

Fernanda Fedi and Gino Gini, Artists, Italy
fernanda-fedi@tiscali.it
gino-gini@libero.it

Fedi and Gini are the Commissioners for International Participation in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina Fourth International Biennale for the Artist's book, 2010, Egypt.

Creative Practice

Fernanda Fedi - Production processes for artists' books include: Inkjet printed, Letterpress, Laser printed, Linocut, Print-on-demand, Woodcut, Etching, Lithography, Altered book, Sculptural book, Hand-drawn/Letraset.

Gino Gini - Production processes for artists' books include: Letterpress, Print-on-demand, Screenprint, Lithography, Altered book, Photocopy, Hand-drawn/Letraset

ABTREE

Fernanda Fedi - With reference to the ABTREE, most of my artists' books sit in the ARTISAN category: Livre d'Artiste, Livre de Luxe, Fine Press, and also in the ARTISTS' BOOKS category: Sculptural, Multiples, Digitally Printed.

Re the diagram, I don't think that 'postcards', 'cards', 'posters', should be placed under the heading 'EPHIMERAL' - are we speaking about artists' books deriving from ephemeral and from zine?

Gino Gini - With reference to the ABTREE, mostly I fit in the ARTISAN CATEGORY, sometimes in DIGITAL.

Re the diagram, everything may be put in as it is, or in other ways, so I have no dispute with your choices.

Technology and Tradition

Fernanda Fedi - My production methods have not changed very much over time. They follow my research in the field of art regarding writings, archaic words and the material I use to put them on a surface; sand, glue and different papers. Only when I create an artist's book together with a poet do I make use of new technologies, digital print or simply computers. The computer has helped me to realise some precious artists' books together with some poets, making written words interact with my signs and writings. As an artist, I don't really use new technology. To adapt my work to new technologies, I must learn new

programmes, work with new machines. But I am also interested in learning processes. If someone invites me to create a book through new technological means and shows me what I can expect from the technology, it would be an interesting experience. But I would need a deep understanding of it to realise something worthwhile. My creative process may be influenced by new technologies but it is the artist who adapts new technologies to his/her thought and imagination.



Soul nourishing - to Neper 2003. Mixed media: cloth, modelling paste, sand. 30 x 40 cm. Unique book, which will be exhibited at the IV Biennale Alexandria in 2010.

I don't think that traditional methods automatically mean quality. It is the thought and the realisation of the artist that makes a book high quality. The artist lives in his/her time. The artist is the conscious pioneer of the society in which he or she lives. Traditional doesn't mean anything - it is just the way of creating something with means adopted in the past but with other meanings. The quality and the depth depend only on each single artist.

I don't know about electronic paper and many new technologies. I never wait for the development of new technology; I just get on with my ideas and creations. I believe technologies may be also negative, when they make the artist, little by little, homologous to all other artists in the world: I believe in difference.

I have nothing else to add about production methods, just an appeal to all artists to: 'Never to be slaves, also never be the slaves of a machine'.

Gino Gini - In 1976 I created my first artist's book. The change in my production methods is related to the development of my poetry. In my work, I prefer to produce the artist's book in one single copy; unicum.

Each production technique has its values, whether traditional or digital. Traditional methods have wider material possibilities for application and many

different types of materials, from papers to copper can be used. Generally traditional methods are more successful for me, they guarantee less copies and a more active participation by the artist. In some cases I have realised that new technologies offered me different ways of creating a book. Each artist researches his own technology. Regarding my own work, as a 'Visual Poetry' artist, writing is the main component, and handwritten words above all. I think traditional technologies are more suited to my work.



Sky, Gino Gini, 2003. Unique book, mixed media, 20 x 16 x 3 cm.

Marketing and Distribution

Fernanda Fedi - When creating my books I don't think about success in terms of a sale. Internal artistic impulse drives me first and foremost. That may be a limit when it comes to promoting my work, but it is also a great strength. What I realise when visiting museums and libraries is that a lot of them prefer artists' books printed by an editor/publisher, and lack object books, monotype books, precious books in small editions.



La tragedie de l'écriture 2003. Mixed media: engraved wood, coloured paints. 42 x 23 x 3 cm. Unique book.

Of course, cost influences my method of production. If I can't find an editor/publisher who will take on all the costs of production: through different types of printing, ancient or new, then I must invent something that I can afford.

I sometimes create books of a certain importance using digital print, generally for a collector. Everything is useful for promotion, but I do prefer to work on precious books, monotype books or limited edition. I don't have a big market. My sales are supported by some public or private collectors or libraries (sometimes with donations to Museum). As for my audience it's not a culture of mass - there are just a limited number of people that follow a certain kind of artistic research.

I have not yet used the Internet to market my work. I don't know how bookshops/galleries/specialist shops can, or will adapt to distribute books produced using solely digital media. As to who will collect it; everything may be bought - the basis is promotion and the quality and seriousness of what is proposed.



Cielo, Gino Gini, 2003. Unique book, mixed media, 18 x 16 x 3 cm.

Gino Gini - I sometimes use digital media when this media is required by my work, but not to increase sales or distribution. Museums, galleries, bookshops, private collectors are the main client for my books. As an audience, private collectors give me the greatest satisfaction. I have not yet used the Internet to market my work. Digital media are more difficult to sell though bookshops and galleries, I think that Museums and Libraries are the right places to collect digital books.

Nowadays the artist's book is having a resurgence here. In Italy, there are many exhibitions. However, the market is feeble, because the artist's book is a personal object and consequently can only be appreciated by a certain type of collector.

The Future of the Book

Fernanda Fedi - Yes, I do think that the artist's book has a limit. I think the artist's book is a book: thought, conceived and realised by the artist, sometimes in co-operation with a printer, or an editor. Not everything is an artist's book. The artist's book has its own physiognomy.

The artist's book is the result of an artists' research. I think that the artists who are most suitable to create books are those whose research is in visual poetry (in the different areas) and in the conceptual field. I don't believe in strict rules. Everything may survive: traditional and technological methods. The most important thing is the quality of the work.

Do you think there is any limit to the definition of an artist's book?

Gino Gini - The artist's book doesn't pose the question of its own definition, but it must preserve the relationship with the book. The book has to remain steady in its structure. The artist's book was born as a transgression, all contemporary art is a transgression. The artist's book must preserve this view of transgression in art.

It is difficult to think about the future of the book. It is clear it is a witness of its time and has therefore changed in practical and conceptual ways to reflect the different periods of its existence. I can only suppose that the artist's book will change in the future according to the different situations and new advancement of technologies. But in any case it will always be a testimony of its time.

This case study forms part of the Centre for Fine Print Research's AHRC funded project 2008 - 2010: *What will be the canon for the artist's book in the 21st Century (In an arena that now includes both digital and traditionally produced artists' books, what will constitute the concepts of artists' publishing in the future?)* <http://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/canon.htm>