

# ARTS & IDEAS

## ART

### A NEW CALENDAR

Washington Women Printmakers  
Reviewed by Clarissa K. Wittenberg

A BRIGHT, new, rather romantic calendar has appeared, providing an interesting way to mark the coming months. Thirteen women have contributed their work resulting in a polished and professional product. All the designs are interesting; however the green and yellow growing plants for February by Carole Sue Lebbin and H. Terry Braunstein's apron and hands for April stood out. The calendar is large, silkscreened with eight colors and hung with a red leather thong. It costs \$15.00. Concepts from the *I Ching*, the ancient Chinese "Book of Changes," were used to bind the work together. Although beautiful and poetic, the mystic phrases of *I Ching* seem far removed from the lives of most contemporary women and perhaps a stronger work would have been achieved without this theme. It tends to compete with the art work too strongly at times.

The artists involved are: Bonnie Holland Arlen, Carole Sue Lebbin, Carol Duffy (editor), H. Terry Braunstein, Ann Zahn, Marie Ringwald, Phylliss Hoffman, Pat Golden, Annette Polan, Judy Byron, Patricia Allot Silbert, Marianne La Roche, and Chris Zimmerman. The calendar can be purchased at Talking of Michelangelo, the Community Bookshop, the Corcoran, the Gallery in Reston, Discount Books and Records and many other places.

Last year this group had a hand done calendar in an edition of 50 which sold out quickly. This year an edition of 500 was silkscreened commercially and the problems of a larger business operation undertaken. Each artist made her own decisions about design; there was no jury. Carol Duffy supervised the printing, a very difficult task. Despite the difficulties of producing 12 original prints on a large scale, the group is pleased and ambitious for the future. The Washington Women Printmakers developed out of the National Conference for Women in the Visual Arts, a now historic conference held at the Corcoran in April 1972. From discussion on the position of women in the arts and concern about their disadvantages has come concrete and positive action. This group of printmakers has had several group shows and is now planning others. A group show was held in December at Talking of Michelangelo and their work can usually be seen there. A show is planned for the Jewish Community Center in Rockville next June. They plan to hold studio demonstrations, which will be open to the public. Growing in size, they welcome all women working in any form of printing, such as lithography, wood blocks and silk screen.

For more information about this group, its activities, its shows and membership, contact Carol Duffy, Washington Women Printmakers, 6244 Utah Ave., NW.



## ONE SHOT DEAL

PHOTO by George Kinal. To submit photos for this space, send to DC Gazette, 109 8th St. NE, DC 20002 by the third Tuesday of the month. If you want photos returned, enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope.

## MEDIA

### NEW TIMES

Reviewed by Richard King

*New Times* is an attractively put-together bi-monthly with plenty of money and advertising. Its staff includes some of the "new journalism's" best and brightest — David Halberstam, Larry King, Mike Royko and Nicholas Von Hoffman among others — and would make any editor drool with envy. Initially one hoped that *New Times* would combine the immediacy of the weekly publications with the vitality and depth of, say, *Harpers* before Willie Morris was fired as editor. But if the first several issues are indicative, this is not to be so. For, despite all the luminaries and advance build-up, there is less than meets the eye to *New Times*.

So far *New Times* has displayed no compelling reason for its existence. It lacks even the tendentious specificity of *Time* or *Newsweek* and its writers lack the space to develop a story with any complexity or texture. As a result *New Times* has tended to go in for rather short, flashy "human interest" stories from young reporters or run what seems to be throw-away copy from its stars, which gives every indication of having been done in their sleep (or in their cups). For instance, a profile of Elliot Richardson failed to even mention the conflict between his and General Haig's account of events leading up to the "Saturday Night Massacre." Surely a knowledgeable and sceptical journalist should have nosed this story out rather than giving us another warm-up for some future version of Richardson's profile in courage. In short there is a certain slothful ambiance to the magazine.

The general tone of *New Times* reveals several of the new journalism's more irritating traits. The cult of personalities abounds to the neglect of articles on events, issues or ideas. The magazine includes heavy dosages of populist chic by which anyone is

inherently fascinating to write about as long as he or she can be condescended to. (Samples include a talk with Agnew's favorite restaurateur, the agonies of a leading dairy farmer who must sell his beloved stock, and a totally useless interview with Judge Julius Hoffman.) Most of the writers assume that they are as engrossing as their subjects and the combination of condescension and self-indulgence is deadly. *New Times* reached a distinct low when its November 2 cover story profiled the sartorial exploits of the clothes horse of the NFL, Frenchy Fuqua; it was neither news nor fit to print.

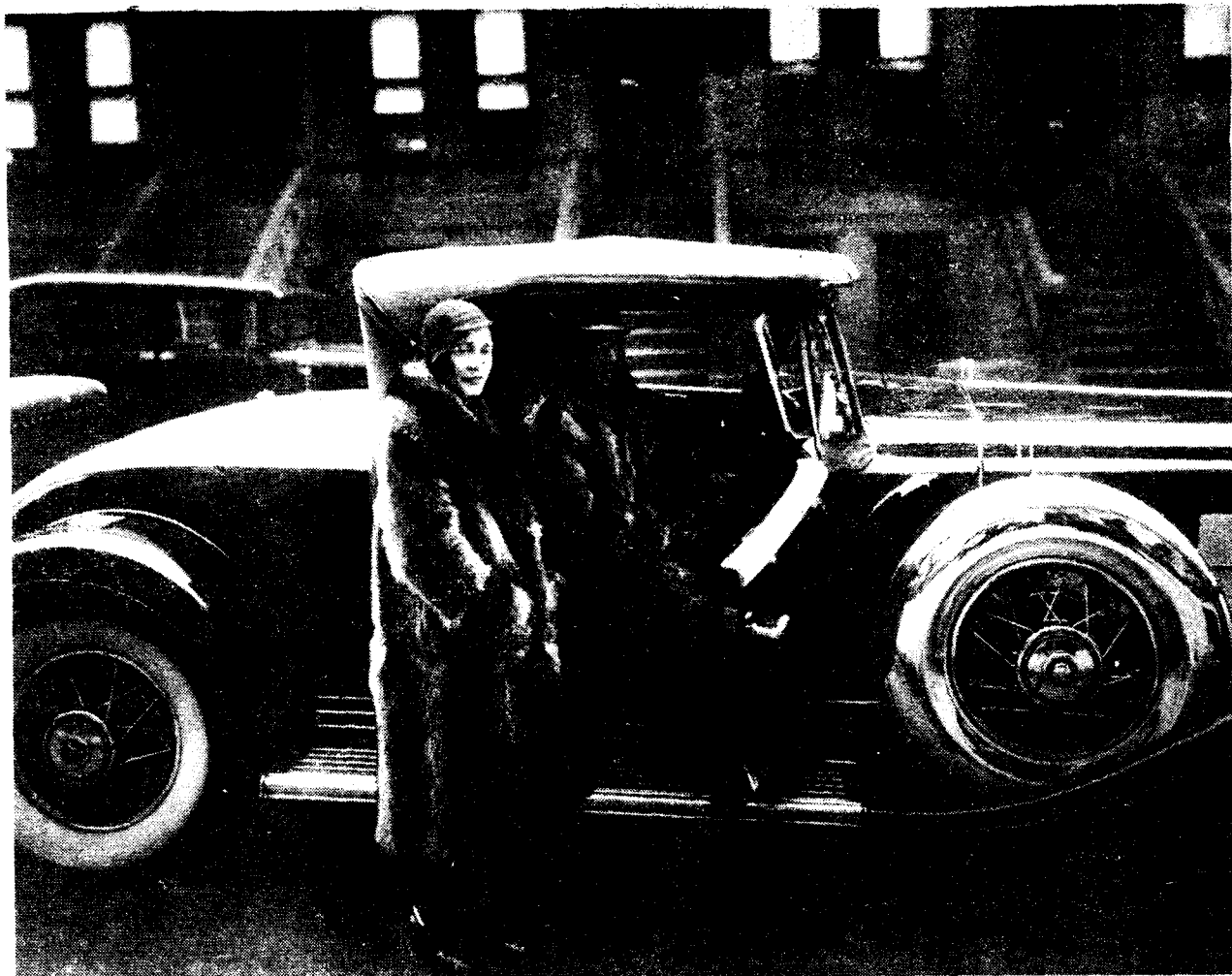
An excessive number of pages in each issue is devoted to short gossip items which fail to even titillate; non-revelatory consumer and political info which fails to inform; and capsule book, movie and record reviews which are repeated from issue to issue a la *New Yorker*. The longer book and movie reviews are adequate to good, but hardly are the stuff from which superior magazines are made. One suspects that the staff includes several aging hippies since apparently the word hasn't gotten around that rock music is dead. As a result we have read feature length stories on Jobriah, the "Ash Burns" and Chip Taylor, a veritable trinity of non-starters.

There is indeed a serious question as to whether *New Times* is worth printing or reading. There have been some good articles, but those few have suffered from the dross on either side. The weekly magazines and better daily papers do the reporting job better and *Harpers* and *Atlantic*, now all rouged up and "with-it," do the essay length stories better (which doesn't say a whole lot.)

In his first issue publisher George Hirsh promised to "unleash hard working, honest reporters and ask them to bring back the truth." Apparently they can't find the way home or have settled down under some tree to take a snooze.







Photos this page by James Van DerZee

one couple of the Jazz Age in raccoon coats preparing for a ride in their gleaming, long and very fancy convertible. Children in the streets, men playing dice were all his subjects.

Van DerZee was the official photographer of Marcus Garvey, the head of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, Garvey Militia, Black Cross Ship Line and leader of many who believed in a global black organization. He went to the homes of proud Garveyite families and caught them in formal poses. Van DerZee photographed the literary, social and financial elite of his time as well. His pictures of poets Countee Cullen and Langston Hughes, and James Weldon Johnson are used over and over again.

Even more interesting than his political and social pictures, however, are those of his women. "Women...women...what can I say...a lot of beauty..." and his women are beautiful. He insisted on them looking better than their best, retouching if necessary to achieve a photograph that looked like the print in his mind. They are all seen at their best moment, wearing best dresses, (often direct from Paris), eyes aglow. There is an often reproduced picture of his wife Kate and his daughter Rachel looking calmly at the camera from a beautiful glade. Kate carries a huge bouquet of leaves. They are beautifully dressed: Kate in a blazer, Rachel in a beautiful embroidered coat, a lovely round child. It is unforgettable. And there are pictures of performers, like Ethel Waters and the legendary Florence Mills, whose death caused crowds in Harlem to weep and release black birds.

Van DerZee's work came to national attention when Reginald McGhee, himself a pho-

## CAMERA

JAMES VAN DERZEE:  
A Unique Photographic Vision  
Reviewed by Clarissa K. Wittenberg

JAMES Van DerZee is black, 87 years old and lives in Harlem. A photographer in New York for the better part of this century, he has photographed almost everything of interest. Relatively unknown until he was invited to be a major contributor to the controversial and unprecedented show Harlem on My Mind, presented by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, he is now becoming recognized as the dean of black photographers.

Mr. Van DerZee was born in 1886 in Lenox, Mass. His mother and father had moved there after serving as maid and butler to General Ulysses S. Grant. He grew up in a genteel family, one that read in paneled libraries, played musical instruments and encouraged artistic pursuits. At the age of 12, he saw an advertisement offering a camera for selling 20 packs of sachet. This he did and then ran back and forth to the post office in anticipation. Finally three packages arrived. One held a camera, another developer and other chemicals, and still another six 2 1/2 x 2 1/2 inch glass plates. He memorized the directions and began what was to be a highly unusual career. He photographed everyone. As

a young man he took pictures of many wealthy families, the Vanderbilts, the Morgans, the Westinghouses and others. He often did not charge, explaining later that he was "ashamed to," not knowing that some people earned a living this way. Taking pictures was his passion, with every new camera, he "took pictures of everything in sight."

Despite a relatively gentle beginning, his life was not easy. He worked in a number of jobs, being unreasonably dismissed from some, and tried a variety of things. He played violin and piano professionally for awhile and did photography part time. He moved to New York in 1906. The city was filled with wooden buildings and cobble streets. Many blacks lived on the lower East Side, although there was an almost "infectious mood among blacks to buy real estate" and Harlem was developing. He met and married Kate, his first wife. They had two children, Rachel and Emile. He moved to Phoebus, Virginia and worked in a hotel. During this period he photographed men who worked in Virginia, schools (Whittier School in particular) and the way of life.

He returned to New York in 1909 and worked as a photographer's assistant in a Newark department store. Finally in 1914 he opened the first of several studios in New York: "My first real customers were the churches." He photographed both the senior and junior Adam Clayton Powell. Daddy Grace and Father Divine were often subjects. He took many pictures of black Jewish synagogues, whose members believed themselves to be descendants of true Ethiopian Jews. All the respectable groups posed in neat lines, the black baseball clubs, the fraternal orders, the social clubs and even those having tea at fashionable hair salons. He photographed



tographer, was organizing Harlem on My Mind. While walking down a street in Harlem he passed the GGG studios and went inside. Impressed by the artist and his work he selected photographs for the exhibition. Since that time many people have seen Mr. Van DerZee's work and an institute has been formed to foster his work as well as that of other black photographers. A new book, James Van DerZee, published by Morgan and Morgan, will

