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RUBBERSTAMP

(selection)

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rubberstamp>

In the art world, there is also rubber stamp art. Sometimes the rubber stamps are self-made or even carved out of erasers. The print from the carved rubber stamp is viewed as work of art on its own or one or several stamps are used to embellish a work of art with other components. Also, other materials besides rubber may be used to produce a stamp. In fact woodcut and linocut are the same art using another carving material, but linoleum is much harder and so special tools are needed to work with it. In Europe linocut is widely used, other than rubber carving. While linocut is much used at schools or by hobby artists, woodcut is mostly restricted to professional artists because it's hard to do and takes long. Rubber carving material is available there now, but it's marketed as a children's toy and not widely used. There are several possibilities to vary the look of those works. Paints, pigments and dye inks all create different effects, extending the use of rubber stamping from paper to fabrics, wood,

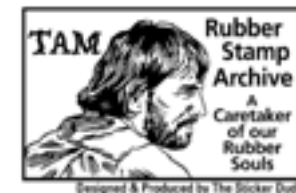
metal, glass, and so on. Special ink pads can be purchased that allow for embossing and there are pens that can be used to ink stamp pads with a variety of colors for a multi-color look. All this creates possibilities for mixed media art of all sorts. The print of a larger rubber stamp can be a work of art on its own right, and is often used as such. But it's also possible to use multiple prints from the same or different rubber stamps on a piece of art to create a picture, or combine stamping with other art forms. Of course the use of rubber stamps can be combined with other materials. The image may be embellished by the addition of chinks, inks, paints, fibers and a variety of other ephemera and embellishments. Those works are often used in mail art or artist trading cards because they tend to be small and allow the making of series. The TAM Rubber Stamp Archive has a collection of prints of rubber stamps mail-artists used since 1983 (see link). Stamping is also often used in handmade card making. In addition, use of the stamping technique has become widely popular with scrap booking. The variety of stamps available allow for different looks to any given page.



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© 2007 – afdruk 30th April

SHORT STATEMENTS ABOUT MAIL-ART BY RUUD JANSSEN

TAM Rubberstamp Archive



TAM RUBBERSTAMP ARCHIVE

One might say this is just one of the many mail-art projects that took place over the years. Instead of some, it is running for almost 25 years now.

THE STAMPSHEETS VARIATIONS

When the Archive started there was always just the one sheet I included in my outgoing mail where I asked a mail-artist to print rubberstamps on. Over the time there came these variations which I will discuss.

VARIATION: OTHER RECEIVERS

In 1996 I was asked by Bill Gaglione and John Held Jr. to do an exhibition at the Stamp Art Gallery in San Francisco. Instead of just using my large collection for the exhibition I thought out the concept that the sheets would go straight into the archive after people stamped on an empty sheet. Thousands of sheets were sent out, and hundreds came in for the exhibition. A catalogue was made of this exhibition (printed version). In 2004 I used this concept again for an exhibition at the L-Gallery in Moscow. The catalogue of this exhibition you can find online as a PDF-file (see links at the end).

Besides these two large exhibitions this concept was also used on two other occasions: Ed Giecek (USA) made several EggHeadz for mail-artists. I also received one and placed a

print on a stamp sheet and sent this special designed sheets to other EggHeadz members to build a collection for Ed. A second time I made sheets that went straight into the Administration Centre of Guy Bleus in Wellen, Belgium. Never heard how many sheets arrived there, but I sent out hundreds at the time I was slowing down mail-art but still wanted the new prints to arrive somewhere.

Do you use rubberstamps? Then you probably have heard about the TAM Rubberstamp Archive. A large collection of print-outs start started in 1983 and will celebrate its 25-year existence in 2008

VARIATION: COLLAGE SHEETS

The nicest variation is the Collage-Stamp Sheet. Probably the one you know. There are the sheets with 2,3,4 or even 5 participants. The result is always a surprise since the sheet normally doesn't get returned by the one who gets it from me. It also expands the network that receives the sheets. Maybe that also resulted in the large number of contributors to the archive so far: My estimations are that about 4000 mail-artists participated and returned over 20,000 sheets into the archive...

PAUSE

The Archive was started when I lived in Tilburg. I wanted to stop the collection when I moved to Breda. But somehow I didn't do that and restarted shortly after the move to Breda with sending out new sheets. What I enjoy most is when old sheets eventually still

make it into the archive located in Breda. Each stampsheet is numbered and dated, so as far back as 1983 they might originate.

FUTURE?

The mail-art network always has explored the new ways of communication. Also in the Fluxus world these tools were favourite. The Rubber Stamps have become widely accessible nowadays, but the computers have taken over the 'multiplication' possibility. Also the new generation hardly knows about rubberstamps. Because of the factor TIME the new sheets are very interesting. When someone wants to explore how the use of rubberstamps was by mail-artists over a long time.... It is possible.

INFO ONLINE

For those who want to know more about the archive; a lot can be found online. Check out the following links to read and see more:

Blog with a selection of stamp sheets (also the older ones and the special variations):
<http://tamrubberstamparchive.blogspot.com/>

The basis-information about the archive and an explanation of some historic facts:
www.iuoma.org/rub_arch.html

The online catalogue I made for the exhibition at the L-Gallery in Moscow. A booklet that in printed format is over 25 pages:
http://www.iuoma.org/catalog_l_gallery_october_2004_v1.7.pdf