

division of the world." Published to accompany a 1995 exhibition at the Kunstverein Göttingen (\$30) it is an elegant volume of icons, logos, and banners, preceded by a foldout reproduction of a hand-drawn map of the world. The Nicolais were born and educated in East Germany, where they studied separately (in fields only obliquely related to art), and didn't come west until after the Berlin Wall came down. The disorientation associated with reunification, on every scale from the personal to the global, seems the impetus for this book (and the body of work it illustrates). The make-believe political alignment in *Die Neuaufteilung* is as comprehensive as it is hermetic, its symbolic consolidation achieved under the headings "names and signs," "flags," and "interieur." Making equally good use of crisp graphics, wavery ink drawings, and line drawings on translucent overlays that transform abstractions (a circle, a blob) into concrete images (globe, brain), the Nicolais establish the broad strokes of a new iconography. Not only the visual symbolism, but the names by which they are identified, are inventions; the Nicolais provide a glossary at the end. It is in German, as are a preface by Kurt von Figura and essay by Frank Eckart, but readers not fluent shouldn't be discouraged—linguistic disadvantage and cultural alienation are, clearly, part of the point.

Of course, cultural misunderstanding can be understood in many ways. Heraklusz Lubomirski is a Polish artist, now co-owner, with Alfonso Paredes Jr., of Ah! Space and Gallery in New York. *The First Manual: Two Dogs Laughed* is Ah!'s first publication (1996, \$35), and a messier, funnier, more histrionic account of dislocations both geographic and personal can hardly be imagined. A veteran of Poland's "Therapeutical Performer" theater (and direct descendent, a press release says, of Catherine the Great), Lubomirski writes of being a newcomer to New York, of renting an apartment, getting drunk and noisy, meeting people, and traveling cross-country, all in a torrential stream of text that occasionally dissolves into computer-collaged imagery and freestyle typography. In addition to this discontinuous narrative, there is a long, digressive "Fairy-Tale about the Squire and Seminarist," itself much interrupted. Abundant black and white photographs,

many of birds in flight, are by Paredes, who contributed signally to the book's dreamy, headlong rhythm. *The First Manual* also contains a poster with a mordant illustrated poem, and an oversized card with a more lyrical text. Indulging their own mistakes of translation, production, and protocol—Lubomirski's picture of his wild-and-crazy night life sometimes seems lifted intact from vintage "Saturday Night Live"—the artists celebrate emotional and aesthetic disorder with an enthusiasm that is infectious.

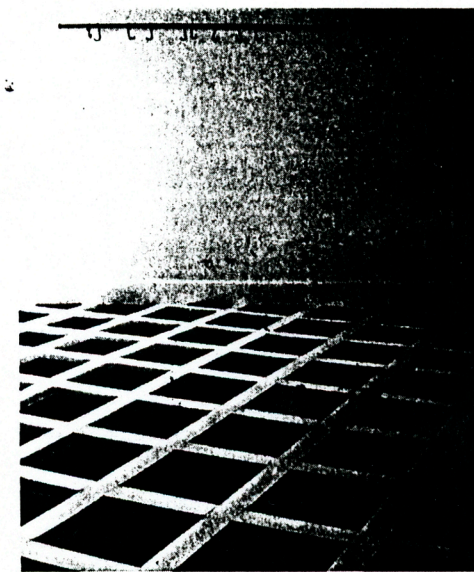
Daniel Martinez is a veteran of street theater, too, though of a more disciplined variety. His work is the subject of *The Things You See When You Don't Have a Grenade!* (Santa Monica, Smart Art Press, 1996, edition of 3,000, \$25), which is, like most Smart Art monographs, more or less indistinguishable from an artist's book. Its design is integral to its meaning, even if it also contains a number of conventional (if unusually incisive) critical essays by such important public art veterans as Coco Fusco and Mary Jane Jacob. The heart of the book, though, is a survey of Martinez's projects since 1978, and the heart of those projects, whether billboards, installations, or freestanding structures, is his language, as disturbing on the printed page as anywhere else. Martinez's scope is broad, ranging over the entire field of racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic injustice. But his voice is a unique compound of boiling anger and profound ambiguity. New Yorkers will recognize two phrases from his contribution to the 1993 Whitney Biennial, "I can't imagine ever wanting to be white" (broken into one- or two-word bits and printed on buttons given out free at the Biennial), and "in the white man's house the only space to spit is in his face" (from the installation itself). This book's title is another good example, and to make the reader ponder it longer, it is stamped in Morse Code on the otherwise blank, black-flocked front cover; a key to the code is given inside.

Also new from Smart Art is a reprint of Jeffrey Vallance's justly legendary 1979 book, *Blinky The Friendly Hen* (1996, \$15). A triumph of solemn silliness, it follows Vallance as he buys a chicken at the supermarket, purchases a plot for it at the local pet cemetery, and duly interrs it, satin-lined casket and all (expenses for the whole shebang are tot-

ted up at the end: \$229.57, in 1978 dollars). Endpapers are "the shroud of Blinky"—facsimiles of the blood-stained paper towels on which the old bird was laid out. Lodging somewhere between frat-house prank and conceptual performance—or, to use different cross-hairs, between the 70s, when one artist burned rats onstage and another shot a dog on tape, and our own proudly (if sometimes hypocritically) eco-aware era—Vallance's manifestly untheorized stunt can best be appreciated for continuing to elude critical aim.

Much too honest to be called art, **Cail Rebhan's *Mother-Son Talk*** (Rochester, Visual Studies Workshop, 1996, \$15) is a laugh-out-loud read for anyone with even a passing interest in how children grow. Sure of your values? Certain that self-confidence, tolerance of difference, and respect for others are simple concepts to impart? Spend some time with a couple of young kids—smart, privileged white boys like Rebhan's will do as well as any—and think again. *Mother-Son Talk* is simply an assemblage of choice bits of real dialogue, cleverly illustrated with photographs and a few supplementary graphics. A couple of times we watch Rebhan, a Washington-based photographer, admit defeat. But she's gracious, win or lose, and I'm betting her sons will do her proud.

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Juan Muñoz, *Silence Please!*, artist's book (7-5/8x5-5/8 in.), 1996.