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ABTREE

With reference to the ABTREE, my works sits somewhere between 'Artist's books', 'Ephemeral', and 'Digital'.

I think 'Installation' should be added to the diagram, as it's not quite the same as 'Sculptural'. I think almost every item can in a way be linked to another. But doing that would replace the diagram with a nonsensical mishmash.

Creative practice

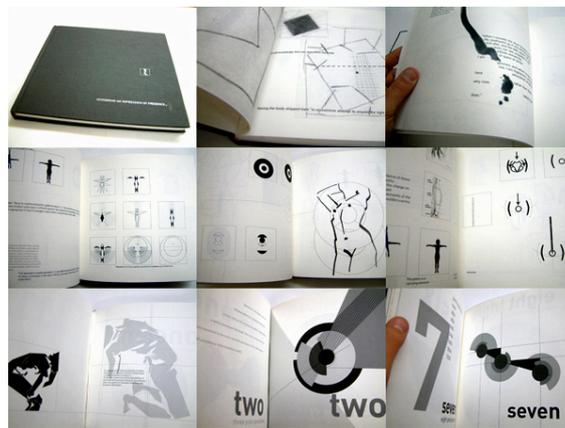
Production processes for artists' books include: Inkjet, Laser printed, Screen based/Internet, Letterpress, Screenprint, Etching, Lithography, Altered book, Sculptural book, Photocopy, Hand-drawn/Letraset, Installation.

I think of what I do as work/play: a composite of the notions of effort and recreation that renders them inseparable. In terms of process, I enjoy laborious tasks and/or elaborate systems and rules, especially (if not exclusively) when they subvert means of productivity, when they put forward uselessness, excess, or failure as valid ways of being and doing. I paradoxically take as much pleasure in engaging in effortless exercises or uncomplicated gestures, mostly when they hint at problematic matters or suggest challenging ideas. In fact, in my practice, these two methods are inextricably linked: play can only be serious and work can only be fun.

What I work/play with is the thoughts and things that furnish the everyday, a realm in which the book has featured in various roles. These are some of the roles that the book has played in my practice: embodiment of the process of reading, aesthetic material, format for democratic distribution, vehicle for thoughts, collection of objects, archive for memory, laboratory for experimentation, environment with its own rules, and space where fact and fiction can coexist.

Technology and Tradition

Over time, I would say that my productions methods both have and haven't changed. The basic methods are pretty much the same, but the combinations vary. My bookworks fall mostly into the digital category in terms of production: the easiest and cheapest way to the democratic multiple.



Rendering an impression of presence, 2001

I do also use many traditional methods to address craft as a process or the actual 'thingness' of the book.

The computer has definitely helped in the production of my artists' books. I trained as a graphic designer and have worked in print production, so the computer is the quickest way for me to produce layouts and prepare for print production when working on a big (in terms of number of pages or of copies) project. I also use it for photographic editing and typesetting for test printouts. I've also recently started playing around with video.

On small editions however, I prefer to use more traditional printing and setting techniques (collage, etching, screen printing), mostly because of the directness of the process. Cutting and folding books into sculptural narratives is, I think, my most successful means of production. This probably has to do with the accessibility of the final product, and maybe also with the fact that I have been doing it for so long that I can try to push the technique a little bit further with every new project.

Cost definitely does influence my methods of production. My general rule is that I'm allowed to invest in the next project only a bit more than what I have earned from the previous one. Of course, rules are there to be broken. Otherwise I would not be making anything at all!

I don't think I would consider publishing an artist's book on electronic paper. I like the accessible aspects of books, and the experiments I have been making with video have to do with the ubiquity of its format, not its 'newness'.

Is there anything else you would like to add about your production methods?

I think I'd like to add a word about collecting and recycling as methods. I find that collecting (objects,

elements, stories...) is not just a process of preparation for a book, but a book in itself. I have been struggling with how to present an accumulation of objects without them being just a list and each item an exemplary, trying instead to put forward the uniqueness of each within the collection. I think it is a bit of a curatorial project where different permutations of the elements at hand can be considered in one construct. Book content? Index? Exhibition? Not sure...

Whatever it is, I think of it as very connected to recycling of both materials and full projects that can get re-formatted or re-thought. I think it all has to do with the changing meaning of objects, and looking for ways to allow them to do that within concrete formats.



Cloud making machines, bookwork commissioned by KOAC and AIGCO, industrial gas companies, 2005.

Marketing and Distribution

I sell the majority of my artists' books by email contact, but the Book Art Bookshop in London also holds a few.

My target audience? Anyone who would enjoy them. Institutions are particularly good because they provide accessibility to a larger audience and a catalogued preservation of the work.

I haven't used any websites to sell my work, but the Internet has helped me sell to people who have expressed interest through email.

I think maybe an artist's book collective fair with free stands would allow for a lot more people to show and sell their work.



Reading "*Munjid al Tullab*". Modified book, part of the "Pinceaux Pour Plumes" shown at Sursock Museum, Beirut, Lebanon, 2006 (selected by Galerie Janine Rubeiz).

The Future of the Book

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

I think the definition would have to depend on each book artist. Anything with a quality of 'bookness' (that addresses the book or reading, that is made with book materials or processes, or that can be 'read') and that is conceived as an artistic object is, for me, an artist's book.

I don't really have any concerns about the future of the book: I don't see the book disappearing any time soon.

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>