

L.A. LOUVER, Inc.

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L.A. Louver is delighted to announce the publication of an extraordinary limited edition facsimile version of Semina, volumes 1-9 by Wallace Berman (1926-1976) which will be available in June 1992. The facsimile volumes will be on view at L.A. Louver to accompany an exhibition opening June 4th entitled "Poem Makers: Wallace Berman, George Herms and Jess". Also on view at that time will be original archival letter and photographs from the personal collection of Jess and the Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institute which houses the Berman archives and those of Patricia Jordan. This is the first time that the Archives have lent original source material to a gallery exhibition.

Semina was originally a limited circulation artwork created by Berman in collaboration with other artists, poets and writers. Hand set typeface printed on letterpress, each volume is small, hand-bound and uniquely designed, and contain numerous inserts of photographs, poetry and essays set into the interior pockets. These volumes, together with the mixed media constructions made concurrently, represent the principal thrust of Berman's creative work between 1957-1964 and precede the familiar verifax collages he made from 1964 until his death in 1976. Only five original complete sets are known to exist.

Semina was iconoclastic in its approach and in its choice of contributors. Rather than create a more traditional art journal which might reproduce "high" art images of religious subject-matter, genre or landscape scenes, Berman focused on representing the artistic and literary avant-garde which resonated within the Beat Generation and the then fledgling and marginalized artistic community in Los Angeles. Berman selected the contributors which included figures as diverse as William Burroughs, Jean Cocteau, Robert Duncan, Allen Ginsberg, Herman Hesse, and Michael McClure. One could not subscribe to Semina; one could only receive an issue if Berman sent one which makes Semina virtually the first example of mail art work, presaging important developments such as Fluxus and Conceptual Art.

The facsimile edition of Semina 1-9 is published in an edition of 320 copies with no proof copies. The production, which has taken four years, has been supervised throughout by Berman's fellow artist and friend, George Herms. Intimately acquainted with Berman's entire oeuvre, Herms has painstakingly overseen the publication to ensure veracity to the original and an overall outstanding quality.

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The edition is available as a complete set of nine volumes. The pre-publication offer is \$ 900 at which price only fifty sets will be sold. The subsequent publication price will then be \$ 1,200.

This is a wonderful opportunity to have in one's collection an entire body of work by an artist who, through his unorthodox approach to life and art, made an invaluable contribution to American art and culture. Please contact L.A. Louver Gallery as soon as possible should you wish to order an edition of Semina and discuss Berman's work in greater detail.