

TO ALL MY FRIENDS (including my Dealers)

Jan. 20, 1978.

NEWSLETTER #4. From: Clarence John Laughlin

1. First of all, my heartfelt appreciation must be extended all the kind friends who sent me Xmas greetings and best wishes for my health. My deepest apologies because, so far, I have not been able to acknowledge even a single one of these remembrances. The reasons why will become clear in this Newsletter.

2. Many things, including the rheumatoid arthritis in my right knee, the stones in my kidneys, and the necessity to spend much time with a contractor, in order to have a wing constructed in the back of a house owned by a former wife - all conspired to make it impossible to get started on the actual packing of the over 20,000 books of my library - till early in Sept. 1977. This was the prelude to my removal from the Upper Pontalba Building (where I have lived for the last 31 years) - to my new address. In order to do this, all my possessions (I also have over 5,000 magazines, and over 1,000 music records) must be removed bodily down 3 long flights of stairs - since this old building has no elevators. I have had to do all the packing myself - since I am spending nearly all my savings of the last 20 years on the construction of the wing, and since the books must be fitted into the boxes - not merely thrown in. And because of my economic situation, I am very concerned about whether I shall be able to pay the high cost of moving (which is \$35 per hour here) - unless I can work out a better way to get the books down the stairs, or find a mover who is willing to give a flat price.

3. When I first started packing, I could not work more than 5 or 6 hours a day - after that, my knee became agonizing. I am now, with the help of vitamins and Motrin, working 11 to 12 hours per day. The boxes are running 25 to 80 pounds each. They must be taped, strapped with plastic, and stacked. I have now finished packing 370 boxes. But during this period, because of the slow building up of an exhaustion that utterly possessed my body, finally - I came to the very brink of complete physical collapse - and I was forced to take almost 2 weeks off. I now "feel" there are at least 200 more boxes to go (but I cannot be certain - since there is no way I can exactly calculate this. Nor is there any way to exactly calculate how long 200 boxes will take me. Some days I can work longer than others. If I were in good health - as I was for so long - I am sure I would be finished by now. As it is, the earliest I can possibly finish - will be perhaps the end of February. But I cannot guarantee this. (Dealers, please take note - and try and get clients with present orders, to hold off till March.)

4. Meanwhile, the wing is practically finished. And I now have, for the first time in my life, a darkroom of my very own! (After so many years of going, on 3 different buses, over 10 miles, to a darkroom of some friends in a suburb, - this seems like a dream. I was never sure that I was going to live long enough for this to happen. And now that it has, I still cannot use it.

5. But if things go well - during March I hope to make reprints of all the images in my Aperture book "The Personal Eye", and in my Crown book "Ghosts Along the Mississippi" - which has now sold over 55,000 copies. I must also get a new circulating show together - which will be titled "The Third World in Photography: The World Beyond Documentation and Furism". This show will consist of 50 to 60 mounted 11 x 14 prints - all of which will deal with the transcendence of the object - the introduction of the poetics of dream into objects and people... It is now booked for the Addison Gallery of American Art in Andover, Mass. - April 7th through May 14th. This show is now open for bookings thereafter - the rental fee being \$600. for 1 1/2 months, plus one way transportation and insurance charges. There will be a Foreword for the show, and captions for every print - but prints will have to be framed by exhibiting institution.

Please keep wishing me luck! I will need it!

My love, and warmest good wishes to all!

My new address will be: 5227 Marigny St., New Orleans La. 70122

Phone there: 504-288-6279 (I get all my mail there)

I am still mostly at: 627 Decatur St. (Attic) (Upper Pontalba Bldg.) 504-522-5588 (This is where most of the work must be done).

Clarence John Laughlin

P.S. Because of not having a literary agent, and my lack of time to personally find a publisher for my new book on Louisiana (almost 300 pictures and over 92,000 words) - it may have to wait till 1979 for publication

2/15/78 P.S. Terribly sorry to hear about the injury to your foot, and the gout. You might try Motrin tablets for the gout (prescription needed) - it has helped me with the arthritis in my right knee - a lot. Delighted to learn of the book being done (but be very careful with Viking Press - it is now owned by Penguin Books). Please keep in touch with me regularly. Most affectionately - Clarence