

WHAT'S WRONG WITH THIS PICTURE ?



Ever Meulen's art from Raw #2

Courtesy of Pantheon Books

"Read Yourself Raw," edited by Art Spiegelman and Francoise Mouly, Pantheon Books, \$14.95.

In the early part of this century, a small group of artists, theorists and writers, far to the left of the surrealists and more committed to absurdity than the absurdists, began producing a body of works that, although obscure and ignored by all but a few academically cloistered pedants, has had a lasting effect on every underground cultural movement of the past 65 years.

The movement these artists spawned was called Dada and their chief theorist, Tristan Tzara, issued manifesto after manifesto proclaiming the goals of the movement: denial of form, reality, history and Dada itself. Most of Dada was as the name implies: theoretically substantiated gobbledygook buoyed by pedantic over-intellectualization.

Much of it, however, grasped the absurd tone of this century, the mind-numbing effects of industrialism, urban sprawl, hyper-media and hyper-capitalism, more appropriately, humanely and, above all else, humorously, than any other modern cultural movement.

Most critically acclaimed TV sitcoms — "Cheers," "Buffalo Bill," "Taxi," etc. — contain some elements of Dada. And underground comics, comics for and by sophisticated adults, have always looked to Dada as a source of inspiration.

The magazine "Raw," first published by Art Spiegelman and Francoise Mouly in July 1980 is, perhaps, Dada's most respected heir. "Raw's" first three pioneering issues have been reprinted in one cover and titled "Read Yourself Raw." The book's introduction is by Spiegelman, whose graphic novel "Maus: A Survivor's Tale" has been acclaimed by some critics as a piece of modern literature. The first three issues feature work by "Zippy" creator Bill Griffith; Josh and Drew Friedman (published frequently in National Lampoon); and Spanish furniture, shoes and textiles designer Mariscal among many others. The graphic short

stories range from bizarre blends of James Cain and Franz Kafka to the childlike punk ruminations of Gary Panter.

Spiegelman, in the book's introduction, delivers a Tzara-esque manifesto for "Raw":

"Underground comics had offered something really new: comics by adults, for adults; comics that weren't under any obligation to be funny, or escapist pulp; comics unself-consciously redefining what comics should be, by smashing formal and stylistic, as well as cultural and political taboos. At last, there was a comics avant-garde."

Inside there are several nods to the Dada spirit, including a story by French playwright Alfred Jarry, who created one of the best-known Dada characters: Pere Ubu. Ubu was featured in three Jarry plays. Jarry has since become a prominent cult figure for underground and alternative comics, novels and music.

"Raw" is still published erratically and is available at Trade-a-Tape here in Lincoln. As an added bonus, this repackaging of "Raw" includes Mark Beyer's "Terrors of the City" detachable color trading cards and Spiegelman's full-color mini-comic "Two-Fisted Painters." The color covers of the first three issues are also intact.

The comics here will hold little interest for those whose enjoyment of comics stops with "Garfield"; they are for those interested in a thriving, if not monetarily prosperous, comic underground. Unfortunately, the business of making comics as respectable as they are in Europe and Japan has shoved many of these artists further into obscurity. Most of the comics in "Raw" have qualities usually only associated with literature — a demanding sense of style, substantive subject matter that is often distasteful for the squeamish, a sense of historical and political perspective, and an unabashed knowledge of cult cultural movements like Dada, absurdism and surrealism.

As the cover of "Read Yourself Raw" promises, this is a coffee-table book for "damned intellectuals."

Reading Raw

By Charles Lieurance

Shakespeare at the Bowl

From Staff Reports

The Ranch Bowl Entertainment Center (1606 S. 72nd St.) in Omaha, which started booking alternative bands last semester, will start off the new year with a performance by the Minneapolis band Trip Shakespeare tonight.

Trip Shakespeare released an album this year called "Apple Head Man" on Gark Records. The band features a stand-up drummer.

The show begins at 9 p.m. and admission cost is \$2. The first draw of beer is free with a ticket.

The ex-bass player for the Violent Femmes, Bryan Richie, will perform at the Ranch Bowl with Blind Idiot God on Jan. 26.

Oklahoma's Flaming Lips will perform Feb. 1 with Doctor's Mob.

Guadalcanal Diary will return to the venue on Feb. 14.

The Ranch Bowl is in the process of booking Husker Du, John Cale, and Guns and Roses, according to owner Matt Markel.

February 17, 1988 is the Deadline!

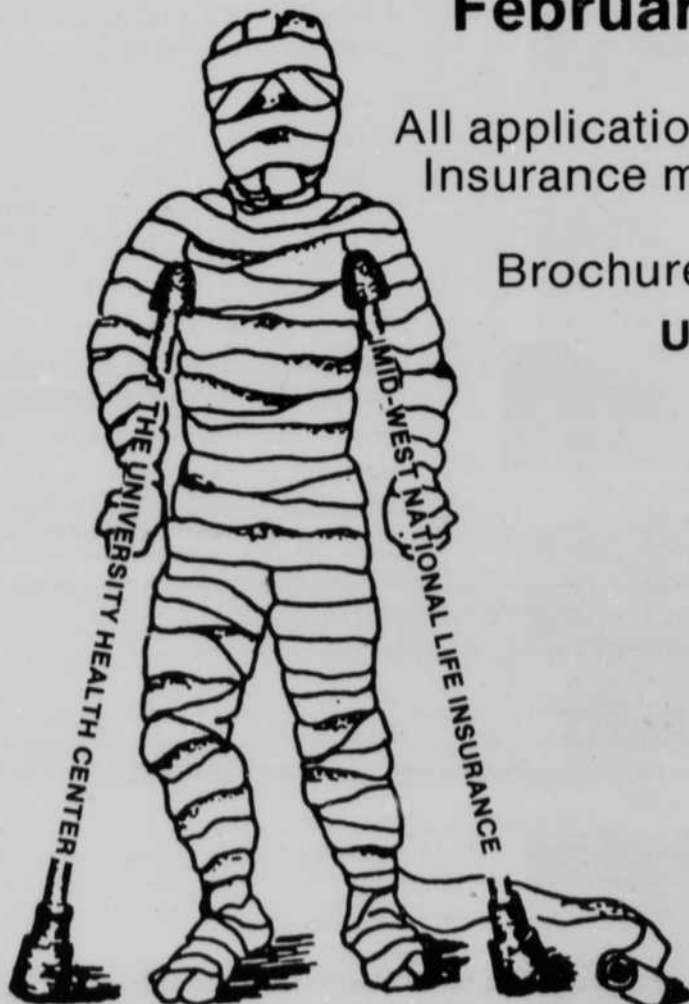
All applications for the Student Health and Accident Insurance must be received by February 17, 1988.

Brochures and information are available at:

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- Am I still eligible for coverage under my parent's plan?
 - A. Is there an age limit? Most policies limit the age for dependent coverage to age 23.
 - B. Are you thinking of marriage? Most policies exclude a dependent after he becomes married.
- Have I declared financial independence from my parents by receiving financial aid, and no longer eligible as a dependent under their plan?
- Would a medical emergency deplete funds set aside for my education?



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