



100 WORD ideas to change MALTA

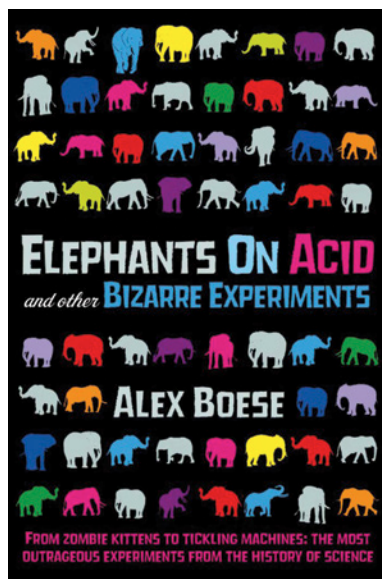
An Artlab for contemporary visual production

by DR VINCE BRIFFA

Global cultural production has in recent years expanded far beyond any previous phenomenon in visual arts history. At the same time, the humanities have lost exclusiveness over image production. In fact many scientific fields indulge in lavish image-making as potential thinking and working support tools. A merger between the artist's studio and the research laboratory is perhaps now called for. This place would encourage research; produce and disseminate the contemporary image; bridge the sciences and the humanities and address the totality of the image in the full spectrum of contemporary culture at the intersection of art, science, technology, and society. ●

BOOK REVIEW

by The Editor



Elephants on acid

Alex Boese

WHAT DO YOU think would happen if you were to inject 3,000 times the human dose of LSD into an elephant? The answer is at the end of this book review. Alex Boese's *Elephants on acid* is the perfect bathroom read. He has collected short snippets of bizarre and sadly entertaining experiments. They will make you laugh out loud, cry, and learn.

The book is split into 10 chapters. Each chapter is themed as a collection of short stories on a topic. You will be horrified by *Frankenstein's Lab*, a section that talks about real life mad scientists who created zombie kittens and two-headed dogs. Apparently, when in 1780 Luigi Galvani discovered that electricity caused a frog's muscles to contract moving its limbs, others decided to try it on pretty much everything, including humans. Electricity was seen as part elixir of life, part public demonstration. Thankfully, human demonstrations were eventually banned due to public outrage, but might even have inspired Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Other experiments have less shock value, yet are still incredibly interesting. Take Chapter 4, *Bedtime Stories*, when Boese writes about sleep experiments. In one story, the author sheds light on how the myth of sleep-learning came about. In 1942, Professor Lawrence LeShan kept reciting the phrase, after his gramophone broke down, "My fingernails taste terribly

bitter" to 20 young sleeping boys. They heard it over 16,000 times and the Professor concluded that this stopped them biting their nails via their subconscious. It didn't cross his mind that having an old man talking whilst you're trying to sleep biased the results. By the 1950s, carefully controlled studies dispelled this myth, although it still keeps cropping up — every crank likes a good story to spin, and sell. I wish it were true, it is such a shame I cannot learn quantum physics in my sleep: shoot!

By chapter 5 (*Animal Tales*), Alex Boese visits the book's title. In 1962, animal ethics hardly existed; injecting LSD into an elephant was definitely a poorly thought out experiment. But, it didn't stop Louis Jolyon "Jolly" West and Chester M. Pierce from trying it out on an adult male. After nearly two hours of charging, collapsing, and panting, the elephant met its maker. Perhaps this is how the term *pink elephants* became linked to the drug.

This book will interest anyone who likes bizarre scientific facts. Inside its covers are the perfect party stories. It is a very entertaining read, though I could not read it for long periods. It's the type of book you pick up, read a few stories, and then put down. Expect to learn a fun fact or two, a bit of science, and lots of entertaining history. One of the most entertaining books I've read this year, highly recommended. ●