

Letter from Mark Strand To Basim  
on The "Scrapbook"

Batuz:

It occurs to me that the ideal way to document the activities of the Société Imaginaire is to create a series of scrapbooks. A scrapbook has the virtue of giving those who create it a great deal of leeway - it can be whatever its authors wish it to be. It can include photographs, drawings, pieces of conversation, plays, poems, stories, observations of a profound or frivolous nature, menus, dreams, etc. But, I suppose, it could also be a series of voids. It is up to its creators. What I propose is that a group of six individuals - writers, poets, printmakers, etc. - get together for a week at Alzella with the sole purpose of creating a scrapbook. It would represent the combined energies of the six people and imaginatively document their time together. I believe that the group of six should share the same language (this will make collaboration a great deal easier). Thus, there might be a North American contingent, a Polish contingent, a German contingent, etc. The work of one group will be translated by each of the other groups. Perhaps two visits to Alzella per year will be sufficient - that is, there will have to be enough time between scrapbooks to allow for the completion of the translations. If the first group of six is a Polish speaking, then the next group of Poles will come only after a number of other groups will have had their week of making a scrapbook. It is hoped that the scrapbooks will differ vastly from each other, that a friendly competition might develop between the groups. No group of the same individuals should get a second chance at a scrapbook. Each attempt will be unique and have about it a ragged finality, an air of terminal improvisation. The original scrapbook stays at Alzella. The making of these scrapbooks should be a great deal of serious fun. And inasmuch as they are collaborative efforts, they will reflect, provisionally of course, the provisional ideals of the Société Imaginaire.

Mark Strand