
Practically no one in the book art world is unfamiliar with the outstanding and brilliant work of Richard Minsky, and this delightful volume is a treat for book art enthusiasts. Filled with autobiographical details, Minsky’s first-person narrative discusses the influences and events in his life, such as that this brilliant and talented artist began his industrious career while in junior high school! This is why, through years of devoted practice, Minsky is able to create such extraordinarily beautiful and meaningful fine bindings. It is his intelligence steeped in a keen interest in politics that led the artist to design such ingeniously creative bindings for such titles as Orwell’s 1984 (with some covers embossed with “Big Brother Is Watching You” and incorporating an LCD monitor and camera), the voluptuous Eating at the Y: Pornographics by C. Bible (1974); and the famed Run of His Life: The People v. O. J. Simpson by Jeffrey Toobin (1996), the cover of which includes a black leather glove dripping blood from the fingertips. Minsky is at his artistic and political best in his ten-volume set, The Bill of Rights, of which the Toobin cover signifies the Sixth Amendment (the right to a speedy and public trial).

In the United States great interest arose about the U.S. Bill of Rights after the events 9/11 and the issuing of the USA PATRIOT Act. Minsky’s work often addresses social issues, and the cover of the book under review is taken from his volume on The First Amendment (addressing freedom of speech). Not only is the reviewed book’s binding beautiful to gaze upon, it is of the type that librarians like to see – hard boards, sewn signatures, and built to last. The scholarly apparatus at the end of the book includes a list of Minsky’s exhibitions, group shows, curated exhibitions, publications, a bibliography, and a careful listing of collections housing his work.

What is of particular value in this volume is the book’s autobiographical portrait of Minsky plus the numerous color reproductions of many of his works. The quality of the entire book is a joy to any bibliophile. My Life in Book Art is a true celebration of this multi-talented artist, what has driven him to become an important and essential leader in the book arts, and a stunning look at his life’s work. It is highly recommended for every art library.

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