Artists’ Books Deserve Critical Inquiry:
JAB - Journal of Artists’ Books
1994 – 2013 and into the future

Center for Book and Paper Art • Columbia College Chicago

table #605 - ARLIS
shredded into a growing heap. The printer and shredder are both mounted on a chrome wood base. Zweig's piece was first exhibited at PS1 in Brooklyn.

In this smart and witty rejection of the patriarchal myth of the founding fathers Zweig has created a book-like object that nearly works. On a conceptual level, Invention and Revision traverses nearly two centuries by exposing the way in which nineteenth-century authority (or discovering that it had stumbled upon a hokey bit of propaganda) perpetuated itself on all the way to the present era. With the misread- ing of information belonging to the public and potentially harmful to the careers of public servants doing the deed. New York, North, and other battlegrounds.

On a formal level how is this a book-like object? Between 1975 and 1983 Zweig made seven editions of artist's books: Being and Judity, A Play, She yes to dates, The Book is Extremely Reactive, etc., two of which are collaborations with the writer Holly Anderson. These are real books; they have paper pages that turn, they're bound in covers, they're small and portable, they have text and images. Since that time she hasn't, "thought in terms of books." Instead, Zweig made a series of static sculptures constructed of books which emplaced different ways of reading. One of these, Self Reference (1995) is a 3.5 x 3.5 x 3.5 high cube. An opening in the top allows the viewer to see inside which contains four shelves of books facing one another. These books appear rigidly forward-facing, turned and shut from the outside world. As a piece of artwork that refers to itself, this gentle indictment brings to mind a bookstall, de prop by artists who think the fetishized object itself will bring with it some of the pre- sumed knowledge, prestige, and aura contained in the original. Think of window displays in chic boutiques or a tv interview of some expert authority in front of her/his bookshelf.

Artists' books came about in the 60s and 70s as relatively inexpensive publications in an effort to circumvent the gallery system and get artists' work into circulation. Since that time many artists have been exploring the possibilities of joining the form of the book with the content in an effort to realize the full potential of the medium. Keith Smith has spent more than twenty years doing just that. Starting with the traditional western...

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Betty Owens says better qualified means, better qualified jobs.

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Imprinted into the lower left-hand corner of the frame far above the ad is one 8 x 10 high school yearbook photograph. Mottled blue studio background. Weird angle. Lighting. Corner torn. Curly hair. Wears smile. No words. Looking out with anticipation. Life.


QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

W: Were the other passengers on the train part of the audience or part of the work of art?

When the other passengers on the train were in front of them or their newspapers or books at their feet and become lost in their thoughts, there was part of the work of art. Then when they look at the work of art, put up by the MTA for their edification and diversion they are still part of the work of art. However, when they look at another person with interest, or when they notice the photograph in question and become interested in that, they become part of the audience looking at the art. No longer things. Their interest in art brings them to life.

Who put the photograph there? Why?

We don't know. Perhaps the high school student himself put it there among the ads as an out of self-assertion at this crucial transition in his life. A stubborn sonness among the dreaminess of the obvious. The future he wants to want but does not look forward to. Perhaps he put it there as a way of blowing it away, losing it among the semantic complex of money, selfishness, and symbols. Fucks it.

Perhaps his lover put it there out of pride. Look at him, isn't he hot.

Perhaps it is a few years later and his mother no longer knows where he is and she is worried about him and puts his old picture there out of the desperate hope that he will see it and remember to go home.
THE JOURNAL OF ARTISTS’ BOOKS

ALL DRESSED UP WITH NO PLACE TO GO: THE FAILURE OF ARTISTS’ BOOKS

Janet Zweig

Recently, I asked myself: If I were stranded on a desert island, and could have only one book, either a novel or any artist’s book, which would I choose?

Once, a collector showed me an artist’s book. He said, “Look at this book!” and flipped the pages slowly before my eyes. It was a beautiful book, in fact, a stunning book, but that was the end of it, done.

The next day, I turned the last page of a long and wonderful novel. When the book was shut, my first thought was that someday I would read it again.

What do I want from a book, or on or off a desert island? And how have most artists’ books failed to satisfy? Who’s to blame for this failure?

Since Lucy Lippard wrote her seminal article in 1977, the terms of the debate, which at that time seemed lively, have remained the same, and the discourse has gotten progressively stale. Various cliches have been enshrined and rarely questioned. Lippard said, “...the artist’s book is a work of art on its own, conceived specifically for the book form.” But the received wisdom in answer to the often repeated and by now infuriating question, “What is an artist’s book?” is almost always some permutation of “An artist’s book is a book that is conceived and produced entirely by the artist.” Why in the world should this be true? The results of this prescription are all too often thin and week, or what Lippard describes as “wildly self-effacing.” Take a “theater piece,” a book, a major production, the more talent and skill that can be contributed to the production, the greater the gestalt.

Perhaps a writer, a visual artist, a graphic designer, a film director, a printer, and a publisher must collaborate to make a spectacularly experimental book, in a brilliant talk at a conference in 1978, that seems to have fallen on deaf ears [2]. Olve Philipson, former librarian at MoMA, made a plea for collaboration and cited The Medium Is the Message by Marshall McLuhan, designed in collaboration with Quennin Ferre, coordinated by Jerome Agel, printed by a trade printer.

CRITICAL NECESSITIES

Johanna Drucker

People are talking

JABET and some transcripts of exchanges which took place on the Book Arts list server, The Art of the Book.

Some of these concern JAB directly and give evidence of some confusion about JAB’s mission. These commentators (who will remain unnamed since this discussion is issue-oriented, not personal) accused JAB of “drawing lines in the sand.” This prescriptive assessment referred, no doubt, to JAB’s attempt to distinguish artists’ books from other forms of art—such as works in electronic media and sculpture using books as a material component.

To clarify: JAB believes that establishing critical distinctions between forms of artistic production is a means of assessing the conceptual terms on which work is produced, as well as identifying the location for which it is being used with in mainstream arts: these seem like essential aspects of developing a sophisticated critical dialogue about artists’ books, and this is JAB’s major goal.

In order to move artists’ books out of the category into which they have drifted and to insert artists’ books into contemporary art, it seems essential to take seriously the terms on which books are conceptualized as an artistic form—especially from within the networks of artists committed to books as their primary medium. That means making distinctions between what is and isn’t a book as well as what makes an interesting and vital work and what doesn’t.

The nicely-nicest pretense that every book is “sooo good” is b.s. Such policies don’t prevail in any serious arena—from literature and the arts to food prep and car repair. If your local bakery sells you a lousy confection and you say “Oh that’s sooo good!” Don’t artists’ books deserve the same amount of critical assessment? We think artists’ books should take themselves seriously. We invite controversy and discussion in
In mathematics, combinatorics is defined as "the art of counting." The devices of this art are permutation, combination, and variation. For permutation, all of the elements within a set are reshuffled, as in an anagram. For combination, some of the elements of the set are taken out to form a subset. Variations are permutations with repetitions allowed, opening the possibility of infinite incarnations.

Outside of the realms of mathematics, there has always been something creatively compelling about combinatorics.

Combinatorial systems for mystical and creative purposes have a long history reaching back to antiquity. One early system is described in the Sefer Yetzirah, a mystical Hebrew text that dates somewhere between the first and sixth centuries A.D. According to the Creation myth of the Sefer Yetzirah, "The Infinite One" created the world by permutating letters and numbers to fabricate being from nothing. The Kabbalah or "tradition" arose from these ideas, the medieval practice that included, among other things, permutation and combination of letters, numbers, and texts as a meditative tool, to create texts called golems, or to achieve mystical ecstasy. The I Ching is an even older combinatorial system, an oracle book from China where configurations of broken and unbroken lines are placed in every variation of six places and are then coded to match specific texts. Jamming ahead a thousand years, we find the composer and artist John Cage using permutation, combination, and variation to determine the structure of almost all of his works. Other procedural artists from the 1960's and later explored combinatorics in their work, and some of theirs made this work in the form of books.

The book is an especially good form for permutational procedures. Its discrete parts, its interactive potential, its narrative and sequential possibilities of pages and texts—all of these elements make it useful for combinatorial experiments that can operate in a number of different ways. It can be the site for placing previously derived permutations or combinations of text and/or images. Like hypertext pages, the book itself can suggest permutations of reading order to the viewer who can read it interactive-ly by jumping from place to place within the book. Finally, it can be physically manipulated to reorder its pages or parts into all possible permutations of positions and readings. There are a number of books that use combinatorics as their structuring principle.

In the 1960's, the French literary group known as Oulipo played with devising procedural rules for generating poetry. One of Oulipo's members, Raymond Queneau, working with the designer Messaï, made an unusual book that operates as a permutational machine. The book, titled Cent mille milliards de poèmes (Fig. 3 consists of 107 rhyming sonnets, one per page. All of the lines in the same position from poem to poem rhyme with each other. Each page is cut between all the lines, allowing the reader to lift
Kerbach that gave the community spirit its first and most decisive generational stamp. Here we find any moral judgment of Anderson's diabolical connections with the Ministry for State Security. At the time, no one else could have imagined that they, and the fact that the producers lived together in misery in order to work together, first of all, nothing more than the close connection between everyday life and creative energy. When one painted, a second copied out poems, and a third glued the pages together. The booklets in school notebook format, each with a unique, pull-out original graphic, were usually arranged and sold at the conclusion of readings held in apartments. Anyone who wanted to could purchase a - this time truly - unique piece of work for thirty to fifty Marks. Even if our knowledge today indicates we can assume that the State Security Service knew about this method of artistic production and distribution and secretly tolerated it, the effect on outsiders was astounding and by no means calculable. It was only possible to obtain these handmade poetry booklets immediately and so read difficult texts that no publisher would print. This was the idea of implementation licensing. To this day (and not long before now, one has no idea how many of these booklets were circulated or into whose hands they fell. But the decisive question is what thoughts the owners had when they looked through the booklets. The existence of such works was a signal for all who were serious about writing but who were rejected by the idea of writing for their own desk drawer or organizing themselves with the official publishing houses.

In about 1984, Anderson ended this series of "Albums" that could be described as "still life", "Berliner Alben," or "Fluchten in Worte" to begin an edition of artist's books. For each of these large-format, Japanese-bound silk screen printed books of thirty expensive postcard paper, he brought together a poet and a painter. This book production claimed an entirely professional status and had nothing more to do with the spiritually anemic, spontaneously thrown-together booklets. This mirrored the growth and establishment of structure within the scene; Anderson was recognized as the organizational head. His position was one of power. But those who weren't willing to be disturbed here and there in his "switchboard" lost all their significance in post-Communist Berlin. They were put down, or, at best, polarized into antagonists, as was the case with Götz Kubick and Uta Rauter. The artists' books seemed elitist and exclusive as soon as they were produced. One copy cost three hundred Marks (or put this in scale in the GDR, an average skilled laborer earned ten hundred Marks a month). Those really interested in the scene were out of the question as purchasers. But the target audience was another, anyway. "Fluchten in Worte" and professionally serious journals could not only convince themselves of the actual existence of a "second culture" in the GDR, they were also harrowed for distribution in the West, since it was easy to smuggle the expensive bibliophile wares as diplomatic baggage. The 1981 GDR exchange rate meant a book could earn a profit many times its original price. The broad mass of the scene observed this commercialization of identity with fascination, envy, and nausea. It had nothing to do with the desire for communication.

The formal principle applied to surmount the barbed wires of the "printing permit procedure" was so stringent that the poet had to integrate it or somehow find another way to do so. The argument that the text was itself visual art was certainly a brilliant and pioneering idea and would today stand in immediate light. If Anderson's badly paid and the state didn't raise justified doubts about the authenticity of his breakthroughs. Nonetheless, at the time he sought theoretical underpinnings for his work: "the reasons for the constant phenomenon of script in image are as innumerable as the loopholes in the law," he wrote in this essay. "Die Zimmertüren sind einfach..." (The Contents are Simple...), "but apparently the contexts must have been more complicated than the images in the image could depict." Be that as it may, in those years, it was precisely the artists' books that displayed the expensive and artistic gesture of a younger generation of artists. In my view, Wolfgang Schier, Hans-Ulrich Sparrmüller, and Angela Hampe contributed unmistakable decorative originality.

3) "Entwerter und Umdenker..." The periodical begins in 1983. Uwe Wanneke and a friend, the puppeteer Siegmar Körner, founded "Entwerter-Oder." The first issue was an edition of four and consisted of a grand total of twelve pages: it contained poems and a short prose text. Like the poetry albums, the booklet was half-page format, with a brilliant red line drawing on the cover. The authors published under pseudonyms. Since no one knew how the necessities would react to word of the existence of the booklet, it was risky. The editors were often in fear of the Gestapo, but discipline ensured a magazine was a magazine. If one recalls this, in the early eighties, the GDR was considered absolutely stable, and most serious confrontations with the omnipresent State Security meant prison or enforced emigration. But the pseudonym chosen clearly showed from which one chose associations in this game of hide-and-seek. German Deutsch, Francois Micheloff, Gorekseль Sary, and Ivan Zecevski, were the names borrowed from the imagination of Ida Wanneke. Wanneke presented her first issue to friends in Dresden, receiving encouragement from the poet and musician Andreas Pilzner, who found its extremely exciting. In a March 30, 1983 letter to Wanneke, he wrote: "I know you are already working on a similar undertaking - something more is still not enough!"

At almost the same time, "Umd" was founded with an initial edition of fifteen copies. But since it is incorrectly stated in all bibliographies and essays, let it be noted once more here: it wasn't "Umd" but "Entwerter" that made the beginning. As is known, authors wrote for "Umd" under their real names only. "Karte" was a pseudonym. In Dresden, where the art college was the fertile ground for a relatively large scene at the time, these activities didn't remain hidden for long. And so the editors were soon repeatedly summoned before the authorities, warned against continuing their work, and even threatened with prison sentences.

Finally, they were given the suggestion of applying to emigrate. The GDR's perfect and pernicious network of legal clauses ended the publishing of "Umd" after fifteen issues, in January 1984. But the spark had been kindled and could no longer be blown out. In the same year, the photographer and performer artist Richard Andrejczak continued his work with "Umd zu Oder." "And To Oder." This magazine operated in essentially the same way. The core of participants was a circle of friends in Dresden, with the addition of a changing cast of poets, painters, and artists not limited to a single medium. The characteristic of artistic activity was never the same, essentially visible in the variations in the cover of a single issue, was retained. The deep relationship among primary participants stabilized in the circle and the intention. In his essay "Modnehlisotomie" (Spaces of Possibility), literary scholar Peter Böttcher wrote: "Dialogue, intensive reference and communication among people with similar ideas about -
the American spirit has not been extinguished
it only dimmed while we were sleeping
Proud
of the heritage that
has been carved out
of history and passed
along for you to
nourish and to
protect.

Drawing of Ku Klux Klansmen which appeared in an 1868
issue of Harper's magazine.
ATTENTION

All persons, packages & vehicles passing beyond this point are subject to search.

The following items are prohibited beyond this point:
- Weapons, firearms and ammunition
- Explosives
- Incendiary devices
- Noxious material to include acid
- Intoxicating or inebriating agents
- Illegal drugs and/or controls
- Related drug paraphernalia

TRUTHFUL

In your relationship with others, for truth is the cornerstone of democracy. Without it, the structure will crumble.

MAN IN TELEBUBBLE SUIT IN FRONT OF QUIK'E MART

PRANCE
Pie in the sky

We go, we do, we be.

It is up to us if we go or as it is.

beliefs

Christian

Islamic

Muslim

made free

in the world

leftovers

don't stay in the dark, be free of fire.

righteousness

Tegas... see Änegra.

gerä... to drive away, to remain, to be free, Cape Verde.
que participaram do evento, a fim de buscar traçar um panorama geral da situação em que se encontram os trabalhos e pressupostos sobre o livro de artista, no momento, no Brasil.

**Breve panorama do Livro de Artista no Brasil**

Até a data, poucos publicações no Brasil trataram especificamente do livro de artista. Destacam-se o catálogo da exposição "Tendências do Livro de Artista no Brasil" (1995) de Ines Ammirati Fabris e Cecília Teixeira da Costa e o livro "O pântano violado: limites da intervenção na construção do livro de artista", publicado em 2000 pelo pesquisador Paulo Silveira. Estes dois publicações serviram de referência para o breve panorama que pretendo trazer, pontuando alguns momentos em que artistas trabalharam com a que se pode denominar "livro de artista."

Na lista de artistas citados, estão Paulo Silveira, "No exemplo do livro de arte, a pesquisa tende a se tornar um pouco anticonvencional, pela constatação da mesma liquidez notável de detalhes que o livro apresenta", e "Esse é o caso de Joana de Freitas, que produz um livro com um ensaio intitulado "Perspectivas do Livro de Artista", que aborda as técnicas e as ideias que definem o livro de artista."

Neste trabalho, pretendo discutir sobre alguns dos estilos e técnicas que os artistas e pesquisadores assumem no livro de artista, para trazer-se de uma referência internacional e nacional deste tema.

**Escrever um livro sobre o Livro de Artista, a arte de livro de artista, uma história e uma visão do livro de artista.**

"O livro de artista é um objeto. Qualidade e capa e capa de um livro de artista que não pode ser considerado um livro definido."

**Perspectivas do Livro de Artista,** "O livro de artista é um objeto. Qualidade e capa e capa de um livro de artista que não pode ser considerado um livro definido."

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Columbia College Chicago
Center for Book & Paper Arts
ULISES CARRIÓN: OTHER BOOKS AND SO

Gerrit Jan de Rook

With the arrival of Ulises Carrión (1941-1989) in Amsterdam, around 1972, the Netherlands was an exciting artist richer. [Fig. 1] Unfortunately, here in the Netherlands, too few people are aware of that. While Carrión had but a small group of admirers here, and only a handful of Dutch libraries have his books in their collections, international interest in this artist continues to be considerable. Carrión's major theoretical work, *The New Art of Making Books* (1975), was published in at least five languages, including a recent Greek edition. Several of his artist's books have been reprinted in Switzerland. In Mexico, he caused a furor as that country's first conceptual artist. The wide-ranging interest in Carrión's work is thanks not only to his great enthusiasm and the many languages he spoke, but also to his continual activities in various countries to draw attention to the importance of artists' books and mail art.

BEGINNING AT ZERO

When Carrión arrived in the Netherlands, he already had a career behind him, although he never talked about it. He had studied at universities in Mexico, France and England and spent time in Germany in order to learn the language. In his native Mexico, he had published two collections of short stories, and was counted as a promising young literary figure. In Amsterdam, he had to start again, at the beginning. On previous visits, he had met a number of South Americans, including the Colombian Michel Cardenas (Miguel-Angel Cardenas), who had lived in the Netherlands since 1962 and who introduced Carrión to Amsterdam's first 'artists' gallery', the In-Out Centre (1972-1975). There, Carrión met Sigurður and Kristján Guðmundsson, Pieter Laurens Mol, Harry Heijman, Raúl Marraco and John Liggins. He had a solo exhibition there and, under the imprint of In-Out Productions, published stencilled books by artists.

The first of his own books published here [in the Netherlands] was *Sonnet(1)* (1972). It comprises 44 versions of the same sonnet, with each version slightly altered. The direction of these changes was indicated by their successive titles, beginning with Borrowed Sonnet, and by way of such typographical interventions as CAPITAL SONNET;

Underlined Sonnet, 'tenmos de ronriM', they arrived at the final Famous Sonnet, in a publication that became responsible for Carrión's own fame. The changes are sometimes witty or humorous, but they also say a great deal about the sometimes minimal codes that govern language, such as the structure of a syllogism, the use of capital letters in German, or the usefulness of quotation marks and asterisks.
EMBODYING BOOKNESS: READING AS MATERIAL ACT

MANUEL PORTELA

Three elements (which are in fact woven into a web) are: the 'IT' occurs twice (provides a definite cultural reading), the 'IT' occurs twice (provides a definite cultural reading), the 'IT' occurs twice (provides a definite cultural reading). The occurrence between verbal signs is strongly emphasized by the way the reader, consistently displays the dynamics of the printed page, as manifested in the terminus et johnson's page, page opening, and page sequence. The reader has developed a very personal and quite complex understanding of how things are related on the printed page.

Portela introduces the concept of 'longitudinal narrative' as a way of understanding the way in which the printed page is read. This narrative can be seen as a process of unfolding the page from the top to the bottom, and then from the left to the right, creating a sense of movement and progression. The reader is encouraged to see the page as a whole, rather than as a series of discrete elements, and to engage actively with the text. This approach to reading as a material act emphasizes the physicality of the page, the way in which the reader interacts with it, and the way in which the page is designed to be read.
IN PORTUGAL:
Authors' Editions, Small Presses, Independent Publishers, & Book Artists

Catarina Figueiredo Cardoso & Isabel Baraona

In Portugal the apparent marginalization of self-publishing and artists’ books has had the collateral benefit of providing networks of cooperation and friendship between authors and collectors. But the sudden attention these objects have received signals the time to broaden the debate, to look critically and reflect on the nature of these objects—books—art and at the interactions of various media that rarely host them.

The difficulty in defining the artist book has been widely discussed by Anne Mepham Delolme and Johanna Druden, two authors indispensable for anyone interested in the subject. The intrinsic difficulty in defining the artist book and in designating specific classifications for these objects is in many ways similar to the attempt to catalyze the diversity of contemporary interdisciplinary artistic practices. However, there is a specific feature that distinguishes the artist book from all other books—it is a book entirely conceived as an art object.

The artist book is a vehicle for artistic expression. We can even posit a second feature of the artist book—it is a medium and support with a seemingly endless versatility, an exhibition space for the artist’s work that can be activated at any time by the person who manipulates it.

Our aim with the gathering of this group of curators is to launch the debate and deepen some insights. We don’t pretend to answer the basic question of whether an artist book can make an exhaustive history of the art form or to define the artist book movement in Portugal. The first problem is well known to J&L readers. Our answer to the second challenge in these pages is to offer an introduction to the recent history of experimental publishing in Portugal.

In Portugal there was an almost complete absence of critical writing until the beginning of the twenty-first century. Critics didn’t recognize the specific difference of artists’ books from other publications. They failed to investigate the self-publishing of as many works by experimental poets and artists as they did the Portuguese work via the intentional movements related to book production and creation. Reasons for this can be found in the cultural isolation and conservatism of the country until the mid-1970s and the strict adherence to older models of literary studies at the university. Indeed, even now at the arts faculty of the art school dedicate a program specifically to the study of artists’ books or the book art. The situation started changing by the mid-1980s and now artists’ books can be found and dealt with in several manifestations and contexts.

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Various artists. KWY covers 1958 - 1964
Photography by Filipe Braga.

JOÃO VIEIRA: SO WE HAVE DOUBTS ON LANGUAGE

Painting letters was apparently the plastic purpose of João Vieira whose work, tinted by experimentalism, can be traced back to the group participation of the magazine KWY. Any approach to the

Nouveau realism insists on the theme of the emptiness and triviality of consumer society and the absurd condition of contemporary man in view of the “Camusian precept that the absurd man does not explain, does not interpret and update fully in this
JAB33: CONTENTS & THE FUTURE
Brad Freeman

The images on the cover (front, inside front) and this page visually encapsulate the philosophy and mission of JAB—to creatively demonstrate the attributes of the book and to document current artist book activity. The turning of the page from the front cover to the inside front exemplifies the time-based aspect of the book form—the placement of these images within the recto/verso turning takes place over time—the pages can’t be viewed at the same moment—a brief span of time that corresponds to the camera’s recording of the actual event—a representation within the actual. We look at her, she looks at us.

She is Jenni Rodriguez looking closely at calligraphic dots during the printing of the cover of Isabel Baro’s book that was inserted in JAB32. And our in-house printing she demonstrates the DIY quality of JAB since its inception.

Books Received has been moved up to the beginning of JAB instead of at the end—this is meant to highlight a sampling of the variety of contemporary work that makes its way here either by artists sending their publications or through our ongoing collecting. Kate Morgan and Claire Sammons (picture here, slightly out of focus) wrote the commentaries for Books Received.

JAB33 is an eclectic collection of essays and interviews concerning the expanding network of the artist book such as installations, public art, and digital media. The interviews with Emily McNair, Jody Zellen, Jean Zieg, Kyle Schlager, Anton Gorick, and Phil Giff give a wide range of approaches to intermedia art. As often happens in JAB there are international reports including: the Italian printer/bookmaker Alberto Giangy of Polistina/Polistina; Natalia Silberkly’s essay on her work with Argentinean women priests; and Susan Vignes’s report on travels with her students to book art destinations in Korea.

ROOM3, a combination of FLAT Production and JAB Book was conceived by Carol Sombey who was soon joined by Brandon Graham in carrying on the project. A group of writers and artists was invited to spend the afternoon and early evening at a rented room of the O-MI Hotel—a do-it-yourself event in Chicago—after which they would respond with work inspired by that visit.

FUTURE

JAB34 (Fall 2015) continues our international reporting with the Poland and JAB which includes essays by Polish writers and artists compiled by Maczka Tomaszewski, the publisher of TVO Prensky Naczyzniki (TWO Most Important Magazines) JAB35 (spring 2016) will consist of two artists’ books, one by

BOOKS RECEIVED
Kate Morgan & Claire Sammons


Chico com Caro (CCC), first founded in 1995, is a collective of writers, comic artists, and illustrators from Portugal. The twelfth volume of their comic anthology is based around the concept of a “primitive future.” Each contributor was asked to choose from a list of modernized concepts for inspiration: weapons, architecture, fire, shelter, wheel, metal, currency, printing, steam engine, electricity, nuclear power, transistor, the pill, and the sheep. The contributing artists to this issue are: Lucas Almeida, Ana Ribeiro, Manuel Pereira, João Orrego, João Góis, Daniel Scalera Lopez, Marco Moreira, João Chambel, Ana Meneses, André Coelho, João Mato Pinto, Andrea Rocha, Bruno Borges, Rafael Guerra, David Campese, Silvia Rodrigues, Paulo Del Rey, José Pinto, Natalia Andrade, Christina Castello, Uganda Lebre, André Lemos, Bráulio Amado, Caçapo Duarte, Jacileia, Almeiro Figueira, Marcos Ferraz, Ruihili, Ricardo Martins, and Pedro Brito. Intentionally avoiding any linear form narrative, the comics were combined as an esquisito corpus. Panels are broken up from their sequence and then reorganized together, creating graphic tension between multiple artists’ work on each spread. The overall result of this strategy makes for a disorientating and disorienting reading experience but successfully demonstrates a collaborative, group-derived aesthetic. (KM)


This photo book captures the landscapes and vacationers of the Algarve, Portugal’s most popular tourist destination. Almeida spent summers here as a teenager with her parents, and credits the sense of empathy she feels for the tourists to her own adolescent experiences there. This book spans an entire day—beginning with sunbathers on the beach and ending with late-night partiers in a dance club. The portraits relate a sense of middle-class vacation with a mix of knapsacks, sun tan oil, lary livers, neon-colored hoodies, and abundant tattoos. Nature is kept at a distance and above all serves as decoration for the vacation fantasy—a pen of flamingos, a hotel parking lot filled with palm trees dressed in lights, and a landscaped mini-golf course. The photographs offer a complicated feeling of crowded vacancy, as they alternate between congested beaches and empty restaurant patios. In an essay at the back of the book David Alexandre Guimaraes explains that “what we see in the pictures are persons that are at once actors and spectators (of themselves) but also persons and characters, just like the landscapes are at once landscapes and settings, just like reality is at once real and staged, i.e. built on the basis of fiction... Patriots will be, in this sense, a fictionalized real world.” (CS)

Berken, Bill, Kyle Schloering, and Henry Steinberg. Tennis Fence. Victoria, TX: Canfield Press, 2012. (canfieldpress.blogspot.com) 5.5 x 8.5 in., edition of 100, twelve pages. The original Tennis Fence was published in 1971 by the author in a photooffset limited edition of “ten or fewer.” Canfield’s reprinted upgraded the book’s production and materials by letterpress printing on fine bookmaking paper, sewing the book rather than stapling it, and tipping in the letterpress printed photographs by hand. Each copy is signed by the author. The book documents Berkman’s objection to the installation of a fence at the edge of a cliff on Terrace Avenue in Bolinas, California. He explains that “I didn’t imagine that any action on my part would stop the fence. By photographing it, I registered at least my private dissonance, which soon gave way to a lighter sense of the absurdity involved.” Tennis Fence is visually minimal with text appearing only on the cover, title page and colophon. The Kodak Instamatic photographs appear in pairs on the recto. In one photograph, Joe Brainard is shown enjoying the view in safety behind the chainlink fence. Also included is a letter to the reader in which Berkman details the story behind the book. (CS)