



## Ray Johnson: The Paper Snake

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Long out of print and unavailable to wider audiences, *The Paper Snake* is an essential work in Ray Johnson's oeuvre and the second title published by Dick Higgins' Something Else Press, in 1965. Johnson describes the book as "all my writings, rubbings, plays, things that I had mailed to [Higgins] or brought to him in cardboard boxes or shoved under his door, or left in his sink, or whatever, over a period of years." A vertiginous, mind-bending artist's book, *The Paper Snake* was far ahead of its time. In his essay "The Hatching of the Paper Snake," Higgins says: "I was fascinated by the way that the small works which Ray Johnson used to send through the mail seemed so rooted in their moment and their context and yet somehow they seemed to acquire new and larger meaning as time went along ... Since a book is a more permanent body than a mailing piece or even than our own physical ones, I could not help wondering what it would be like to make a new body for Johnson's ideas as a sort of love letter or time capsule for the future." A collection of letters, little plays, tid-bits, collages and drawings, *The Paper Snake* connects disparate elements to unbed fixed relationships and forge new systems of meaning by means of scissors, paste and the American postal system.

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