

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO ACQUIRE MAJOR ARTIST BOOK COLLECTION FROM FRANKLIN FURNACE

November 17, 1993.....Richard E. Oldenburg, director, The Museum of Modern Art, announced today the acquisition of the artist book collection of Franklin Furnace, an alternative performance and exhibition space in New York. The collection consists of some 13,500 artist books, magazines, and audiotapes by more than 500 artists internationally, in addition to documentary files. Later this year the collection will be transferred to the Museum, where it will eventually be merged with the Museum library's own holdings of some 4,000 artist books.

Mr. Oldenburg states, "The acquisition of this extensive collection, built over seventeen years by Franklin Furnace, is an exciting event for The Museum of Modern Art. With the merging of this valuable repository with our own, the Museum will have one of the largest collections of artist books in the world. In addition to its increased availability to artists, scholars, students, and interested members of the public, the archive will be a resource from which our curators will be able to draw for the study and display of the Museum's collection. In making this important acquisition, we have been assisted by the Evelyn A.J. Hall Charitable Trust and members of the Museum's Library Committee, to whom we are most grateful."

Martha Wilson, founding director, Franklin Furnace, states, "We are delighted that our collection will join that of The Museum of Modern Art,

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enabling this extraordinary archive to remain intact and in New York. This sale allows Franklin Furnace to concentrate on performances and exhibitions, and to continue to encourage meaningful interaction between the artistic community and the public. It is therefore of great value not only to The Museum of Modern Art and Franklin Furnace, but to the public as well."

Clive Phillpot, director of the Museum's library, adds, "The result of merging the Franklin Furnace collection with that of the Museum library will be to offer the public a truly exceptional resource. The expanded artist book collection at the Museum is now not only international in scope but much more comprehensive, representing a broad range of content, formats, and individual voices and group endeavors throughout the world. We would like to encourage the continuing support of artists as we build upon this foundation."

While the Museum's collection of artist books primarily comprises works by artists who are familiar to a wide audience, such as Ida Applebroog, Sol LeWitt, Adrian Piper, and Ed Ruscha, that of Franklin Furnace is especially strong in publications from regions that have been less fully represented at the Museum, such as Eastern Europe, Latin America, and Asia, as well as in books by lesser-known artists. The Museum of Modern Art/Franklin Furnace Artist Book Collection joins the ranks of such notable and comprehensive public collections of artist publications as the Jean Brown Archive at The Getty Center and the Archive Hanns Sohm at the Staatsgalerie in Stuttgart, Germany.

Most of the examples in the collections of both The Museum of Modern Art library and Franklin Furnace are inexpensive booklets produced by artists -- frequently using offset lithography or xerography -- and published in open

editions. Neither collection includes fine-press publications, limited-edition books, or the more costly illustrated books that involve printmaking.

Ms. Wilson founded Franklin Furnace in 1976 as an archive of artist books. Her goal was both to display these books, filling a void in the art world, and to explore the ways in which language intersects with art in book form. Franklin Furnace soon became a meeting place where artists could exchange ideas, view work, and develop experimental programs; "time-based" art forms, such as video- and film installations and performance pieces, became integral to Franklin Furnace's programming. Many of today's most influential artists, including Eric Bogosian, Karen Finley, Guillermo Gomez-Pena, Jenny Holzer, and Barbara Kruger, launched their careers at Franklin Furnace. It is in order to concentrate more fully on exhibitions, performances, and educational outreach, that Franklin Furnace has relinquished its archival function and decided to sell its artist book collection.

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For further information or photographic materials on the Artists Book Archive, contact Jessica Schwartz or Lucy O'Brien, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 212/708-9750.

For further information on Franklin Furnace, contact Julie Zander, Resnicow Schroeder Associates, 212/595-8263.