

**Bernd Reichert, Artist, Belgium**

<http://www.bernd-reichert.net>

### Creative practice

Production processes for artists' books include: Inkjet, Laser printed, Linocut, Woodcut, Screenprint, Etching, Altered books

### ABTREE

With reference to the ABTREE, my work is somewhere between artists' books (handmade, altered, zine) and livres d'artistes (original prints).



*Merz-Collages, (homage to Schwitters) 2009, 36 collages, 15 x 10 cm*

### Technology and Tradition

Over time, I have moved from printmaking more and more to using a scanner and ink jet printing. Using traditional methods is not so much about quality for me, but I would not like to go fully digital such as publishing on the Internet. I have printmaking materials at hand, and so continue to use them.

The computer has helped me with texts and creating images, and including them in publications has become much easier. Computers make realising concepts and testing ideas much easier. Also, production at a distance becomes easier (sending images and texts electronically to the printer/bookbinder who is putting the book together or proofreading etc.). I wouldn't consider making screen-based books as I find it hard to read on screen, but more importantly I would miss the haptic experience.

### Marketing and Distribution

Letterpress and original prints make books very expensive and the market for these has seemed to shrink. I sell my work at dedicated bookstores (London, Amsterdam, Berlin) and at gallery exhibitions for the livres d'artistes.



*Differential References, published by Redfoxpress, c'est mon dada collection, October 2007 - 40 pages*

My main audience is private collectors. I have sold some books via my own website but need to explore more Internet options for marketing and distribution. I don't think that bookshops and galleries will necessarily adapt to selling purely digital media, artists' books are more of a niche market which will continue to exist as they are.

I do however collect digital artwork myself (video works) and I look at blogs and web pages for publications, but I wouldn't think of "collecting" digitally published books.

### The Future of the Book

No, I don't think that there is any limit to the definition of an artist's book, but sculptural works are often more sculptures than books. I have a certain tendency that I need to be able to turn at least some pages (or similar) to call it a book.

I would describe my definition of Book Art as something which has undergone a certain creative (visual) process and, which is distinct from publishing a text for the sake of the text. An artist's book is produced for the sake of the (individual, even in the case of multiples) book – Gesamtkunstwerk – rather than distributing a text.

I don't think I have any concerns about the future of the book. Where we have had over the years a decreasing interest in printmaking and book art, I see within the current student generation a returning interest. The decisions of art schools to abandon traditional methods are, of course, a concern, but students and (subsequently) artists look for alternatives in order to compensate for the shortcomings at art schools and to satisfy their interests.

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>