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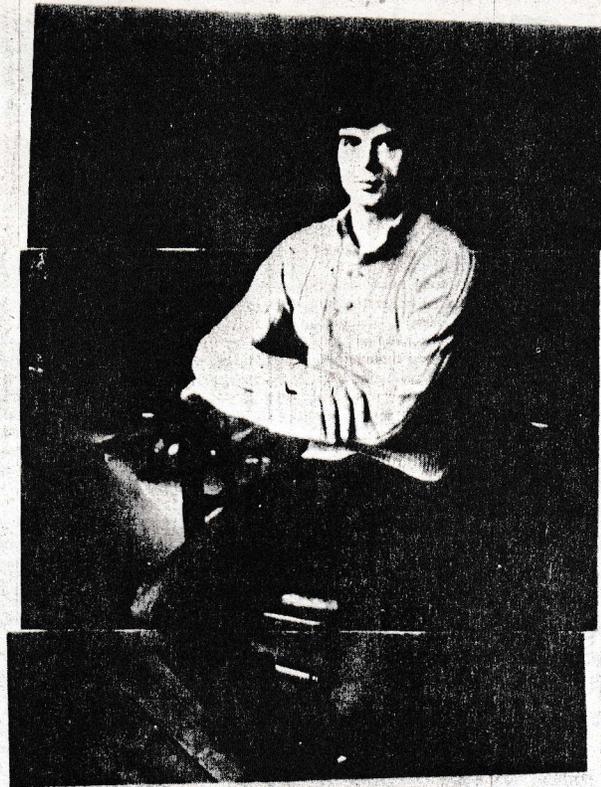
Frolic Art

by Hunter Drohojowska

Who says books about art and/or artists have to be academic and tomish? There are those out to prove otherwise.

Better Living Catalogue by Philip Garner. Delilah Books. \$6.95.

This slim catalogue features "62 Absolute Necessities for Contemporary Survival," all of them the eccentric inventions of artist Philip Garner. It's a hilarious assortment. In the tradition of great satire, the line between fantasy and fact is practically indistinguishable, and even the goofiest products seem plausible. For example, "Jog'N'Blend," a "people-powered product" — a plastic backpack that can be strapped to a jogger for the blending of favorite beverages. Or, the "Shower-in-a-Can," accompanied by "Towel-in-a-Can." Then, there's the "Blaster-Bra," a wearable stereo speaker system that "leaves hands free for sports, driving, other activity." This lampoon features a photograph of each ridiculous item and a paragraph of breezy explana-



Rudolf Nureyev from David Hockney Photographs.



tion. A more amusing conceptual artwork is hard to find for the price. In addition, a number of Garner's weird creations, specifically lamps, are available at the Functional Art Store in Santa Monica.

Exterior Decoration: Hollywood's Inside-Out Houses by John Chase. Hennessey & Ingalls. \$19.95.

Anyone who has pondered the origins of West Hollywood's idiosyncratic stage set architecture (and who hasn't?) should welcome the explanations in this book. With a combination of wit and scholastic restraint, L.A. architect John Chase analyzes the city's irrepresible drive to remodel by endlessly attaching elaborate facades to blank stucco cubes. The author cites the film industry and the gay community among the influences on the "fashions in facades," which he categorizes as the Mansard, the Classic and the Box. These remodels often incorporated architectural details from the neighboring mansions in Beverly Hills, reflecting the less wealthy owners' personalities and aspirations. Much of the book derives from Chase's research. He drove the streets of Hollywood, photographing bizarre examples of "Hollywood Regency," the most popular style, and then traced the origins of appearance. Rather than dismissing the at times comically excessive structures, Chase seeks explanations for their emergence as a phenomenon. The spare volume is amply documented with black and white photographs, long captions and footnotes. The cover, however, is disconcertingly tacky and, as the adage goes, is no indication of

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the content's quality.

California Artists Cookbook. Introduction by James Beard. Photographs by Chotzie Blank. Foreword by Henry T. Hopkins. Produced by Chotzie Blank and Ann Seymour. A Modern Art Council Project for the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. Abbeville Press. \$25.00.

Now here's a question for the holidays: What do the artists eat? This colorful book includes quite a range of answers, from the sincere good taste of William Brice's steak au poivre, to the gourmet aspirations of Laddie John Dill's stuffed squid with beurre blanc, or such exotic contributions as Frederick Eversley's Caribbean conch chowder. The book includes many more Northern than Southern California artists: Wayne Thiebaud and his tantalizing spaghetti with mizitra sauce; Paul Wonner's champignons a la provencale; even Henry T. Hopkins, director of the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, gets into the text with a recipe for roast wild duck. The volume is attractively illustrated with paintings and drawings of foodstuffs, as well as photographs of the artists, either in studio or kitchen, and a brief curriculum vitae. Recipes run the gamut, from appetizers through dessert, from Larry Bell's chile verde, which serves 12, to Lynn Hershman's imprisoned eggs for

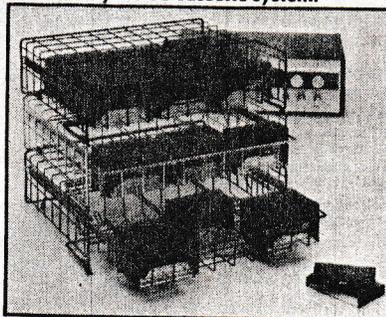
Timothy Leary, which serves only one but clearly is the most cosmic dish in the book.

David Hockney Photographs. By David Hockney. Petersburg Press. \$30.00.

David Hockney's recent Polaroid compositions were exhibited under the title "Drawing with a Camera," and indeed, the complex works demonstrated a remarkable understanding of the nature of seeing. This book includes those latest photographs and shows an evolution of images beginning in 1962. Hockney's enjoyable text elucidates what relationships exist between the photographs and the paintings, as well as providing tasty bits of autobiography. Hockney writes that the photographs acted as a visual diary and his book exudes that intimacy, that familiarity and knowledge that he expects of his readers. The tone is warm, and, in fact, correct, since anyone with an awareness of Hockney's painting *does* know the recurring characters of Celia and Ossie, Peter, Henry, Gregory, Christopher and Don. One only laments that the book features so few of the most recent cubistic Polaroid compositions. They are evidence of his observation, "Vision is flux" — the new photos are more real because they are closer to the experience of looking. Those photos, perhaps, have been saved for the sequel. ■

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