

The Box: From Duchamp to Horn
October 29 - December 10, 1994

The transformation of a box into a magical object or a work of art has been a challenge to artists over the centuries. From the medieval chased, enamelled and bejewelled bronze reliquaries housing holy icons to the pure and simple oval American Shaker finger boxes of the 19th Century, artists and craftspeople have attempted to infuse a mundane object with power and meaning.

With the arrival of Modernism in the 20th Century, artists created boxes which expressed the ideas and mood of the period. The wit and irony of Dada, for instance, is reflected in the ready-made *Boite en valise* by **Duchamp**, which was published in several editions between 1941 and 1968. Each box was filled with between 68 and 83 replicas of the artist's work (depending on the date of the edition), transforming it into a portable museum.

The individual concerns of artists have endowed their boxes with metaphysical, sinister, satiric, and even political characteristics. We are tantalized by **Joseph Cornell's** mysterious Victorian traveling bar, to which the artist added bone, coral, mineral and various other ambiguous elements. A box of **Lucas Samaras** is richly sheathed with festive colored beads and glass scarabs, only to open to a terrifying diorama surrounded by thousands of pins.

The smoked glass cover of the galvanized metal box by **Kounellis** alludes to a fiery combustion, underscoring the artist's interest in alchemy. **Christenberry's** Alabama Box is a visual autobiography which includes sand from his home state, a wooden folding knife carved by his father, and a mock relic of the Ku Klux Klan. The total work stresses the artist's political concerns.

O

The art works of nine separate artists are concealed in **Sol LeWitt's** intriguing nine-part box. By means of a flashing light, the viewer is permitted a very limited glimpse through the outside grid into the art secreted darkly within. **Rauschenberg** is concerned with formalist issues exclusively when he retrieves a shoeshine box and transforms it into a dynamic sculpture.

These are just a few of forty works by forty artists which are represented in this second exhibition of Ubu Gallery.