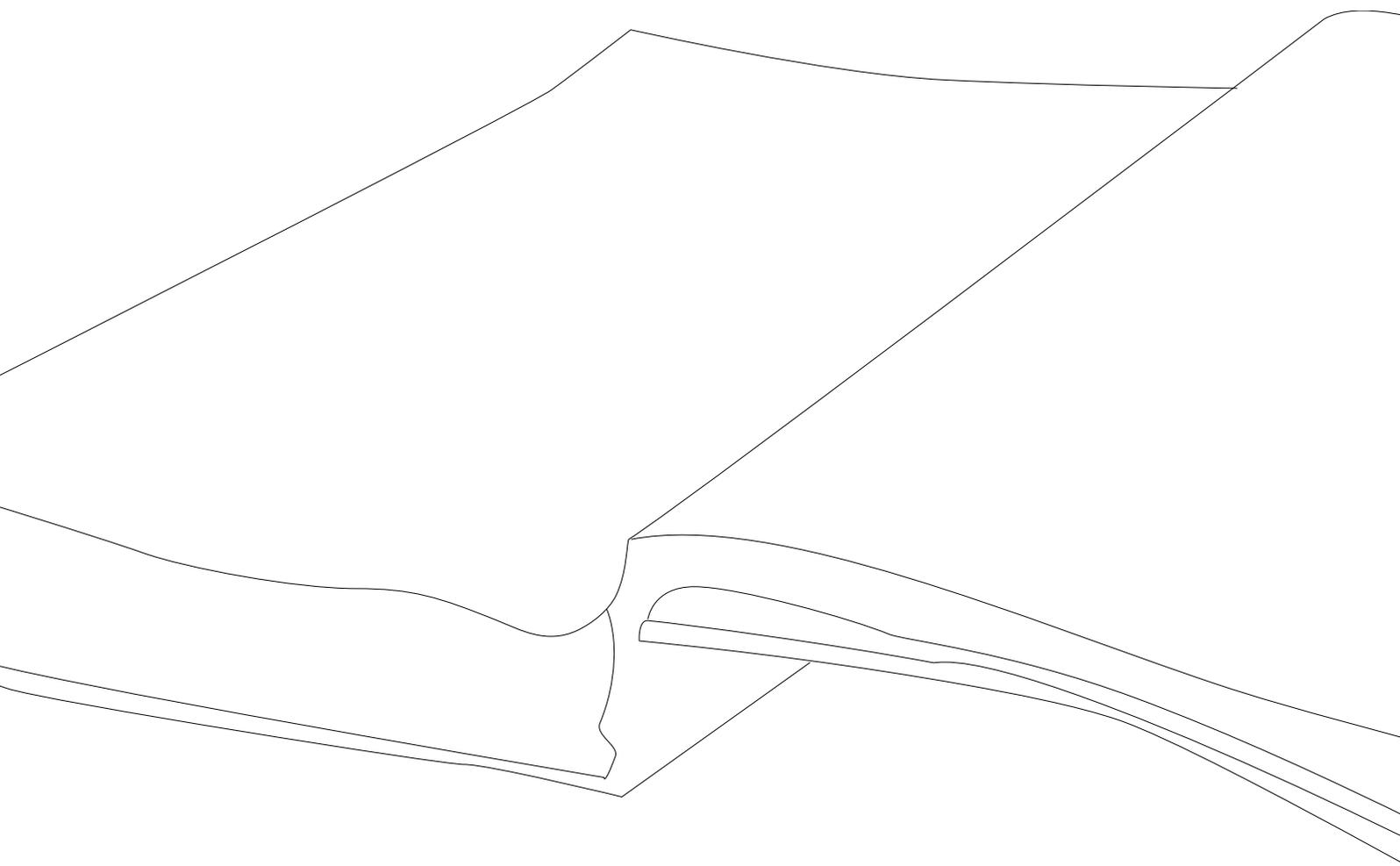


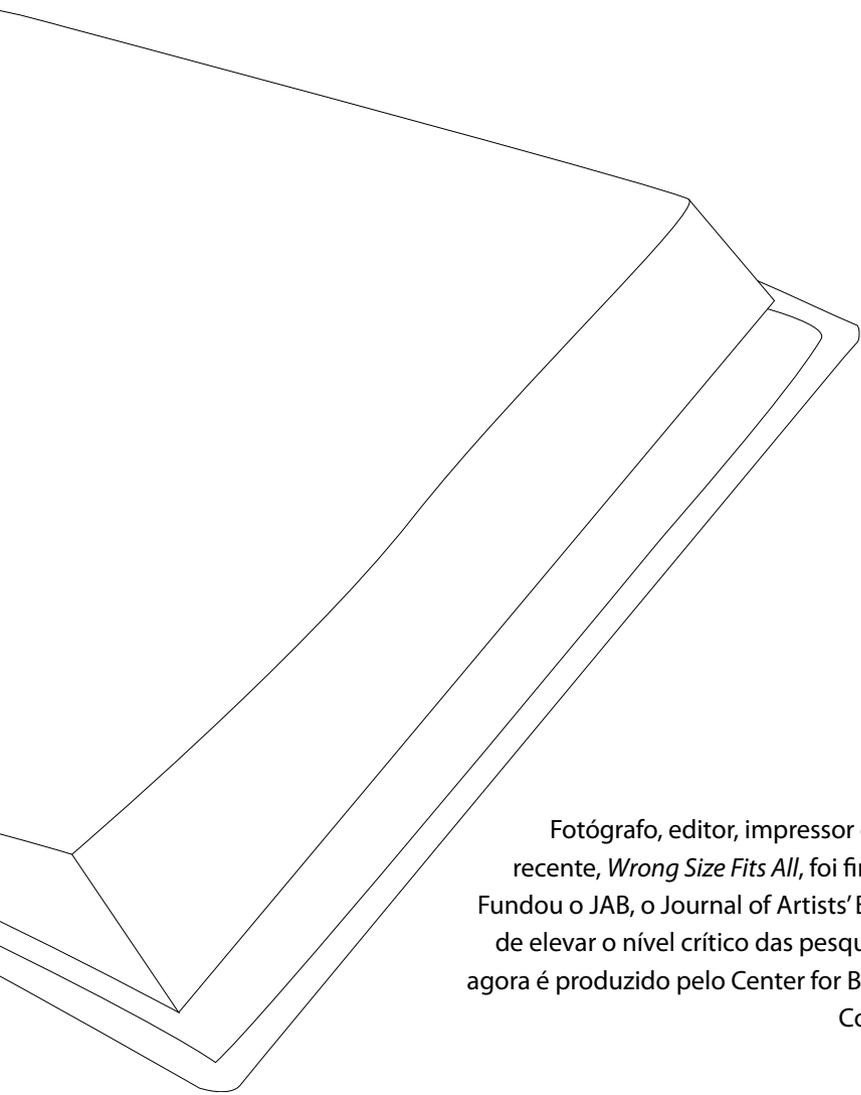
ABSTRACT

In this essay I will attempt to report on the field of contemporary artist books from a point of view based upon my personal and direct experiences at recent artist book conferences in the US, as the founder and editor of JAB—the Journal of Artists' Books, as a book artist myself, and as a staff member of the graduate program in Book & Paper Arts at Columbia College Chicago.

RESUMO

Neste artigo procurarei fazer um relato no campo dos livros de artista contemporâneos, de um ponto de vista baseado nas minhas experiências diretas e pessoais em congressos recentes sobre o livro de artista nos Estados Unidos, como fundador e editor do *JAB – The Journal of Artists' Books*, como um artista do livro, e como membro do Programa de Pós-graduação nas Artes do Livro & do Papel no Columbia College de Chicago.





Brad Freeman

Fotógrafo, editor, impressor e fazedor de livros. Seu livro mais recente, *Wrong Size Fits All*, foi finalista do MCBA 2011 Book Prize. Fundou o JAB, o Journal of Artists' Books em 1994 em uma tentativa de elevar o nível crítico das pesquisas sobre livros de artista. O JAB agora é produzido pelo Center for Book and Paper Arts, do Columbia College de Chicago, onde trabalha.

Contemporary Artists' Books

This view is limited by my own prejudices and constrained to what I have seen directly and should not be taken as a definitive or thorough overview of the current state of the varied, vital, and fast growing field of artist books.

I will conclude with a description and analysis of three contemporary artists' books—by contemporary I mean books produced in this century. This description and analysis is meant to serve as an example of close looking as a process toward

I AM AN ARTIST, NOT A SCHOLAR, AND MY LOOKING AT AND READING OF THESE BOOKS WILL ALSO BE A PLEA TO FANS AND SCHOLARS ALIKE TO WRITE MORE ABOUT ARTIST BOOKS.

a poetics of the artist book. I am an artist, not a scholar, and my looking at and reading of these books will also be a plea to fans and scholars alike to write more about artist books.

Here at the beginning I offer a quote from Charles Bernstein, a poet and educator in the US, who is in turn paraphrasing Ralph Waldo Emerson from his essay *Self Reliance*. Bernstein words are not referring directly to artist books but I think we could substitute the word "poetry" with the words "artist book" and have a meaningful statement.

Poetry is aversion of conformity in the pursuit of new forms, or can be. . . . When poetry averts conformity it enters into the contemporary: speaking to the pressures and conflicts of the moment with the means just at hand.

from *A Poetics* by Charles Bernstein

This statement is a call for artists and writers to create the new. It is a realization that only through experimenting with the book form and engaging

with the world as it is now, will this relatively new medium continue to have relevance with the ever-evolving culture-at-large. And I say artists and writers because the so-called artist book is first and foremost a book, defined by Dick Higgins in *Foew&ombwhnw* (1969) as an intermedia device that can contain writing and image. And this book called the artist book has become a stage of the contemporary confrontation between creators and the status quo.

In the last twelve months I have attended four artist book conferences in the US and to me this is one indication of the accelerating amount of activity in the field. This many artist book conferences and the rising level of substantive talks at the conferences by a growing number of scholars as well as artists talking about their work in one year in the US is unprecedented. In fact, there were other conferences and fairs that I was unable to attend.

But what is this activity? And what does it mean?

Basically there are three kinds of activity;

- 1) there is an increase in the amount of production of experimental books by artists whose primary medium is the book;
- 2) there is more scholarly research concerned with artist books ;
- 3) and there is an increase in artists who are presenting and talking about the conceptual and production aspects of their work at these conferences.

This growth indicates a striving toward scholarly and artistic professionalism. The field is maturing as young scholars begin to look closely at and to write about the work book artists have been producing for years. This upsurge in writing looks at artist books within an historical context as well as contemporary work.

More classes are being taught in artists' books at universities; graduate programs in book arts are gradually increasing and the established programs are becoming more rigorous in approaching the making of the artist book from a conceptual as well as procedural manner.

The Pyramid Atlantic Artist Book Conference and Fair has been occurring every other year for the past twenty years in a suburb of Washington DC and so ranks as the single longest running conference and fair in the US. In 2008 about 40 vendors attended the fair while there were five talks about contemporary artist books.

The fair offers the opportunity for young book artists, in this case a student from a local university, as well as established book artists and dealers who specialize in artist books to display their work and talk with people who are interested in this work.

The book artists who attend the fairs depend upon the coordinators of the fairs to bring in people who will buy artist books—private collectors as well as curators from institutional special collections which are usually housed in university and public libraries.

An important aspect of the Pyramid Atlantic fair are the prizes given to outstanding works as judged by experienced scholars and institutional curators. This is only the second time that prizes have been awarded at this fair. However, not only were prizes awarded, the judges explained why they chose

particular books. Elisabeth Long, a board member of JAB—The Journal of Artists' Books chose two books for the JAB Critic's Award—Maureen Cummins's *Anatomy of Insanity* and Masumi Shibata's *Karaoke* (published by Preacher's Biscuits Books, Rochester, NY). Ms. Long wrote reviews of the two books that were published in the spring, 2009 issue of JAB, JAB25. This essay provided a longer forum for her to describe and analyze the books for a larger audience.

Mary Tasillo's essay, "Context is King: The Democratic Multiple in a Digital Age", initially given as one of the talks at the Pyramid Atlantic Conference, was published in the current issue of the Journal of Artists' Books—JAB26.

Both Long and Tasillo have master of fine arts degrees in book arts—Long from Columbia College Chicago and Tasillo from the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. From this we have evidence of graduate book arts programs producing graduates who are writing about contemporary artists' books as well as being artists themselves.

Johanna Drucker and I founded JAB—The Journal of Artists' Books in 1994 as an attempt at elevating the level of discourse in artists' books by providing a critical forum for debate about theoretical & creative issues in artists' books.

Artists' books exist at the intersections of printmaking, photography, writing, experimental narrative, visual arts, graphic design, & book art. As a forum for the study of these works, JAB publishes critical & theoretical articles; reviews of books & exhibitions; documentation of current activity through interviews with artists & publishers; as well as commentary on conferences & other book art-related activities. JAB also regularly showcases creative work in the form of artists' statements

& artist-designed pages & covers produced specifically for JAB. Most writing in the book arts up to 1994 had concentrated on the craft aspect of the book, which is important but it should not preclude any discussion of the conceptual, procedural, and formal aspects that go into the making of the artist book.

JAB is published twice each year, now at the Center for Book & Paper Arts at Columbia College Chicago where we have a master of fine arts program in Interdisciplinary Book & Paper with about thirty students. We have three studios and a gallery; a papermaking studio, bindery, and a print studio with offset lithography and letterpress.

The College Book Art Association was founded in 2006 and the first conference of the CBAA was held at the University of Iowa in January 2009. There was not a book fair associated with the conference, but Jim Snitzer of the legendary Chicago Books (active from the mid 1970s to mid 1980s) displayed their entire publishing run.

This conference was notable for some well-researched and high quality talks, which to me is an indication of positive progress in the field. The mostly young speakers, often graduate students or recent graduates, spoke on substantive topics, including Sheelagh Bevan's *WHEN A MULTIPLE BECOMES A BOOK: Losing Artists & Photographs* at MoMA Library, of which a revised version was published in JAB26.

Artists & Photographs is a multiples that included many artists' publications and was produced by Marian Goodman in 1970. It included works by Bruce Naumann, Andy Warhol, Douglas Huebler, Allan Kaprow, Sol Lewitt, and numerous other artists associated with the conceptual art movement.

From Sheelagh Bevan's essay;

...by recounting this particular story, I hope to use the example of Artists & Photographs to consider several issues relating to hybrid publications that appeared in the years leading up to 1972-73, when the term "artists' books" was first used in print to designate both a genre and a subject for exhibitions. By not shying away from ontological questions that dare to ask, what is an artist's book, I hope to show that the retrospective inclusion of hybrid forms and genres under the rubric of "artists' books" may be a critical gesture of friendship (and something of a matter of convenience), but it is one that has the potential to distort aesthetic expressions and obscure material forms.

The second biannual Codex Artist Book Conference and Fair was held on the campus of the University of California Berkeley in February 2009. It is the largest regularly held artist book fair in the US with over 200 vendors including publishers, artists, and book dealers from North America, Europe, and Asia. Peter Koch, the organizer, has made it clear that in order for the field of artist books to survive, the books produced by artists must have success in the market place and so he works hard at bringing private collectors and curators from university library special collections which often contain artist books.

The conference aspect of Codex featured 6 speakers including Emily McVarish, a California writer, letterpress printer, book artist, and protege of Johanna Drucker. She spoke eloquently about her new book *The Square* published in 2009 by Granary Books of New York. A revised version of her talk is published in JAB26.

The following quote is from McVarish's essay;

The initial impulse behind *The Square* was not really initial. It was an urge I have had repeatedly: to try to make sense of, and make sensible, the role of images in our lives, the nature of our desire for their stillness, their sameness and containment. As I began, again, to work on this fixation, it gathered a few other familiar concerns, relating to public space. Despite incursions of the virtual, public space still operates as a concrete (albeit disregarded) stage of everyday life, a place of palpable intersection between the particular and the general, between individual trajectories and social reproduction, between momentary enactments and the perpetuation of history.

The first Hybrid Book Conference was held in June 2009 at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. The title of this conference, Hybrid Book, signals a

THE BOOK AS AN INTERMEDIA DEVICE, AN OBJECT THAT CAN HOLD VARIOUS MEDIA AS THEY
INTERACT WITH ONE ANOTHER TO PRODUCE SOMETHING NEW

desire by the conference coordinators that book artists remain open to outside influences and various media—similar to Dick Higgins’s idea of the book as an intermedia device, an object that can hold various media as they interact with one another to produce something new.

Awards and prizes for exemplary work are given in nearly all fields of human endeavor. In sports the process used to determine the winners is fairly straight forward—the team or individual scoring the most goals or running the fastest race have for centuries been the victors. Codified rules authorized by professional societies and developed over time help in the judging of more subjective criteria that may be found in, say, cat shows, surfing contests, or figure skating. In the emerging professionalism of the field of artist books hard and fast rules of what may be considered excellence remain unwritten. This is probably a good thing.

Six awards were given at the Hybrid Book Conference with most of the judges being special collections librarians. The conference committee asked me to be a judge for the Emerging Artist Prize—I accepted. Some discussion occurred about what constitutes an “emerging artist.” This was resolved at the book fair by having only the emerging artist tables placed on the second floor—reserving the

first floor for the more experienced artists. The criterion for judging was left to the discretion of the judges, with each judge given the opportunity to explain to the conference attendees and vendors the reasons particular books were awarded prizes.

The Way To Be Empty, 1 was made in 2005 by Sun Young Kang, a Korean artist and recent graduate of the book arts MFA program at the University of the Arts. Her books were clearly the favorites of the judges—receiving 3 out of the 6 possible awards.

The Way To Be Empty, 1 won two awards; one purchase award from the special collections library at Wellesley College where Ruth Rogers is the curator and a regional award from the Philadelphia Center for the Book.

The pages are hand cut with transfer printing on Japanese Okawara paper. It has a Coptic, exposed

binding and a banana leaf covered clamshell box which measures 25 cm x 18 cm x 4 cm (10" x 7" x 1.5"). The edition size is 10 and there are 3 artist's proofs. In her artist's statement Sun Young writes,

The act of cutting 108 pages and printing 108 different combinations of 14 words is one that empties my mind of desires. The path of piled desires gets smaller and smaller until finally the reader reaches the emptiness at the end of the path, the last page.

The 14 words are included in four categories:

- 1) senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind
- 2) aspects of time: past, present, future
- 3) characteristics of heart: pure, impure
- 4) emotional preferences: like, dislike, indifferent

The *Way To Be Empty, 2* also by Sun Young won a purchase award from Arthur Jaffe of the Jaffe Center for Book Arts at Florida Atlantic University.

Each small box with its burned cover is a page in this book. The burned-out figure on all 108 pages are renderings of a [Korean language character] which has various meanings, including 'path' or 'way'. The incense was used to create emptiness on paper and each image of emptiness creates the 108 different ways or paths in this book.

The subject matter, presented from a Buddhist perspective, at once vague, yet possibly specific in a viewer's mind, gently encourages a quiet and reflective moment. The books, so well crafted and meticulously constructed in an almost ritualized manner, exude a fetish-like presence.

On the other hand, the first purpose of William Snyder's project titled *800,000* is to make the viewer acknowledge the shocking genocide and deaths of 800,000 Tutsi in Rawanda in 1994. As stated above, one of my functions at the Hybrid Book Conference was to choose a book by a young artist for the JAB Emerging Artist Award—I actually chose two projects, this being one.

Snyder's *800,000* is not a book as such, but a larger project of, as he states, "Acknowledgement, Remembrance, and Renewal", with this installation serving as a point of entry for an artworld audience. The image on the left

shows what appears to be an installation with similar objects repeated over and again to fill a space. On closer examination the viewer discovers that there are books placed spine side up in boxes. Most are blank books with a total of 800,000 pages, the same number as the estimated murdered Tutsi.

Snyder found out about the genocide ten years after the event from a Tutsi survivor who was living in the US and spoke at Snyder's Christian church in rural Pennsylvania. Moved to the point of action, in 2006 Snyder conceived of his project and began setting up binding sessions at schools and community centers as part of the process of making other people aware of the genocide. He devised a strategy to collect money in order to do some sort of practical project to help the people of Rwanda. People who contribute money to this project may dip their hands in clay, a symbol of humanity for Snyder, and print the image of their hands on the blank pages of the books, thus participating symbolically and practically in the project. In the process Snyder set up a non-profit corporation to collect the money and ultimately the first practical result of the project was the building of a water pumping and purification plant in a Rwandan village.

This project bridges some gaps that usually exist among art, social activism, religion (specifically Christian in this instance), and religious activism. Snyder is an anomaly in the US—an openly Christian artist working within the blatantly secular artworld thus forcing anti-religious artists to question their prejudices and biases.

I also chose Antonio Serna's project, *Good Morning Baghdad*, for the JAB Emerging Artist Award to share with Snyder's 800,000. The main point

of similarity between these two projects is their activist nature—both are efforts at affecting social change. Serna's project was an attempt to push back against the overpowering US media campaign of misinformation concerning the ongoing and devastating violence in Iraq since the American invasion and occupation.

For a four month period in 2006 Serna bought copies of the *Village Voice* newspaper in New York and replaced the covers with his *Good Morning Baghdad* which he had designed to mimic, if not the *Village Voice* exactly, but a generic newspaper a commuter might see on the subway. Serna found images on the web of bombings in Iraq that were ignored or downplayed by mainstream American media and printed the images on the front cover of his *Good Morning Baghdad*. He exchanged only the covers of the actual *Village Voice*, leaving the inside of the newspaper in its original state. Then he would take the *Good Morning Baghdad* and leave them on the subways to observe the reactions of anyone who noticed the counterfeit newspaper and began to examine the covers. On the back covers Serna placed images of ancient artifacts and national treasures that had been looted from the Iraqi National Museum during the chaos soon after the American occupation began.

Even though Serna does not consider his project to be art, but rather activism, he also clearly understands that his efforts are miniscule in the face of the juggernaut of conservative American media such as the Fox network and the likes of Rush Limbaugh on right wing radio talk shows. It bodes well for our country that Serna pushes back.

These three projects by Sun Young Kang, Snyder, and Serna give an indication of the wide range

of work being produced by young, emerging artists—and fortunately for us they are being given the opportunity to share their work at conferences and book fairs.

In the final part of this essay I will briefly explore three recent books that I think are exemplary works; books with compelling and important subjects presented in ways that use the book form to create meaning. Two of the books are by established artists whose primary medium is the book and one artist whose career has been centered on photography. Ines von Ketelhodt and Johanna Drucker have the book as their primary medium. The case of Johanna Drucker is more complicated since she is a visual artist and a writer, writing both poetic and scholarly works, and with a tremendous output in all her work. Her example as both writer and artist is a natural fit for working within the artist book if we keep in mind that the book is an intermedia device capable of carrying both writing and image. Since near its inception photography as a form of printmaking has been associated with the book and the photographer we will consider, Joachim Schmid, has also used the book as a container for his work.

As we examine these books let's keep in mind the similarities and distinctions among them that demonstrate the elegant technology of the codex form. Each of these artist books share the codex form with the other books—the codex, the familiar everyday object, made of leaves of paper bound along one edge, so common and easy to use as to be nearly invisible. Yet each of these artists uses the codex in very distinct ways which show the resiliency of the book form and the book's potential for malleability and plasticity which allow a vast array of activation strategies for the artist/writer.

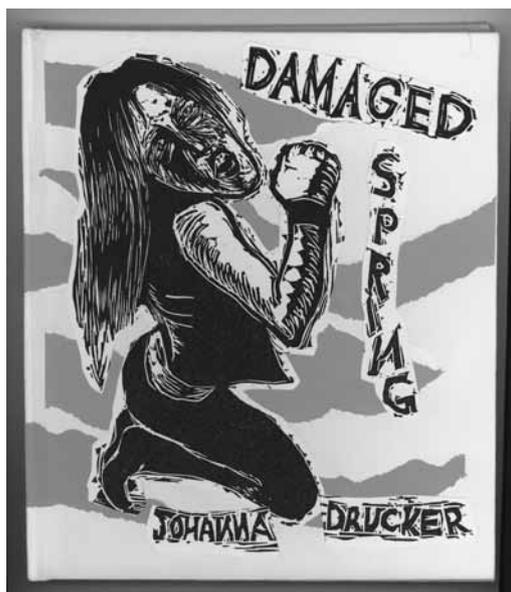
Another point of comparison and contrast is that each of these artists uses photography in 3 distinct ways—photographs that have been altered in 3 different ways from their original purpose. Using newspaper photographs as a model, Johanna Drucker made linoleum cut prints that interact with her poetic writing within the book. Joachim Schmid has made a career from the photographs he has found on the streets from Berlin to Belo Horizonte and then re-purposed the photographs, usually in gallery exhibitions and recently in books. In her artist book Ines von Ketelhodt has used photographs that were originally part of her family's album and transformed the photographs into a universal statement of a condition of life.

Before we look at her artist book *Damaged Spring* I would like to mention Johanna Drucker's extensive scholarly work. She has written books about experimental typography and visual poetry, artist books, contemporary art, graphic design and the alphabet. Her titles include *The Century of Artists' Books*, *The Visible Word: Experimental Typography and Modern Art*, *Alphabetic Labyrinth*, *Graphic Design History: A Critical Guide*, etc. She also conceived and initiated Artists' Books Online (ABsOnline) as a digital resource designed to promote scholarship and research in artists' books. The first phase of this project is complete and the second phase, again in a consortium model of multiple institutions with a wide group of participants, is in the beginning stages. ABsOnline contains metadata designed to lead critical, scholarly discussion about artists' books through an unusual combination of standard bibliographical description and authored, interpretive fields that record project narratives, production history, and information about aesthetic features.

This quote from ABsOnline by Drucker is about her book *Damaged Spring* and serves as an example of one of the types of authored information found at ABsOnline:

with respect to the look of the book, my longstanding desire to make a distinctly neo-expressionist response to current events, had long been developing the vision that manifest fully in this work. . . . And the shrill, almost hysterical pinkness of the cover papers, torn and pasted, were the other gesture meant to register anger in the aesthetic of production. – Johanna Drucker from www.artistsbooksonline.org

Johanna Drucker.
Damaged Spring.

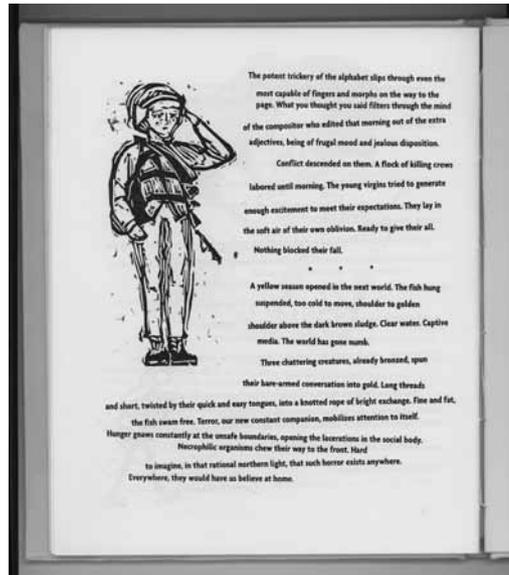
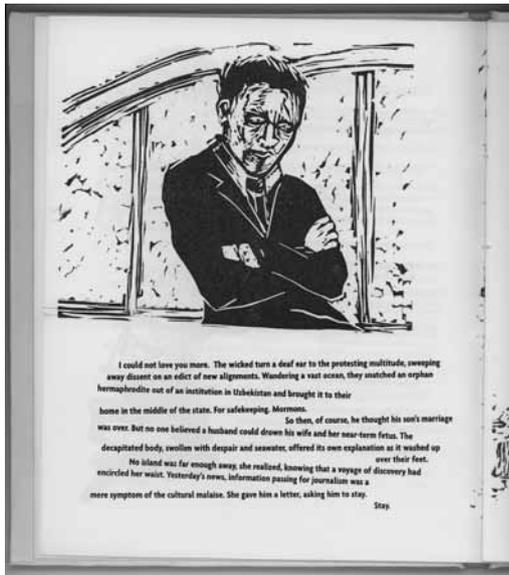


Damaged Spring comes in two editions; a deluxe edition printed in 25 copies on Rives BFK paper, with collaged hardbound cover, signed and numbered that sold for \$300 by Johanna's dealer Steve Clay of Granary Books; and another edition printed in 75 copies on Mohawk Superfine paper that Drucker gives away as presents to her friends.

All of the images are drawn and then cut from linoleum blocks by Drucker from photographs in newspapers and magazines during 2003—beginning with the US buildup toward an unlawful war with Iraq, through the invasion, and the beginning of the occupation. The linoleum blocks were printed by Drucker on her Vandercook SP-15 proof press - a letterpress machine. The text is laser printed from her writing composed by her in Quark. Johanna uses a technique of typesetting she calls "typopoeses" in which the procedure of typesetting her writing, whether done digitally in a page layout program or by hand setting metal type for letterpress printing determines the form of the typeset page.

On the title page there is a lino-cut of her name, the title of the book, and an image of a man holding his arms up in surrender.

Bitter wind grazed her cheek. Stolen breath was exchanged for impossible kisses. She smacked hard against the event horizon then watched the Miss World riots break out in an undisclosed location. Harbingers of a difficult season, finger after finger closed on her throat, cutting off the light. She found herself against his mouth. Hands. Daily rituals of transcendence fail to satisfy the desire that drives them. Military ad campaigns streaked blood red, rising on a tide of patriotic music through a deceptively gentle New Year's night. Her heart froze in mid-air, terrified by the coming freeze. – Johanna Drucker, *Damaged Spring*



The fundamental structure of an artist book is comprised of the conceptual, procedural, and formal relationships among its writings and images. Drucker's writing is performed on the page through the use of alternating diagonal lines of text—creating a careening, head-long rush of language pushing against the agitated lino cut images. Across the gutter and the plane of the page an interaction of images frames the text to create some visual / textual formal stability and yet the positions of the images from page to page are constantly in flux, reflecting the idea of a neo-expressionist performance of visual poetics.

If we read the text from *Damaged Spring* aloud, this becomes a new enunciation, materially different from the performed poetry on the page. And yet, this remains a work that is untranslatable into another medium. The material qualities of the writing, how it is placed on the page along with the images, are essential to the meaning of the book.

Losing strategies. The possibility of free fall into verse was the measure of new thought. The air was filled with calls for conformity to values of belief. She struggled under the constraint, mouth twisted to hold back her cries. Truncant overlap, not of love but of the number of nouns their tongues are now accustomed to exchange. Their endless invention of verbs performed swarm functions elegant as weather patterns in a perfect model. – Johanna Drucker, *Damaged Spring*

Johanna Drucker.
Damaged Spring.



Joachim Schmid.
*Belo Horizonte, Praça
Rui Barbosa.*

Only the raw, edgy, harsh high-contrast of cuts, in this case, linoleum, long a favorite medium of mine, seemed sufficient to express the cruelty of fate and injustice being wrought by the current administration. Trying to figure out what was going on in the world was so difficult. All the lies and rhetorical obfuscation of media reports coupled with the anecdotal evidence of daily lives of real people, friends, family. – Johanna Drucker from www.artistsbooksonline.org

On the front cover of Joachim Schmid's *Belo Horizonte Praça Rui Barbosa* is a straight-on photograph of a handsome adolescent boy from the chest up who looks directly into the camera. He has brown skin, dark wavy hair and wears a clean white tank top and a necklace. Scratches mark the entire surface of the photograph.

The title page is on the first opening or page spread of the book after the cover—"Joachim Schmid, Belo Horizonte Praça Rui Barbosa"—the author and title are printed on the recto while the



inside front cover remains the white of the paper. Being of a larger type size the title is given more prominence than the author as is the norm for title pages. There is no embellishment, rather the title page remains understated and elegant with a serif typeface. By identifying the place and origin of the photographs, this book remains in the arc of the evolution of documentary photography.

On the recto of the next page spread following the title page is a photograph of another boy, younger but in the same pose and setting as the cover photograph. He looks directly into the camera and wears a clean short sleeved shirt with a blue collar. As with the title page spread, the verso, the left side leaf of the page spread, is white.

At first glance I thought Schmid had taken the material form of the codex for granted—the book was merely a convenient container for his random grouping of portraits. But then I started looking closely. On the following page spread on the verso or left page is a photograph of a middle-aged woman looking somewhat severely into the camera. She wears a black dress and delicate necklace with a crucifix. Does the black dress indicate that she is a widow? The crucifix she wears, a symbol to her of Christ's suffering, may confirm this. On the recto of this same page spread and across

the gutter from the woman in the black dress is a photograph of a young man with a collarless white knit shirt with a striped neck.

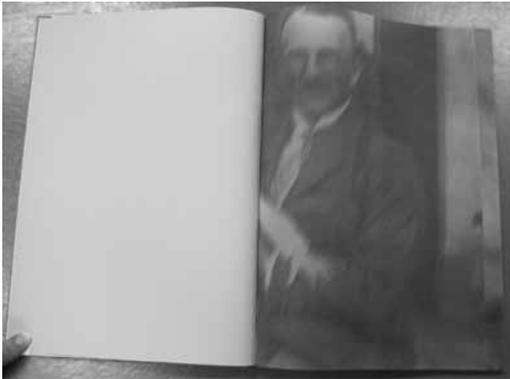
On the next page turn we are confronted with a mirror image of the previous spread. Now the verso, rather than the recto, depicts another young man wearing a white shirt with a striped neck and on the recto a woman appears. But within the repetition and mirroring of the sexes some changes begin to offer, if not stories, at least signals of lives lived via the relationships of the photographs within the technology of the book. As a contrast from the preceding page spread now there is a young woman, rather than a middle aged woman, also wearing a delicate necklace, yet this time there is a heart attached, a symbol of youthful love and optimism, rather than a crucifix.

The next page spread depicts two men. An older man has been introduced into the equation that started with boys in the first two images, was followed by two spreads with young men, and now this spread depicts the contrast of youth and middle age. This is a variation on the statement made in the immediately preceding sequence of the middle-aged woman wearing a crucifix and young woman wearing a heart.

I suggest that the author, Schmid, has considered the format of the book in structuring the plane of the page spread and the sequencing of the pages. In other words, he has carefully chosen and placed each portrait by finding similarities or contrasts with other portraits. From these patterns and rhythms a flow forms as the pages are turned. Throughout the book the author's strategy of consciously using the material form of the codex in the sequencing and placement of images to create meaning becomes clear. One might even suggest that the book becomes a microcosm of the connectedness of all people.

On the last page is a photograph of a girl with the colophon across the gutter on the recto. In the colophon Schmid explains how he found the negatives from which the photographs were made discarded in the *Praça Rui Barbosa*, reinforcing the found document aspect of this work.

Comprised of deliberately sequenced photographs *Belo Horizonte Praça Rui Barbosa* is a multi-



Ines von Ketelhodt. *Album*.

directional book—it can be looked at from front to back or back to front. The author has created structure through rhythmic patterns in the page turnings. This book depicts the ongoing cycle of humanity—the beginning of the book and the end show two kids—particular individuals who at a certain time were here in Belo Horizonte, and who also serve as symbols of the joyful potential of youth and the rejuvenation of the human species.

The artist book *Album* by the German book artist Ines von Ketelhodt, on the other hand, is uni-directional and the cover indicates this with a clear directional sign—go this way, enter here, this is the start, the beginning of an inexorable journey. There is no language on the cover, only this directional glyph which, in the context of a book's front cover, we understand to mean “enter this book here”.

Album was made by von Ketelhodt in 2009. She conceived, digitally manipulated the photographs from her family album, inkjet printed, and bound the book in an edition of 45. I first saw *Album* at the Hybrid Book Fair in Philadelphia and bought it there for \$300 US (600 Brasil real).

The first page spread is blank with off-white end sheets, no writing and no image; we are still at the beginning, before time, nascent. On closer inspection the title, *Album*, is just visible and can be seen through the end sheet high on the upper right corner and in the same position as the directional sign on the cover. At the second turn the title is fully visible along with the sign from the cover, however, this time reversed and pointing at the title. This marks an affirmation of the process of coming into the book, coming into being, with the arrival of language from the pre-language directional sign on the cover to blank end sheets to actual language on the title page.

The third turn reveals a foreword located in the upper right corner—a quote from Maurice Blanchot in German.

the essence of the image is to be altogether outside, without intimacy, and yet more inaccessible and mysterious than the thought of the innermost being; without signification, yet summoning up the depth of any possible meaning; unrevealed yet manifest, having that absence-as-presence which constitutes the lure and the fascination of the Sirens — Maurice Blanchot

Earlier I stated that the fundamental structure of an artist book is comprised of the conceptual and material procedures that produce formal relationships among its writings and/or images. In this book there is no writing between the foreword and the colophon at the end. Von Ketelhodt's feat, not dissimilar to Schmid's, is that she tells a story through the visual language of the gestures of the human body. Printed on translucent paper are images from the author's family album of photographs that trace the life of her father from infancy to old age. Family albums are comprised of photographs of particular people, the significance of the photographs being defined by the relationships and circumstances of the family members depicted. We are not privy to this information, yet it doesn't matter. Von Ketelhodt, through her sequencing of images that create relationships seeming to communicate with one another, has made a document from which we produce significance. By using all the parts that comprise the technology of the codex—the book machine—von Keltelhodt depicts the transient moments that, when put together over time, make a life.

I end with a quote from Viktor Shklovsky from his book *Literature and Cinematography*, ". . . art is not created by a single will, a single genius. The individual creator is only a geometric locus of intersecting lines, of forces born outside himself."

Ines von Ketelhodt. *Album*.

