



CREATIVITY AND CHANGE: IKON, THE SECOND SERIES

Change is contingent on continual re-examination, re-evaluation, awareness... It is our hope that IKON will help contribute to that growth which is so necessary to comprehend and experience ever more fully the dialogue/ dialectic/ meeting/ struggle/ act of love by which we gather in and alter our world. -IKON, Second Series #1 Editorial (Fall/Winter 1982-83)

After months of work and preparation, the launch of the second series of IKON was actually about to happen. I was busy gathering the names of the readers still missing as the last of the overflow crowd streamed into the auditorium from the large waiting area at the NYU Law School—the auditorium had been made available to us thanks to co-sponsorship by NYU Law Women. I was simultaneously excited, apprehensive, delighted.

Many of the first issue contributors to the magazine, representative of the diversity that IKON represented, were gathered in the front two rows of the auditorium. Among them were Audre Lorde and Hettie Jones, Jewelle Gomez (whose first short story appeared in the issue), Lois Elaine Griffith (one of the founders of the Nuyorican poets café), Akua Lezli Hope, Patricia Jones, Blanche Wiesen Cook, (the noted feminist historian who would write the definitive three volume biography of Eleanor Roosevelt), Michelle Cliff, Irene Klepfisz and Jan Clausen.

Finally everyone was seated. Everything was in place. It was October 16, 1982, and the second series of IKON magazine was about to be reborn as a feminist magazine focusing on work by women.



The Second Series of IKON was an organic extension of the original affirmation of IKON from the first series:

It is for this purpose that IKON has been founded... so there can be a place where... information can serve as an impetus to action, not divorced from, but irrevocably part of our involvement in this world... IKON #1 (1967)

But why a Second Series, and why the name IKON? To answer that question it is necessary to look at the origin of the first series of IKON, which was published from 1967 through 1969, and numbered seven issues in all.

In 1966, Arthur Sainer, a playwright and theater critic for the Village Voice, and his friend, Thomas Muth, who had promised him \$1500 for seed money, got together with Nancy Colin, an artist, and myself at our apartment in the East Village to discuss putting out a new magazine. Little did I know at the time that my

comfortable rent controlled floor-through, in an old tenement building constructed in 1908, would soon be taken over by this new venture. Our front room would be devoted to graphics, complete with a drawing table and light box; the middle room, where I had my desk and typewriter, would be the editorial room and *de facto* business office, a small side second bedroom would soon house a ten foot antique wooden copy camera complete with polished brass fittings (we had to tear down a wall and two closets) to make our own Photostats and photographic silkscreens. What was left over, which wasn't much, was where we would now live.

We started work on the new IKON in 1966, years before computer typesetting, so I did all the typesetting myself on an IBM Composer—which would justify copy if you typed it twice—located at a firm owned by Virginia Admiral, an abstract expressionism painter, who was quite radical and also incidentally the then unknown Robert DeNiro's mother. I was originally to be the book and theater critic and Nancy was to design the first issue—it was her idea to integrate graphics and words, one of the hallmarks of IKON. After a year of meetings with no actual magazine, I finally said that I would make sure the magazine came out, but I had to be the editor. They agreed, and IKON was born.

After many abortive attempts at names for the new magazine like *East of the Sun, West of the Moon!!* we decided on IKON (the K because Nancy felt it worked into graphic design better). For us the word IKON symbolized synthesis—words and pictures, art and politics, creativity and change, the separate parts fused as one into an organic unity in which all the parts could be perceived simultaneously, the way you perceive a picture. We believed there was no conflict between theory and art,

art and action, that “there was no place for the middleman,” that artists were perfectly capable of understanding and writing about their own work—anyone who has ever read the letters of Van Gogh, the numerous artists’ and writers’ manifestos, the Blue Rider edited by Kandinsky, one could go on endlessly, should have understood that. But the Fifties and Sixties, according to Academia, was the age of the critic, not the artist, of analysis, not originality—sound uncomfortably reminiscent of contemporary postmodernist theory?

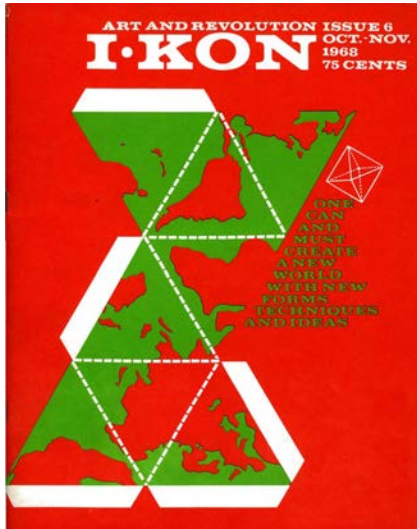
As the first series of IKON progressed, so did its political content, centered squarely in the epic events, both political and cultural, of the Sixties. The publication date of Issue One, Series One was February, 1967, the year that would see rioting sparked by racial injustice in Detroit and New York City, Rochester, Birmingham and Connecticut at the same time that Thurgood Marshall was sworn in as the first Black US Supreme Court Justice, and the death of Ernesto “Che” Guevara. By this time the U.S. was firmly entranced in Vietnam, and the following year, 1968, would mark a much-publicized bellwether in American history with the assassinations of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, and the announcement by President Lyndon Johnson that he would not accept his party’s nomination for president. And for me, that year marked my first trip to Cuba, to the Cultural Congress of Havana, which would be a major turning point in my life.

I made two trips to Cuba, and finally in 1969, with the issue devoted to the Cultural Congress of Havana, our distributors simultaneously, within one week, mysteriously decided to drop the magazine, sending it back undistributed. Our circulation at that time was over 8,000 copies, the format and distribution geared

toward newsstand sales. That spelled the end of IKON, because on principle, during the Vietnam war, we refused government money of any kind, and now the major source of our income was cut off. We continued the spirit of IKON until 1971 with IKONbooks, a bookstore that sold very few books, but which became a counter-culture political and cultural center.

My stepfather died in 1982 and left me \$5000. Not enough to retire on or take a trip around the world, even then!! So I decided to use it as seed money to revive IKON, keeping the same name, since IKON was a name already known and respected. After much thought I decided start again with number one and call it the Second Series to avoid the confusion of continuing with number eight from the first series. In the intervening years between the original IKON and the Second Series, I had become involved in the women's movement. This new IKON would not only be a magazine staffed by women, the work of women would be central.

The slogan *Creativity and Change* carried over from the first series along with a slogan taken from the cover of a Tri-Continental magazine I brought back when I returned in 1968 from the Cultural Congress. The original cover was a map of the world that could be cut out and formed into a new shape. We had adapted it for the first series of IKON, Issue #6, and it would serve as the guiding motto of the new Second Series: "*We can and must create a new world with new forms, techniques and ideas.*" IKON, Second Series #1, (Fall-Winter 1982-83) featured this motto alongside a photo by Margaret Randall of three young Nicaraguan women:



Randall, a poet and the founding editor of *El Corneo Emplumado*, a bi-lingual magazine from Mexico City, which I, along with many others, consider one of the best and most influential literary/cultural magazines ever published, and a friend since 1962 when I had sent her poems for *El Corneo*, contributed articles to the first series of the magazine and consented to be contributing editor of the new series of IKON. At the time the first issue was published with her portfolio from Nicaragua, she was living and working there.

Creativity and Change was already a permanent part of our logo and it, along with a short essay of Audre Lorde's, "Poetry is Not a Luxury," was a main inspiration behind publishing IKON once again in 1982. In her essay, Lorde characterizes poetry "as illumination... as a vital necessity of our existence....the way we help give name to the nameless so it can be thought." She continues: "The farthest external horizons of our hopes and fears are cobbled by our poems, carved from the rock experiences of our daily lives." (IKON, Second Series #1, pg. 36)

Culturally, not only was poetry not valued in mainstream society, it was not recognized at the time by the Left in the US either. I'll never forget a socialist women's conference I attended where the poets were scheduled to read at the same time and in the same place other women were eating their lunch. Poetry as mealtime entertainment.

Although political activism in 1982 was overshadowed news wise by the recession caused by "reaganomics" and wasn't as nationally publicized as when the first series of the magazine was published in the Sixties, there were movements for social justice all over the country with protests against the dictatorships in El Salvador and Guatemala and other parts of Latin America, support for the sanctuary movement in the Southwestern United States, an ever expanding African American and gay liberation movement, Native American and Asian American movements, and the growing and expanding feminist and Lesbian/feminist movement, part of which was engaged in organizing for the equal rights amendment which narrowly failed ratification in June of that year.

After the first issue of IKON, Second Series, was published, we incorporated as non-profit, got our charities registration number, and received funding from the literature division of NYSCA (the New York State Council on the Arts) which was headed at the time by Gregory Kolovakos, a creative, progressive young gay man who died of AIDS in 1990 and to whom we dedicated IKON Second Series #11, a retrospective of IKON Series One, "With all our love and gratitude." The money from NYSCA, along with money from subscriptions and contributions (including our own), and all the work being done on a volunteer basis allowed us to continue publishing.

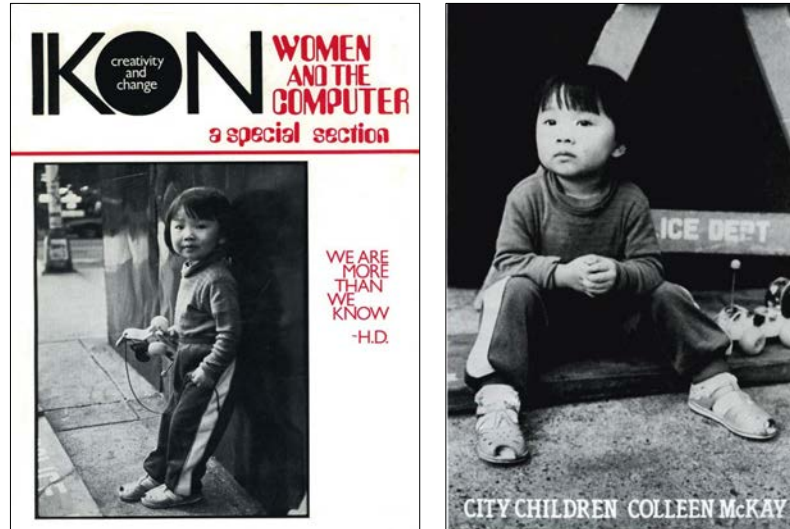
The Second Series ran from 1982-1994, was comprised of twelve magazines, all book length, averaging around 140 pages, which included three double issues (#5/6, #12/13, #14/15) and totaled over 1700 pages. The 7"x9" non-standard dimension of the magazine was chosen because of the importance we gave to artwork. For the same reason, even though it was more expensive, we chose to print on a coated stock. We had to discontinue coated paper on the last issue for financial reasons. Each issue of IKON was centered loosely on a different theme, either carrying through the entire issue or as a special section.

The premier issue, IKON, Second Series, #1, besides Margaret Randell's photos, featured the first published short story of Jewelle Gomez, a fact I didn't learn until many years later; poems by Cherríe Moraga and Judith Malina as well as the poets already listed who read at the inaugural reading; and the work of Mercé Rodoreda, a Catalan writer translated by David Rosenthal. Suzanne Lacey wrote an analysis of a performance she did with Lesley Labowitz, "In Mourning and In Rage," which was inspired by the activism of Women Against Violence Against Women (WAVAW). Candace Lyle Hogan interviewed Blanche Wiesen Cook. This first issue would be an indication of the breadth of work that IKON would publish in the years to come.

Lynette Hirshman, who was working on computer languages at NYU, an atypical skill for a woman at the time, was my roommate for a number of months in the Eighties. I was also, at the time, working on an article called "The Tyranny of Form" based on a critique of the work of Marshall McLuhan, and between us we came up with the idea of making the special section of Issue Second Series #2,

Women and the Computer. It would center on “The New Technology’s Effects On Our Work, On Our Lives.” This was at a time when computerization was just beginning to be discussed, and the two words “women” and “computer” were seldom, if ever, seen together. Included in the special section were essays on theory, on graphics, a Technology Information Sheet, and Molly Jackson and Toni Russell, two computer repairwomen, wrote about the effects of technology on the workplace. Poets, writers, and artists represented in the issue included Paula Gunn Allen and Judith McDaniel, with excerpts from their new novels; prose by Beth Brant, Alexis de Veaux and Luisa Valenzuela; music by Patsy Rogers; the art work of Bea Krelloff; photography by Colleen McKay and Margaret Randall, and poetry by Fay Chiang, Cheryl Clark, June Jordan, Martha King, Susan Saxe, and Rosario Murillo.

The issue opened with a portfolio of photographs, “City Children,” by Colleen McKay. We actually started the portfolio on the front cover. The inside front cover became the title page, and the photos then led directly from the cover photo into the table of contents, in keeping with our attempt to make both the placement and the choice of visual material as creative as possible. Next to the photo on the cover was a favorite quote from H.D.—“We Are More Than We Know.”



IKON, Second Series #3 (Spring/Summer 1984) had a special section devoted to *Women in Struggle: Seneca, Medgar Evers, Nicaragua*. Seemingly three disparate events, the tie-in was the focus on womens' leadership in the struggle for social justice. Andrée Nicola-McLaughlin, Medgar Evers' University's first woman Dean of Administration and spokesperson for the Student-Faculty-Community-Alumni Coalition spoke about the Coalition's struggle in an interview by Andrea Doremus, a struggle which would eventually lead to the ouster of the college president. At the time Medgar Evers College in Brooklyn had a student body that was 95% black and 75% women and yet only three appointments out of twenty in Deanships were women, and there were no courses about Black women.

The Seneca Women's Encampment for a Future of Peace and Justice in front of the Seneca Army Depot was documented in words by Ynestra King, one of protest's leading activists, and by Catherine Allport in photographs. One of the obvious reasons for the site being chosen as a women's action was because in 1848, the

American feminist movement formally began in Seneca, New York. But a more pressing reason in 1984 was the Seneca Army Depot was a storage site for cruise missiles slated to be shipped to Europe. Allport's photo documentation includes graphic photos of police arresting the women, but perhaps the most moving photo is one of the group empowered by their solidarity. We realized with this issue how IKON could be used as a vehicle for presenting women's creative work in the arts at the same time as documenting feminist activism.

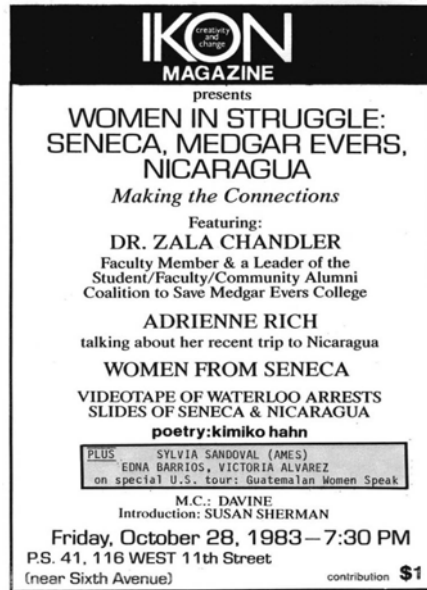


The section on Nicaragua included an essay I wrote as a result of my trip to the Conference on Central America in 1983, "Feminism and the Nicaraguan Revolution." It was accompanied by photographs by Colleen McKay. Margaret Randall's interview with Nicaraguan poet, Vidaluz Meneses, "We Cannot Talk about the Revolution in the Third Person," was accompanied by two of Meneses' poems, printed both in Spanish and English, a practice we would continue with bi-lingual material in subsequent issues.

Certainly one of the most chilling portfolios of art we published in IKON was a series of drawings in that issue by Margo Machida based on her experiences as a psychiatric aide.



To coincide with the launch of Issue #3, IKON sponsored an event at PS 41 with presentations by Dr. Zala Chandler, a leader of the struggle at Medgar Evers, and Adrienne Rich, who spoke about the trip to we had taken to Nicaragua for the conference. A video tape was shown of the arrests of the women from Seneca. Kimiko Hahn, who I met at the conference and who would become a friend and important part of IKON, read her poetry. There were also women from the special U.S. tour of “Guatemalan Women Speak” and a representative from AMES.



We did many of our events at PS 41, a public grammar school, which was reasonable to rent, was in a convenient location in the West Village, and had a large informal auditorium next to their cafeteria which could be used after the event for refreshments and general “meeting and greeting.”

A theme of Second Series #4 (Winter/Summer 1985) was *Women and Photography*. This time instead of a special section, portfolios of photographs were interspersed in the issue. It was our general policy to print portfolios of artwork rather than scattering featured artists’ and photographers’ work throughout the magazine in order to more fully represent them and avoid presenting their work as an interlude or illustration. This issue featured the work of photographer Maria Thereza Alves, “Recovering My History: Butia, Brazil: A Journal in Photos & Words,” as well as portfolios by Edna Bennett, Colleen McKay and Marisela La Grave. Margaret Randall’s essay, “Women and Photography: Why and How I Make Pictures” accompanied her portfolio “American Images.”

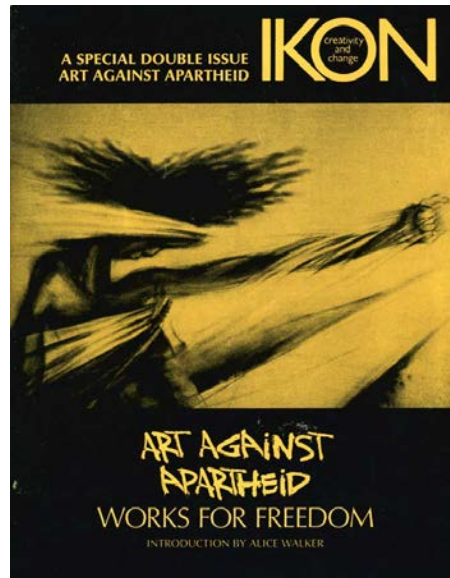


Mother and Daughters: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The issue also included among its many contributors excerpts from longer works by Beth Brant, Judy Grahn and Judith McDaniel, as well as prose and poems by Meena Alexander, Gloria Anzaldua, Enid Dame, Kathy Engel, Suzanne Gardinier, Janice Gould, Marilyn Hacker, Audre Lorde, Minnie Bruce Pratt and Nellie Wong.

With IKON, Second Series #5/6(Winter/Summer 1986), *Art Against Apartheid: Works for Freedom*, we began publishing special double issues that could also be sold as books. This was the first issue we did in collaboration with a collective. It grew out of a combined reading IKON did with the Art Against Apartheid Committee, a group of artists and writers actively working against Apartheid in South Africa. *Art Against Apartheid* went into two printings, selling close to 5000 copies. We combined resources on both the content and design of the issue. The cover art was by Carole Byard, whose sculpture would also grace the cover of the final issue of the IKON #14/15, *Crossroads*. She was also responsible for

much of the material in double Issue #12/13, *The Nineties: Moving Forward, Reaching Back*.



The coordinating editors for the issue were myself for IKON and Gale Jackson for the Art Against Apartheid collective. Besides contributing part of the content, IKON was responsible for the final “putting together” and publication of the issue as well as publicity and distribution. It was certainly our most ambitious project. Major funding for the issue came from the United Nations Special Committee Against Apartheid with Major-General Joseph N. Garba (CFR), the chairman of the committee, writing an introductory statement of support. The rest of the funding came from contributions of readers and a grant from the New York State Council for the Arts.

In her introduction, “The People Do Not Despair,” Alice Walker wrote: “Like the other artists in this anthology I add my voice, my testimony, to the sometimes hidden, unexpected debilitation evil does in the world. But I know too, as they do,

the restorative power of a sister's resolute travel and presence (bringing back both the message and the attitude), a brother's persistent work and voice, a comrade's attempt to heal." (pg.9)

Art Against Apartheid, IKON, Second Series #5/6 was dedicated to Victoria Mxenge, Benjamin Moloise, and Micheal Stewart, "And the living/and the work before us." (pg. 1) Victoria Mxenge was a South African Anti-Apartheid activist and lawyer who was assassinated. Benjamin Moloise was a factory worker, poet, activist, follower of the ANC, who was executed by the apartheid regime, and Micheal Stewart died during police custody after being arrested in New York City for painting graffiti. His death set off city wide protests against police brutality.

Divided into two sections, *South Africans Speak* and *Art Against Apartheid: Works for Freedom*, fifty writers and forty-seven visual artists, women and men, contributed to this issue of IKON which ran 186 pages. On the inside front cover, Dennis Brutus, South African poet, educator, activist-in-exile, opened the issue with his poem in honor of South African Freedom Day, June 26, 1967: "...and the mind ranging/wildly as a strayed bird/seeking some names to settle on/and deeds being done/and those who will do the much/that still needs to be done."

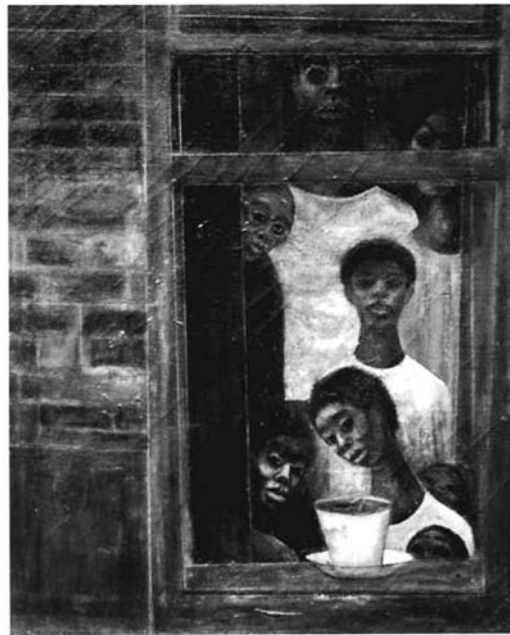
The first section *South Africans Speak* begins with two poems by Benjamin Moloise written from his jail cell. Photographer Catherine Allport had just returned from South Africa with a portfolio of photographs including one of Victoria Mxenge's Funeral:



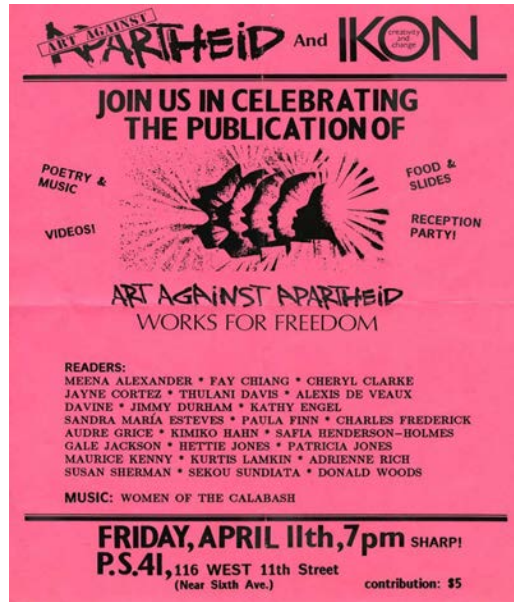
Allport had also surreptitiously taped leaders of the anti-apartheid movement, some of whom were underground, and after transcribing and editing the tapes I was able to piece hours of interviews into oral histories that make up the bulk of the section. These include Barbara Masekela, administrative secretary of the ANC Department of Arts and Culture who would later serve as Ambassador to the US from 2003 to 2007 and Albertina Sisulu, president of the United Democratic Front and the cofounder of the Federation of South African women, whose husband, Walter Sisulu, convicted of treason by the apartheid government, was spending twenty-five years in prison alongside Nelson Mandela. Helen Joseph, another interviewee, was born in England. She was charged with high treason and was the first person to be put under “house arrest” in South Africa. Lastly, there was the “testimony” of a white South African whose name had to be withheld. These interviews along with poems and artwork make up the remainder of the section which ends with a long poem/prose poem by Jeremy Cronin, a noted South African

poet, who served seven years in jail (1976-1983) on charges of terrorism for disseminating propaganda for the ANC and the SACP (South African Communist Party).

The second section of the issue, *Art Against Apartheid: Works for Freedom*, as well as containing writing about the struggle in South Africa, also tied the issue of South African apartheid with racism in the United States. Nowhere was this stated more succinctly than in Audre Lorde's, "Apartheid U.S.A." and in Cliff Joseph's painting, "Window":



Art Against Apartheid: Works for Freedom IKON, Second Series #5/6 was formally launched on April 11, 1986 with a reading/celebration at PS 41:



A little more than a year later, at the same venue, we celebrated the return of Margaret Randall to the U.S., and our support for her in her case against deportation, with an event that featured her reading and speaking and the music of Casselberry and Dupree.

Although those events were difficult logistically, entailing as they did getting everyone in the right place at the right time, making sure the sound equipment was working, and that all the things that could go wrong didn't, other events were difficult for entirely different reasons. One very successful fundraising party we gave wound up with me back in the closet, literally, as I hid out with some Chinese take-out in a large clothes closet to get a little peace during a dance that we sponsored.



After the DJ we hired sat down too hard on her wooden folding chair and wound up on the floor with her equipment and a very large plate of spaghetti in her lap, and a small group of women followed me relentlessly around the dance floor protesting that the music wasn't feminist enough, while another group complained the music was too conservative, I headed for the first shelter I could find. The walk-in coat closet. I was not missed, and the dance went on, a great success. Even then, at the end of the evening, the two women who were in charge of the loudspeakers got into a pushing match with myself and another woman, thinking they were on the ground floor, when the elevator, in fact, hadn't moved. We tried to push the loudspeakers back into the elevator, while they tried at the same time to push them out!! It was a stalemate for at least five minutes until we finally convinced them they were not on the ground floor and had not gone anywhere at all!!

The silkscreened poster we had made to sell at events like these and raise money for the magazine incorporated the slogan, "Revolution is the Struggle of the

Imagination.” I don’t know if we made it up or if we got it from somewhere else, but it is one that continues to resonate.



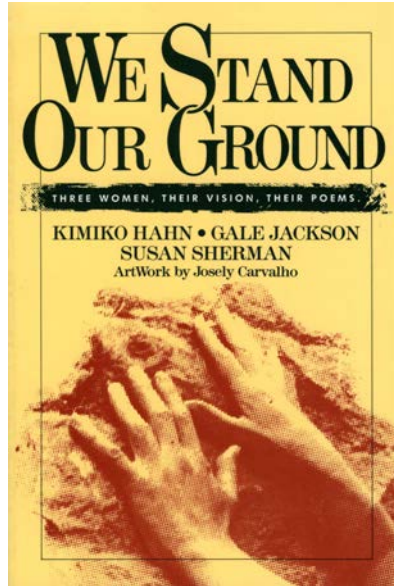
The theme of IKON, Second Series #7 (Spring/Summer 1987) was *Women and Love*—love in all its iterations. The title was chosen purposely to make the thematic material as broad as possible. The cover was perhaps the most striking and at the same time the most problematic of any we had done. The design was from a page of artwork from the portfolio “The Meal,” by Josely Carvalho, a Brazilian American artist. We decided to experiment with using silver and red inks. It looked beautiful. The problem was the silver ink wasn’t stable and easily wiped off. Another lesson learned. Since we were doing everything ourselves, we learned a lot about the technical issues involved publishing a magazine. Apart from lay-out and printing, they included fund raising, organizing subscriptions, all of the business work that would usually be the province of a managing editor.



Besides Carvalho's portfolio of artwork, the issue featured an essay, "Making Common Cause: Diversity & Coalitions," by Charlotte Bunch; "Sara: Lost and Found," a play by Clare Coss; and work by Meena Alexander, Cheryl Clarke, Myriam Diaz-Diocaretz, Paula Finn, Janice Gould, Gloria Hull, Karla Jackson-Brewer, Melanie Kaye/Kantrowitz, Barbara Moraff, and Margaret Randall.

In 1987, we published a book, *We Stand our Ground: Three Women, Their Vision, Their Poems*, which featured the work of Kimiko Hahn, Gale Jackson and myself—an Asian American poet, an African American poet, and a Jewish Lesbian poet. The cover, as well as the internal design and artwork, was by Brazilian artist Josely Carvalho who had created the art for the cover of the seventh issue. Besides the poetry, the book started with a twenty page *trialogue*, "Three Voices Together a Collage," the three poets writing about their lives and their theories of activism and writing. It was constructed of questions I wrote, sent to the poets, then edited, wove together, and returned to them for their editing and additions. Once the piece was

put together it looked like a seamless “telling.” It was later picked up and published in the anthology *Art On The Line: Essays by Artists about the Point where Their Art & Activism Intersect* edited by Jack Hirschman (Curbstone Press, 2002).



IKON, Second Series #8 (Winter/Spring 1987-88), was simply called *Journeys*. The range of work here once again is evidenced by the contributors, including work by poets Marjorie Agosin, Karen Brodine, Rachel Guido deVries (who for awhile was the fiction editor), Kimiko Hahn, Achy Obejas, Kate Millett; an interview with Joan Larkin by Elly Bulkin; and photography by Claudia Gordilla, an outstanding Nicaraguan photographer. Trix Rosen also contributed a photo journal title “Igorata: The Women of the Cordillera” from the Phillipines.

After Issue #8, we did two more issues in collaboration. Our experience with the *Art Against Apartheid* issue had been so positive we looked for other groups that might need our technical expertise and all around support. These issues of IKON were perhaps the most rewarding, because they not only gave us a chance to work

collaboratively with activist and artistic collectives, but because we felt we were fulfilling a real service by disseminating important information that came from the women themselves. The creative work was coming *from* them, not from others writing *about* them.

The Asian Women United Collective had already been working for several years collecting and putting together an anthology when they got in touch with us to see if we could help them finally complete their project. And that is how IKON Second Series #9 (1988), *Without Ceremony*, was born.

Kimiko Hahn acted as the poetry editor and Penny Fujiko Willgerodt as the prose coordinator. Lilly Lee designed the issue and did the cover design. Tomie Arai did the cover artwork as well as contributing a portfolio of work of her own.



It was the first time another group had almost total control over the issue and its design, and occasionally it was frustrating working with sometimes difficult personalities, but the final reward was an incredible issue including everything from a sexuality roundtable, to a working mother's roundtable, to a veteran political activists' panel. With fiction by Bharati Mukherjee and Ninotchea Rosca to an interview with artist Yong Soon Min, with poetry and prose filling 126 pages, the Collective's dream had finally been realized.

IKON, Second Series #9 became a memorable issue, both because of the value and beauty of the issue—in form and content certainly one of the best and most rewarding we had published—and because, ironically, it was the project that lost us our NEA funding.

IKON had not been funded in the Sixties by any governmental agency, solely being funded by our salaries and money from subscriptions and sales. When our distribution at that time was mysteriously cut off after my trip to Cuba and our special issue on the Cultural Congress of Havana in 1968, we had no choice but to stop publishing the magazine. Now, in the Eighties, with NEA funding, which we had gotten previously, plus our continued funding from the New York State Council on the Arts, it seemed we could finally escape constant financial pressure and actually pay small stipends for the all work that had here-to-fore been done strictly on a volunteer basis. We had always tried to pay our contributors, even if it was a small token, when it was at all possible, and had paid some of the layout and design people, but neither I nor the rest of the staff had ever had any kind of monetary recompense for the untold number of hours of work we put into each issue and I was also

looking forward to not having to use my credit card to make up expenses. When we were notified that the magazine funding has been discontinued, it came as a shock. I fully expected that with this issue it was a “no-brainer” that we would continue to get NEA funding.

During that period, the NEA was under heavy pressure not to fund any Lesbian and Gay material, but I didn't think much about it since there wasn't anything particularly sexually radical in the issue—or at least not to my mind. Since you could call and find out why your funding had been denied, I took advantage of the opportunity to call and see what was up. I was told that future funding had been denied because the writing in the issue was considered “uneven,” which came as a surprise to me, because IKON always published material of the highest caliber, and this issue was one of the best. When I asked for a concrete example, I was told that in particular an article by a woman called Huong Giang Nguyen had been cited. Not remembering exactly what that article was, I hung up and referred back to the magazine. The title of the article in question turned out to be “A Vietnamese Lesbian Speaks.” Phoning the NEA representative back, I asked, “Could the subject matter perhaps had something to do with it?” “Of course not!!!” And that was the end of the conversation. And that was the end of our funding from the NEA. Since the NYSCA grant and subscription money didn't cover costs, out came my credit card once again!

The next issue titled *Anniversary Issue*, (IKON, Second Series #10, 1989), focused on *Autobiography and Short Fiction*. Some of the writers represented were Janine Pommy Vega, Rosario Caicedo, Diane Glancy, Safiya Henderson Holmes, and

Carol Tarlen. Art Work was supplied by Valerie Maynard and Clarissa Sligh, and Amy Zuckerman contributed a photo documentation, “Loiyangalalani: Place of Contrast, “Place of Trees,” about a small town/village resting on the southeastern shore of Lake Turkana, Kenya. In this issue, I included some work of my own, the first chapter of what would later become a memoir, *America’s Child: A Woman’s Journey through the Radical Sixties* (Curbstone, 2007).

Also included was Catherine De Maria’s searing testimony in words and photos, “War Zone: Thompkins Square Summer ’88.” August 7, 1988, over 450 police charged peaceful protestors demonstrating against anti-gentrification and a midnight curfew on Tompkins Square Park, a curfew which had been designed specifically to displace the homeless sleeping there during a time of rampant homelessness in the area. The police rampaged through the neighboring streets arresting and beating passersby, the homeless, residents. It was all was caught on video, but no policeman was ever convicted. It was the beginning of a month-long occupation of the surrounding neighborhood by the police. Catherine DeMaria’s journal of those days remains an important resource. One of her photos of that night is hauntingly reminiscent of Kent State—although fortunately in this case although many were badly hurt, no one was killed.



We decided that most of the readers of IKON would never have seen the first series of the magazine, so IKON, Second Series #11 (1990) *The Sixties: A Retrospective of IKON Series One 1966-1969* was an anthology of material selected from the seven Sixties issues. It opened with an essay by Margaret Randall, “Parallels from the Sixties to the Nineties,” comparing the two series of IKON, which was only appropriate since she had been connected so closely with both, appearing in the first issues of both Series One and Two and as a contributing editor of Series Two. The introductory section of the issue also included an essay edited from an interview with Carole Byard, “On Being a Woman Artist of Color: The Sixties, The Seventies, Today.”

We picked representative works from each of the seven issues including political essays, poetry, articles, photo essays by Karl Bissinger, who was the IKON

staff photographer at the time, a short story by Grace Paley, an essay by Diane Wakoski, “The Theater of Eternal Music: LaMonte Young and Marion Zazeela,” work from the Cuban Cultural Congress, Henry Flynt’s Exercise Awareness-States—Flynt was the only man to appear in IKON, Second Series #1, with his controversial essay, “The Radicalism of Unbelief.” Haydée Santamaría’s “Letter to Che,” and “Letters from Minoko, about the anti-nuclear protests in Japan.

The logical next issue after the Sixties was the Nineties. The two issues were originally thought of as a piece with Carol Byard’s piece in the Sixties issues as a transitional essay, recognizing that the IKON of the Sixties, with all its “radicalism,” did not represent either women or women of color adequately. This was the last collaborative issue we did and because of its length and scope (160 pages) IKON, Second Series #12/13 (1991-1992) was published as a double issue. It was titled *The Nineties: Moving Forward, Reaching Back/A Multicultural Odyssey* with the subtitle, *Focus on Coast to Coast: National Women Artists of Color*. The publication would run concurrently with Coast to Coast’s exhibition, “Ancestors Known and Unknown: Box Works.” Because of the number of artists represented, we made the editorial decision not to isolate the visual art into a separate section. Specific information about Coast to Coast exhibitions, along with the names of the over 200 women participating in the exhibitions, was listed at the back of the issue.

Besides artwork by twenty-three artists including Emma Amos, Tomie Arai, Josely Cavalho, Miriam Hernández, Yong Soon Min, Faith Ringgold, Beverly R. Singer, Clarissa Sligh, Diosa Summers, there were essays by Adrian Piper, writing on “The Joy of Marginality,” and by Lucy Lippard on “The Hand of Memory in Some African

American & Latina Art.” Work by Margo Machida, Arlene Raven, bell hooks and Meena Alexander was also included.

Along with selections of fiction and poetry, there was a Latina Panel Carole Byard put together especially for IKON in which Regina Araujo Corritore, Maria Elena Gonzalez, and Miriam Hernandez discussed their box works projects leading into a more general discussion of themselves as Latina artists.

One of the artists, Regina Araujo Corritore described how her box project, “My Mother’s Side,” centered around her mother’s history, a combination of Puerto Rican, Peruvian, and North American lineage. Using maps in the background, she chose to symbolize her mother in transition “as a bride.”



Crossroads: An Anthology of Art for a Time of Transition & Change (IKON, Second Series #14/15, 1993), a double issue, would be our last. After two series of the magazine, an anthology (*We Stand our Ground*), a series of chapbooks (Hettie Jones, Chuck Wachtel, Paul Pines, Martha King, Harry Lewis) and a series of seven

poetry books (Jan Clausen, Kathy Engle, Gale Jackson, D.H. Melham, Paul Pines, Rochelle Ratner, Bruce Weber), IKON was finally laid to rest.

In part our demise as a press was thanks to a tax form of which I had no knowledge. The usual procedure, which we had followed for more than twelve years, was just to send in a Charities Exemption Form since we didn't make enough to have to fill out a 990. Because we hadn't filed the 990 for five years, a new requirement, even though we never received notice of the change, in order to continue, we would have had to go through the whole process of getting approval for tax-exempt status and file years back tax forms. The only way to avoid the bureaucratic mess was to dissolve the corporation and close our bank account, and so IKON became officially a part of history.

In any case, when we ceased publishing the magazine in 1993, even though we continued with chapbook and book publications, IKON as a concept was over. Because, above all, IKON, as its title implied, was a synthesis that brought together art and politics, creativity and change, pictures and words, and as a magazine could reflect within months what was occurring in the cultural community, the local community and the world. For me, the end of the Second Series, like the First, punctuated the end of an era. As the title *Crossroads* implied it *was* a turning point. The cover perfectly reflecting the synthesis that was IKON was a beautiful sculpture by African American artist, Carol Byard, who had created the artwork for the *Art Against Apartheid* issue, and had played such a important part in the magazine, both editorially and artistically. Her cover graphically depicted unity in duality, the traveler, the proud warrior woman, refusing to be defeated.



Among the contributors to the final issue were women and men from past issues, along with writers and artists who had not been published in IKON before. Both writers and artists from the New York community and nationwide were represented. Among the poets were Minrose Gwin, Pamela Sneed, and Enid Dame, Kathy Engel, Anya Achtenberg and Anjail Ahmad, Meena Alexander, Steve Cannon, Jack Hirschman, Chris Brandt, Irena Klepfisz, Mary Jane Sullivan, Judith Clark, and Eileen Myles; essayists included Janice Gould and Margaret Randell. Altogether twelve prose writers, forty-five poets, and eight artists were represented.

Between the first and the final issues of the Second Series, a journey had been undertaken. This time it extended beyond the First Series emphasis on aesthetics and the commitment of the artist to her or his work, even past the Sixties' eventual total immersion in political and social struggle, a time during which the subtitle of IKON, *Creativity and Change* was coined, to a different arena, to gender and all that implied in the struggle against racism and classism, to exploring women's creativity as an inclusive rather than exclusive construct.

CrossRoads—different paths/worlds/directions coming together, meeting, converging. In this, the last decade of the century, the Nineties. The transition/link between the old and new. This is how the editorial written for the final issue of IKON, Second Series, #15 (1993/94), begins. And it is these words that sum up not only this issue, but the Second Series as a whole, best:

... in *The Road to Oz*, Dorothy is caught in the hub of a crazy wheel of roads spinning until it lifts her more truly than a hurricane out of the arms of everything she has ever known, catapulting her into something she could never have dreamed. At the crossroads where paths meet, magic is possible. Where meeting takes place, hope is born and remains inviolate. It is the hub of the wheel, the center that makes revolution/change possible.

It is important finally to document the enormous amount of work that goes into any alternative press. The invisible hard work and incredible commitment of the women and men who devote their time and energy to keeping the creative spirit alive. The hours, the nights, many times all night, simultaneously holding down a daytime job, that people worked putting out IKON, a magazine that could vie with any “big time” publication with a paid staff and an office, from a computer in the front room and a light box in the small side room of an old tenement apartment.

Looking at the stack of issues now, as I write this history, this incredible history, I am filled with pride—not personal pride, because a magazine is the work of not one, but many people, those who helped with the physical labor, those who contributed to the issue, all because it was something they believed in. There were other wonderful magazines and presses at the time that honored the history and spirit of the creative women and of the activists of the period, that saw feminism as inexorably linked to issues of racism and classism: *Sinister Wisdom*, *Conditions*,

Kitchen Table Press, Heresies to mention only a few. What set IKON apart, I think, was in its dedication in this mission to the integrity of the picture and the word, separately and in combination, and its expansiveness, reaching ever beyond—states, continents and in special cases even gender.

I am so grateful to Demetria Martínez, to Julie Davis and the women of SEW (The Society for Educating Women) and to World Literature Today. Because of them this important compilation of our history will continue to be made available. Along that line, I would like to end with the concluding words of the *CrossRoads*' editorial:

There are no words to adequately express my gratitude for the privilege of working with so many talented and dedicated people, many of whom have become close and much valued, personal friends. To them, and to the many women and men, who, as readers of IKON, have supported our work over the years, what can I say except very simply, Thank You.

SUSAN SHERMAN
Editor/ IKON Magazine
1965 – 1969, 1982 - 1994