

Semina, originally produced from 1957 - 1964 by Wallace Berman, who was then already clearly acknowledged as one of the forerunners of the California Assemblage art movement, together with artists such as Jay De Feo, George Herms, Jess and Ed Kienholz, has recently been reprinted, produced by hand in limited editions of varying size.

Considered to be Berman's most major work, *Semina*, a collection of nine journals or "little magazines", was created principally as a vehicle to express the ideas, issues and art embraced by Berman and his contemporaries of the "Beat Generation." All of the volumes were printed predominantly on a tabletop platen press utilizing an eclectic variety of paper stocks and type faces. Each stylistically variant issue was sent by mail primarily to friends and colleagues of Berman's. None were for sale!

Umbrella (vol. 2, no. 1, January 1979) had a cover article by Clair Wolfe, a former editor of *Artforum*, which told the story of these "containers" for Berman's deepest concerns. They contained carefully selected works of his friends as well as works he admired from all histories and times. The "friends" included Charles Bukowski, William Burroughs, Robert Duncan, Allen Ginsberg, Michael McClure, and David Meltzer. Selected writings of Antonin Artaud, Baudelaire, William Blake, Jean Cocteau, Herman Hesse and Yeats, each of whom had an influence upon the spirit of the "Beat" movement. So, this was much in the vein of Conceptual Art, Fluxus and Mail Art.

Within *Semina*, Berman exhibited a fascination with and devotion to the timeless sense of mystery and power of the human experience. His use of Hebrew letters incorporated into his works began in 1957, referring to the hidden meanings of the Kabbalah. These letters became a pivotal element in subsequent works created throughout the remainder of his career. In addition, his motto stated in *Semina* 2, the cover of the Beatles' Sargent Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band album showed Wallace's face may be seen with his faithful reminded that "Art is Love is God."

In producing this facsimile edition of *Semina*, George Herms has remained as faithful to the original version as possible. However, due to the passage of time, various aspects of this monumental project dictated the necessity of selecting alternate materials, type, etc. Yet the paper remained. Herms, in the three years it took him to complete the reprint, made any such determinations with a deep consideration for how Berman would have proceeded and with an intuitive knowledge gained through their many years of close association and friendship.

Published in an edition of 300 with 20 proofs, the cost is \$1,500 from L.A. Louver Gallery, 55 N. Venice Blvd., Venice, CA 90291.