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THE PAGE: AN INTERACTIVE EXHIBITION OF ARTISTS' BOOKS

THE PREMISE *by Karin Lanzoni*

The artist's book is a little known creative genre in which an artist presents his or her ideas in the form of a book. For this survey exhibition, thirty-four artists from a broad range of studio art practices were asked to submit one page (as they define it) from one of their own artist's books to mount on the walls of the gallery. The featured artists—painters, photographers, sculptors, graphic designers, printers, performance artists, and book artists—employ distinctive strategies and techniques. A cursory view of the artists' pages on the gallery walls underscores the diverse and often contradictory forms of this contemporary multiple.

Some pages are terse and conceptual; involve an institutional critique; or are modeled on existing types of books. Others borrow aesthetics from a wide range of fine arts practices and are playful and collaborative, utilizing different mediums and surprising materials. The subjects are as diverse as writing, drawing, printing, color, and typography. Some comment on other formal issues—while other pieces grapple with contemporary culture, focusing on controversial or difficult social and political issues.

The books themselves are either mass-produced; self-published via different printing techniques; or made by hand through traditional bookbinding practices. Within this exhibition, one finds a broad assortment of images on a variety of paper constructions: there is no limit to what appears on the page or how it gets there.

Everything in the world exists to end up

in a book. ~ Stephane Mallarme

In the new art (of which concrete poetry

is only an example) communication is

still inter-subjective, but it occurs in a

concrete, real, physical space: the page.

~ Ulises Carrión

THE PAGE *by Karin Lanzoni*

Brought together on the walls and framed are the exhibited "pages" from 34 different artists' books. These pages may or may not be fully understood as displayed on the wall. By isolating one page, framing it and presenting it as a 2-D artwork a nod is given to a particular type of artist's book, a "sub-genre" called "livre d'artiste."

"A distinctive product of French modernism, the livre d'artiste came into being at the end of the 19th century and matured through the 20th. The genre was intrinsically eccentric in form, and its success – relatively modest, at first – was predicated on an urbane European cosmopolitanism and on developing markets for avant-garde (predominantly Cubist, Surrealist, and Symbolist) experimentation. Modern masters were enlisted along with young upstarts, and their work was matched with poems and prose ranging from the experimental to the traditional. From there, each project required paper-makers, printers, typesetters, etcetera – a myriad of skilled craftsmen. Although always inventive, livres d'artistes are distinguished by several elements: printed by specialty ateliers in relatively small limited editions, the volumes feature original images juxtaposed in relation to variably designed text. Commonly encased in boxes, the folios are comprised of sheets of carefully selected handmade-paper, often unbound and frequently oversized, and sometimes cut and folded to unusual effect. The text is handset in distinctive typefaces, in flexible and perhaps stylized relation to the page size." (Lisa Fischman) Unbound, a page from a "livre d'artiste," could be framed and put up on the wall.

Here we have asked our artists to "unbind" their book, as it were. While some artists have supplied the actual page from their books, others have provided us with sources that come from their archive for the page: a letter, a paperback, found photographs, a photograph uploaded to Wikipedia, a small bookcase, etcetera. It appears that the idea of "a page" in an artist's book of the 21st century is complex and no longer limited to paper. Since we asked each

Contrary to most fine art forms, the artist's book is viewed best when an individual interacts with the book itself. In order to promote this kind of unique interaction, the main area of the gallery is a "reading area" designed to be intimate, but provocative. All of the "pages" on the walls are contextualized within their original books, which are placed on tables with chairs, such that the viewer/reader can sit and handle the actual artists' book or a facsimile produced by the artist. Selected by the architects, Linda Chung and Daniel Herman, several Los Angeles designers and architects were asked to design and contribute a chair to this exhibition. *Chung/Herman* also designed the modular tables to display the books, using cardboard—a book-like material—to underscore the physical connection between the books and furniture. Sitting in every chair makes for a varied experience, each one devised by a different designer—just as each page has been created by a different artist.

Also located on one of the tables is an interactive computer kiosk, which allows these books to be viewed page-by-page on the web, emphasizing democratic access.

Introducing the artist's book as both a visual form and an interactive, phenomenological experience prompts the viewer to consider how this format lends itself to a different kind of audience participation compared to a painting, photograph, or piece of sculpture.

THE PAGE ITSELF

I am a lover of paper—I love its feel, its

smoothness, its sounds. And it is with

deep regrets that I close 28 years of

publishing on paper.

~ Judith Hoffberg

artist to select a page, how he or she envisioned or presented that page on the wall—some, after dialogues with the curators—is also a way to understand the artist's intellectual approach to his or her book.

Each "page" on the wall represents a specific relationship to the very idea of a book. Collectively, these pages are fairly analogous to something like "film stills," "freeze frames," "motionless images" or "still pictures" from dissimilar movies. One artist included her hands in the photograph of her page; her hands are the shutters that click through the book. The book is, after all, a series of frames, in a sequence and physically tied together via a binding or another such intervention. A book, the codex, is part machine. Or as artist and conceptualist Ulises Carrión writes in his *The New Art of Making Books*: "A book is a sequence of spaces. Each of these spaces is perceived at a different moment – a book is also a sequence of moments."

The page is, as I have emphasized, an

element in a composition itself, whether

for supplying a white ground...or a

field of action. Experimentation in

computer-generated writing and

hypertext has altered the nature of

textuality altogether, rendering the idea

of the "visible page" a rather outmoded

concept. But the typographic

revolution in modernism made

possible the condition for the page's

deconstruction as moveable type

gave way to photo-offset printing,

now to pixel characters. In a recurring

modernist paradox, the page must first

be seen in order to be made invisible.

~ Michael Davidson

The pages themselves are reunited or explicitly referred to in the books that are laid out on the tables in the gallery. "A book's mechanism is activated when the reader picks it up, opens the cover and starts reading it." (Steve McCaffery and bpNichol) The books are all waiting to be picked up and handled – gently, of course. And they can be handled by anyone.

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Pose, by Alan Kaprow;
A Book of Folds, by Sol Lewitt (last image).



HOW TO READ AN ARTIST'S BOOK by Karin Lanzoni

SIT We are inviting architects to design and fabricate chairs for this show. The main requirement of the chairs is that they are suitable for sitting and reading an artist's book. The other requirement of the chairs is that they be made of wood or wood-based products because, after all, books are made from paper, which comes from wood. This creates a relationship of process between the art and the furniture. Both are made from the same materials but are at different moments in the process. Chairs might be raw lumber, finished wood and/or processed wood products. The collection of chairs will demonstrate the process of wood becoming something else, and this idea of a process is then taken further with the books themselves. In this way, the chairs help to frame or introduce the idea of the book. ~ Dan Herman & Linda Chung

A chair is a very difficult object. A skyscraper is almost easier. That is why Chippendale is famous. ~ Ludwig Mies van der Rohe

Only reality interests me now and I know I could spend the rest of my life in copying a chair. ~ Alberto Giacometti

Carrying chairs through the city, sitting down here and there, photographed, pix left on the spot, going on." ~ Allan Kaprow, score for "Pose" Happening

There are various chairs—designed by Los Angeles Designers—set up around the room; we want you to think about sitting. They all say something about material and about sitting, about wood and the structure that must hold up the human body. In a way, the different structures of these chairs—all chairs nonetheless—parallel the diversity in the books on the table. They too have diverse structures: the codex form, the accordion form, etcetera, even electronic forms, and yet they all are books just the same.

Allan Kaprow, a performance artist, philosopher and the inventor of the phrase "Happenings," did a small artist's book on sitting called Pose. He and several friends walked around Berkeley with chairs and a camera. They sat down in all kinds of pedestrian and non-pedestrian places: a sidewalk, railroad tracks, an off-ramp, a park, etcetera. One person (sometimes Kaprow) sat down for a while and struck a pose—some mimicked Rodin's "The Thinker"—and the other person photographed the sitter. A Polaroid photo was left at the scene. The documentation for these little sitting events was turned into a collection of unbound pages with the dates printed on them, housed in a modest manila envelope. With the title and instructions (also known as a "score") on the envelope, it is possible to re-create this piece. This was recently done in 2008 and can be viewed on YouTube.

What Kaprow asks is: What does it mean to sit in a place that is not meant for sitting? The poses reflect how one is thinking or contemplating (something) in a place where one should normally be alert and watchful or walking. Do we focus our minds more when sitting? How does our thinking change when we are sitting and relaxing? Do we give ourselves time to think about things? Museums often provide benches for sitting, while paintings or sculptures are contemplated.

We felt that this gallery should be transformed somehow into a place where this kind of thinking can occur. The tables and chairs are meant to make the books accessible and invoke such interaction. Please try out all the chairs while you look at the books; some chairs you will relate to strongly, and others not at all, just as with the books on the tables.

Once you sit down, the chair, oddly, transforms your body into a kind of pedestal as you hold the book in your hands. You become part of the exhibition; you are "the reader."

& READ

Every reader finds himself. The writer's work is merely a kind of optical instrument that makes it possible for the reader to discern what, without this book, he would perhaps never have seen in himself. ~ Marcel Proust

Reading makes immigrants of us all. It takes us away from home, but more important, it finds homes for us everywhere. ~ Jean Rhys

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free. ~ Frederick Douglass

If the First Amendment means anything, it means that a State has no business telling a man, sitting alone in his house, what books he may read or what films he may watch. ~ Thurgood Marshall

One must be an inventor to read well. There is then creative reading as well as creative writing. ~ Ralph Waldo Emerson

Outside a dog, a book is man's best friend. Inside a dog, it's too dark to read. ~ Groucho Marx

Once you are comfortable, you pick up a book, you look at the cover, you look at the back cover, you open it, and then proceed to "read" it – back to front, front to back, middle to end, in whatever way you happen to examine that book. Your approach will depend on the book itself.

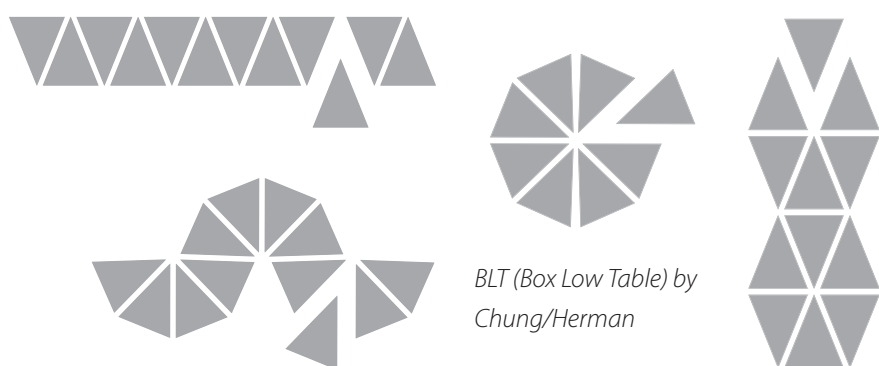
"So here you are now, ready to attack the first lines of the first page... Are you disappointed? Let's see. Perhaps at first you feel a bit lost, as when a person appears who, from the name, you identify with a certain face, and you try to make the features you are seeing tally with those you had in mind, and it won't work. But then you go on and you realize that the book is readable nevertheless, independently of what you expected of the author, it's the book itself that arouses your curiosity; in fact, on sober reflection, you prefer it this way, confronting something and not quite knowing yet what it is." (Italo Calvino)

The kind of reading here will be somewhat different than in a bookstore or a library. It could be about looking at and manipulating an object with contiguous pages. Or it could be about starting in the middle and skipping around in the book. It certainly involves another kind of thinking. Here are some instructions:

- In order to read the old art, knowing the alphabet is enough.*
 - In order to read the new art, one must apprehend the book as a structure, identifying its elements and understanding their function.*
 - In the old art, all books are read in the same way.*
 - In the new art, every book requires a different reading.*
 - In the old art, to read the last page takes as much time as to read the first one.*
 - In the new art, the rhythm of the reading changes; it quickens, it speeds up.*
 - In order to understand and to appreciate a book of the old art, it is necessary to read it thoroughly.*
 - In the new art, often you do NOT need to read the whole book.*
 - The reading may stop at the very moment you have understood the total structure of the book.*
 - The new art makes it possible to read more rapidly than what the fast-reading methods enabled. To read a book is to perceive its structure sequentially.*
 - The old art takes no heed of reading.*
 - The new art creates specific reading conditions.*
- (Ulises Carrión)

TABLES

READING AREA DESIGNED BY Linda Chung and Daniel Herman



CHAIRS BY:

- 1 Renee Dake Wilson and Brian Wilson (Dake Wilson Architects)
- 2 Tim Durfee
- 3 Pierpaolo Granata
- 4 Tom Marble (Marble Architecture)
- 5 Chris Puzio
- 6 Nathan Swift and Gloria Lee (Swift Lee Office)
- 7 Warren Techentin with Nima Payan and Machine Histories
- 8 f.l.u.f.f.
- 9 Chris Warren (WORD)

THE CHAIRS

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A QUICK “READ” OF THE BOOKS IN THIS EXHIBITION

ARHEIM ALKADHI'S *Postcards from the Glandestine Troupe* is a series of bound postcards that underscore the difficulty of documenting women in Iraq's warzone that has dictated a kind of invisibility for them. Culling recent photojournalism from Iraq, Alkadhi creates a fictitious group of women—by digitally manipulating these images—who can freely appear in public disguise (wearing male clothing, using short haircuts, etcetera); they become subversive representations. As Alkadhi comments, “The postcards commemorate a kind of empowerment that goes unacknowledged because so much clouds the representation of people from this region.” Yet, simultaneously, the postcards invoke the epistolary form by virtue of the format, which invites the viewer to pass on these images and descriptions by writing (an invite and a message of support) and sending it to someone else in the world as part of this covert network. —kl

MICHAEL ASHER'S *Painting and Sculpture from the Museum of Modern Art: Catalog of Deaccessions, 1929 through 1998* is a thoroughly researched red-covered book that lists the works by various artists (including Braque, Cezanne, de Chirico, Kandinsky, Miró, Rothko, Pollock, Picasso, etcetera) which were sold or traded between 1929 and 1998. This 15-page book was Asher's contribution to the group show “Museum as Muse: Artists Reflect” as a site-specific piece looking into the opaque practice of deaccessioning art-works. In his “Lieutenant Colombo” personae of posing seemingly innocent questions, Asher met with the Registrars of MOMA and painstakingly reviewed their records to compile this list of paintings and sculptures, all of which had been stamped “deaccessioned” in the logbooks. Normally, this list would never be published; hence, MOMA's anxiety compelled a reduction of the print run and problems with the book's distribution; it is also evident in the uneasy prologue by Kurt Varnedoe. Asher modeled the cover and format of his book on the “New Acquisitions” catalogs published by MOMA; the stamp “Deaccessioned” on the front cover is a replica of the Registrar's stamp found in the logbooks. What would an exhibition of these 400 deaccessioned pieces look like? In keeping with Asher's interests in Conceptual Art and his previous work on absence, one is only able to imagine these paintings and sculptures in reading through the alphabetical list of artists.—kl

DHARRELL FLETCHER'S very modest, small pink book called *The American War* belies its horrific subject matter: graphic photographs of war horrors from the War Remnants Museum in Ho Chi Minh City. While in Vietnam in 2005, Fletcher was so moved by his visit to the War Remnants Museum that he returned there several times to take his own photographs of the display cases containing documentary photographs (with bi-lingual captions) depicting American atrocities against civilians. Shot at peculiar angles to avoid reflections in the display glass, the oblique vantage point of each image is a potent metaphor for how painful and difficult it is to face the Vietnamese perspective that runs so counter to American “truisms” spun in movies like “Apocalypse Now” and “The Deer Hunter.” It is a haunting book. —kl

CHRISTINE FORSYTHE'S *Book of Honest Silence*, invites us into the abstract language of fiber and thread. With a background in fiber arts, Forsythe creates a complex and layered work made with various types of neutral-colored woven pages, overlaid with fine embroidery thread stitched on vellum sheets. This stitching—yellow, orange, black, grey, white and beige—echoes the look of an EEG (electroencephalography) or EKG (electrocardiography) or even a seismic chart, recording some kind of activity that is going on elsewhere. Within the format of the book, there is a tentative narrative that follows these linear threads, starting from their absence, to many of the recordings, and on to the last — blank — page of vellum. Forsythe's choice of using the codex allows for a sequencing of events that we can only imagine; the physical turning of the pages somehow underscores the materiality of these events. Forsythe created the beautiful facsimile book specifically for this exhibition to allow viewers to handle it. —kl/rwc

BKIM BECK'S *A Field Guide to Weeds*, is an elegant re-working of the book's most difficult and ignored space: the gutter. The center of the spread—the “gutter”—is a place where the book folds in (as signatures are sewn together), and it is where, visually, the printed area and the binding meet (usually ungraciously). Here Beck manipulates the dry “scientific format” of the field guide to show how the ugly and marginalized—the gutter of the book and the attribution of certain plants as “weeds”—can be recouped. Instead of showing each specimen of weeds laid out and described, Beck makes a kind of flip book in which these beautiful plants grow—profusely—within the gutter of the book and multiply to cover the page, transforming the white space into a lush array of greens. —kl

A structuralist to the core, **STEPHEN BERENS** has made a tightly organized book, *Here, over there and sometimes here*, that is based on this score: “All of the images in this book were photographed as pairs. The second photograph was taken between 46 and 50 intervals (depending on my age) after the first using one of the following measurements: seconds, minutes, hours, days, inches, feet, paces, miles, number of buildings or of city blocks.” What arises is a document comprised of very small photographs of these multiple mini-performances (or “happenings”) carried out by Berens and published in a large, spacious format for a book. Where the first photograph is taken and why the second photograph has been assigned a particular measurement is often unknown to the viewer. However, the viewer can deduce certain relationships that are outside the frame (including the selected measurement). This informs the narrative structure of the paired photographs and creates a kind of strange conceptual space, signified by the large white area in each spread. The fun is in “reading” these relationships; some quite literal, some very poetic. —kl

SARAH BRYANT'S *Point of View* is an ingenious little artist's book. Each suite of drawings has two “doors” that open up, and the depicted figures change as layers of vellum are turned, almost the way a photograph can change dramatically as different color lenses or see-through patterns are overlaid on the still image. In this work, the very act of turning pages guides the experience of the viewer as images are revealed, hidden, layered, covered and uncovered. Bryant's figures are very elegant but modest; they look like they might be students on a university campus. The physical space of the book is an investigation into perception, or, as Bryant puts it, into “an individual's perception of the relationships of people that surround him or her at any given moment.” Beautifully executed in unassuming materials, the reader sees the transformation of these figures; it prompts a sense of wonder like an optical device could. —kl/rwc

DAVID BUNN is an artist whose source material over the past decade has drawn on the now defunct book-cards from the card catalog once owned by the Los Angeles Central Library. In this bookwork, *Subliminal Messages*, he searches his source—thousands of book-cards—to find the anomalies: accidental marks, the roguish hand-written comments and the playful insertion of bogus cards or interventionist stickers, none of which (presumably) would have been contributed by the professional library staff. Bunn captures these public “interventions” by printing a close-up on one page and then, on the following page, showing the “intervention” *in situ* on the formulaic (and often dated) book-card itself, to hilarious or surprising effects! These anomalies often slyly comment on the content of the volume described on the book-card. The cumulative effect of these “interventions” shows that this great card catalog, like any human institution, houses a version of cultural history and a kind of collective “id” created by a vast public visiting the Library. —kl

GH Five and a half years in the making, **DAN GOODSSELL'S** “Mr. Toast” began as a website project and has morphed into a series of comic books and toy multiples as part of the “Vinyl Art Movement” (a term used to describe toys and other collectibles created by artists and produced independently, in limited editions). As seen in his *Imaginary World Comics #2 with Mr. Toast*, Goodsell has developed a complete comic book world with his grocery characters: Shaky Bacon, Clem Lemon, Joe the Egg, Cornelius Candy Corn, Drunken Carrot and his star culinary figure: Mr. Toast. Taking cues from Gumby, Mr. Toast is an iconic figure and occupies himself with very simple pleasures in a 1950's world where there are no Wii's or cell phones, but rather popsicles, slices of pie, flying carpets, ant farms and space ships. Mr. Toast is not really a comic strip, but a cartoon where each drawing comments on pop culture (for example, brandishing a light-saber Clem Lemon accidental cuts himself in half; Joe the Egg's friends do the River Dance) or the banal interests of a childish imagination (a toilet-paper fort, a monster-face balloon, and stamp-licking as an occupation). Dry, subtle and somewhat quaint, Goodsell's comics are like a child's version of cartoons in *The New Yorker*. —kl

NANCY JO HASELBACHER'S *Borrowed: Mystery, Romance and Knowledge* is focused on the subtle indexical marks left behind by readers. The work is an intriguing collection of pages removed from various fiction books (library discards) in the mystery and romance genres. Also included are pages from several non-fiction books, hence the word “Knowledge” in the title. Flicks of nail polish, smeary stains, faded highlighters, and cryptic blots and blemishes all make an appearance and leave traces of past borrowers, sometimes revealing how those people approached the book. The pages themselves have only fragments of text, but their patterns of fingerprints, smudges, and drips become a record of the way the readers' hands interact with the material form of books. —kl/rwc

Composed of charcoal, graphite, pastel, enamel paint, and the employment of stencils, **DEBORAH HEDE'S** little book called *Sidewalk* is inspired by her drawings that map out her daily walks in Santa Monica. Using a grid and overlaying heavy black lines, her drawings refer obliquely to the curbs and squares of the sidewalks. Hede also makes several abstract shapes that reference street signs or the markings of pedestrian walk-ways and street-crossings. Her marks and layered images also work as a metaphor for “jogging one's memory” as one traverses the city. Having an affinity with Sol Lewitt's artist's books, this little book is about grid, expressive line and shape, and how these elements can structurally invoke a more complex poetics. —kl

MARGARET HONDA'S *Dear Ms. Honda* is a selection of letters written by her students while teaching 5th grade art classes. These letters of apology actually convey a story, albeit in hindsight, about an instigator (Blakely), an out-of-control class, the teacher (Honda) yelling at the students, and also — via later self-reflection — about the kids' own motives in the whole mess. The letters also underscore a key component of the epistolary form, manifested here in awkward but hilarious release: the honesty that underlies confession. —kl

The Wikipedia Reader edited by **DAVID HORVITZ** and designed by **MYLINH NYGUEN** is a collection of (truncated) Wikipedia articles, which tracks the lines of research by a selection of artists as they hyperlink from one article to the next. On the one hand, this piece pays homage to a great democratic experiment in which an educated public creates and contributes to Wikipedia for free. Horvitz, both a Wikipedia fan and contributor, offers an interesting space for artists to utilize, as when he notes his own hand in the picture of Hannah Arendt's grave he had uploaded to her Wikibiography several years earlier. Oddly, two of the artists' “research” landed on this same page about Arendt. Horvitz asks in his introduction to the book, “Why not play with images? Anyone can assert their presence in the background and margins of photographs, becoming part of the information.” Among other things, he is perhaps suggesting a kind of artistic intervention, which one might call “online marginalia,” except the marginalia is composed of images not text. —kl

The brain child of **STEVEN HULL**, *Nothing Moments Press* consists of 23 different book projects that were made by 100 participating writers, artists and designers. Each book had three equal partners: writer, artist and designer. Their collaborative effort underscores the main idea of the series, which is, as quoted from Hull's informative website, “invert[ing] the traditional foregrounding of text over art in the book format.” The book included in this exhibition, *Three Boys Pose for a Camera None of Them are Looking Into*, is a text by **SIMON LEONG**, the drawings are by Steven Hull; and the design by Four Fold. The result is an interesting cross of zine and literary magazine. For example, the artists' work—their drawings and paintings, principally found only in a gallery setting—are now democratically dispersed and accessible in a full range of different venues. These books are a kind of inexpensive, democratic, modern-day “livre d'artiste.” —kl

CROBIN CAMERON, a prolific book artist, has made a book about the book. Titled simply *The Story*, Cameron photographs the cover of 80 paperback novels—be they pulp fiction, self-help, or classics—and constructs several long sentences by inserting, flawlessly, grammatical conjunctions to the title proper — ampersands, letters, or a word — all in graphic camouflage. Cumulatively, these almost imperceptible interventions add up to a humorous but profound overview of life with an aphoristic tint, just as the outdated graphics and fonts on the covers set the kitschy tone (associated with some of the 60's, 70's & 80's book designs) to *The Story*. —kl

Thoughtfully captured in the format of the unbound folio itself, **CAROLEE CAMPBELL'S** *The Persephones* meshes her images with the poems by Nathaniel Tarn. Working collaboratively, the poet himself, in 2007, altered the text specifically for this Ninja Press edition. Twelve ethereal folios have been hand-painted on both sides using sumi ink and salt by the artist and encased in supple goat parchment covers; the sensuality of these materials can only be experienced by the individual access of the reader. Campbell's seasoned eye for typography interprets each *Persephone* with expert pacing, line breaks and movement across the page. In a truly modern version of the “livre d'artiste,” Campbell's seamless integration of type and image exemplifies the elegant union of writer and artist. —kl/rwc

MACY CHADWICK'S *The Topography of Home* is a meditation on the “at-homeness” of where she has lived and where she is living now. The beautifully letter-pressed and pressure-printed pages contrast with blue, diaphanous, circular insets which at once signify a telescopic and a microscopic view of her locale. In trying to clarify this ineluctable idea of “the feeling of there, my place,” she carefully uses a variety of map codes and her own invented “signs” of topography. Hence, the page has the look of an old parchment map. But the yellowed page also references the body; the text is a simple narrative describing her memories about these places, which, in her words, are “recorded under [her] skin.” Her poetic attempt at mapping geographic locations resonates with the viewer; we all attempt to codify our experiences in a book that could evince how we have felt them in life: viscerally. —kl/rwc

REBECCA CHAMLEE'S *Azusa: a Sequel* is a very funny, but sophisticated alphabet book, with witty poems by Paul Vangelisti. The poems allude to the relationship with the Roman and Hebrew alphabets, their numeric analogues and the actual shapes of the letters themselves. The work pays homage to two Los Angeles artists: poet Stuart Z. Perkoff (1930-1974) and visual artist Wallace Berman (1925-1975), both of whom Vangelisti worked with in the 70s and whose profound interest in the Hebrew alphabet became an important touchstone for Vangelisti. Chamlee's innovative use of wood type and interpretive typography playfully set up the humor within the poems, and the title of this alphabet book — *Azusa* — references an old Jack Benny joke: “Azusa, Everything from **A** to **Z** in the **USA**.” —kl/rwc

At least 7 years' in the making, **COLIN COOK'S** collaborative project *Drawings with Bill* (someone who is completely untrained in drawing) provides a clever comment on the state of drawing in the 21st century. Collected in this one edition, Cook's super-tight and “photo-realistic” contributions contrast strongly with Bill's child-like expressionistic renderings, whereby each drawing feels more like a conversation (or an argument) about “reality,” rather than a resolved whole. Cook creates and selects the ideas and images; he carefully marks each drawing so that Bill knows where his lines must intersect Cook's faintly sketched-in figure before mailing it to Bill for his contribution. On finishing, Bill sends the drawings back to Cook—who openly admits to being very surprised at Bill's work. Cook then takes weeks, sometimes months, to finish each drawing using a very fine mechanical pencil. Slightly slapstick but always in control of the image, Cook shows how this de-skilling has great cultural currency at the moment; Bill's awkward hand allows for male subjects to appear as humorously self-deprecating. Cook's work is about the adolescent desires within the male body, both sexually and physically. —kl

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A QUICK “READ” OF THE BOOKS IN THIS EXHIBITION

IJKL

AMOS KENNEDY first worked as a computer programmer. He found old letterpress equipment and became intrigued, took classes on printing and now runs a poster shop in Akron, Alabama, making arresting, eye-catching posters. Known as an “activist artist,” he states that his commercial print-works are about “selling something and my own work is about selling ideas.” In his artwork—small letterpress books or posters—he often employs quotes or cites shocking facts. The little book included in this exhibition is no exception. The simple fact it presents is this: in August of 1993, Lindsey Murdock—a six-year-old boy—died horribly in Roseland, on the south side of Chicago; there was little or no media coverage of this event. Kennedy’s startling work simply titled *Book on Handmade Paper* shows how text and sequence can make no sense of the brutality of such content; at every page turned, we are more horrified. The letterpress printed directly on handmade paper supports the raw immediacy of its impact upon the viewer; it is a cry for righting this terrible injustice done to this child. It is not easy to “read this message and move on,” as is suggested in the preface; the book, in fact, incites us to act. —kl/rwc

MARK ROBERT LEWIS’ *Glassell Park* is a beautiful rumination on painting and color theory. His book collapses the spaces between buildings and presents a collection of exterior painted walls found in his tough East Los Angeles neighborhood, Glassell Park. These color samples, from a wide range of architecture, are a core sample of the social painting practices from his community. Articulated in book form, these colors now quote academic painting, art history, Bauhaus color theories, and prescribed industrial aesthetics. Lewis’ re-contextualizing of painted stucco into page spreads comprised of color charts, color compositions, and color forms, bait the viewer to think about the “laboratory” of color theory over and against the use of color in the real world. It is an epistemological study of the social uses of color through everyday practices. —kl

STEVE MILLER’S *The Dogs of Havana* is a collaborative book between the poet Cade Collum, artist Julio César Peña Peralta, and printer/bookbinder Steve Miller. The creation process was three-fold: Miller began photographing Cuban feral street dogs out of concern for their survival. Then Miller showed Peralta these photographs, and the latter, inspired, made linoleum-cut prints of skeletal dogs (similar to the imagery of humans in “Day of the Dead”). Finally, Collum’s bi-lingual poems were a haunting response to the Peralta’s linoleum prints. Miller printed the book with elegance: “The linocut was printed in black ink infused with violet, against a different, brightly-colored background. The poems were visually shaped to complement their linocut partner. This book is a finely-tuned example of a high-level and slowly developed collaboration.” It is a modern livre d’artiste. —kl/rwc

M N

TUV

Coming from a conceptual background, **KATIE LEWIS UNDERWOOD’S** *Inside Out Drawing Book* is one long gesture across one long page, folded accordion-style into a book. She calls her action or process “drawing” as in drawing + scrawling. Her script is loopy with the ink shifting colors mid-stroke without hampering the gesture; it moves across the pages the way a rather tipsy dancer might promenade—with flourishes—across a dance floor. With allusions to the long-hand letters “g” and “p” and perhaps “o,” the “drawing” is found on the *inside* of the folded pages of the accordion-style book, thus making it inaccessible to the viewer if the book is held in the normal way. To read this book, one must view it from above or below and peek in between the pages. It is as if the whole book evinced a speech act that was strangely stifled, like trying to talk with one’s mouth taped shut. Or perhaps it looks like what a “murmur” would be, if it had color. —kl

SUSAN VIGUERS’ *Spring Tongue-Tied the Ocean* reveals how the formal use of typography and color can make meaning with a few effervescent phrases. The simple narrative—the birth of Spring—literally turns the word “Spring” into a vibrant green while the rest of the words subtly change hue from black to deep blue (the ocean). Childlike, with woodblock letters spread whimsically on the page—perhaps alluding to waves in the ocean or to a landscape—there is a spare yet also quirky approach to the idea of the forces of “Spring” unfolding. —kl/rwc

WXYZ

SUSAN WEINTZ’S *Dancing with Zsa Zsa* is an amusing book, with a straight-forward narrative about Zack the letter Z, who “was a self-confessed zealot of all things zany.” Weintz’s crisp typography accentuates her interest in language and letter-forms. The text colors are unusual, vibrant and greatly varied in size. The sounds of the words and the typography allude to Futurist poetry—where sound and typography often mesh—and one cannot help but pronounce out loud all the alliterations of “z” words, as in “Zack zwaggers with Zsa Zsa into the wrong zip code.” This book is an excellent example of play and restraint used to form an elegant children’s story in the tradition of Bruno Munari. —kl/rwc

MICHELLE WILSON’S book *Current* is a series of photographs taken in Cacheuta, Argentina, on the banks of the Rio Mendoza (Mendoza River). These are long and horizontal photographs, incorporating a view that is much wider than what we might see in person if we were to stand by that river; by contrast, the reader’s is an omniscient view. The text, subtle and almost camouflaged, asks the question: what happens if a small stone is thrown into this river? According to chaos theory, certain actions can prompt system responses that are unpredictable: “When a bird or a butterfly moves its wings, it makes a small wind, and this wind can make a difference in the weather a few weeks later; this is called the ‘butterfly effect.’” (Wikipedia) Wilson’s poetic images of the river are haunting; the small and inconspicuous can accumulate to the point of occasioning great effects—sometimes, sadly, to our detriment, as with global warming. —kl/rwc

POPOR OPOR

SUSAN PORTEOUS uses found objects—always books—as both theme and material. The results of her creative efforts take the form of what we might call sculpture rather than book. In this exhibition, she unbinds the *Observer’s Book of Aircraft* (1959). The pages of this tome become her small folded paper airplanes, giving the pages literal and metaphorical flight from its bound volume. There are 20 different kinds of small paper planes, and the overwhelming urge that arises in a reader is to try to fly them all. (We did—and they worked!) The little airplanes are meant to be humorous and thought-provoking, reminding us that the material of a page can be transformed into a structure. —kl/rwc

SUE ANN ROBINSON created a unique notebook exclusively for this exhibition, *The Chisholm Hours: Artist Book Facsimiles of a Contemporary Book of Hours*. A Book of Hours is a specific kind of medieval manuscript made for lay-people to be able to incorporate monastic practices into their devotional life at home—a liturgical volume of weekly cycles of psalms, prayers, aphorisms and readings. These were all hand-written and illuminated texts; most are unique. Robinson’s immense “Book of Hours” took over 20 years to make, beginning with a public art project for the *Long Beach Press-Telegram* in 1987 (which appears on the notebook’s covers). The original pages were printed at Visual Studies Workshop, NY, forming a contemporary “book of hours” with cowboy life and lore as its subject. In the original book, the artist then embellished each page with beads, belt buckles, studs, charms and other material—an illumination of sorts—that are iconic of the West. —kl/rwc

Exchanges by **MOIRA ROTH** and **SLOBODAN DAN PAICH** are collaborations through email built on a daily practice that utilizes the new electronic space of the page. Paich works on a drawing during the day and sends a jpeg of it with a poetic title to Roth. Roth, then, writes a short narrative or poem for the image or images. The resulting PDF is emailed to friends or printed out and disseminated locally in Berkeley. These modest and tender exchanges are ephemeral in their physicality; yet, the documents formed by these collaborations have been featured in several exhibitions. Hard to define, they are pamphlets or zines or broadsheets, but all prove an interesting example of email as an interactive format for communicating and publishing these interdependent narratives and drawings. Taken together, they are a “virtual” book, of which the email print-outs are the physical manifestation. —kl

S

JÉRÔME SAINT-LOUBERT BIÉ’S *BILLYLLIB* is based on IKEA’s best-selling and now 30-year-old bookcase called BILLY. Used world-wide and “signing” for Sweden’s simple design, accessibility, and low cost, Billy is the basis on which Saint-Loubert Bié creates page after page—ultimately, a whole catalog of this empty bookcase. This book is both the “store catalog” and a large flip book. As such, it is a commentary on commercial products and store catalogs, and the ubiquity and emptiness of both. —kl

ROBBIN AMI SILVERBERG’S *Home Sweet Home* contains archival ink-jet blueprints that mimic the old-fashioned non-archival Diazo prints used by architects to show technical drawings to all parties involved in building a house. Here, the handsome plans of blue lines have proverbs superimposed on them, phrases from around the world concerning women’s work in the home. Some are amusing, others simply dubious: “A house of girls is a house of ruin (Arabic, Lebanon)” and “Let women spin and not speak (Gikuyu, Kenya).” Meticulously placed inside the plans—almost like the decorative motif of wallpapers—these aphoristic words are trapped within the diagrammed walls, structures, chimneys and floors, leaving us with the idea that a house is culturally constructed too, no matter how impartially logical the drawings look. —kl/rwc

SUMI INK CLUB is a drawing collective founded by Sarah Anderson and Luke Fischbeck (both of Lucky Dragons) in 2005. Mostly based in Los Angeles, their collective reach involves participants from other states as well as Europe. Their philosophy is one that embraces a non-hierarchical openness (“all humans and all styles”) for working on their detailed ink drawings. Their aim is, as stated on their website, to “open and fortify social interactions that bleed into every day life.” In a way, these drawings (mostly done on paper, but currently on store-front windows) are the collective result of a social gathering (a kind of improvised performance), usually at a given time and date. Instead of making a functional object like a quilt (although they have made t-shirts), this little book, *Sumi Moderne*, produced by the Sumi Ink Club is more like a set of documents born of this social interaction and shows how a drawing can be made without the hegemonic voice of one artist, but rather by consensus. —kl

JENNY YOSHIDA’S ambitious work, *A Brief Condensed Diagrammatical Abridgement of the Encyclopedia Britannica in Twenty-Six Pages* is printed from the encyclopedia’s diagrams, which have been rearranged to interconnect in a visually condensed form that runs the length of a 10-foot sheet, in turn folded into an accordion-style book. The expert printing of this book from polymer plates is an incredible feat in itself. The long horizontal sheet is beyond the purview of the eye, and so the reader must track the image page by page to see the whole of this complex yet delicate, ornamental, machine-like object whose function is completely unknown. Yoshida’s work obliquely references the *Wunderkammer*, Denis Diderot’s plates in the *Encyclopédie*, and the current online *Wikipedia* as all of these are depositories of knowledge. Hers is not a “useful” encyclopedia, but rather an elegant, aesthetic realization of the desire to have all things connected into one coherent whole. —kl/rwc

