

## Creative Creatures

*The ideas and the work of the American and European painters, songwriters, photographers, fiction and non-fiction authors, musicians, film makers, architects, designers, poets, and dreamers I met during my 20 years in America.*

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### **# 49 / Terence Sellers, author, dominatrix, New York City, New York / Abiquiu, New Mexico**

“To any room she adds a dark sparkle of glamour, to any conversation she adds wit. When Terence left New York at the end of September, the city lost a shade of its color. A diarist, a bibliophile and a lover of cats, she was also our most beloved dominatrix.” I do not know when exactly this was written—had she left for Paris or Berlin? No, she must have been on her way to her main domicile in New Mexico. Clearly Terence Sellers had a presence in New York City; she was one of the nightclub literati. In an issue of Gadfly magazine Sanya Osha visiting N.Y.C. from Pretoria, South Africa wrote an article titled ‘Why Terence Sellers is too outré for bohemia’.

Her home in New Mexico sits perched on the edge of a narrow ridge above a deep canyon in the Plaza Blanca area dominated by white sandstone. I have quite a few friends who live in sensational spots worthy of National Park status, but Terence’s location is one of the most extreme and coming with an overwhelming end-of-the-world feeling. Still, she has neighbors. The nearest one is Sabra Moore, also an artist with a New York background. A little farther lives my New York/Los Angeles buddy Susan Martin (a previous Creative Creature) in a spot almost as extreme, though with even better views. Do not think that the word “neighbor” has the same meaning here as elsewhere; many a Dutch nature preserve would easily fit between these neighbors of Plaza Blanca. Somewhere on the same mesa is the second home of Blaine Ellis, a photographer from San Francisco; the cabin of former Santa Fe bookseller

Constanze Frank, now living most of the year in Berlin, Germany; the adobe of Susan Kahn, an artist formerly from Los Gatos, California; and the homes of other unique characters such as Irma la Douce, aka Shirley MacLaine (whose 7,000 acre “off the grid” ranch is for sale in case you are interested).

Terence was one of the first ones to build on the mesa. She selected the best spot, for on her land, high above the rest of the world, sprouts an artesian spring; it fills a little pond where coyotes and smaller desert creatures nightly come to party and which is surrounded by the greenest of ferns—a mind-blowing sight so smack in the middle of sun-bleached and bone-dry sandstone formations which allow no vegetation at all. Most of Terence’s neighbors have only hope; even the deepest of wells produce very little water and sometimes no water at all.

Born in Washington D.C., Terence attended the Classical Studies department at St. John’s College in Santa Fe and studied forensic psychology at John Jay in N.Y.C. In Manhattan she pursued a career in writing and dance. There she wrote her first book: ‘The Correct Sadist, The Memoirs of Angel Stern’, which made her famous even outside the SM scene and was translated into German (‘Der Korrekte Sadismus’), French (‘Ange de Cruate’) and Italian (‘La Sadica Perfetta’). It is a collection of case studies relating to themes of sexual dominance and submission, bondage and discipline, and fetishism. As a prolific writer Terence keeps daily journals and maintains close correspondence; she contributes to BOMB magazine, X magazine and other publications devoted to New York’s downtown art, music and literary scene; her archives are kept at NYU. She appears in many films, such as Betty Sussler’s ‘Menage’ which became integrated in the theatrical production of a Reiner Werner Fassbinder play, ‘Pre-Paradise Sorry Now’. While back in New York for an extended period, during which I was asked to manage and rent out her house, she edited a website for Penthouse.

‘The Correct Sadist’ is a classic in the genre of sado-masochistic erotica, written in an arcane 19<sup>th</sup> century style; it has been variously categorized as a novel, as pornography, and as a dogma. “This classic novel brilliantly draws the reader into a world of an often misunderstood aspect of human sexuality. Exquisitely crafted, ‘The Correct Sadist’ is, in the tradition of de Sade, Sacher Masoch and ‘Story of O’, a vital contribution to our literary and cultural heritage. Through the thoughts of the Mistress Angel Stern we learn about the attitude, acts and reflections of the Dominatrix as she grapples with the strange destiny that life has wrought for her. In doing so she gives us an insight into our own desires and fears, and leaves us to draw our own understanding of an often suppressed and damaged region of the human psyche.” A sequel is on its way. ‘The Correct Sadist 2, Dungeon Evidence’ is a new report from the sado-masochistic frontline documenting the many visitors to the dungeon of Miss Angel Stern. Another Sellers writing is ‘The Obsession’.

In Abiquiu, Terence is sort of a recluse, far away from “the crowd” writing and blogging most of the time. ‘Most Ill of All’ is a collection of stories drawn from life in the “underground” of the sado-masochist’s milieu. “All have that twist that guarantees to enforce the author’s conviction that sado-masochism is not a game.” Some of Terence’s writings have been called “Stringently lyrical and charged with a near-hysterical passion ... favorably compared with the works of the French Symbolists.”