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http://www.juanitadeharo.com
http://juanitadeharo.blogspot.com/
www.flickr.com/photos/2ndedition_virtual_books/

Creative Practice

Methods of Production for artists' books include: Inkjet, Screen based/Internet, Linocut, Etching, Altered book, Sculptural book, Photocopy, Hand-drawn, Installation, books from found and natural materials, book-like objects.

Any method is valid and the right 'quality' if it meets the desired end. I use traditional methods like making my own paper from plants because it can add significance to the materials or because it adds to the meaning in the work or because I can't find what I want from any other source. Similar reasons are behind almost any method I use- it is to meet an end (or it's just what I felt like doing that day perhaps). The production method is not what makes a thing 'art'. Remember in the not too distant past a painting was not 'art' unless it was an oil painting?

ABTREE

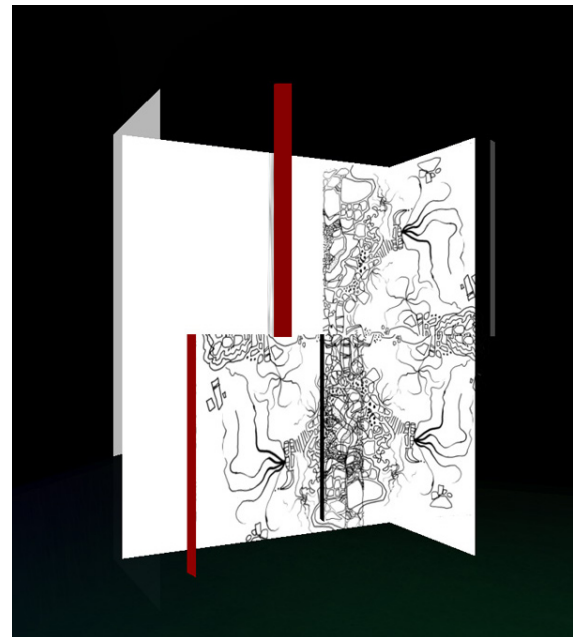
With reference to the ABTREE, I can see that I fit within a few places or that I don't fit – whichever way you want to look at it. I don't see how this diagram can be useful as a classification system. The items on the second level of such a diagram need to have a relationship to the main class (Artists' Publishing) and to each other. They need to be either/or (i.e. artist publishing is either this or that, and this and that belong to the same class of things) In your diagram the second level is a mish-mash of product (artist book) means of production (digital) qualitative description (ephemeral) and producer (artisan). It is like comparing apples and oranges. It seems clear it is not an either/or situation (unless you are suggesting that anything digitally produced or fine press can't fit under artists' books or anything ephemeral can't be classed as an artist's book).

The second level should be a set of alternatives that indicate artists' publishing is either this one thing or that one thing. What is the alternative to being an artist book? I don't think it is being digital or ephemeral. If you use a term as broad as "publishing" then where are prints, catalogues, invitations, newspapers and magazines, commercially printed

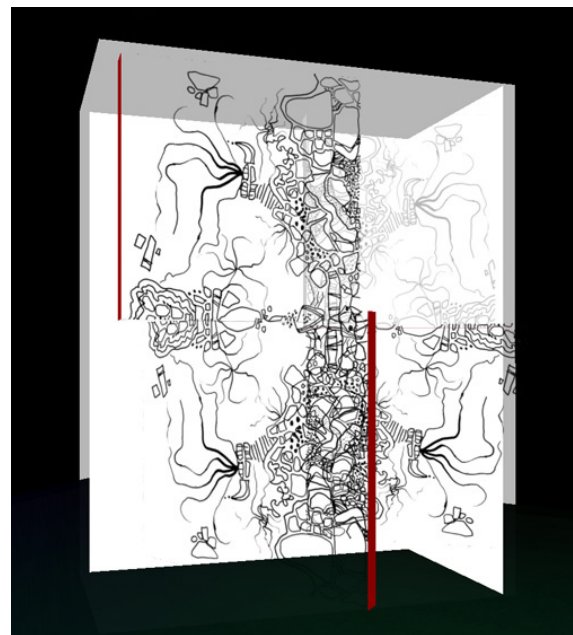
books etc? So maybe the second level could look something like:

1. Artists' books (sculptural, ephemeral, digital, photographic etc etc)
2. Promotional material (catalogues, websites, invitations, blogs, posters, magazine etc)
3. Prints (Intaglio, relief, litho, digital, photographic)
4. Art objects/multiples (bookmarks, posters, cards, badges, zines etc)
5. Fine Art Books (livres d'artiste, fine press etc)

Maybe it's as confusing as the existing diagram but it's all I have off the top of my head.



Squiggles, Juanita Deharo (Judy Barrass) virtual book. This is hard to represent here as the pages and cover are in constant motion, sometimes making a sort of sense when they all come together and sometimes operating as randomly organised parts. You stand in one place and the contents of the book 'perform' for you.

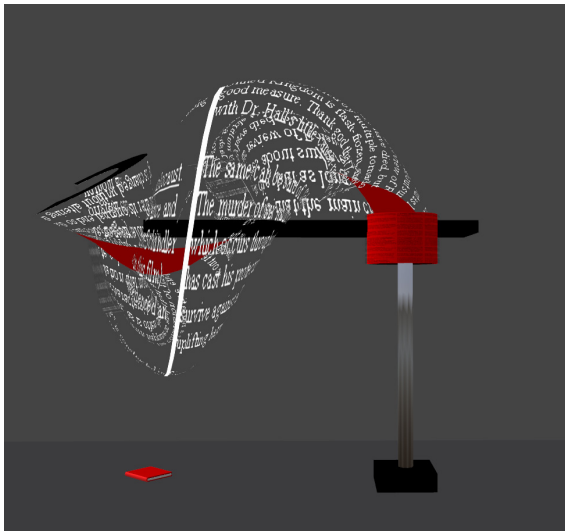


Technology and Tradition

Like everyone, over time I have added new methods, modified old ones, discarded some, embraced new technology, fallen back in love with old technology. Basically the production method is just a means to an end and I use what is appropriate and takes my fancy at the time.

I like to embrace any new technology – either a newly learned traditional technology or a new way of approaching an old one or something completely new. So when they come along, and I embrace them, they then become part of my creative toolkit.

I used to draw on paper while I listened to the radio or waited for the bus etc Now I draw on the inside of milk cartons instead. I used to draw on paper when I wanted an image – now I am just as likely to draw on a tablet straight onto my computer screen.



Modern Warfare - the Storybook Machine, Juanita Deharo (Judy Barrass) virtual book. A comment on modern attitudes to warfare and how they are fed by the press. The moving text revolves around the red drum and spews comments on our desire for happy endings out of the 'machine' in the swirling mass of white text. The little red book on the floor is titled 'Happily Ever After'.

Using a computer has added another exciting method of production to my repertoire. It allows me to spend endless hours experimenting, being creative and enthralled by the possibilities and I can then just turn it off and go to bed and there is no mess in my studio. It has put me in touch with a very broad cross section of people across the world – allowed me to find out things, share knowledge, swap ideas, feed off the creativity of others – etc etc. My laptop is a mobile studio that I can carry into many situations.

I started making books on a Commodore 32 computer back in the early 80's. That software and hardware is obsolete and almost all of what I did

back then and since has been lost. But it's part of the thrill – working at the new frontier and one can be too precious about retaining everything.

However, if you are wondering about longevity of digital work in general and how we can store significant work for posterity then that's another issue. We simply don't know enough about appropriate storage of digital content yet, but things will change. In the meantime much is being lost, stored inappropriately etc.

The whole issue of cataloguing, storing, recording, and keeping records of what is being done digitally is a vexed one. It is not just an issue for individual artists, but one that librarians and others interested in classifying and storing information and artworks have been slow to recognise and address. In many cases libraries have been more interested in looking backwards – in digitising existing collections rather than paying attention to the new media as an entity that requires attention itself.

I have seen many significant artworks disappear. Significant because they broke new ground, others have built on them, they said and did something new – but there was simply not a way to keep them. History is being lost.

Yes, new technologies influence my creative process. I think your brain changes when you learn new things and become absorbed in new ways of doing or being creative. I can see that my sense of aesthetics changes and my evaluation of other's work and the way I look at the world changes whenever I become absorbed in a particular technology, new or old.

There's some interesting stuff in the process of being done on the cognitive changes that occur when artists slip over to being more digitally based in their work. It has certainly changed my brain a little.

We are now becoming multi-literate – able to read, understand and create in many more ways than just traditional print and language. I would consider publishing an artist's book on electronic paper.

Marketing and Distribution

I sell the majority of my artists' books at galleries I don't have a target 'market' in mind when I make my work. 'Target audience' is something different. I generally make my books with an individual in mind as an audience. They are a sort of conversation, but that individual almost never knows they are my target.



Juanita Deharo (Judy Barrass). I have included this image of my library in *Second Life* with a big collection of all sorts of virtual books, publishing systems and templates for making virtual books.

Most of my books are bought by institutions and private collectors –I know MANY people see and enjoy my work – they are my audience – they just don't/can't afford to buy.

I have used the Internet to sell my work via my own website, gallery website and the virtual world website Second Life. I am selling, showing, distributing work in virtual worlds. It doesn't see the light of day outside the computer. I also make and sell work that is produced digitally but it is printed and sold as an object in galleries. At times I use the computer as a cheap, easy way to produce multiples – say as a gifts, for swaps, for catalogues etc.

The Future of the Book

Print on demand, e books, podcasts phone books etc are a reality – you can buy them now. More bookshops will adapt to on-line sales and more and better technology for downloading and reading digital books will become available. Digital books will become commonplace and the nature of reading will change.

Virtual worlds open up other possibilities – already many publishers and bookstores have presences in virtual worlds and sell books there. Virtual book readings, book launches etc are happening now and will become more common. Reading might become a more immersive experience, not so dependent on words.

Similarly galleries are moving to web based presences, websites, blogs, etc and into virtual worlds. I think at last count there were 600 or more art galleries in the virtual world Second Life. It's a way of reaching a very broad audience. Galleries like Jack the Pelican Presents in Brooklyn or the Australian National Portrait Gallery are already straddling the boundaries. There will be more of this.

I don't think any collecting/classifying organisation can keep up with collecting digital media at the moment. We are just starting to wake up to the fact that the internet has a vast store of ever changing information, art etc that is here today and gone tomorrow – almost impossible to get a handle on. A lot has been/is being lost. And that is not to mention all the stuff that is on people's home or work computers.

A light at the end of the tunnel is that major galleries and institutions are now investing a lot in digitally based artworks. They are going to have to figure out how to maintain and store them.

There is a need for virtual libraries that go across national boundaries. How that can be funded/organised is difficult to see.

There's an amazing market for digital artworks in virtual worlds – some artists are making a career and a living in this already. It's an interesting idea, buying an artwork that doesn't exist in any traditional sense.

There are already virtual collectors, virtual galleries, and real life galleries showing virtual works and the growth we see happening in this area will make it a big part of the income opportunities available to artists.

Yes, there is a limit to the definition of an artist's book: An artwork that references or is based on the form or format of a book.

Do you have any concerns about the future of the book, for example the loss of traditional artisan skills? If so, how do you think this can be remedied?

No – artists are very good at keeping traditional skills alive long after they have ceased to be necessary as artisan skills in any other context. I see a bright future for old technologies – look at all the old letterpress or bookbinding equipment that is being lovingly retrieved and put back into use in people's backyard studios.

My concern is that if we persist with a rush to pin and capture the thing that is artists books we will, in the process, consign the whole movement and genre into the past.

Some further information:

Things are really moving in virtual worlds and publishing - I am (through University of Western Australia) sponsoring a monthly prize for virtual artists' books and getting some interesting works. I will be speaking on virtual books at the Forum in Mackay this year.

I met Tom Layton in cyberspace - he is writing a course in virtual publishing for University of Oregon.
www.tomlayton.net/Tom_Layton/Resume.html

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>