ARTISTS' BOOKS : BOOKS BY ARTISTS

The Boston Athenæum

October 12, 2011 - March 3, 2012

In recent years, much of the energy devoted to the production of unusually creative books has been flowing into a rapidly evolving category of diverse material grouped under the mantle of "Artists' Books." These works of art in book form may be beautifully hand-bound and incorporate components of fine letterpress printing and traditional techniques of illustration. However, they are more likely to move away from those earlier standards and utilize new forms of electronic imaging, innovative structures, and unusual materials. Any combination of new and traditional book-production techniques is acceptable in this burgeoning field. This exhibition is drawn entirely from the Boston Athenæum's permanent collection which is designed to be representative of the most inventive and successful artists' books being produced today.

Stanley Ellis Cushing
Curator of Rare Books & Manuscripts

— Checklist for the Exhibition —

Ryoko Adachi, **Jack and the Beanstalk**
Tokyo: Ryoko Adachi, 2008 (one of an edition of 20)
Jerrold I. W. Mitchell Fund, 2010

This commentary on genetic engineering was printed by ink-jet on sheets of Japanese kouzo paper that have been folded in a zigzag spiral structure using no adhesive or sewing structure.

Harriet Bart, **Garment Register**
Minneapolis, MN: Hermetic Press, 2001 (#16 of an edition of 25)
John Bromfield Fund, 2001

This volume, which commemorates the women of the garment industry, includes swatches of fabric accompanied by vintage photographs of women wearing similar fabric, poignant quotes by women writers, and reproductions of pages from union ledgers.

Harriet Bart, **In the Presence of Absence**
Minneapolis, MN: Mnemonic Press, 2002 (one of an edition of 15)
Philip Hofer Fund, 2004

The prose poem, written by Harriet Bart, has been laser cut into the pages. The glass binding allows light to flow onto and through the poetry.

Linda L. Broadfoot, **Insecta**
Skaneateles, NY: Linda L. Broadfoot, 2005 (#19 of an edition of 50)
Susan W. Paine Fund, John Bromfield Fund, 2008

Housed in a specimen box such as those found in natural history museums, this book contains a letterpress-printed story, "Things Are Not What They Seem" by A. S. Byatt, and portfolios of vivid photographic images of insects, each enclosed in a silk organza pocket.

Wolfgang Buchta, **Beyond the Wall of Sleep**
Vienna, Austria: Wolfgang Buchta, 2007 (#9 of an edition of 30)
John Bromfield Fund, 2008

The text and illustrations of this horror story by H. P. Lovecraft were created by the use of etching, aquatint, and hand-lettering.

Carolee Campbell, **The Real World of Manuel Córdova**
Sherman Oaks, CA: Ninja Press, 1995 (#41 of an edition of 160)
Proprietors' Book Fund, 2010

This poem by W. S. Merwin is printed on persimmon-washed handmade Japanese paper. The poetry appears next to an undulating image of the Amazon River that extends for fifteen feet in the accordion-folded book.

Ken Campbell, **Ten Years of Uzbekistan**
London: Ken Campbell, 1994 (#38 of an edition of 45)
John Bromfield Fund, 2005

This volume was inspired by Aleksandr Rodchenko's 1934 commemorative book that celebrated Soviet rule in Uzbekistan. After Stalin purged the leaders who had been memorialized in the original book, Rodchenko had to obliterate their images and biographies. Campbell has attempted to revive those destroyed lives in these heavily silk-screened images.

Drew Cameron & Drew Luan Matott, **Combat Paper**
Burlington, VT: Green Door Studio, 2007 (one of an edition of 5)
Proprietors' Book Fund, 2008

Created by members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, the images of a veteran cutting his uniform off his body are on paper made from the pulped uniforms that were worn in combat in Iraq.

Julie Chen, **The Veil**
Berkeley, CA: Flying Fish Press, 2002 (#22 of an edition of 100)
John Bromfield Fund, 2003

The poem, printed on the banner running along the lower edge of the volume, is somewhat hidden by the elaborate standing sculpture which emerges from the laser-cut layers of accordion-folded colored papers that are held in place with magnets embedded in the oval covers of the book.

Laura Davidson, **Fort Point Illuminated**
Boston: Laura Davidson, 2006 (unique copy)
John Bromfield Fund, 2006

This miniature book of hand-painted and gold leafed images of Boston's Fort Point neighborhood was bound by the artist in a brass and sterling silver binding that is reminiscent of medieval book production.

Stephen Dupont, **Axe Me Biggie**
Bondi Beach, Australia: Stephen Dupont, 2006 (unique copy)
John T. & Ruth M. Galvin Fund, 2007

These ninety-three portraits taken on a street in Kabul, Afghanistan, on March 13, 2006, record some of the people going by that day. The title is a crude phonetic rendering of "Mister. Take my picture!"

Timothy C. Ely, **Time Stunt: Spore**
Colfax, WA: Timothy C. Ely, 2001 (unique copy)
John Bromfield Fund, 2005

This volume, so evocative of scientific research and mathematical solutions, was created by the artist using his own idiosyncratic lettering and intricate hand-drawn diagrams that speak of his inner thoughts but remain mysterious to the viewer.

Donald Glaister, **Brooklyn Bridge: a Love Song**
Cleveland, OH: Donald Glaister, 2002 (#30 of an edition of 60)
Kathleen L. & Peter A. Wick Fund, 2003

The painted acrylic images and silk-screened text of this volume rest on sanded aluminum pages that have been attached to a traditional binding structure. The book contains assemblages of metal wire and sand that relate to the structure and textures of the bridge.

Susan kae Grant, **Radio-Active Substances**
Dallas, TX: Susan kae Grant, 1995 (#19 of an edition of 20)
Rodney Armstrong Fund, 2008

This book of lead pages, housed in a lead box, focuses on the pioneering research on radioactivity done by Marie Curie. The glass test tubes contain biographical information about Curie that is printed on paper rolled around glass rods.

Barbara Hodgson & Claudia Cohen, **The WunderCabinet**
Vancouver, BC: Heavenly Monkey Press, 2011 (#2 of an edition of 36)
Anonymous Fund, 2011

This book and its accompanying boxed collection of extraordinary objects, both natural and artificial, was inspired by the early attempts of collectors in the sixteenth century to arrange and classify natural history specimens and man-made curiosities.

Iliazd, **Poésie de Mots Inconnus**
Paris: Le Degré 41, 1949 (#114 of an edition of 157)
Kathleen L. & Peter A. Wick Fund, John Bromfield Fund, 2005

This book consists of five gatherings of quarter-folded sheets of poetry and prints by leading modernist poets and artists. Never meant to be sewn or trimmed, it is enclosed in an ingenious translucent vellum wrapper with an embossed title.

Paul Johnson, **The Boston Athenæum**
Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire, Great Britain: Paul Johnson, 2008 (unique copy)
Susan W. Paine Fund, 2008

This tunnel book was commissioned by the Boston Athenæum after Paul Johnson visited the institution in the summer of 2008. It incorporates various architectural components of 10½ Beacon Street but is essentially evocative of the fifth floor of the Athenæum.

Peter Koch, **Diogenes: Defictions**
Berkeley, CA: Peter Koch, Printer, 1994 (one of an edition of 50)
Kathleen L. & Peter A. Wick Fund, 2010

Created as a "forgery" of writings by Diogenes, this book is housed in an ancient- looking ceramic box. The text was written by Thomas McEvilley and printed on soft lead plates in lettering designed by Christopher Stinehour.

Russell Maret, **Æthelwold Etc: Twenty-six Letters Inspired by Other Letters and Non-letters and Little Bits of Poetry**
New York: Russell Maret, 2009 (#8 of an edition of 55)
Arthur & Charlotte Vershbow Fund, 2009

Each of the letters of the alphabet has been envisioned by the artist as a separate work of art inspired by the history of different letter forms and literary usage. It was printed using 163 plates and 105 colored inks to create images that appear to be hand-colored.

Russell Maret, **Eclectic Geometric, or, Lunch with Nicolete: Twenty-six Letters Rendered with Compass & Straightedge**
New York: Russell Maret, 2001 (#7 of an edition of 8)
John Bromfield Fund, 2009

A limited edition manuscript inspired by letter forms of the past 1,700 years, each letter has been designed and drawn by the artist and then painted with gouache.

Robert ParkeHarrison, **Listening to the Earth**
South Dennis, MA: 21st Published by Steven Albahari, 2004 (#36 of an edition of 65)
John Bromfield Fund, 2005

With poems by Morri Creech and platinum print photographs by Robert ParkeHarrison, this volume features ten fantasy images of a man dealing with improbable and anachronistic technology.

Werner Pfeiffer, **Alphabeticum**
Red Hook, NY: Pear Whistle Press, 2006 (#32 of an edition of 52)
Philip Hofer Fund, 2007

These abstract designs were created by repositioning the letters of the alphabet, each in a different typeface.

Werner Pfeiffer, **Out of the Sky: Remembering 9/11**
Red Hook, NY: Pear Whistle Press, 2006 (#17 of an edition of 52)
Jerrold I. W. Mitchell Fund, 2007

When deconstructed, this sculptural artist's book rests within a box that opens to become the foundation of the towers of the World Trade Center. The stacking segments of the towers are covered with the names and woodcut images of some of the victims.

Tom Phillips, **A Humument: a Novel after W. H. Mallock**
London: Tetrad Press, 1970-1975 (#24 of an edition of 100)
Philip Hofer Fund, 2011

The artist graphically obliterated the original text of an old book. He then graphically highlighted the remaining words to tell a new story.

Fred Rinne, **Bad Moon Rising**
San Francisco, CA: Fred Rinne, 2010 (unique copy)
William T. & Jean G. Cushing Fund, 2010

This hand-painted response to the Iraq and Afghanistan wars utilizes the energy and lyrics of an anti-Vietnam War song by John Fogerty.

Veronika Schäpers, **26°57, 3'N, 142°16, 8'E (The Squid Book)**
Tokyo: Veronika Schäpers, 2007 (#28 of an edition of 44)
Susan W. Paine Fund, 2011

The title indicates the location in the Pacific Ocean near Japan where the first underwater photographs were taken of a living giant squid. The translucent vellum and darkly toned Japanese paper evoke the ocean depths and the mystery surrounding this almost mythical creature.

Fran Siegel, **Fragments of Light IV**
New York: Vincent Fitz Gerald & Company, 2009 (#8 of an edition of 35)
Proprietors' Book Fund, 2009

The text by Jalaluddin Mohammad Rumi, translated by Zahra Partovi, and the lithographs by Fran Siegel have been laser-cut into alternating pages of white paper and silver mylar. The binding, reminiscent of a desk calendar, consists of two metal hoops that are screwed into a heavy stainless steel base.

Aaron Sinift, **5 Year Plan**
Brooklyn, NY: Aaron Sinift, 2010 (# 6 of an edition of 180)
Jerrold I. W. Mitchell Fund, 2010

This book was created from cloth made by hand in India. The images were inspired by the art printed on the sides of cloth sling bags produced by Gandhi ashram collectives in India. The 5 Year Plan project was designed to promote the benefits of local industry in India that Gandhi championed.

Keith Smith, **Book 91 (The String Book)**
Barrytown, NY: Space Heater Multiples, 1982 (#38 of an edition of 50)
John Bromfield Fund, 2006

With no printed text, this volume engages the viewer with pages perforated with holes which act as conduits for heavy strings that change patterns—rather like the children's game of cat's cradle—as the pages are turned.

Marshall Weber, **Commonwealth: A Travelogue**
Brooklyn, NY: Booklyn, 2008 (unique copy)
John Bromfield Fund, 2009

These layered compositions of text and imagery were built up from graphite and wax rubbings created from many diverse inscriptions and surfaces discovered during the artist's travels.

Christopher Wilde, **Lt. Shrapnel**
Brooklyn, NY: Artichoke Yink Press, 2002 (one of an edition of 30)
Jerrold I. W. Mitchell Fund, 2007

This volume is meant to invoke the body of a soldier who has been wounded by metal fragments from exploding shells. The paper pages hold metal shards that could rip through flesh.

Christopher Wilde, **No Quarter Given**
Brooklyn, NY: Artichoke Yink Press, 2003 (unique copy)
John Bromfield Fund, 2004

Collaged with cut fragments of colorfully engraved paper currency from various countries, this volume reconfigures one of the mediums of capitalism into intricately beautiful visions.

Xu Bing, **An Introduction to Square Word Calligraphy**
Brooklyn, NY: Xu Bing, 2001 (#14 of an edition of 99)
John Bromfield Fund, 2004

This elegant instruction manual explains a new way of writing English words using traditional Chinese brushstroke lettering patterns. The resulting calligraphy inspires a fresh approach to viewing lettering and cultural differences.

This exhibition has been made possibly by the generous support
of Anne and David Bromer and Ann and Jerrold Mitchell.

The Boston Athenæum
10½ Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108
www.bostonathenaeum.org