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"Art of the City" is a weekly column by Andrew Russeth that runs every Tuesday.

Let's Get Rite

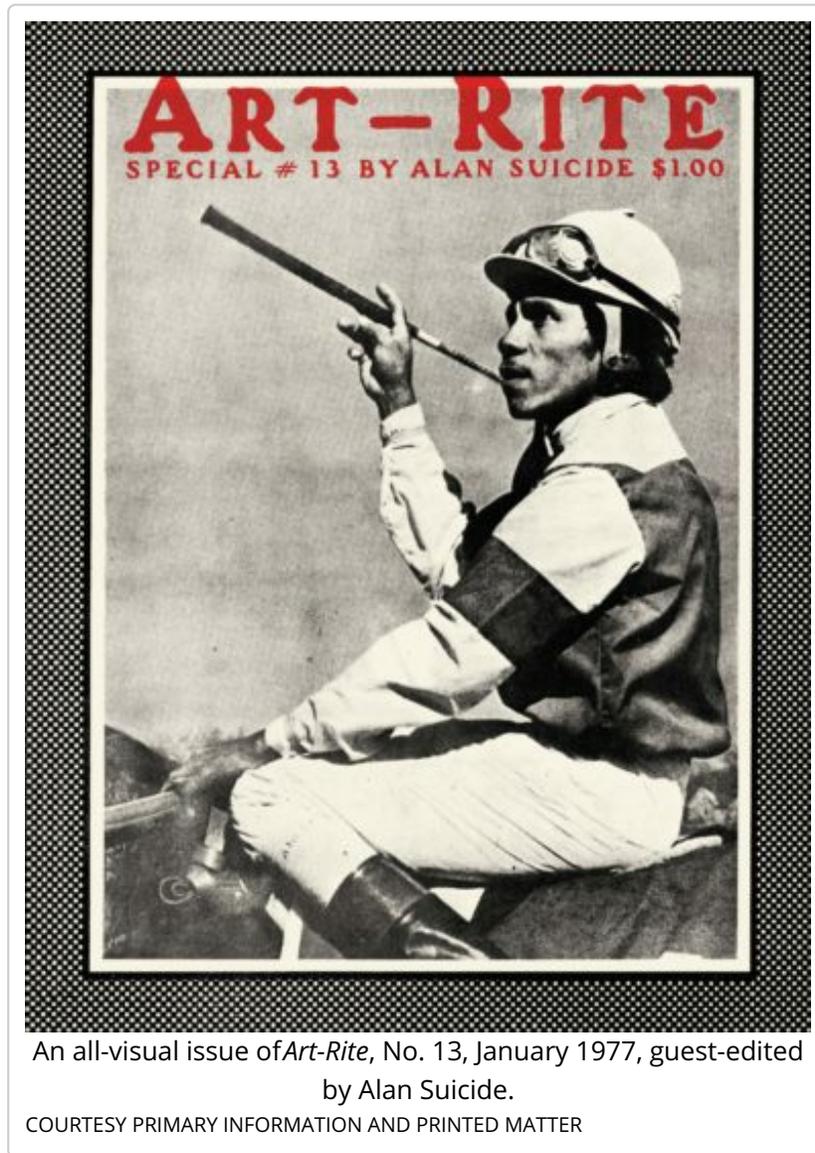


Art-Rite No. 5, Spring 1974, with a cover by Christo.
COURTESY PRIMARY INFORMATION/PRINTED MATTER

At a time when there is much fretting about the health of art criticism, it's refreshing to come across **Printed Matter** and **Primary Information**'s exquisite new facsimile of **Art-Rite**, the charmingly scrappy outlet that ran in New York from 1973 to 1978, billing itself as an "unpredictable art magazine with nonformidable criticism in a disposable format." It crackles with good ideas that are ripe for replication and adaptation, and it contains an irreverent tone that actually does exist today, though usually only spotted in scattered artists' blogs, sardonic Instagram accounts, group chats, and the odd podcast.

Where to begin? No issue was ever quite like another, but a defining thread of the vision of editors **Edit DeAk**, **Walter Robinson**, and **Joshua Cohn** (who dropped out midway through its 20-issue run) was a commitment to the voices of artists and writers. "I enjoy giving books I have made to others," **John Baldessari** says in one issue. "Art seems pure for a moment and disconnected from money." Writes **Les Levine**, "What the audience expects from the artist is that you be some heroic figure, which they can look up to." In a condensed interview, **Julian Schnabel** expounds on man's best friend; an editorial note concedes, "We should say that he does talk about things other than dogs."

One element remained constant: artists designed the covers, and **Dorothea Rockburne** crafted a heartbreaker by simply folding it diagonally to form a triangle below the logo.



Semi-recurring features included breezy reviews, artist projects, and substantial, unsigned profiles of art critics like **Max Kozloff** (“Maximum Kozloff” is its winning headline), **Lucy Lippard**, and **Douglas Davis**, who offers an opinion that could have been delivered this morning: “If you’re seriously involved in art I don’t see how you can be completely satisfied about any of the ways to earn a living it.”

Minutiae delight. **Linda Nochlin** shows up in the letters section of an early issue declaring *Art-Rite* “too cute for words,” while scolding the team for misspellings of Clement Greenberg and Claes Oldenburg. Nochlin, née Weinberg, writes: “Most Artb-rgs are bergs; most Jewishb-rgs are bergs; more other b-rgs are one or the other.”

The ads alone are worth spending time with: **Castelli** and **Sonnabend** marketing videotapes, **Betty Parsons** quoting herself (“Feeling is the content of art”), a one **Norm Dolph** offering “portable discotheque for loft parties” (“We can work it out” was his catchy slogan).

It all amounts to a portrait of an art world much smaller than today's, and also one a bit more cloistered from mainstream culture. Artists and writers were experimenting, and a great deal of fun was taking place, the volume suggests, but the go-go 1980s were approaching. A lot was about to change.

RECENT COLUMNS... The **new MoMA**, public art and a **Chase flagship branch** in Midtown Manhattan, a guide to **art museums and ice cream** around New York.

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