC V7X 1N8 Canada. The general prescription sounds: "Anything can be a CP. Print no less than 200 copies (depending on the number of contributors), give a free copy to all the participants, use all of the contributions you get, keep in mind printing and mailing costs when setting size limits for contributions, name it CP N°... and indicate a theme". In the introduction of Pawel Petasz, specially written for this edition, he describes more precisely the regulations to do a CP-edition

Anyway, each contributor or reader is "encouraged" to organize a future edition. But doing so means also assuming the responsibility of the subject or theme, size, deadline, reproduction process and distribution. It is a privilege for every mail-artist to do so.

JUPITTER-LARSEN HAD ABSOLUTELY
~~NOTHING~~ TO DO WITH THIS . X