



From left to right:
Jacob Muldowney (USA), M. Pavan Kumar (India),
Michal Graczyk (Poland), Ed Varney (Canada)

International Mail Art Exhibition & Swap

Coordinated by Kathy Tycholis

RICHMOND ART GALLERY
November 18, 2011 – January 15, 2012
Opening: Thursday November 17, 7-9pm

SUPPORTED BY



Artists from all over the world have contributed their work for the RAG's *International Mail Art Exhibition*, coordinated by Kathy Tycholis. Mail Art is a worldwide cultural movement that involves sending visual art, music, sound art, or poetry through the international postal system, and is based on the principles of barter and equal, one-to-one collaboration.

For this exhibition, anyone was welcome to submit up to three artworks that measure 5" x 5", on the theme of "Economy". All submissions received will also be part of an online gallery for one year at www.richmondartgallery.org/MailArt. At the end of the exhibition, the artworks will be traded and sent to each participant as part of the exchange. Although the Mail Art call specified a theme and size, we also realize **there are no rules to Mail Art**. We expected absolutely anything, and all art we received is displayed, regardless of the specifications.

Mail Art is believed to have started in the 1940's with a small piece of collage created by New York artist Ray Johnson (1927–1955). Known as the "Father of Mail Art", Johnson mailed artworks to fellow artists, who transformed the work and sent it back to Johnson. From here Johnson's *New York Correspondence School* formed an extensive communication network through the mail between artists.

As Johnson's *Correspondence School* gained momentum in the 1960's, Mail Art spread throughout the world and continues on today. The mailing of artworks, or art relating to postal products (i.e. bearing artists' faux postage or rubber stamps), is one of the main characteristics of Mail Art. Lettering, handwritten or printed, is also integral to Mail Art whether as a literary art form or as personal notes sent with artwork.

Mail Art generally operates with a spirit of “anything goes,” combining artistic experimentation with humour, spontaneity, and simplicity of materials. One of the most important principles is that a sender must also receive. For many Mail Artists, the process of exchanging ideas and collaboration within a global community is valued above the aesthetic merits of the finished product, differentiating the Mail Art Network from the world of commercial postcards and of simply “mailed art”.

In recent years Mail Art has moved online, displaying and sharing works on Mail Artists’ blogs and through social networking groups. Mail Art continues to transform itself with the times, while remaining a free cultural exchange in opposition to the commercial art market.

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Art Gallery presents “How to Draw a Bunny”, a documentary about the life of artist Ray Johnson, known as the granddaddy of Mail Art. The film includes cameos by many artists involved in the New York art scene of the 1970s–1990s. The free film screening will be shown on Saturday, December 3 from 2:00 to 4:00pm.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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Gallery Hours
Monday to Friday, 10am to 6pm
Weekends, 10am to 5pm
Closed for statutory holidays

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