

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

“A Book About Death” Global Art Project Returns to New York 10 Years After

August 15, 2019 East Islip, NY – “The 10th Anniversary Edition of Ray Johnson's A Book About Death - The Last Waltz,” an International Mail Art Exhibition will be at the Islip Art Museum in East Islip, NY, from September 14 through November 2, 2019.

Artists' Reception Saturday, September 14 at 4 - 9 pm.

Curator's Talk at the Museum: Tea and Birthday Cake on Ray Johnson's Birthday at 3 pm, Wednesday, October 16.

The 10 Year Anniversary Edition of A Book About Death – The Last Waltz is part of an international mail art project that brings international artists together in the continuing exploration of the single most unifying human experience that we all share – death. This “edition” celebrates the 10 Year Anniversary of the original show in NYC and the birth of the ABAD Project.

SEE NEW WORK BY RAY JOHNSON

The show will feature a gallery full of never-before-seen work by Ray Johnson, the Father of Mail Art, from the private collection of Johnson's contemporary and friend, Mark Bloch.

LEARN THE GLOBAL HISTORY

The main hall will provide a living history of the ABAD Project and include information about the life and work of Ray Johnson alongside the story of Matthew Rose's original show and its many iterations all over the world. An 11 1/2 foot timeline will trace all 29 shows, their curators and include curators' notes.

MAKE IT YOUR OWN

More than 250 original pieces created for this show came from 30 different countries including Sweden, Japan, Malta, Luxembourg and Turkey. Visitors will be encouraged to collect one of every card and take them home.

BE PART OF THE MAIL ART MOVEMENT

Stop by the Mail Art Guestbook Station where visitors will be asked to comment on specially designed commemorative postcards. The Museum will mail one to every ABAD contributing artist after the show.

WALTZ IN THE RESTORED GOLD COAST BALLROOM

Events for the reception include performances from Fluxus and Dada artists Honey Millmann, Nadine Boulter, Mark Bloch, Mary Campbell, Betty Esperanza, and Soho poet Steve Dalachinsky. Waltz music will be performed by the Long Island Baroque Ensemble, accompanied by professional ballroom dancers. Visitors will be encouraged to take a spin around the grand ballroom at the museum.

WE'RE GOING TO PARIS!

A set of the 10th Anniversary Exhibition has already been requested by the Musée de la Poste in Paris, France for their permanent collection.

A BOOK ABOUT DEATH: A SHORT HISTORY

The first “A Book About Death” was created in 1963 by Ray Johnson, American conceptual artist and inventor of Correspondence Art. He was a seminal figure in the history of Neo-Dada and early Pop art. He was described as “New York's most famous unknown artist.” Ray Johnson mailed his original unbound “A Book About Death” to his “New York Correspondence School students” which included pages in his idiosyncratic style that were funny, sad and ironic one-page essays on death.

In January 1995, Ray Johnson launched himself from the Sag Harbor Bridge into the icy waters below and drowned — an apparent suicide. For an artist who spent his life communicating seemingly non-stop, his death left a mysteriously silent wake.

The A Book About Death project began as an underground global art show in September 2009 at the Emily Harvey Foundation Gallery in NYC. It was conceived by Paris-based American artist Matthew Rose as an open, unbound book on the subject of death. Borrowing the name “A Book About Death” from Ray Johnson, Rose paid homage to the founder of Mail Art while offering artists the opportunity to explore the theme of death through postcard-sized works in editions of 500. Visitors collected one of every card, making their own personal editions.

The set of cards from the 2009 show is in the Permanent Collections of the MoMA New York and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California. It includes work from 487 artists, some as well known as Yoko Ono and some as obscure as Ben Brown, a 10 year old from Helena, Montana. The cards, of every kind of design imaginable, approach this universal subject from every point of view – personal, metaphysical, political, conceptual and abstract.

See also:

[ABAD 10th Anniversary Exhibition Website](#)

[ABAD 2019 at the Islip Art Museum](#)

[The ABAD Archive Site / 2009](#)

CURATOR BIO

LuAnn T. Palazzo is a mixed media artist, independent curator and award-winning designer living on Long Island, NY. She has been a part of the A Book About Death Project since the original Soho exhibition in 2009. Her design and photography has been shown all over the world, as far away as Australia and as close to home as Islip, LI. Her work is in the Permanent Collections of the MoMA New York, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, California, the Museu Brasileiro da Escultura, Brazil and the International Space Station Gallery.

In November 2010 with Joan Harrison, LuAnn Palazzo co-curated the highly acclaimed "Ray Johnson and A Book About Death" exhibition at C.W. Post/LIU in Brookville, NY. This groundbreaking show put the entire movement into its historical context and featured Ray Johnson's original “A Book About Death” for the first time anywhere. It was favorably reviewed in Newsday. [Ray Johnson and ABAD 2010 Website](#)

In 2011, the artist and curator brought a different slant to the project with “ABAD: Ties That Bind” at the Second Avenue Firehouse Gallery in Bay Shore, NY. This exhibition celebrated the ties that bind all living things universally through death, as well as the creative ties that literally reach around the world to bind together thousands of international artists through the ABAD Project.

The exhibition took new work from worldwide artists in the form of book pages like Ray Johnson originally created in 1963 and bound them into handmade volumes, providing an omega to the alpha of the unbound book theme.

This exhibition also featured the performance of New Orleans Second Line Funeral Jazz with The Joe Saylor Brass Band. (Joe spends his time these days as drummer for Stay Human on CBS's Colbert Show.) The show was enthusiastically reviewed in the NY Times. [ABAD The Ties That Bind Website](#)

**For more information, images, interviews:
Contact LuAnn Palazzo at DesignDivaNY@gmail.com**

The Islip Art Museum: 631 224-5420

Museum hours are Tuesday through Friday 10am - 4pm. Saturday 12pm - 4pm. Closed Sunday and Monday.

For all exhibition information: <https://abad2019.blogspot.com/p/exhibition-events-update.html>

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