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Homo Futurus

On the first page of Barbara Rosenthal's book, *Homo Futurus*, she writes: "Making art: discontinuant processing of raw experience."

And *Homo Futurus* is exactly that...an artist's documentation of the processing of the "raw experience" of life. It is a kind of scrapbook, composed of diary-like prose-poetry entries, with photos, letters, newspaper clippings and other oddments superimposed on the text.

As in a family album or journal, Rosenthal's book encompasses the entirety of the artist's life; nothing is too inconsequential or too personal or too painful to mention -- from a line her daughter says, comments on the creative process, refrigerator troubles, to an account of her mother's hospitalization and death.

According to Rosenthal, the visual material in the book -- the snapshots, etc, -- only appear to obscure parts of the text. In reality, she says, the words were cut and the poetry written to the shape of the pages to give the effect of "missing" words. The reader's possible frustration with the seemingly incomplete text was intentional, she said, "to indicate the intrusion of the world's data...on the running flow of an artist's/individual's conscious or stream of conscious."

"That frustration with interference," she says, "is very much a part of my life, and writing.... It is this constant butting up of the external and internal flow of language and information and imagery that I mean to convey."

Convey it she does. Spanning a period of two years (1982-4), the book is a compelling glimpse of a life charged with psychic energy. It seems to be only a chapter in what must be a much larger work, the life of Barbara Rosenthal.

The book, 48 perfect-bound pages, was published in 1986 by Visual Studies Workshop Press. Copies are available from Printed Matter, 7 Lispenard St., NYC 10013.