

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

John McDowall and Chris Taylor

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INTRODUCTION

Special Collections is an exhibition, curated by John McDowall and Chris Taylor, that brings together unique and historical material, selected contemporary artists' books and commissioned works. It examines collections of books, such as those gathered together in libraries and museums, and books that are in themselves collections. The selected works exemplify accumulations, inventories and typologies within the serial structure of the book.

The exhibition, in itself a temporary collection, proposes an instance of a relationship between artists' books as an intentionally accessible form of visual communication and examples of some of these that now reside within public and institutional collections – works are displayed on table tops for handling or in vitrines. As well as these issues of acquisition and access, there is also reference to related aspects of production and distribution. The work on show also illustrates a continuing engagement with the book format by artists and the ways in which this mode of representation, in relation to varying contexts, creates its own set of curatorial possibilities and issues.

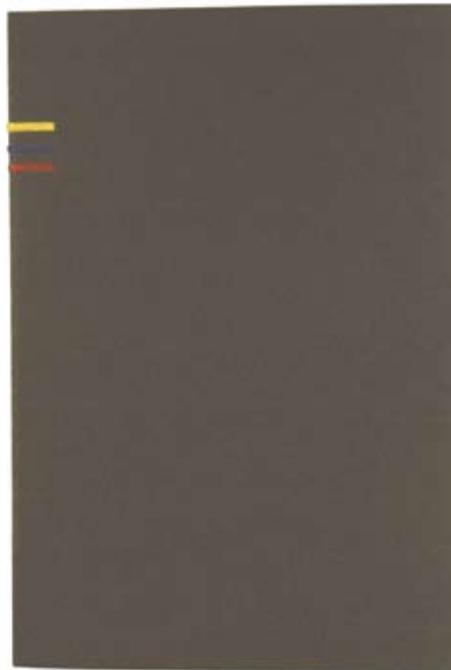
This catalogue, as well as documenting the exhibition, includes invited written contributions by artists, researchers, collectors and curators which express their diverse experiences of the medium and reflect on the act of collecting and the book's position within collections. In addition to these, the curators have also commissioned three new artist's book works informed by the theme of collections.

TEXTBOOK / Sabine J. Bieli

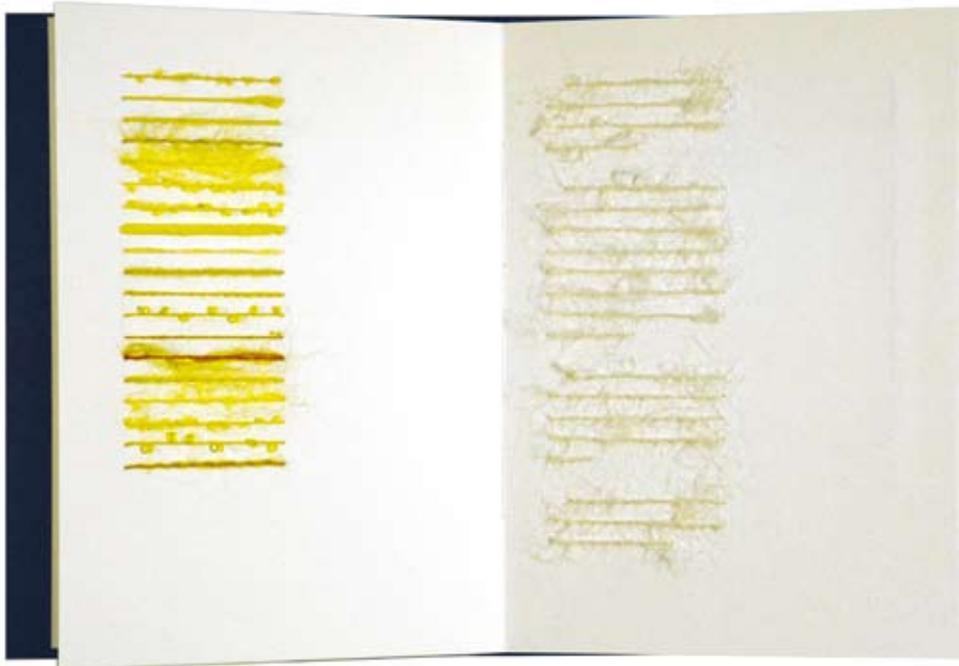
My Textbook attempts to visualise the fact that the words 'text' and 'textile' have a common root: Latin *textus* means woven. A multitude of yarns is used to compose images and texts in terms of threads.

Each double page collects and 'describes' a specific aspect of yarns such as their colour, material or texture. The resulting inventory is held together by a title page and a table of contents. Some of the yarns have played an important role in my recent sculptural work.

"An ancient metaphor: thought is a thread, and the raconteur is a spinner of yarns – but the true storyteller, the poet, is a weaver. The scribes made this old and audible abstraction into a new and visible fact. After long practice, their work took on such an even, flexible texture that they called the written page a *textus*, which means cloth." Robert Bringhurst, *The Elements of Typographic Style*.



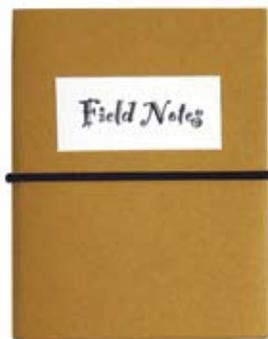
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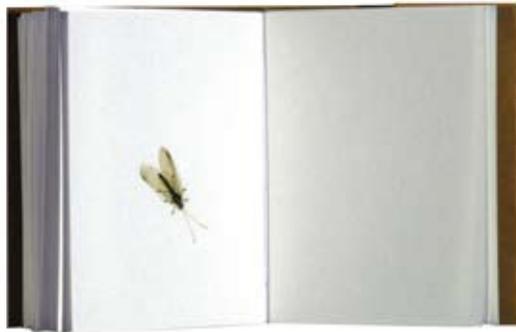
FIELD NOTES / Helen Douglas

Over a number of years I have made a small disparate photographic collection of insects and leaves, mostly photographed, while out in the field, on a piece of white paper. The reason for the paper is that I wanted to capture the exquisite detail and aliveness of these insects, in relation to the plain page of the book. I acknowledge my hunting instinct and would even argue that the camera was my means of pinning the insect and my fascination to the page. I realised this collection would make my book.

I had imagined making a slim, well-trimmed book. When I made a copy like this, I felt much of the excitement of my collection, and indeed of the notebook into which I usually collect things, had gone. I therefore devised another way, I first made a small stitched notebook of 32 blank pages, into which I then interleaved and stitched my additional insect and leaf pages. In this way the accumulated gathering and binding, the bulging full nature and unruly fore edge, affirms the collection spirit of the final book.



2



TENEBRAE / Ian Tyson

John Pawson has written a book called *Leçons du Thoronet* about the influence that the Cistercian Abbey of Le Thoronet in Provence, France, had on his work and thought. I have visited Le Thoronet several times along with its sister Abbeys of Silvacan and Senanque and my work is, in some way, also influenced by the structure and volume one finds in these buildings. As I am an admirer of John Pawson's architecture it seemed logical to make this book an acknowledgement of that.

Tenebrae are the matins and laudes said for the last three days of Holy Week, where the lights in the church are extinguished one by one until at the end the church is in darkness. For me it is the drama of this event that gives the context rather than the religious significance.



3





Le collectionneur des livres. The opening words of Walter Benjamin's 'talk' (he calls it this) about book collecting resonate in a thrilling manner. I hear them internally, spoken in a particular tone of voice: 'I am unpacking my library. Yes, I am.' I imagine saying that myself. I know exactly how I will sound. I am smug and excited. Yes, I am. I am very pleased with my books indeed, and I am even more pleased that I should be seeing them again. Benjamin asks his interlocutor – a fellow reader – to join him in the disorder of unpacked crates, to share with him his mood of anticipation, a sentiment that books arouse in a 'genuine collector'. One may be a collector of many things: I may list my current interest in the acquisition of hand-woven rough linen women's night dresses, preferably with monograms in red embroidery, pastel-coloured milk jugs from the 1940s, bearing the lovely words '*nous deux*' in flamboyant gilded scripts, Victorian lorgnettes with a nifty snap mechanism that neatly makes two lenses fold together as one, the descriptions of Nana's odour from Zola's eponymous novel, vulgar appellations, and rhetorical tropes. Yet all these collections have an end in view; their collection is justified in the name of work, unlike many additions to my library (which has a tendency towards the genre of crime fiction as much as towards works on psychoanalytic theory), though at times I do use this justification (it is, I think, the difference between 'want' and 'need'). A collector of books may be called a *bibliophile*, one who loves books, and it is a term that appears to have entered the English language in 1824. A *bibliophile* reads, collects, and loves books. While possession of books may be unnecessary in this loving encounter (indeed, it is two years since Benjamin has seen his books) and the *bibliophile* may content him/herself with reading or touching books in a public library, discretely and properly – the collector's 'attitude towards his possessions stems from an owner's responsibility towards his property'. Each collector, his or her own librarian, vigilant keeper of his or her own collection, loves, and in a act of loving responsibility, catalogues that dear and admired collection. Each collector will bring his or her own rational system to that collection, one that makes perfect sense to the collector, while others may be left somewhat in the dark upon consultation, unable to follow the selected set of cataloguing rules and remaining without an accurate impression of the bibliographic aim (more of this later).

Ranger, régler, cataloguer. *Ranger* means to dispose in place, in order, implying some kind of reasonable, logical arrangement. *Régler* is to fix, to take for a model, to resolve. *Cataloguer* – oh, to *catalogue* – that is to classify, to classify in an act of judgement, to inscribe in order. The *bibliophile* learns how to consult the catalogues, even if it is only at Amazon on-line, to add to the collection, and if the catalogue is the invitation to possession or the system s/he adopts to contain new objects (however peripheral they may appear to be initially, there will be a method of accommodation, including, as last resort, *miscellaneous*).

Benjamin calls this the 'prismatic fringes of a library'), to catalogue has certain aims. The German Librarian's Annual Conference, held in Augsburg in 2002, advises that a catalogue should produce reliable results and clearly display differences. In 1876 Charles Ammi Cutter, first director of the Forbes Library in Massachusetts, inventor of the Expansive Classification scheme on which the Library of Congress bases its cataloguing system, defined the objectives of any bibliographic system (Cutter's system was, however, largely unadopted elsewhere, in favour of Melvil Dewey's taxonomic system of decimal classification, which encloses knowledge in ten distinct classes. Dewey also invented the loose-leaf binder and vertical filing). It should bring together what belongs together, while presenting meaningful choices and allowing the user to locate what s/he wants. The method of display – the simple or complex arrangements of books on shelves – must show what the library contains, the objective of collocating. It must assist in the choice of a book, by edition or character. It must let the reader *find* what s/he already knows to be seeking, through knowledge of author, title, or subject. These are objectives to assist others, borrowers or visitors to a system. As a *bibliophile*, one may develop other rules. Benjamin says that 'any order is a balancing act of extreme precariousness.'

Rat de bibliothèque. The bookworm is a library rat in French. Whether a worm or a rat, some unsavoury connotation is implied. The rat gnaws away, leaving an unpleasant odour (one of the olfactory descriptions in *Nana* is of Paris on a rainy evening, 'the dripping city exhaled an unpleasant odour suggestive of a great untidy bed', emphasising the invasive fleshy madness. Zola uses smell as plot and character, as more than mere description). A rat's sense of smell is dominant, and through smell, it recognises its family members and its territory, marked by the odour of its urine. Its sense of smell is essential to its search for food. As a person, the rat may be one who spends his or her time in books, and I find in my *Petit Robert*, that such is the relation between people and rats, that there are any number of metaphoric expressions, called in French a *dérivé*, a word that comes from a derivation, in the linguistic process whereby new words are formed from existing words or bases by affixation, though it may be also a line of reasoning demonstrating how a conclusion follows logically from an accepted proposition. My *dérivés* include *être fait comme un rat*, which means as made like a rat, one fails to find any outcome or solution, that a logical derived conclusion is lacking. To the library rat and the rat without resolution, caught in a tricky situation (let me remind you that a formal library catalogue cannot assist in the choice of a book), I may add the condition: *d'avoir des rats dans la tête*, to entertain caprices, fantasies, and oddities, and of course, in both English and French, rats will leave a sinking ship (*les rats quittent le navire*), however impassioned by its library, leaving it to the bookworms. A *dérivation* is the drift of a boat as well (and one can *faire le rat mort*, make like a dead rat, to express one's indifference).

Rage de lire. If rats carry the plague, then the library rat, the bookworm, has a passion for reading, more than a passion, a mortal malady of viral origin that is transmitted by the bite of certain animals. One is

bitten – and it is evidently a trope – by reading, and in reading, one is subject of and to transmission. The library increases, and a certain strange relation to the libraries of others is born, to collections with which one compares one's own. The *rage de lire* is a *rage délire*, a psychic trouble, a lack of measure, an exuberant enthusiasm, a violent desire.

Abimé. Damaged. As a worm, book-borers are rare, but consultation of my encyclopaedia (top shelf, right-hand-side) tells me that the larvae of the Death watch beetle (*Xestobium rufovillosum*) and the Common furniture beetle (*Anobium punctatum*) will pass into paper quite happily if it is near their wooden preference and that a major book-feeding insect is the booklouse, a tiny, soft-bodied, wingless psocoptera (usually *Trogium pulsatorium*), that feeds on molds and other organic matter found in ill-maintained works, although they will also attack bindings and other parts. Other insects, like the Silverfish (*Lepisma saccharina*) or Cockroach (various *Blattodea*), will consume molds, along with degraded paper or starch-based binding pastes, *Tineola bisselliella* and *Hofmannophila pseudospretella* will attack cloth bindings. Leather-bound books attract various consumers, such as *Dermestes lardarius* and the larvae of *Attagenus unicolor* and *Stegobium paniceum*. To rats and worms, one may add foxes, in the fox marks, foxed, or foxing caused by acidity and/or imperfections in the paper and the atmospheric conditions in which the book has been kept. Benjamin reminds his reader/listener that one will have heard of people who have become invalids upon the loss of their books. I imagine he means the entire disappearance of a library, yet it is quite upsetting, even traumatic, to be unable to find a particular book, despite remembering its appearance and approximate position in the shelving system. To find it – or any other book – but in imperfect (flawed, gnawed or bored) condition produces an equal anguish.

Volume dépareillé. Cataloguing brings order to disorder; the disorder of book collection made by the transient *bibliophile*, rescuing books from lonely abandonment and giving them 'true freedom', ranged somewhere on his or her shelves. An incomplete set disturbs order; as does a book that refuses proper shelving because of its odd format. This is a common problem for anyone arranging his or her library. Classed by subject, or by author; books cannot be neatly stacked with regard to their size. It is a displeasing sight, to me at least though I know of some *bibliophiles* who introduce a sort of catchall shelving arrangement to accommodate the jagged horizon of books. There are other solutions, none entirely satisfactory, including the excess of the collector Henry James Jesson III in Allen Kurzweil's novel *The Grand Complication* (a riveting yarn of a young reference librarian with the task of completing an eighteenth-century cabinet of curiosities), who has a solution for the maintenance of a level book horizon, placing blocks of cut to measure lacquered wood under the shorter volumes. My Penguin Freud Library is several centimetres lower on the shelves of psychoanalytic books, and there is a sudden swoop upwards (2.5 cm) to the Presses universitaires de France edition of his *Oeuvres complètes*. Similarly, my copy of Marx's *Capital*, the Penguin Classics 1990 reprint, is 6mm taller than my PUF edition of 1993. These two at least have their

title on their spines running from top to bottom, but in many French books, the title reads from bottom to top, which makes working along the shelves really quite vertiginous.

Relié. Bound or unbound, there are book and paper sizes, based on an old system, considering the size of a page as a fraction of the large sheet of paper on which it was printed. For example, Imperial folded in half gives Imperial folio, in four; Imperial Quarto, in eight, Imperial octavo. The group of leaves formed is called a gathering or signature, sewn together to make the unbound book. The *bibliophile* may choose to specialise in the rare, the curious, in books with distinctive bindings or with unusual form, making standard classification tricky. However, library catalogues were once lists of manuscripts, and rather than arranged in alphabetical order by author, were organised according to format, as folio, quarto, octavo, and so on.

Appui-livre. Bookend. The distinction between the lover of books and the compulsive collector, one who cares little for his or her social relations in the passion for accumulating books, who continues to pursue books despite the increasing number of those unread in the library, is rather a fine one. As Benjamin points out, some people become quite attached to leaflets, prospectuses, handwriting facsimiles or typewritten copies of unobtainable books. I have a number of photocopied versions of the seminars of Jacques Lacan, wrapped in brown paper and purchased from under the counter of a shop in the rue d'Ecole de Médecine, in the VI *arrondissement* of Paris. Originally, the street was called the rue des Cordèles. In 1304, it became two roads, a *derivation*, rue Saint-Côme and Rue Saint-Damien, joining together again in 1672 as rue Saint-Germain, then from 1672 to 1690, rue des Cordeliers. In 1790, it received the name of Rue de l'Ecole de Médecine. In 1793, it was designated rue Marat and in year 4 of the revolutionary calendar, rue de l'Ecole de Santé. One has to draw a line somewhere. While now more usually read on the verso of the title page, the colophon used to appear on the last leaf, listing what the printer felt to be important.

Sommaire. In short, to sum up, a simple matter of addition (no more than my allocated word count which I fear I have exceeded in providing 2,570), I was asked to write about the way books collected in libraries form connections. My subheadings, which are drawn from a lexicon published by the League of Antiquarian Books, translating terms from French to English for the attentive reader. I have retained the French, while venturing into English in some explanation. My life is haunted by lexicons, by idiom (which is rendered in French as *idiotisme*), by lists, inventories, tropes, and taxonomy. Benjamin's essay tells his life through books, and he ends on the last half-emptied case, well past midnight. He has been unpacking into the night, sustained by images and memories. He remembers through lists: Riga, Naples, Munich, Danzig, Moscow, Florence, Basel, Paris. It is unclear if he is using any chronological system. He recalls other rooms where his books were housed: Munich, Bern, Iseltwald, the room of his childhood where there were only four or five of the thousands of volumes that now surround him (while writing this I found my son arranging a series of his own books on the floor of his bedroom, volumes 1 to 13 of Lemony Snickett's stories of the beleaguered Baudelaire orphans. He called me to admire the set, his first editions). Benjamin speaks of the

collector's bliss, the wellbeing of the 'man who has been able to carry on his disreputable existence in the mask of Spitzweg's "bookworm". He is, I think, referring to the painting by self-taught painter Carl Spitzweg, which depicts a fabulous library in which a stooped gentleman stands precariously on tall library steps, reading a book held in one hand, while another is tucked under his left elbow, another is his right hand as though it is being returned to the shelf, and a third is clasped between his knees. He says that for a real collector ownership is the most intimate relation one may have to objects, for the collector lives, comes alive in them. I think of something my esteemed Sigmund Freud, a considerable collector, both of objects (over 2000 antiquities, from the near East, Egypt, Italy, Greece are displayed in the Freud Museum in London) and books (over 1600 titles plus offprints and journals are in the Museum, while others are in collections elsewhere, including the Library of Congress and the Augustus C. Long Health Sciences Library at Columbia University, New York, where like all Archives & Special Collections holdings, they do not circulate and may be read only in the department's Geraldine McAlpin Webster Reading Room. The Freud Library title list is in two parts: Books and Loose Reprints. Bound reprints are listed with the books. Order is alphabetical by author, except for bound reprints organised by topic. These topical volumes - on dreams, hypnotism, hysteria, and memory - contain articles by many different authors. By tradition they are shelved under 'P' for 'Papers'.), remarks: 'Love for oneself knows only one barrier – love for others, love for objects.'

ON SPECIAL COLLECTIONS / Chris Sheppard

Special Collections is a conventional term for a library's holdings which are not only locked up safely in environmentally controlled storage areas but must be used under close supervision. The aim is to ensure that holdings difficult or impossible to replace are protected from damage and loss and yet remain accessible.

None of the collections in the Brotherton Library's Special Collections is more evidently special than its Jacobean 'Travelling Library' of 1617. At first sight it appears to be a single folio volume, handsomely bound in tooled turkey leather with marbled edges to its leaves. Turn the front board and the volume is revealed as a box containing a collection of uniformly bound, small printed volumes – a microcosm. The books are arranged in three compartments – for classical history, classical literature, theology and philosophy – each of which may be seen as a sub-collection, with contents listed inside the board.

Like the 'Travelling Library', the University Library has its single identity, but is likewise composed of constituent collections, some assembled by others before acquisition, some assembled by the staff of the Library and University, some not regarded as 'collections' until somebody gathers together apparently disparate items for their own temporary purpose. A single item may have its place in innumerable shifting perceptions of collections.

The University Library's finest example of 'Collected works' is Ben Jonson's *Workes* of 1616 - the first collected edition of works by an English playwright and regarded as a presumptuous enterprise in its time. Jonson personally attended to the form and presentation of the book to ensure that it was physically worthy of the ambition of its conception. There are numerous published collections of so-called 'uncollected works', which of course cease to be uncollected in the process of collecting them for publication – Russell's Paradox applies.

'Extra-illustrated' books are books deliberately expanded by the insertion of relevant illustrations and sometimes original documents, popular with collectors in the 19th century. An example in the University Library is *The letters of Queen Victoria, 1837-1861*, originally published in three volumes in 1907. The unique extra-illustrated version, bloated with portraits of nobility and occasionally real letters, runs to ten volumes. Such collections are also termed Grangerised; when James Granger's *Biographical History of England* was published in 1769, blank leaves were included so that an owner could collect and insert appropriate illustrations.

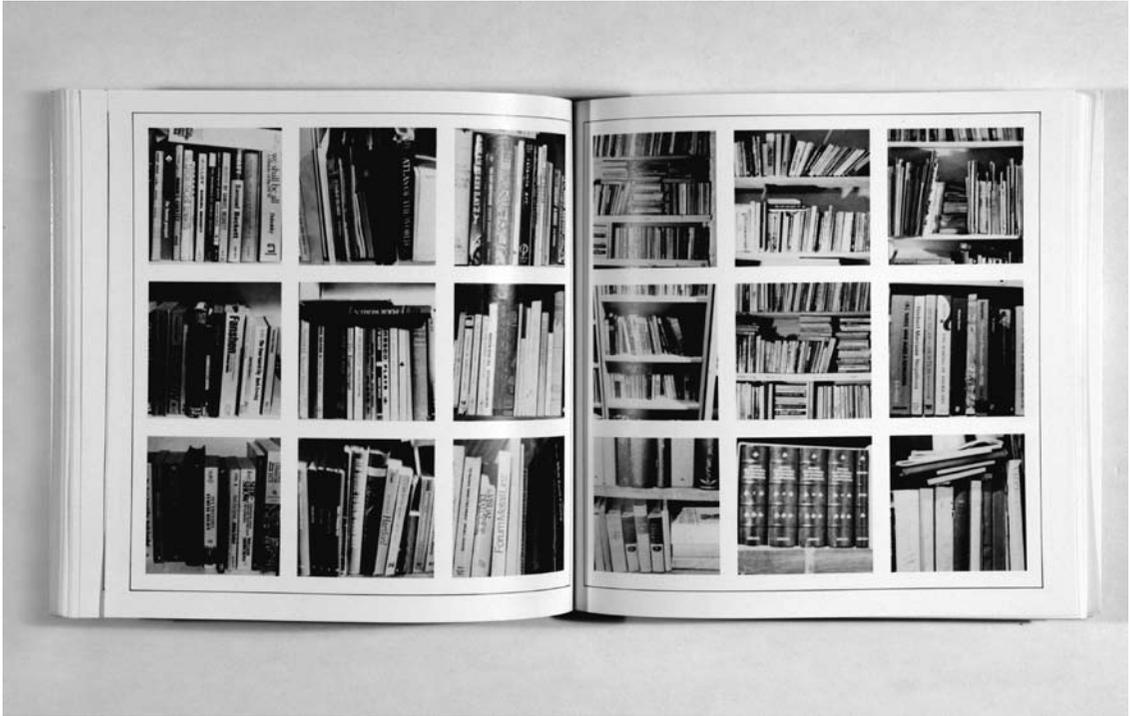
Relative to the above is the 'Examples' book that consists entirely of pieces collected from other books, not merely as extra-illustration. Such an item is Konrad Haebler's *German incunabula: 110 original leaves*, Munich, 1927, comprised of leaves collected from dismembered fifteenth-century books. One is reminded of the entry in John Ruskin's diary for 3 January 1854: "Cut missal up in evening – hard work".

'Working copies' of books can be rather like the 'Extra-illustrated', but arise from the owner inserting notes and other items for personal use rather than to create a deliberate collection. Thomas Frognall Dibdin's copy of Ames's *Typographical antiquities*, c.1810, which he was preparing for a new edition bulges with his glued and sewn-in collection of manuscript notes, correspondence and samples of printing.

A significant collection of autograph signatures is contained in *The George Meredith Birthday Book*, compiled by man-of-letters Sir Edmund Gosse (1849-1928). This printed book is a collection both of dates, as in a diary, and of quotations from Meredith, one per day; space is provided on each for the autographs of individuals born on that day. Gosse has, for example, secured Henrik Ibsen for 20 March, Henry James for 15 April, Rupert Brooke for 3 August. Nothing connects them but acquaintance with Gosse, who had a reputation for diligently 'collecting' the acquaintance of notable contemporaries.

Collections made by individuals, copying out favourite poems, extracts from reading, jokes, aphorisms, recipes, and so on are known as 'Manuscript miscellanies and commonplace' books. Some are purely personal, some intended for others to read.

In 1934, Marcel Duchamp published *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (*The Bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even*), also known as *The Green Box*. He produced 320 copies, each containing 94 individual items – facsimiles of notes written between 1911 and 1915. These were printed, then torn around templates in order to match the irregular shapes of the originals, producing meticulously created scraps arranged in no particular order.



27. Autobiography - Sol LeWitt

AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL INVESTIGATIONS / Yann Sérandour

Sol LeWitt's book, *Autobiography*¹, combines the rational order of his 'graphic reasoning'² with the disorder of a domestic interior filled with the everyday and familiar objects that the artist has inventoried in a series of one thousand and four photographs which index every nook and cranny of his New York loft. As has already been pointed out, this book marks a break in LeWitt's published *œuvre* because, not only does it introduce reality 'in an art that has been up till now rigorously abstract and that, notwithstanding the books, remains so,'³ but its very title contravenes a number of minimalist precepts, whilst maintaining a minimalist structure. The grid layout of the page and the classification of the photographed objects – whether topographic (the studio, the kitchen, the study) or thematic (the chairs, the ashtrays, the clocks...) – may be read as a device to neutralise the affective charge of these private and intimate objects which are nevertheless banal and ordinary, and above all mute from the moment they no longer carry any associations of an anecdotal or reminiscent nature.⁴ According to Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, the rigorous shape of the grid sets out 'to control the disorder, notably the one that would not fail to introduce subjectivity.'⁵ The grid then frames and, as soon as it does, restrains what in the real world is subject to the laws of entropy⁶ and to a double gravitational pull: the material weight as objects, and the emotional charge that invests them in a variety of ways. By opting for a tactical rather than a strategic perspective, interstitial rather than overarching, one can, on the contrary, read this emergence of the specific within the minimalist grid, as a way of insinuating '*personal touches*'. Both readings are possible, but they are not equivalent. They are, in practice, opposed. If one thinks of LeWitt's book in terms of a tactical practice contaminated by the artist's biography, one that an artist like Jonathan Monk has been able to produce without instituting,⁷ the second reading is, to my mind, more productive. LeWitt's book then becomes the catalyst for other practices that have re-introduced the "wolf" of subjectivity into the "sheepfold" of objectivity, in a manner that avoids the suffocating formulas of 'a wild and ardent' heroism.

If the artist's bookcases appear untidy, this is not due to the artist's lack of order but to a shortage of space which, according to Perec, is the main problem facing libraries. 'First an issue of space, then an issue of order'⁸ are the shared concerns of collectors, librarians, archivists and curators: putting away and classifying.

For LeWitt, the layout's grid is a system that allows the sorting of images without recourse to order or preference. It enables to arrange without classifying, that is without establishing a hierarchy on the page. The book's sequence, however, is ordered. It takes one from the general to the specific, from the inner limits of his living and work space (floor, windows, walls) to what inhabits and 'warms' the atmosphere. Family photos, antique furniture, *keyholes*, curios, toys, figurines, bowls, ashtrays, caskets, cigar boxes, soft

lighting, clocks⁹, television, record player, alarm clocks, telephones, calculators, flashlights, fire extinguishers; gas meter and radiators close the book's sequence. With a certain mark of dry wit, the book ends with a series of radiators, air conditioners, fans and a vacuum cleaner: appliances, which temper the air we breathe as well as sanitize it, whilst the calculators and other adding instruments tally and regulate the consumption of energy. This is no longer about emotional warmth and sentiments, but about individual central heating, the use of which is indexed on the uncontrollable fluctuations of the temperature outside and the price of the kilowatt. The book comes full circle and depicts a world, which though turning in on itself, is nonetheless traversed by a flux of energy and ideals. The books, the instruments of transmission (radio, television, telephone), the photographs signal dematerialised or lost objects which circulate and register ideas, fictions, information, reminiscences. If the book ends on a series of images of electrical appliances and radiators, its pages open on what feeds these: plumbing pipes, cables and electric plugs. The circuit is closed. The energised world can power itself.

The bookshelves, which primarily concern me here – I cannot separate this portion from what surrounds it, as this framing gives a particular meaning to its position in the ensemble that LeWitt has ordered in the book. It is placed after a series of chairs and is followed by a series which inventories the archive of his work and a few shelves which hold his artist publications. If the chair stands, at best, for the idea of art as idea, the artist's publications stand for the combinatorial production of an orchestrated idea. The Idea chair, before being a Kosuthian illustration, is a Platonic one. If it does not belong to our terrestrial sphere, it can nevertheless be represented by the well known principle of equivalence by a chair, its photographic representation or a definition taken from any dictionary. The Idea chair (like the one of seat) is only perfect and unique in the world of Ideas. It represents itself best by its absence. The logical analysis of Edwige Regenwetter supports this. To the question posed about the subject of Robert Filliou's *Le Siège des idées* (The Seat of Ideas): 'where does he get the idea of knowing that he is the seat of ideas?', she answers unequivocally: 'from the fact that he is absence.'¹⁰ Not everyone knows how to sit on the seat of ideas; without a bottom only the wise, who levitate, can take place. In a far less subtle way, this library opens onto the world of published ideas. That its antechamber is a collection of chairs suggests the obvious; that it is rather uncomfortable to read standing up.

Autobiography announces the title of the book and sets up a pact¹¹ with the reader: all the truth and nothing but the truth. Sol LeWitt replaces the introspective and retrospective account 'that tries to fulfill and bring a life to a close'¹², with a series of images that inventory the objects which furnish this life to saturation. To an introspective probing, LeWitt substitutes a telefocused view of his interior: 'It is not at all certain, however, that he is telling a story, let alone giving the story of his life. He himself is absent. His life is only there indirectly, in the scattered traces held within these disparate objects.'¹³ No story then, no autobiography in the classic and literary sense of the word, no confessions, no memoirs, no revelations,

no psychology. The few keyholes in the furniture, that he might have inherited, are not the voyeuristic setting of some family secret exhibited in close-up, before our eyes. The autobiographic genre is sidetracked, perhaps reinvented, in this unpronounceable form of an 'autobiophototopographic' inventory. He takes his cues more from the language of insurance companies and letting agencies rather than from literature. LeWitt's autobiography is an inventory of contents, an accident report, even though this collision of stuff happened over time. 'Everything I have' and not 'everything that I was.'¹⁴ LeWitt substitutes for the retrospective account of his own existence the graphic reasoning of a layout which nonetheless provides the means for the ordering, assembling and an after the event reconstruction of the daily reality of his life as an artist, which is organised by work, pleasure, and necessity. For narrative cohesion, LeWitt substitutes the formal coherence that one only finds in books. What produces the autobiography is thus the book itself, and the reading contract announced in its title, that we adhere to until evidence to the contrary. LeWitt does not narrate. He records, he classifies, he stores away. We nevertheless learn a lot of things, more or less anecdotal, about the artist's life; what tools he uses, how he puts them away, which make of paint he employs, what he eats, which wines, spirits, champagnes he drinks, which make of crackers he nibbles on, what blend of tea he sips, what clothes he wears, but we also learn that he ice-skates, smokes and listens to classical music (Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Handel, Haydn, Purcell...) to contemporary music (Schönberg, Gershwin, Steve Reich, Philip Glass...) that he collects curios (engraved stones, opals, starfish...) Japanese prints¹⁵ (Hokusai, Hiroshige...) the work of his contemporaries¹⁶ (Bernd and Hilla Becher, Baldessari...), and also that he reads books. I shall not list here the contents of his library since LeWitt's book accomplishes this task more or less. I take note however from one of the shelves that he owns a number of works by Beckett, and notably *Molloy*, who in the manner of these conceptual artists, more mystical than rational, arrives at conclusions that logic can not attain.

The library is a chapter, or more precisely a section of LeWitt's *Autobiography*, through which we gain access to his intellectual life by deciphering, sometimes with great difficulty, the titles of the books he reads. In the sequence of the book, this is no more important than any other section, but it takes on a particular value when it is represented as it is in a book. The catalogue of this collection is not in the catalogue, though one sees a number of other catalogues, artists' books, some by Sol LeWitt, put away separately. Without being a narrative, *Autobiography* shares with the autobiographical genre its retrospective character. One thus finds a few of the artist's books: *Incomplete Open Cubes*¹⁷, *Photogrids*¹⁸, *Grids*¹⁹, *Color Grids*²⁰, *Geometric Figures Within Geometric Figures*²¹, *Arcs, Circles & Grids*²², *Geometric Figures & Colors*²³, *Five Cubes On Twenty-Five Squares*²⁴, *Open Geometric Structures*²⁵... If this inventory aims to be exhaustive, in reality has its gaps that the book's system does not acknowledge. The presence of empty boxes in the nine-box grid that structures each page of the book shows, as Mœglin-Delcroix has pointed out, that the abstract order of the work has the upper hand on its content and that reality sometimes fails the system when objects are missing. To put it differently, classification wins over order. If the rationale of order is always to find more

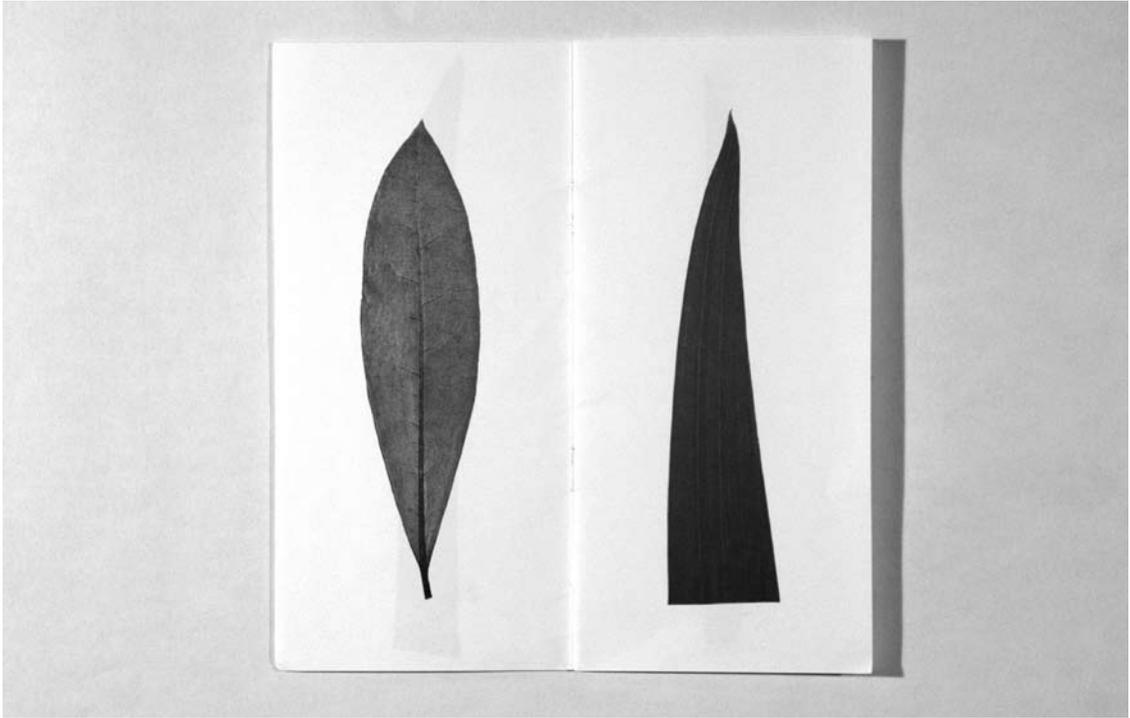
space and to occupy the least of it, the rationale of classification sometimes produces empty space. One can imagine a class with no individual samples, that would occupy a place 'for nothing' in this nomenclature. LeWitt does not always lay out the images in the same way. The four pages of the book with only six instead of nine photographs are set out differently: one of them vertically, the other three horizontally. The sense of permutation and the taste for combinations that characterise Le Witt's work are apparent at every level.

If certain knick-knacks are displayed several times from different angles depending on whether LeWitt has photographed the object or the table on which it is placed, but what can we make of the two slightly different photographs of the two frying pans on one of the pages which inventory kitchen utensils?²⁶ If LeWitt is falsifying his list of contents by adding frying pans to the inventory of kitchen utensils - existing anyway only as a play of photographic doubling, this item deserves the title 'two and four frying pans' – one has the right from this moment to break the contract of truth that the title pretended to establish and to cast an ironic eye on this autobiographic ruse. *Autobiography* not only marks the paradoxical intrusion of subjectivity in the minimalist aesthetic, but also the errors if not the falsehood inherent in any rigorously regulated system. Drop of water in the sea, this error is to my eyes as a reader a 'needle in a haystack'.

If the autobiography is a retrospective exercise, with LeWitt it is only a (falsified) inventory of his goods that leaves no room for introspection. LeWitt substitutes the description of a certain interiority for the methodical exposition of where he lives – where he works – and does not engage in any reflection about his personal life.

It is not so much the absence of text that is lacking from the autobiography as the absence of any 'writing of the self'. If he retraces his existence, it is only through the objects that he has accumulated and that seem to speak out by themselves: *The ups and downs of being an Artist*²⁷ can be read on the cover of a flip book, whose photograph is positioned cheekily at the bottom of the page. LeWitt is not a writer and does not intend to take up his pen to write his autobiography. The camera substitutes for it amply. So LeWitt's photographs do not clash together and do not appear to be staged. They do not point to any personal recollection and – save a mistake in the inventory – do not carry any other signification than the material existence of the objects they represent. LeWitt's book documents the material traces of an existence. He does not romanticise it. He does not turn it into myth. He does not explain it. He publishes it in the neutral form of an inventory of fixtures where issues about preference and choice are removed from the moment LeWitt photographs with the same care what he has thrown away in the bin and so evacuated from his life. LeWitt casts a surveyor's eye on the site where he lives. Filtered through the grid of his minimalist work, he squares up his existence like an archaeologist squares up his dig – leaving it to the reader to gauge the biographical pertinence of what he may find, and to indulge, with a certain pleasure, in the game of interpretations.

- ¹ Sol LeWitt, *Autobiography*, New York, Multiples/Torf, 1980.
- ² See Jack Goody, 'The Domestication of the Savage Mind', Cambridge (England) and New York, Cambridge University Press, 1977.
- ³ Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du livre d'artiste 1960/1980*, Paris, Jean-Michel Place/BNF, 1997, p.243.
- ⁴ *Autobiography* is thus the categorical antithesis of Daniel Spoerri's *Topographie anecdotée du hazard* (Gallery Lawrence, 1962, republished Centre Pompidou, 1990.) If LeWitt's autobiography exists only in the form of a series of images and does not allow any overview, Spoerri's annotated topography, with its anecdotal commentary, articulates the account of his report through captions that he has written. These tell the stories of the objects arranged on a table in the form of chance occurrences, by associating them with reminiscences and anecdotes of daily life. Both these books nevertheless share the idea of reintroducing order in the disorder of a way of life, even if the strategies used – the grid of the page layout or descriptive narration – are as different, as well as complimentary, as an image is to its caption.
- ⁵ Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du livre d'artiste*, op. cit. p.246.
- ⁶ 'A library that one does not order disorders itself: this is the example that was given to help explain the nature of entropy and I have often verified this, experimentally.' (Georges Perec, 'Notes brèves sur l'art et la manière de ranger ses livres', op. cit. p.38.)
- ⁷ The work of Felix Gonzalez-Torres and the *Infected Series* of the group General Idea have greatly contributed to the practice of using, in this way, biographical content to contaminate an artistic heritage, of which they, as artists, were carriers; conferring thus an existential resonance to previous practices of *détournement* and appropriation, which were ordinarily devoid of this. The contamination practices, which these artists suffering from Aids have been able to set up on lyrical and parodic registers, are not only cathartic. They turn into artistic strategies nourished by the imaginary of disease and infiltration.
- ⁸ Georges Perec, 'Notes brèves sur l'art et la manière de ranger ses livres', in *Penser, classer*, Paris, Hachette, 1985, p.34.
- ⁹ All the clocks are not set at the same time. Five past one, thirty-six minutes past three, thirty-eight minutes past seven, twenty-one minutes past four, forty-one minutes past five, sixteen minutes past one, fifty-eight minutes past one, thirty-seven minutes past three, forty-five minutes past ten, forty-six minutes past three, seventeen minutes past ten. Time passes but is not laid out on the grid in a chronological manner. The grid does not classify, it stores. A box of *Tampax* is placed on top of an alarm clock. Time is sometimes cyclical. In the autobiography, time is retrospective. By inventorying his daily context, LeWitt sums it up.
- ¹⁰ Robert Filliou, Edwige Regenwetter; *Le Siège des idées*, Brussels/Hamburg, Lebeer Hossmann, 1977, p.5.
- ¹¹ See Philippe Lejeune, *Le Pacte autobiographique*, Paris, Seuil, coll. 'Poétique', 1975 and updated in Philippe Lejeune, *Le pacte autobiographique (bis)*, Moi aussi, Paris, Seuil, Poétique collection, 1986, pp.13-35.
- ¹² Philippe Lejeune, *La Mémoire et l'oblique*, op. cit., p.44.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p.245.
- ¹⁴ Claude Closky's autobiography, on the other hand, is potential and prospective. *Everything I can be as well as Everything I can acquire*. See Closky, *Tout ce que je peux être*, Limoges, Frac Limousin éditions, 1993 and Claude Closky, *Tout ce que je peux avoir*, Dôle, Frac Franche-Comté éditions, 1994.
- ¹⁵ Sol LeWitt states that he acquired them in 1945, when he was in the American army. Thus, before being an artist, LeWitt was a collector. See the exhibition catalogue, *Collections d'artistes*, Avignon, Lambert/Arles Collection, Actes Sud, 2001, p.T.72.
- ¹⁶ "My collection is the reflection of my subjectivity; there are as many works that will appear to you as essential as exchanges and purchases from American or Italian friends, I live in Italy several months a year." *Ibid.*, p.T.71.
- ¹⁷ Sol LeWitt, *Incomplete Open Cubes*, New York, The John Weber Gallery, 1974.
- ¹⁸ Sol LeWitt, *Photogrids*, New York, Paul David Press/Rizzoli, 1977.
- ¹⁹ Sol LeWitt, *Grids*, Brussels, Pour Écrire la Liberté, 1975.
- ²⁰ Sol LeWitt, *Color Grids*, New York, Multiples Inc./Colombes, Générations, 1977.
- ²¹ Sol LeWitt, *Geometric Figures Within Geometric Figures*, New York, Parasol Press, 1976.
- ²² Sol LeWitt, *Arcs, Circles & Grids*, Bern, Kunsthalle & Paul Bianchini, 1972.
- ²³ Sol LeWitt, *Geometric Figures & Colors*, New York, Harry n. Abrams Inc., 1979.
- ²⁴ Sol LeWitt, *Five Cubes On Twenty-Five Squares*, Bari, Galleria Marilena Bonomo, 1977.
- ²⁵ Sol LeWitt, *Open Geometric Structures*, London, Nicholas & Fiona Logsdail/ Lisson Gallery, 1979.
- ²⁶ One could at first think that he owns these two frying pans in duplicate. A mark on the wall, where they hang, shows that we are dealing with the same objects hanging in the same place. If a frying pan is a manufactured object, replicated endlessly, a mark on the wall is the product of chance and can not reproduce the same form twice. The difference in lighting in the two photographs proves that we are not dealing with the same photograph, reframed in the book, but two distinct photographs.
- ²⁷ Richard Zybort, *The ups and downs of being an Artist*, Marginal Press, 1979. This book is an ironic commentary on the mood fluctuations in the life of an artist through a series of photographs of an erect penis. The book is reproduced in the exhibition catalogue of *Daumen Kino: The Flip Book Show*, Düsseldorf, Kunsthalle Düsseldorf/Cologne, Snoeck, 2005, p.154.



14. From around a lake - Richard Long

ARTISTS' BOOKS: A NEW CANON / Gaye Smith

I cannot remember when the genre "artist's book" became familiar to me but I have been collecting artists' books since the early 1970s. I remember conceptual works in the form of multiples arriving as part of my normal stock selection in my capacity as Librarian of the Faculty of Art and Design at the newly-formed Manchester Polytechnic. Having recently retired from this Library it is an opportune time to reflect on more than thirty years of collecting. In the early days there was no sanctity to artists' books; they were treated like the rest of the lending stock and were dog-eared and battered as a result! Multiples were also extremely cheap to buy and intended for popular distribution by their creators. Those artists who had rejected the gallery system along with conventional art marketing would disapprove of the high prices which works like the seminal early Ed Ruscha books now fetch.

It is also ironical that, in responding to student needs and the need to conserve our artists' books, we created a special collection of reference artists' books within our Book Design Collection. Two years ago the Special Collections at Manchester Metropolitan University were designated with accredited museum status by MLA (the Museums Libraries and Archives Council). "Artists' books: with an emphasis on British and North American books" are designated for active collecting within our collection development policy. However, artists' books are part of a much wider collecting remit which includes books mainly from the nineteenth century to date with a design interest, examples of good illustration (including children's books), typography, period styles and binding, from commercial and private presses. The collection is especially strong on early twentieth century books illustrated with wood engravings and our Children's Book Collection covers the Victorian period to date, again specialising in illustrated books. The tradition of collecting private press books originates from the late nineteenth century when, like many art schools at that time, we were given examples of Kelmscott Press publications by William Morris' family. It is very fitting that the Special Collections also holds the Manchester School of Art Collection of objects which sit alongside finely crafted books and objects created by twentieth century artists.

Artists' books may reflect fine printing and craftsmanship but they also may be modest, cheap productions that express ideas and conceptual thinking. The qualifying factor in defining the artist's book is that it should be an original, creative work by a single artist or a group of artists. For this broad concept of artists' books the collecting criteria has to be quite fluid: new ideas, innovative structures and specific topics of interest to our students; such as humour, political and environmental awareness, imaginative use of text and image and the expression of language through concrete poetry. Above all, the avoidance of pastiche and hackneyed subject matter will ensure the medium of the artist book continues to develop.

Collecting can not help but be influenced by the collector's own interests and taste. Narrative and landscape have always been close to my heart. Over the years, the experience of the land has emerged in books created by Richard Long, Hamish Fulton, Andy Goldsworthy, Simon Cutts and Erica Van Horn, amongst others. One of my favourites is the minimalist, lithographed pamphlet *From around a Lake* by Richard Long, a simple series of single images of leaves and reeds. Long's *Mud hand prints*, containing two prints from each of his hands using mud from the River Avon, was acquired after a visit to the exhibition of Coracle Press works held at the Crafts Council in 1984. An entirely different visual concept is the very rare Richard Long untitled *River Avon* book with impressionistic prints taken with different coloured muds from the River Avon. This book featured in an exhibition at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery in 1978. It was acquired as a chance encounter when purchasing a collection of 1930s wood-engraved books from a private collector. The collection of books connected with landscape were featured in a Library exhibition which led to a request to contribute to a series of lectures for our Landscape Design students looking at landscape in a creative context outside the established professional landscape practice. More recently, political attitudes to threats to the land, such as global warming and genetic engineering featured in the exhibition *Arcadia id est: artists books, nature and the landscape*. Curated by Sarah Bodman in 2005, this touring exhibition includes an excellent website listing each book in the exhibition, this is a useful source for stock selection.

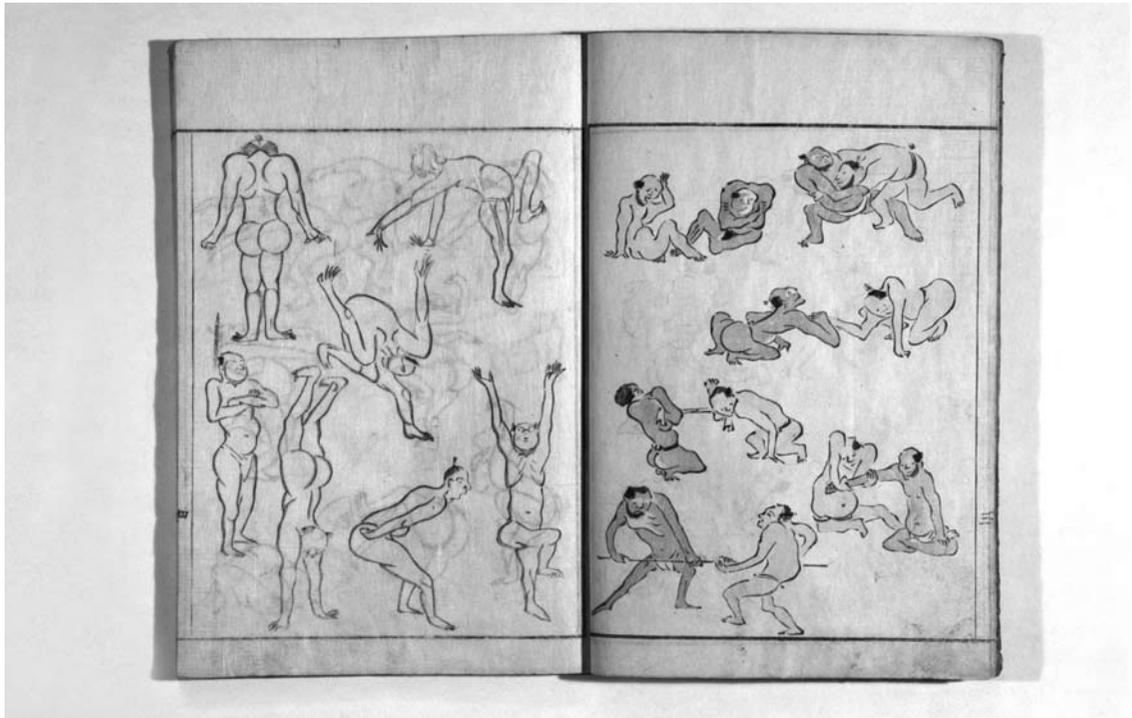
Book reviews and exhibition reviews found in many journals dealing with contemporary art and artists' books are also important methods of selecting material. For several years I followed Cathy Courtney's reviews in *Art Monthly*. Latterly there have been a number of publications on artists' books such as the comprehensive analysis by Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, 2004. In 1973 I first discovered the work of Ian Hamilton Finlay through an enticing article by poet and art librarian, Philip Pacey, in the *Arts Newsletter*. Pacey says Finlay set up The Wild Hawthorn Press "because there were things to be published which no established publisher could be expected to take on, and because these things demanded a craft and loving care which their creator could, in all fairness, ask only of himself, or a true craftsman printer." Pacey informs us that the books and pamphlets are "priced between 20p and £1, cards and folding cards 5p or 10p and poster-sized poem/prints which may be as little as 50p or as much as £15." Maybe it was the challenge of Finlay's statement when interviewed by Pacey that "we virtually have no orders from art libraries" which made me write direct to Finlay to order a host of his publications. Perhaps the most unusual place I have ordered artists books from is a field in Cornwall where Andrew Lanyon champions the conservation of the Cornish environment and bemoans the influx of tourism in his wickedly humorous books. Useful sources for contacting book artists include the *Artists' Books Yearbook* and the catalogues of the annual artists' book fairs in London and Leeds.

Artists' books must be viewed and handled to be appreciated and understood, because of this, book fairs are invaluable for artists and collectors. Visits to book fairs and specialist dealers and shops are vital to

successful collection building. In the early days I completed a set of the works of Dieter Roth when bargain hunting at Nigel Greenwood's Gallery. At the Eagle Gallery in 1995 Emma Hill first introduced me to the work of Deb Rindl where I purchased her wonderful sculptural book: *The thin blue line*.

The contact with artists makes the collecting of artists' books somewhat unique in terms of library acquisition. To be an art patron is unusual for a librarian. Over the years I have made many artist friends and have followed their careers. Collaboration between contemporary book artist and librarian can be important when applying for external funding for expensive items, for the artist can aid your application by providing a statement of intent and methodology supporting the rationale for acquisition. I especially remember the delight Ron King and I shared after the success of obtaining a grant from the then Victoria and Albert Museum Purchase Fund for King's *Anansi Company*, 1992. This complimented the collection of less expensive Circle Press publications.

Collecting artists' books requires an understanding of the medium and some knowledge of the context, dedication and application is required. When selecting books or referring to their structure I often refer to Barbara Blum's description of this unique contemporary art form in which "... its visual material should not just embellish the text but fuse with it. Its formal structure – basically the cover, pages, and sequence of words and images but also size, shape, paper, binding and its mechanism – the way we hold, open, leaf, scan, read and close a book should reinforce one another. The book is thus a vehicle for the art: appearance, content, reading and viewing process internally cohere, work together as a unity.'



BOOKS WITHOUT WORDS / Ellis Tinios

The illustrated woodblock printed books produced in Japan in the Edo period (1615-1868) represent a remarkable achievement in terms of their technical perfection, variety and beauty. Among them are numerous 'books without words' – books that consist of collections of images with texts, when present, reduced to no more than brief prefaces and/or short inscriptions within the image field. Japanese artists of the first rank created designs expressly for reproduction in such books and their names often formed part of the title. 'Books without words' fall into two broad categories: *ehon* 絵本 and *gafu* 画譜.

These *ehon* and *gafu* were printed from cut woodblocks. Two formats predominated: outline printing and colour printing. The first employed a single block per sheet to print in a single shade of black ink. The second employed multiple blocks to print in many colours. The number of colour blocks used ranged from just two or three to twelve or more. A particularly popular combination consisted of two or three pale tints (usually pink, gray and/or blue) with the black keyblock outline. Special printing techniques were sometimes employed. These included carefully wiping a colour block after inking to create a gradated effect and blind printing to provide textured surfaces.

The artist and the calligrapher provided the block cutter with text and images copied in black ink onto a thin sheet of paper. The sheet was pasted face down onto prepared blocks of wood and oiled to make the text and drawings clearly visible through the paper. The block cutter then carefully cut away the background, to create a relief mirror image of the text and images. When the cutting was completed the printing block was fixed to a low table. It was inked and a sheet of prepared paper was carefully laid on the inked block. The printer then rubbed the back of the sheet with a round pad or baren. The printer needed skill to rub the entire surface of the paper smoothly and evenly. The sheet, once printed, was lifted off the block and hung to dry. If the book contained colour illustrations the printing process was repeated on a separate block for each colour. In all cases, the paper was printed on one side only.

Once the printing of all the sheets that would make up a book was completed, each sheet was folded in half, image-side out. Thus each 'leaf' consisted of a doubled-over sheet of paper. The folded sheets making up a book were stacked in order and bound together at their open ends. The flexible, laminated paper covers were then attached to the body of the book with silk cord. The overwhelming majority of books in the Edo period were produced in this sturdy format.

Ehon is used here not in the modern Japanese sense of 'any book with illustrations' but rather in the more restricted sense of books of illustrations meant to entertain through pictures alone. Beautiful, anonymous

women engaged in elegant pursuits provided the subject matter for most *ehon*. Occasionally, *ehon* took the leading actors of the kabuki theatre as their subject. The exquisite images in these books do not tell a story, there is no narrative. At most, the viewer might be aware of the passing of the seasons as he progresses through the book. *Ehon* most resemble volumes of fashion plates or collections of celebrity snapshots. The centre of *ehon* production was Edo (present day Tokyo), the seat of the shogun and the centre of his administration. They were products of the vigorous, merchant-based popular culture that developed in that city. The designing of *ehon* was the exclusive domain of *ukiyo-e* artists.

Gafu are 'books of illustrations' distinguished from *ehon* by their didactic function. They derive directly from printed painting manuals produced in China in the seventeenth century and exported to Japan before the end of that century. *Gafu* were designed by Japanese artists of all the major schools and were advertised and sold as copybooks. They provided models for those wishing to gain proficiency in a particular style of painting to copy; they can be understood properly only with reference to a body of paintings. However, *gafu* do not reproduce specific paintings; they reproduce the essential elements of a particular painter's style within the confines of the illustrated book.

The disposition of images in *gafu* took many forms. At one end of the spectrum, the pages were covered with many small, discrete images. The subject matter found on these pages includes: human figures engaged in a variety of activities; buildings, walls, gates and other architectural details; types of rocks, trees and grasses; and patterns of currents in rivers and seas. All of these elements were intended for use in landscape paintings. Other subjects also offered for study were: bamboo and orchids of every variety in every kind of weather; birds, beasts and fishes; stems, buds and petals of cherry and plum blossoms; leaves, stems and flowers of every variety of chrysanthemum; wings, feet, heads and bodies of birds. These categories were not combined on a single page but grouped separately. The drawing manuals created by Kitao Masayoshi (1764-1824) in the late 1790s and the many *manga* volumes by Hokusai (1760-1849) published from 1814 onward represent the most extensive use of this format of pages of multiple images.

At the other end of the spectrum, *gafu* offered fully worked out compositions presented across the double-page opening of the book. These encompassed Chinese-style landscapes, nature studies (usually bird-and-flower designs), large-scale figures from Chinese and Japanese myth and legend, and scenes from the daily lives of the people of Japan. All these categories might be included in a single volume to demonstrate the range of the artist who designed them. *Bumpô gafu* (1807) is an excellent example of such a book. In it, the artist Kawamura Bumpô (d. 1821) offers a collection of thirty double-page designs in the repeating sequence of figure, landscape, bird-and-flower. In some instances, however, the artist devoted an entire book to just one genre. Thus Bumpô devoted all thirty-four double-page designs in his *Kimpaen gafu* (1820) to bird-and-flower designs. His contemporary, Yamaguchi Soken (1759-1818), issued

two three-volume books, in 1800 and 1804, devoted to depictions of the daily lives of his contemporaries in Kyoto. He followed these in 1806 with a three-volume book of plant studies, and then in 1818 with a two-volume collection of Chinese landscapes. Most *gafu* were produced in the Kyoto-Osaka region by artists whose aesthetic derived from Chinese theory and practice, but some Edo-based *ukiyo-e* artists also designed *gafu*. While the primary function of *gafu* was to instruct, as collections of expertly designed and beautifully printed images, these books could also be viewed for pleasure.



16. Artist & Photographs - Lawrence Alloway and various artists

ABOUT COLLECTIONS / Chris Taylor

A conversation with Peter Trepanier, Head of Reader Services, Art Metropole Collection, National Gallery of Canada, December 2006

Chris Taylor: *The Art Metropole Collection is very different to the other collections housed at the National Gallery of Canada, it's made up of ephemera, multiples, vinyl records, books and videos and it asks for a very intimate interplay between object and viewer. How does a gallery that is normally 'hands-off' regarding its displays deal with something as multi-sensory as the Art Metropole Collection?*

Peter Trepanier: You're right in that it is presented as 'hands-off'. The thing I like about the installation of the current exhibition is you have the plexiglass vitrines, but the fact that they're on trestle tables alludes to that idea of the document, of the working document, being at a table and working away, particularly within a library context. I think the point of the show is to highlight the existence of such a collection. I think the idea of promoting it through a gallery highlights the existence of the archive.

CT: *How about a more general audience who aren't searching databases before they arrive, walking in off the street and used to coming into a gallery and looking at a picture or sculpture with a label, but are faced with a very different type of material and presentation? They somehow have to realise that there's more beyond that room – how do we develop the audience's curiosity?*

PT: But that was always the genre's problem from the very beginning. Wasn't it Lucy Lippard who mentioned the idea of being able to pick up an artist's book at the checkout of a supermarket, that utopian ideal of making all this stuff so easily accessible, when really it isn't? I don't think many people ever really understood it. It will alert those who already know about the existence of this stuff but if you can just ignite a few more, this is dangling a carrot in front of them, to entice them to seek out more. If this is 'The Top 100'¹ then there's still 12,511² additional items yet to be seen so I think it will spur yet further interest of such a collection in our library.

CT: *So the show actually becomes a stepping-stone to the archive, and the public's access to the archive. But how do we make the public aware of this?*

PT: Things are much more accessible, there are no restrictions within the library and the archive room but you do have to go and seek it out. But what is interesting is that what you might find in a library is not necessarily what you might expect – it's primary source material, it's not always secondary source material.

CT: *I suppose the overriding positive aspects for an artists' book fair is accessibility, it brings a genre not often experienced into the public arena, although with the Special Collections exhibition we're finding ourselves coming*

up against those same barriers once again because we're taking things out of particular collections, they're leaving their 'homes' and having to be secured within a safe environment, at which point they can not be handled anymore.

PT: There is an accessibility issue. If you open the access too wide then the books won't survive.

CT: *But I could argue that the nature of the book made of material bound together which will inevitably over time suffer wear and tear, should be viewed and handled until they fall apart and the bits are swept away.*

PT: You should talk to the people at Nova Scotia College of Art & Design who've lost a lot of their material over the years because it's been so heavily used.

CT: *And do they find that an issue?*

PT: Some are very upset about losing items because of their historical significance.

CT: *But for historic purposes there are always means of documenting things.*

PT: But you also want to have the actual object in your hand. You see, we not only acquire books for their aesthetic value but because they are potential objects for exhibiting and there are more and more books from other collections in the gallery library being requested and appearing within the context of exhibitions, particularly exhibitions of paintings. The 'exhibition value' of books has increased whereas before they would have been seen purely as documentary material, and now they're an integral part of an exhibition, it's a recent development, and I don't know whether it's because of the Art Metropole material, making people think, rethink about certain relationships. Those books weren't created with the same intentions as this other material but it's influencing people's sense of the worth and aesthetics of these objects. In spite of the whole premise of that movement being to dematerialise the work of art, to make it accessible and to allow it to exist simultaneously in many places at once but not to have that preciousness associated with it and the whole notion of undermining the art system and hierarchy, and here they are, being preserved in the institutions they were supposed to be provoking!

CT: *So, what is the status of the Art Metropole Collection within the National Gallery? Is it just only one of many archives that exist here?*

PT: Its seen as a major collection within the gallery and given prominence within the library itself, but it's been exciting to see it expand beyond the walls of the library.

CT: *AA Bronson³ talked about the collection being a "living history" and it's a term I've often used for an archive that I helped to develop in the UK. General Idea stopped adding to it in 1996, so in a sense, the Art Metropole Collection does come to an end, its finite. How do you see it continuing as a living archive, what sort of future do you see for it?*

PT: Exhibitions – but we're continuing to build upon it with other exhibitions that will always refer to it, the interest will steadily increase. I hope people will be drawn in by the visuality of the material, then going home and maybe start questioning certain concepts within it, checking the on-line catalogue and then coming back for more. It's all there in the archive, the information is accessible but it throws into question all sorts of notions about galleries and libraries and research, researching in libraries, research and exhibitions, and in time the areas will become more integrated. It will be used as a research collection and an ongoing exhibition collection.

CT: *I remember a number of years ago whilst walking through the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam coming across a room between the galleries and the restaurant, in the centre of which was an enormous wire cage in which they stored their book collection. I recently suggested to a curator at the Whitworth Art Gallery in Manchester that they bring all of their metal shelving housing their historic wallpaper sample books out from the cage in the basement and up into the main gallery, a resource so public that it would hit people as they came in – they couldn't help but be curious about the contents. I suppose I'm interested in making this idea of accessibility visible and the possibility of access to something slightly more exotic than we normally encounter.*

PT: It would have impact but the amount of material would be so overwhelming, you wouldn't know where to start.

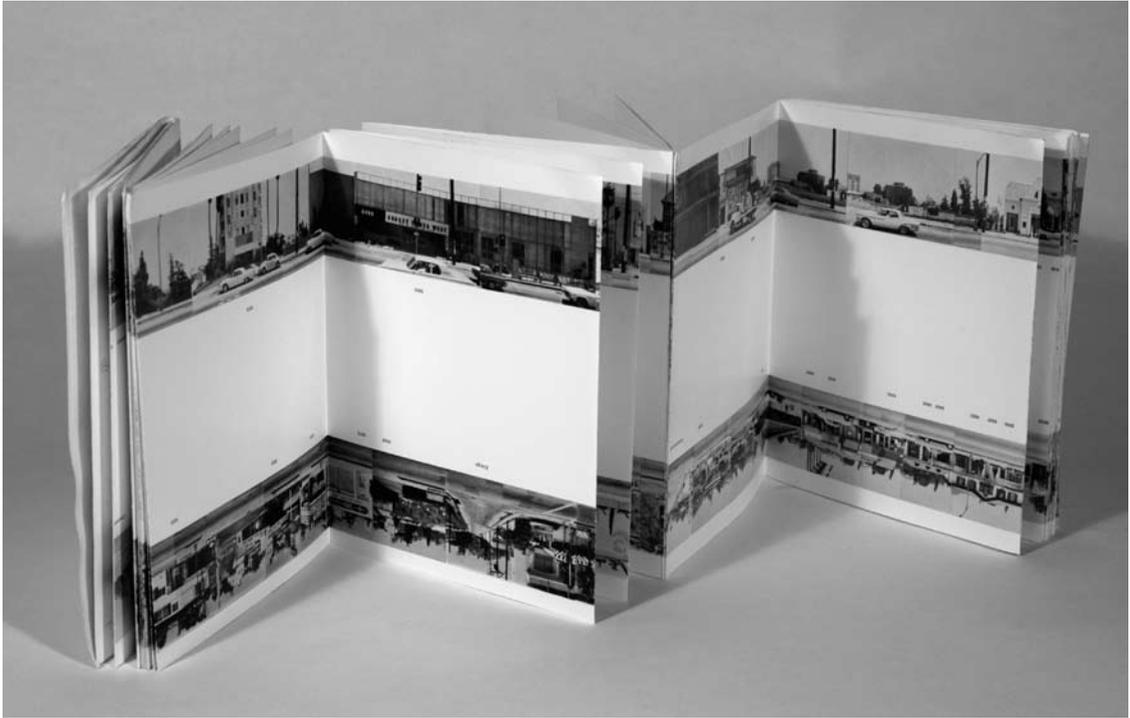
CT: *The range and type of media within the collection, within the genre as a whole, has become its own worst enemy. It started out as a medium for easy distribution, cheap and accessible, but in terms of gallery exhibitions it's possibly the most difficult to curate?*

PT: But this is what you get – this was the work, this was the format of the work.

¹ *The Top 100*, National Gallery of Canada, 1 December 2006–1 April 2007. An exhibition, curated by Kitty Scott and Jonathan Shaughnessy, of material selected from the Art Metropole Collection donated in 1999 by Jay Smith, Toronto to the National Gallery of Canada, where its custodianship is shared by the Library and Archives and the curatorial staff of Contemporary Art.

² Art Metropole Collection on-line catalogue – <http://bibcat.gallery.ca:81/screens/opacmenu.html>

³ AA Bronson, together with Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal, an artists' group known as General Idea, established an agency in Toronto, Ontario in 1973 and launched under the name of Art Metropole in October 1974.



30. Every Building on Sunset Strip - Ed Ruscha

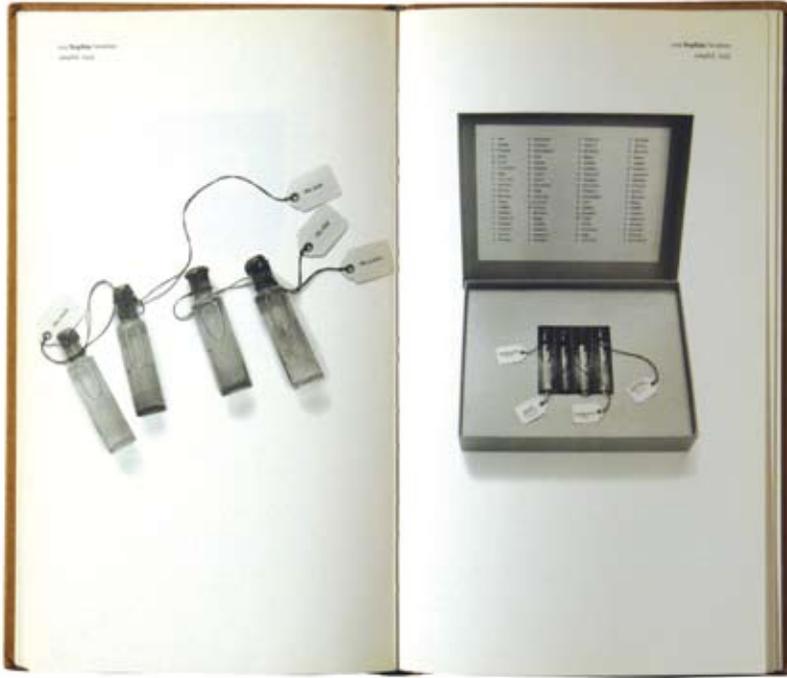
SOME BOOKS / John McDowall

This exhibition of artists' books assembled from collections and libraries, with each one of the books a self-contained collection, also presents the manifold possibilities of interplay in the space from page to page and book to book.

Whatever typological or aleatory criteria or means of gathering books onto shelves and distinct consecutive elements into books, a serial order is formed and from this a consequential potential in the reading through reference and association may develop. This is subjective and infinite as connections are made, expectations confirmed or subverted, and this always an experience in and of time.

Some of these books offer, by way of photographs, as Ed Ruscha said of his own work "simply a collection of facts" and others, in Robert Smithson's words "A Heap of Language". Several in their actual materiality present accumulations of, for instance, soil, paper, texture or ink and others the ethereal experience of walking, of breathing or of the seasons. Some are transcriptions of the rational into the irrational, object into impression and written text into colours.

And others depict personal collections of books, which may be thought of as libraries in and of themselves.



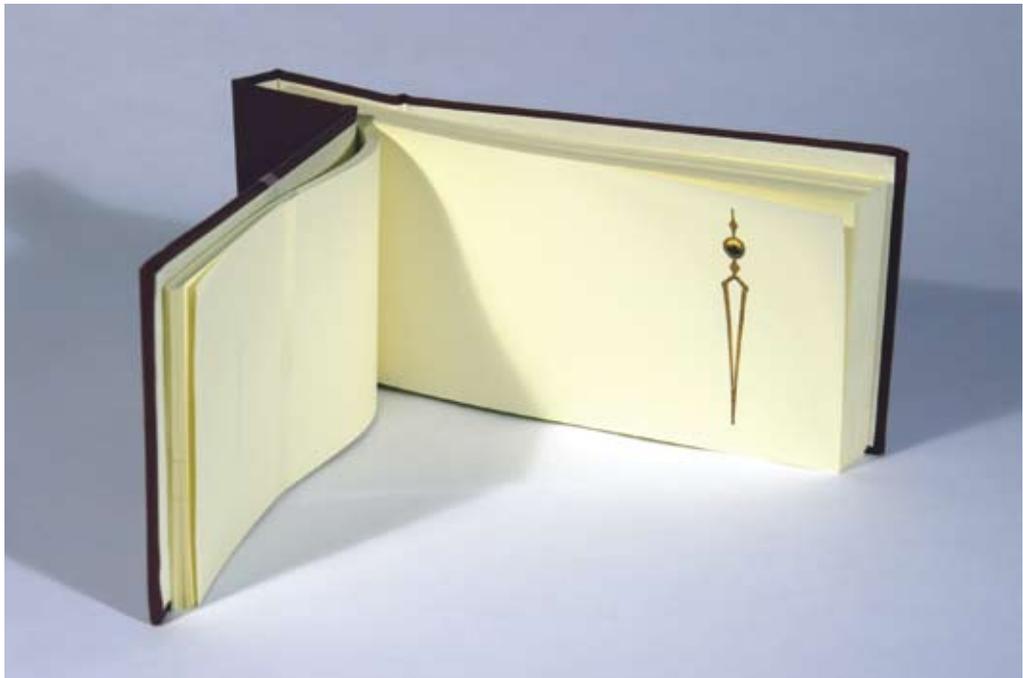
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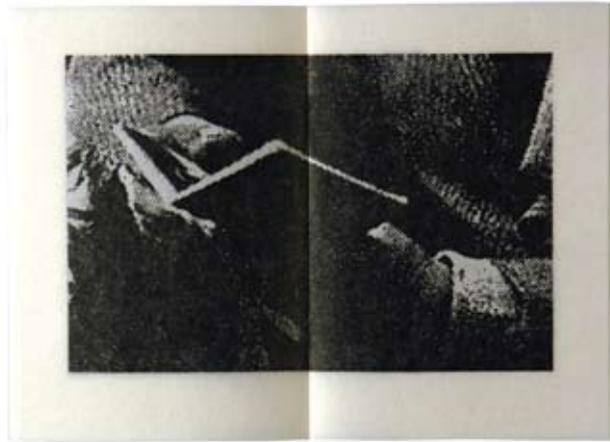
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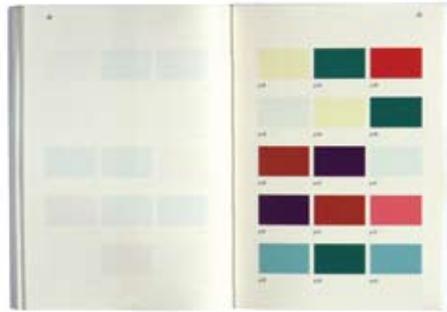
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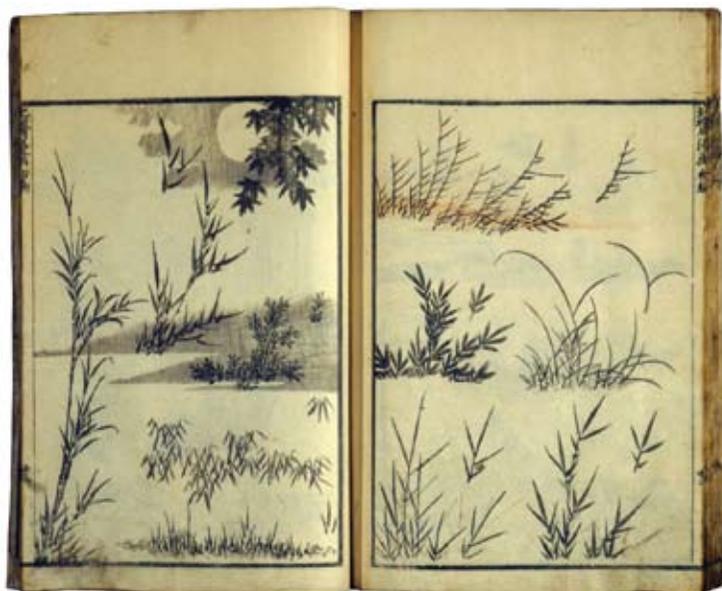
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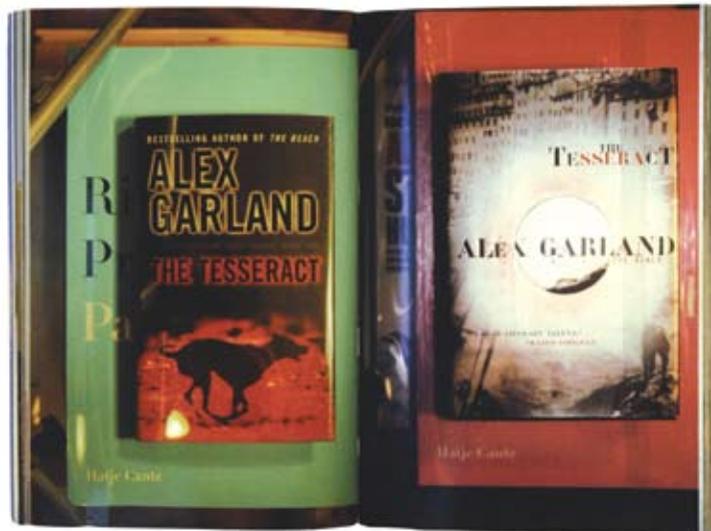
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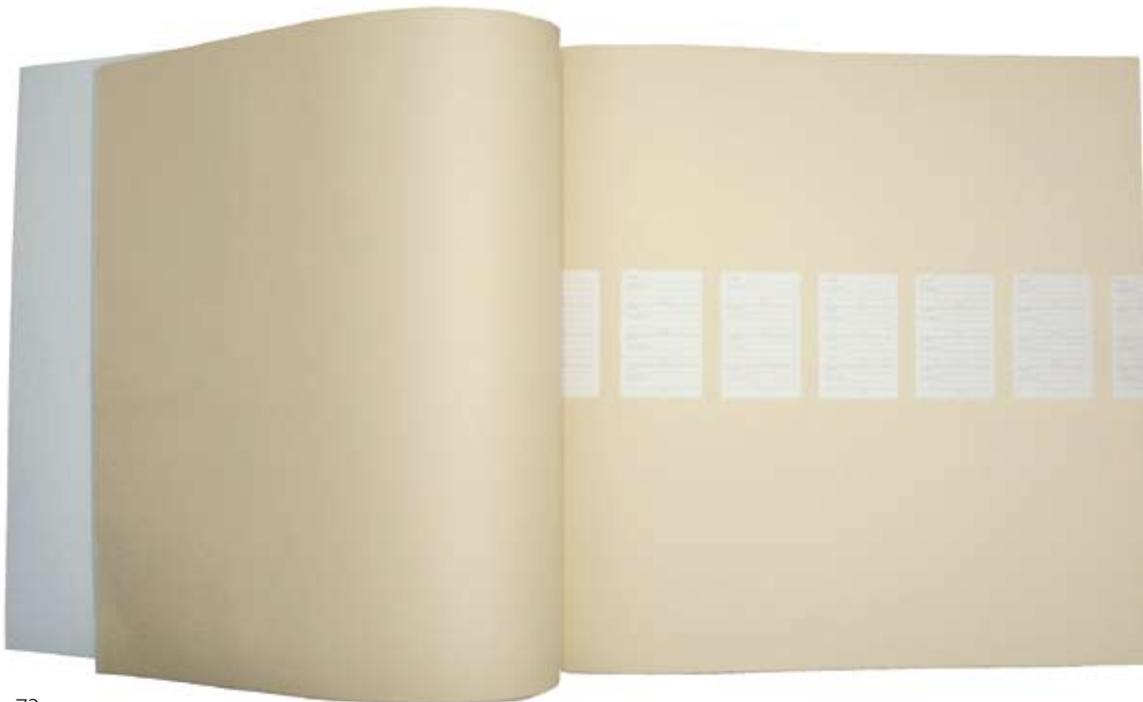
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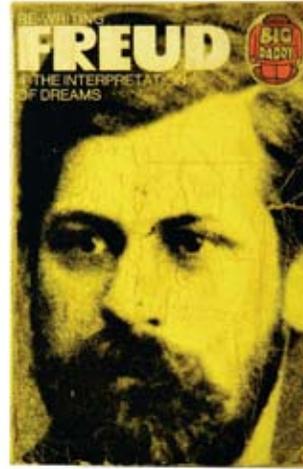
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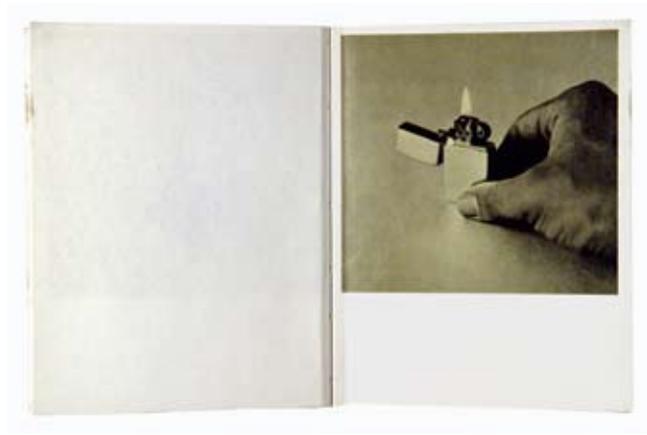
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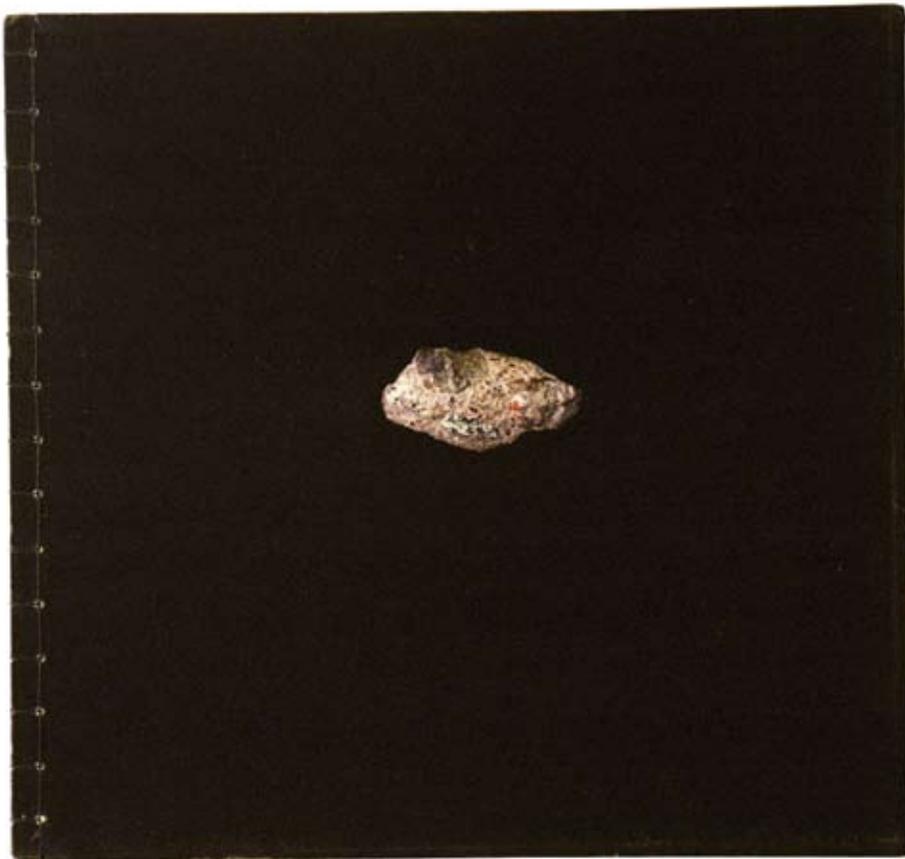
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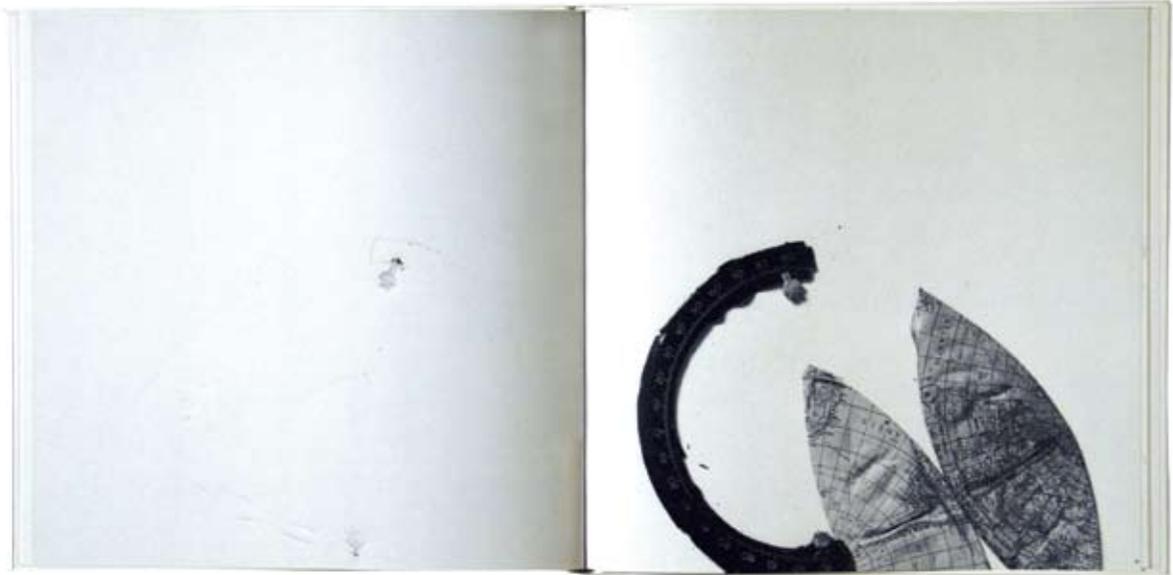
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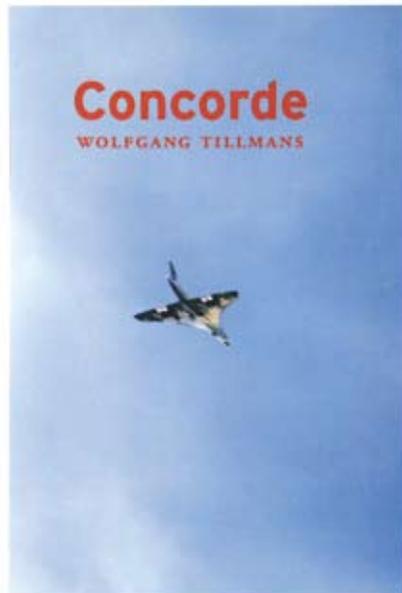
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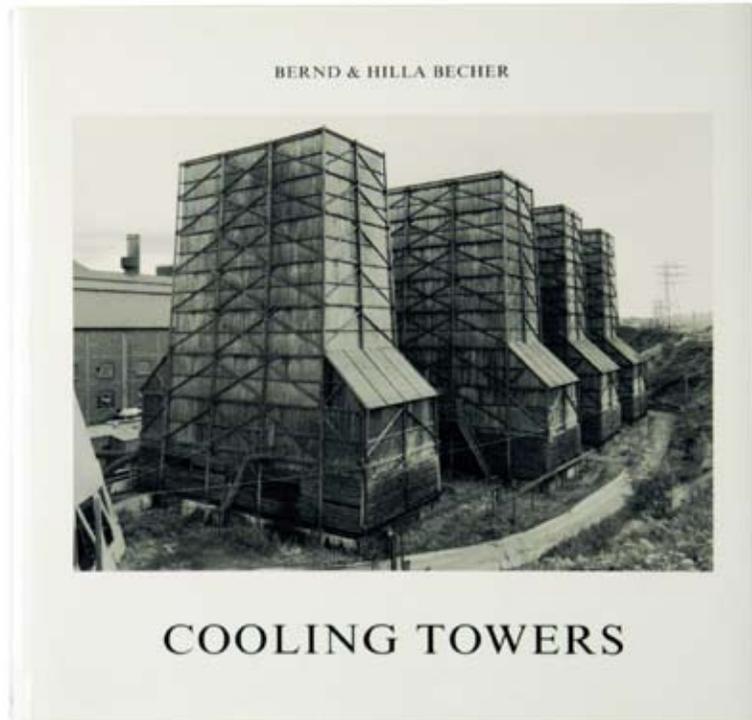
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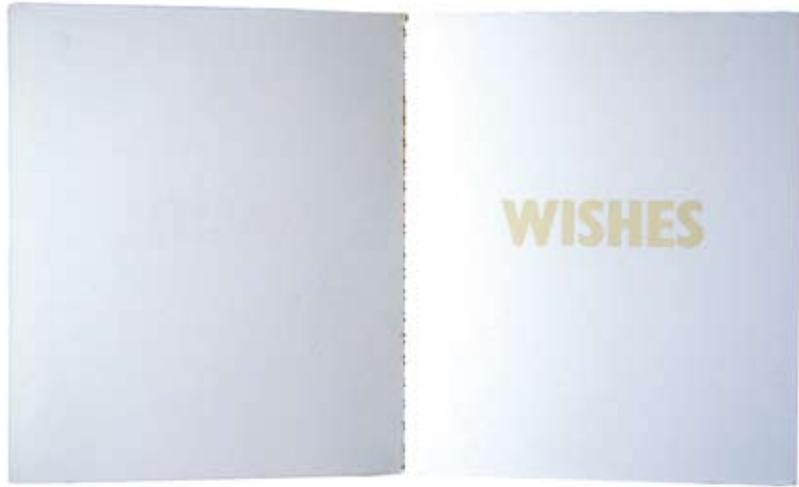
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65



5

LIST OF WORKS

1

Textbook

Sabine J. Bieli
Coloured yarns
2007

2

Field Notes

Helen Douglas
Inkjet
2007

3

Tenebrae

Ian Tyson
Inkjet and cut out
2007

4

Various Small Fires

Ed Ruscha
Offset litho
1964
Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
Manchester Metropolitan University

5

Sea of Buddha

Hiroshi Sugimoto
Offset litho
1997
Sonnabend Sundell Editions
Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
Manchester Metropolitan University

6

Classe Terminale du Lycée Chases en 1931

Christian Boltanski
Offset litho
1987
Maison de Culture de Saint-Etienne
The Henry Moore Institute Library

7

A Herb Garden

Thomas A. Clark
Letterpress and coloured card
1980
Moschatel Press
Private Collection

8

Breathings

Reuben Thurnhill
Etching and screenprint
1994
Private Collection

9

A Hundred Stones - one mile between first and last

Richard Long
Offset litho
1977
Künsthalle Berne
Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
Manchester Metropolitan University

10

Daily Mirror

Dieter Roth
Offset litho
1970
Edition Hansjörg Mayer
Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
Manchester Metropolitan University

11

Unpacking my Library

Buzz Spector
Offset litho
1995
Cleveland Center for Contemporary Art
Private Collection

12

100 Photos qui ne sont pas des photos de chevaux

Claude Closky
Offset litho
1995
Centre d'Art Contemporain de Pougues-les-Eaux
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13

Cooling Towers

Bernd and Hilla Becher
Offset litho
2005
The MIT Press
The Henry Moore Institute Library

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From around a lake

Richard Long
Offset litho
1975
Art & Project
Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
Manchester Metropolitan University

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Sachlich

Christian Boltanski
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1995
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The Henry Moore Institute Library

16

Artists & Photographs

Lawrence Alloway and various artists
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1970
Multiples, Inc.
Henry Moore Institute Library

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955,000

Lucy Lippard
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1970
The Vancouver Art Gallery
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**La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même /
The Bride stripped bare by her bachelors, even
(The Green Box)**

Marcel Duchamp
Mixed-media
1934
Sir Herbert Read Collection, Special Collections,
Brotherton Library, University of Leeds

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Six Souvenirs de Jeunesse de Christian Boltanski

Christian Boltanski
Offset litho
n/d
The Henry Moore Institute Library

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Brutus killed Ceasar

John Baldessari
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The Emily H. Davis Art Gallery of the Univ. of Akron
Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
Manchester Metropolitan University

21

Purloined – A Novel

Joseph Kosuth
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2005
Salon Verlag
Private Collection

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Les Pins

Bernard Lassus
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1983
Coracle Press
Private Collection

23

Nine Hundred and Ninety-nine Cranes

Chia Cheng Ho
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1999
Private Collection

24

Thirtyfour Parking Lots

Ed Ruscha
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1967
The Brotherton Library, University of Leeds

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Catalogue of Barcodes #2

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Photocopy and collage
n/d
Leeds College of Art & Design Library

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A Jacobean Travelling Library

Letterpress
1617
Special Collections, Brotherton Library,
University of Leeds

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Autobiography

Sol LeWitt
Offset litho
1980
Multiples, Inc.
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from earth: brown, braum, brun

herman de vries
Crayon, pencil and earth
2005
Lydia Megert Editions
Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
Manchester Metropolitan University

29

Four basic kinds of straight lines

Sol LeWitt
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1969
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Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
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30

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Ed Rusha
Offset litho
1966
Special Collections, Sir Kenneth Green Library,
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Ehon tamakazura

Nishikawa Sukenobu
Woodblock print
1745
Kyoto

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Ryakugashiki

Kitao Masayoshi
Woodblock print
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Musée d'Art Modern et Contemporain de Strasbourg
The Henry Moore Institute Library

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Sarah Bodman
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Jean-Marie Krauth
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1995
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Joan Lyons
Digital copy
1998
Visual Studies Workshop Press
Leeds College of Art & Design Library

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Re-writing Freud

Simon Morris
Offset litho
2005
information as material
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42

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Cornelia Parker
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1993
Book Works
Leeds College of Art & Design Library

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Sharon Kivland
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2006
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Thirtysix Fire Stations

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2004
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Pavel Büchler
Digital copy
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ARCHIVE

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Fragment

Miranda Schofield
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2004
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Sharon Kivland
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Alison Turnbull
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Alison Turnbull is represented by Matt's Gallery,
London

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Barbara Greene and John McDowall
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All the Clothes of a Woman

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Offset litho
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Art Metropole
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Six Days on the Road

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Inkjet
1998
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An Archive of Time

Vicky Lucas
Inkjet
2006
Archive Books
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**"Les Gattes" d'Alain Robbe-Grillet:
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Ken Allott and Peter Tremewan
Offset litho
1985
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Brotherton Library, University of Leeds

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Untitled (Volume 1)

Danny Flynn
Letterpress
1996
Burning Book Press
Private collection

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Untitled (Volume 2)

Danny Flynn
Letterpress
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Private collection

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Cover Version

Jonathan Monk
Offset litho
2004
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Wolfgang Tillmans
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Photocopy and mixed-media
2002
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Nubian Queen

Virginia Nimarkoh
Offset litho
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Camberwell Press
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Sharon Kivland
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Susan Hiller
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Chris Taylor & Craig Wood
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The Pelican Freud Library

Simon Morris
Offset litho double-sided poster
2007
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My Virtual Library

Yann Sérandour
Digital projection
Ongoing
www.rearsound.net

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Yann Sérandour is an artist, living and working in Rennes, France. His interstitial and mimetic practice develops through works, publications and products conceived by others, whose range he reactivates and whose stakes he shifts, maintaining a privileged link between the book and the library. At the same time, he is continuing his research activities through writing, lecturing, educational activities and curating exhibitions.

Gaye Smith retired as Library Services Manager for Art & Design, responsible for developing Special Collections which includes the Artists' Books Collection at the Sir Kenneth Green Library, Manchester Metropolitan University, 1970–2006.

Ellis Tinios is Honorary Lecturer in the School of History, University of Leeds, and taught East Asian History from 1978 to 2002. He also served as curator for three exhibitions devoted to Japanese prints and illustrated books in the University Gallery, Leeds. He is Research Associate of the Japanese Research Centre, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and Special Assistant to the Japanese Section on the Department of Asia, British Museum.

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