

Foreword:

*Would You Give Up Your Arms For Wings? A story inspired by the visionary life & writings of Paulus Berensohn*

Equally haptic and esoteric, Paulus Berensohn's approach to every medium he explored brought forth a new material intuition. His dance, his works with clay, his drawings, and his embroidered tapestries eschewed typical forms and focused on a new practice of learning through experience.

This story inspired by the visionary life and writings unveils a time of Paulus' teaching that transcends his practices, where he reaches deep into the ecology of his practice. The tapping into the cyclical nature of ceramics, the mark making of embroidered tapestry, and the dance of the pen through drawing.

While planning to visit Portico during her 2017 sabbatical at the Ceramics Research Center on the campus of Arizona State University, one prerequisite for my visit was to acquire and read a copy of Paulus Berensohn's *Finding One's Way with Clay*. Amidst her transformation there, she now concluded every email with a quote from M.C. Richards, the teacher and life-long friend of Paulus who wrote in her classic text *Centering*, "Our delight in being dazzled or charmed is modest before the greater joy of being blessed." After reading both texts, I understood why she needed to share their work with me. I became an instant fan of both artists and authors.

A year later when I accepted an internship with the Smithsonian Institution's Archives of American Art, one of the few ceramicist collections that I was to assist with included Paulus. As I sat in my windowless closet of an office, a metal trolley carrying three banker boxes rolled in. The chances of this overlap were incredible. When Portico recommended me for the internship neither of us expected the stars to align in such a way as to bring Paulus further into our lives. It felt as if the narrative were closing in to come full circle.

Lifting the lid of the first box, I was confronted by the shifting unprocessed piles of papers and cassette tapes. Taking each out individually, writing a quick glanced description into my document, and then arranging it on the processing table nearby.

- An envelope of iridescent birthday cake shaped confetti
- A scrapbook of photos from different workshops and residencies
- The manuscript for his second book the Silver Sword on the introduction of tapestry to his practice

Sending Portico these notes and sharing in the delight of the world of Paulus, deepened both of our understanding of his work. In the evolution of this work as her own creative play Portico has unearthed long forgotten memories of Berensohn's methods through archival research and personal interviews with those who knew him. Pulling narrative threads from all of these sources, she has used her own silver sword, the writer's pen, to craft a tapestry of his life.

Ross Schartel, MA Fashion Cultures and Histories

Fashion and cultural historian and curator, currently working and living in London, England