

EDITIONS

Artists' Books Special Supplement

Cathy Courtney

This year's Artists' Book Fair, organised as before by Marcus Campbell, takes place at the Barbican Centre between November 15 to 17 with over 70 stands representing Europe and America and, this time, the chance to see the work of Argentinean book artists too. There will be lectures on November 15 at 2pm by Tanja de Boer (Museum of the Book, The Hague) and at 4pm by Meg Duff (Tate Gallery) on the subject of public collections and on Saturday 16 by the artists Susan Hiller (midday) and Joan Lyons (2pm). Lyons will then take part in an open seminar (4pm) with Liliane Lijn, Helen Douglas and Susan Johanknecht looking at the ways in which women approach artists' books. Both Lyons's lecture and the seminar have been organised as part of the London Institute's research project 'The Art of the Book 1960 to the Present Day' which is based at Camberwell College of Arts and run in conjunction with Chelsea School of Art and Design. The aim of the seminar is to look in detail at the content of several titles, using Liliane Lijn's *Her Mother's Voice* and Lyons's *My Mother's Book* (see AM197) as a starting point. Both books will be on show at the Book Fair so that visitors can spend some time with them and be able to participate more fully in the debate; reactions from men are wanted and welcome (it is hoped more men will attend than came to the 1992 conference, 'Book Works: A Woman's Perspective'). A parallel discussion will be conducted at Mills College in California and both seminars will be documented in papers published as part of the London Institute's research project. The Fair will also accommodate a small exhibition of books by women, organised by the Women's Art Library and funded by the London Arts Board, which will include, among others, work by the American artists Stephanie Brody Lederman, Clarissa Sligh and Alisa Golden as well as those featured in the open seminar. Lyons's lecture will draw on the 25-

year old history of the Visual Studies Workshop which she founded and runs in Rochester, New York, and which has been such an important influence on American book art values. The VSW has produced over 350 titles, most of them off-set litho, and Lyons will focus particularly on some of the work by women, using this to illuminate their particular concerns and relationship to the book form. Lyons's own work encompasses both books and prints, working in a variety of media, and she is also the editor of *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook* published in 1985.

Both Susan Johanknecht and Helen Douglas (with Telfer Stokes as Weproductions) will have stands at the Book Fair and it will be possible to view Johanknecht's recent CD-Rom works, *of science and desire* and *WHO WILL BE IT?* on a monitor there. (The latter is based on the 'paper, scissors, rock' game for hands and in this case the viewer is in combat with the random function of the computer.) The CD-Rom pieces appear in book form as well, *of science and desire* lying within soft, black rubber covers and the series of cards which form *WHO WILL BE IT?* secured inside a gold mesh wrapper within a box. While both these works fall naturally into the flow of Johanknecht's past publications, *of science and desire* in particular picks up themes which continue to engross her. The pictorial language of science was a significant factor in *Hermetic Waste*, 1986, partially inspired by the etchings whereby alchemic learning was handed down through the generations, and the current book stemmed from frustrated memories of 60s textbooks and rigid teaching methods recalled from her own childhood when helping her children with their science homework.

Johanknecht is immensely attuned and attracted to the tactile qualities of differing materials and, typically, the messages of her books are interwoven with their fabric. (This combination is by no means annihilated by the use of the computer screen for the CD-Rom version of *of science and desire*, where participants are invited not only to click on icons but also to lick, caress or kiss them.) The transparency of the plastic pages of *Emissions*, 1992, and the ink used inside it allowed the line drawings and text – as well as the simulated body samples (blood, semen, spittle) – to carry the weight of the narrative equally between them, and Johanknecht delights in the fact that the hands of each

reader will be drawn into the visible action as the pages are turned and is pleased that an accretion of fingerprints will build the more the book is manipulated. Unsqueamish in her approach to life, Johanknecht's research for *Crevice/Map*, her 1995 collaboration with Jenifer Newson, led her to The Royal College of Surgeons to draw from specimens of lungs and torsos, part of her investigation into the inner landscape which we all carry inside ourselves and which many of us would prefer to ignore for as long as good health allows. These drawings were allied to other research for *Crevice/Map* at the Royal Geographical Society, where Johanknecht and Newson enlarged photocopies culled from historical maps to the extent that their visual structures began to disassemble. The linen material, which backed these maps, and the folds, which over the years had become part of their being, were important in arriving at the final format for *Crevice/Map*, which is printed on paper, its two parts joined with a sewing machine; sewing and household utensils are another leitmotif of Johanknecht's oeuvre and it is important to her that her studios – the large Vandercook press as well as the computer technology – are integrated within her family house. This time round the paper was semi-transparent, unfolding to the length of a small hammock, one surface bearing Johanknecht's poem relating to and laid out along the contours of a body map, the other side an echo of a walk Newson made on Ben Nevis, the words laid out to mirror the journey which stretches the length of the partially visible drawing beneath it. Sharing some themes with Henry Moore's massive sculptures, the book could hardly present itself in a more contrasting form.

As well as being an artist herself, Johanknecht is also a teacher (primarily at Central School of Art, where she trained) and may in retrospect prove to be one of the key figures linking the period when book art was made only in the margins with the new era in which it is formally taught in art institutions. (She is one of the artists already established in the field who firmly welcomes the new MA Book Art Course at Camberwell.) Before leaving her native America to settle in this country, she was apprenticed to Claire Van Vliet who founded and runs the Janus Press in Vermont and, in England, worked briefly with Ronald King when Circle Press was still based in Guildford. Citing Ian Tyson as an influence as well as her colleague and former teacher, Mike Peel,

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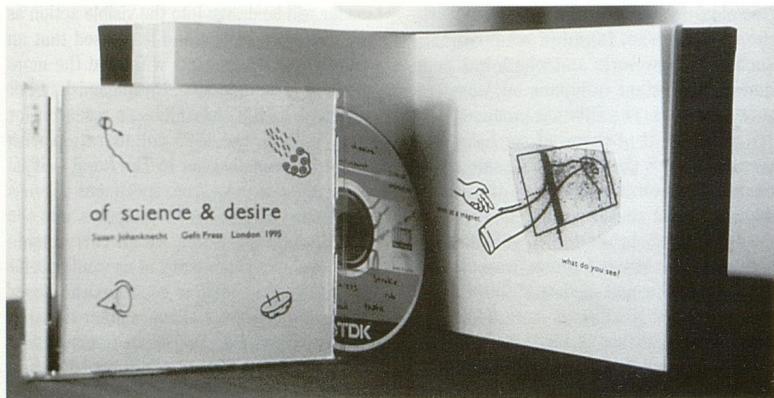
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Johanknecht's first show was with Book Works in the gallery under the arches at London Bridge in 1986 (see AM93) and at that point she became part of the emerging network of artists connected through their use of text and image. Johanknecht is part of two further exhibitions, one curated by Stephen Bury, 'The Body & The Book', and the other to celebrate 25 years of the Crafts Council, 'Objects of Our Time', selected by the writer, lecturer and curator, Martina Margetts. In the latter exhibition, books take their place among a broad spread of applied arts, which Margetts sees as 'the fulcrum between fine art and industrial design'. Other book artists selected for the Crafts Council show include Victoria Bean, Susan Doggett, who teaches book art at Croydon (handbound, handwritten books) and the binder Romilly Saumarez Smith.

Stephen Bury's exhibition is an extension of 'For the voice' which he curated at work-fortheyetodo (the Bible – 'the word made flesh' – is one angle he has pursued in addition to exploring the body's involvement with the making of books and with content as well as examining the reader's relationship to the artefact). The exhibition and the related essay which Bury is working on are part of the London Institute's research project as are two other current shows. The printmaker Paul Coldwell was commissioned to make his first bookwork as part of the research team and follows Susan Hiller (see p44) in being offered the Freud Museum as an exhibition space. The Museum is housed at Freud's Hampstead house and his study remains intact, a room oppressive with an accumulation of belongings and the apparent solidity of which is belied by the discovery that what looks like the fruit of years of habitation was in fact transported wholesale from Austria in 1938 and that Freud only lived for one year after his arrival in England. Coldwell was allowed special access to the contents of Freud's study, unearthing details such as the contents of the pocket of Freud's coat, and has built his images using photographs and video stills of the room as well as the emblematic household objects which traditionally appear in

his own prints. Coldwell will be at the Book Fair and *Freud's Coat* (edition 100) can be seen alongside complementary sculptures at the Freud Museum later this month.*

The third exhibition initiated by Camberwell (assisted by a grant from the Crafts Council) is 'Through the Looking Book: Thirty Years of Circle Press 1967-96' at the Royal National Theatre. This celebrates three decades of work from Ronald King and his associates from a press which has provided the book art community with a backbone of continuity, invention and resilience as well as quantities of practical advice and help. King founded the press after Editions Alecto failed to distribute his first book, *Chaucer's The Prologue* in 1967 (it was at the time of Paul Cornwall-Jones's departure from Alecto to form his own Petersburg Press) and has himself travelled a long distance from his first experiments with text and image on facing pages to the energetic anarchy of the 1992 *Anansi Company* where characters from Caribbean folk tales run amok beyond the violently coloured pages, leaping out in the form of articulated wire puppets. The exhibition includes wall work and three-dimensional pieces as well as the broad sweep of publications which the press has embraced over the years and will also launch the latest book, *Black Sea Letter* by Jean Claude Loubières and Kenneth White. Key figures associated with Circle include Ian Tyson (whose early work there laid the

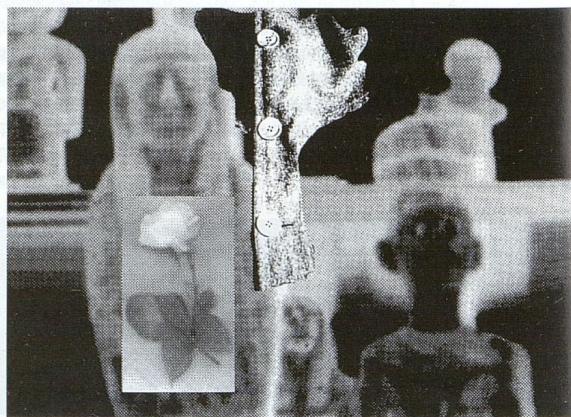
Susan Johanknecht
Of Science and Desire 1995

foundations for the investigation which dominated his subsequent books under his own imprint, Tetrax), Norman Ackroyd (who made his first book with King before later founding his own Penny Press) and John Christie, who has produced 14 titles with Circle to date, most recently his design for John Berger's *Pages of the Wound* which this month makes the rare transition from artist's book to standard edition in the form of Bloomsbury's paperback publication to mark Berger's 70th birthday. (Berger will give a platform reading at the Royal National Theatre on December 12.) The 1990s have seen a new, younger generation feed from King's experience – Victoria Bean and John Paul Bichard are among those who made their first books at the Notting Hill Gate premises King moved to when he left Guildford in 1988 – and King's own creativity shows no sign of drying up but rather of loosening to integrate his making of books within a spectrum that includes sculptures as well as printmaking. Along with the Barbican book fair, the National Theatre and the Poetry Library in the Royal Festival Hall (where a related exhibition of Circle books is on show until December 15) provide a space where an audience unfamiliar with the form can encounter book art for the first time. ■ For details see box p46.

Erasmus Is Late, Liam Gillick, Book Works, 1995, Edition 1,000, £6.95, 870699 17 3

Liam Gillick's book reviews itself on page 40: 'On top of this apparent earnestness it is necessary to pile irony, self-knowledge and layers of complex referencing'. Within the yellow covers with their pin-hole dot title (everything is there and not there in this text) lurks a philosophising prose piece which imagines the possibility of a dinner party composed not only of participants from different centuries but that those assembled round the table can hear and respond to the thoughts of their absent host, Erasmus

Paul Coldwell
page from *Freud's Coat*
1996



Darwin, who spends the evening wandering through a time-telescoped London in an opium-driven haze.

Apart from its literary antecedents, the notion of the dinner party dialogue reminded me of Tony Harrison's brave television 'play' at the outset of Salman Rushdie's *fatwa* where the poet sat alone at a table in a Bradford curry restaurant amid the empty place settings laid for his writer companions – all long-dead voices from the past apart from Rushdie whose absence was enforced for another, obvious, reason. Harrison's monologue remains vivid not only because of its central conceit but also its strong sense of occasion and, to a degree, the same is true of Gillick's book, which is set largely in the area surrounding *Art Monthly's* former premises in Great Russell Street. *Erasmus Is Late* subverts a Book Works project for a site-specific commission by making the setting a vividly imagined one based on a real place; it is also illustrated in a more literal way than most artists' books, the line drawings (by his mother Gillian Gillick) reminiscent of an unsophisticated children's book, their simplicity another layer of irony rubbing against the rigorous-seeming writing, and their architectural references a further means of indicating the energy of past structures, both physical and conceptual, in our contemporary lives.

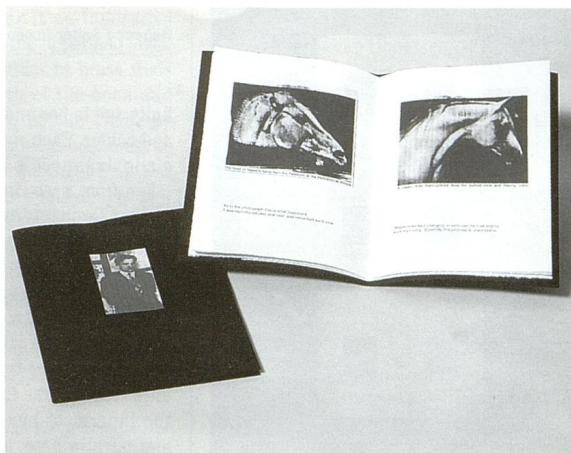
The notion of a conversation spoken across centuries and geographical distance came perfectly alive when my concentration was gently interrupted by a neighbour as I read the book on the last day of September sunshine in the depths of Herefordshire landscape: to the moral, scientific, economic and social debates of Erasmus's guests were added a countryman's occasional musings on the plum and apple harvest and on the death of a local friend – it seemed a perfect fusion. Outside interventions aside, Gillick's text is also an example of the masochistic pleasure to be found in a certain strain of artists' books, the dryness of its tone becoming hypnotic at the same time as the mind longs to disengage itself. Amongst Erasmus's weightier guests – Harriet Martineau, Robert McNamara, Elsie McLuhan (mother of Marshall) and Masaru Ibuka (co-founder of Sony) – the limited understanding of Murry Wilson (father of a Beach Boy) is something to be grateful for. ■

Reports of Worldwide Visual Diseases

edited and published by Stephan Klimas, Edition 500, £132, 3-926820-33-0, Edition of 100 in handpainted/printed box with 6 original screenprints, £276, Edition of 100 in handpainted/printed box with 6 screenprints on handpainted blue 200 gr printwork paper, £310

Stephan Klimas's *Reports of Worldwide Visual Diseases 2000* hits some of the issues thrown up by the characters in Gillick's book (in which the historical moment at which

John Christie
By On About, 1995



the 'mob' became 'the workers' is repeatedly acknowledged). In Klimas's anthology images and prose dwell on urban poverty and social injustice and explore Michael Hager's introductory question of why 'art in the sense of beautiful and sublime is dead?'. The contributions (from a spread of nationalities) are extremely uneven in quality – ranging from an excellent piece by John Sexton on East End housing and a stinging account of his life by David Ayers, a Black American writing from Berlin, to an adolescent parody of better writers by Konrad Bayer – and it is really only the overall design which holds the collection together. That a rather self-conscious style should be the overriding flavour of an initiative of this kind is disappointing and Klimas's own appearance in the book under the pseudonym 'Hausmeister' is contrived, adding to the sense that there is something dishonest in the thinking behind this enterprise. Anything that might directly combat Hager's proposition is omitted – the word 'sublime' might have slipped from contemporary currency but I'm not sure that we haven't found different ways of saying the same thing and it's news to me that we're no longer able to sense beauty. As a work representing the dispossessed and disregarded, this book is curiously out of reach of most people even in its cheapest form; is it not more of a showcase for its artists, a few of whose images, I'm afraid, I found rather ... beautiful? The book can be seen at workforthetheeyetodo. ■

Plumbers, Pamela Golden, The Wild Pansy Press, 1996, Edition 250, £5 plus p&p, available from Gimpel Fils

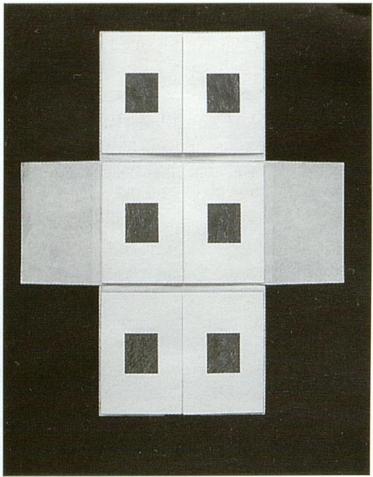
Plumbers may be printed on unremarkable paper and staple bound, but rest assured that it has a fake wood veneer finish as befits a manual of advertisements for do-it-yourself home improvements. The black and white images are a mixture of family snapshots and reproductions of post-war advertisements for household appliances and

domestic outdoor equipment, relieved by the odd luxury item such as the 'Orlik' pipe for that smoke of satisfaction once the day's decorating has been successfully completed. There are many cross-currents in operation within the book, with unrelated images echoing shapes in one another and a subtext almost within reach as characters in the photographs reappear or a previous scene recurs, this time revealing the person just outside the edge of the first camera shot. What comes over most strongly, though, is the picture of a society now entirely vanished, of modest living and low horizons – and one still with us – private repression amid apparent domestic harmony. Advertisement after advertisement (both word choice and image) confirms the stereotypical male/female roles, but the prize must go to the copywriter of a vacuum cleaner ad: 'Ask your wife about it – she uses it every day ... Fill in this coupon and we'll let you and your wife know all about the latest Vetric models ...' The caged birds and animals that punctuate the sequence are among their own kind, and the inclusion of the advertisement for Kenneth Clark's *The Nude* ('The Book of the Year') is less of a surprise in this context than the fact that it shared space with another Book Society recommendation, *The Dark Stranger* by Dorothy Charques an 'outstanding historical novel'. ■

dividing the light, Thomas A. Clark and John Christie, Objectif Press, 1995, Edition 80, \$45

By. On. About. (for Vladimir Mayakovsky), John Christie, Objectif Press, 1995, Edition 20, £50

Both these books were published under a new imprint founded by John Christie for his productions made with computer technology. Interestingly, the equipment has enabled Christie to take up the vocabulary he has honed in previous silkscreen books and fly with it, so that his delight in layering



and shadow and in a degree of 'contrived casualness' is in some ways set free by the economics of desktop publishing; this work seems more at home in the simpler bindings used here than it might have done in the more formal trappings of a limited edition *livre d'artiste*. For both books the physical light weight of the edition and the modesty of presentation are important for the editions' success, in the case of *dividing the light*, being almost part of its subject matter, the reader's hands cupping a drama of shade and luminosity as the pages are turned. Clark's meditation and Christie's images support one another entirely and there is not a single wasted element in the piece, whereas the mild presentation of the Mayakovsky work wins out in a different way, creating an environment where it seems perfectly natural that the disparate quotations and visual observations should fall together into an unpretentious whole, proposing the sum of its parts and a little bit beyond. The sense of unity comes from colour control and taut design, and the poetic import of the short texts is strong enough to make the first reading self-sufficient even before the discovery of notes giving the sources of each quotation and thus provoking a second, altered interpretation. Many book artists have used the Apple Mac aggressively to make work that shuns its separation from traditional book art; Christie has bridged the two. ■

Rondo, Rebecca Salter, Edition 10, \$900

Rebecca Salter's first book has all the meditative qualities of her drawings and paintings and adds to these an invitation to collaborate and play. Its structure allows for a multiplicity of viewings, the three tiers of images able to move and change within their limits like participants in a formal dance, so that the reader can build towers of different combinations, exposing images in pairs, trios or quartets at every level; even the most irregular constellation holds together as a

Rebecca Salter *Rondo* 1996

unity due to her understanding of proportion and colour. Each rectangular sheet of handmade Japanese paper carries an oblong taken from a woodblock print and arranged so that their interwoven tones of the lines flow in different directions, creating a subtle energy within a restriction of resources. It is possible to compose a study of blues or one of dusky pinks by exposing the opening 'chapters' of the story and then to expand the colour field to admit new influences until reaching the final shock of freshness of the innermost images, simpler in texture and pure in note. The whole piece is contained and inseparable from a beautiful matt blue cover which enfolds it (made by the binder Tracey Rowledge) and my only concern would be that the book might not withstand the amount of handling its seductive invitation is bound to excite. ■

After the Freud Museum, Susan Hiller, Book Works, 1995, Edition 1,000, \$18.50, 1 870699 19 X

Susan Hiller was one of the artists who took part in Book Works's project, 'The Reading Room', which involved artists working in three cities. Hiller's contribution was an installation in the Freud Museum, stimulated by the overall atmosphere of the house and by the widespread collection of artefacts that Freud had amassed in his study. This book (which had funding from the University of Ulster as well as the Arts Council of England and the London Arts Board) is a portable museum and one that could provoke a hundred novels let alone academic studies. It is an instance of the artist's book as a container of ideas connected not by a single discipline but by a single mind, a mirror of the interweaving of thoughts and associations as they occur in our lives before being hijacked into separate compartments by the traditions of academia or publishing or else – mostly – allowed to float away

unrecorded. If this is free association, it is of a high order, drawing together mythology, anthropology, modern history, science, superstition, religion, comedy and tragedy – and spiky humour.

After the Freud Museum documents a series of boxes Hiller has collated from her journeys, each of which is a theatre of interwoven propositions offered up by means of samples (for instance, bottled water or earth from significant sites), found objects, texts and reproduced images, all catalogued with the precision of a serious reference book. As is often the case, the neat presentation boxes are immensely collectable as objects in themselves, this tall, handsome book being the only access most of us are likely to have, and the work feeds back in on itself by rooting several of the 'exhibits' overtly in the Freudian tradition – for example *Item 024 Rex/king* contains objects bought near the crossroads of Sophocles's play (the reference to the fact that one of the roads leads to the scene of a Nazi massacre is a typical Hiller link, justified, sensitive in its equation and compact in implication) and the box on the back and front covers *034 Journey/jer ni* relates to an engraving owned by Freud, *Moses* (the documentation of the documentation letting us know that Hiller's own tough climb up Mount Sinai in search of the fossils included in this box was cheered by the thought that the prophet had to do it twice). It is Book Works's achievement not only to stimulate work of this quality but also to provide it within such an affordable price band. ■

A Long Tour of Paris on Foot, Tony Kemplin, 1995, Edition 220, \$8

Ursa Major, Tony Kemplin, 1995, Edition 220, \$8

Margherita Marghereater, Tony Kemplin, 1996, \$5

Kubla Can't, Tony Kemplin, Ring Pull Press, 1996, 0 95263671 9



Susan Hiller
After the Freud Museum 1994

This selection of work by Tony Kemplen (who was inspired to make books after a visit from Ron King to Sheffield University where he was studying and who was lucky enough to have Sharon Kivland among his tutors) represents a strand of artists' books that are relatively transitory and slight in comparison to a work such as Hiller's yet are nevertheless intelligent and alive with excitement about the book form. Their relative low cost and their high (if ephemeral) enjoyment level makes the best of them ideal ambassadors for a public unaware that artists work with books. Kemplen has so far proved prolific and has experimented with different bindings and forms, maybe a path on the way to a major work in which the understanding he has thereby achieved will provide the setting for deeper content. Most of the books to date are relatively short, often developing a single theme whose exposition unwinds visually in tandem with the page sequence. The title of *A Long Tour of Paris on Foot* is adapted to echo the shape of the Eiffel Tower, printing it out in green ink to match the colour and proportion of its stocky green ring-binding, and the book itself is long and tall, the yellow inner pages ('let your fingers do the walking?') bearing a map of Paris beneath the darker text which details the deadpan street-by-street directions the reader is to follow. Paper folded on the fore-edge ensures that there are no open edges to the book and this, coupled with the flexibility of the covers which can move round the spine to touch backs, reinforces the wordplay of *Faites Un Tour* in double translation as 'take a walk' and 'make a tower' – the reader does both by following the columns of instructions to move through their mental picture of Paris as well as literally through the pages; giant footprints barge alongside in case anyone is in danger of thinking the book is too polite. *A Long Tour of Paris – By Metro*, 1995, is a variation on this theme, containing 56 screenprinted pages and sewn in seven different sections onto cords which form the shapes of the metro lines beneath the leather covers. (Edition 3, £350.)

Kemplen's *Ursa Major* is an innovative structure of loose sheets, the upper and lower blue surfaces bound together by brass studs that penetrate the depth of the book and form the constellation of the title. By unscrewing these, the reader gains access to the mythical story of how the Great Bear was formed, told diagrammatically and simply as if in a child's reader. As before in Kemplen's work, the book is turned into a distinctive, self-referential environment which hangs in the memory as a place that has been visited although in this instance there's a suspicion that the idea of integrating the constellation and the binding has overridden the interest of the text.

The two tiny 1996 books are conventional in format, one ring-bound with wire and one stapled. Whatever else happens next, someone ought to rescue Kemplen from his diet: the edition size of *Margherita Marghereater* is determined by the number of pizzas the artist eats in 1996, expected to be around 100. The cover of this is made from a frozen pizza box and the images within are formed from shaped rubber-stamp lettering using the Latin names for the ingredients of the meal, with their English equivalent repeated like a liturgy on facing pages throughout the run. *Kubla Can?* is typeset from a toy 'Mini Printer' and uses each of the characters supplied only once so that when a letter is used up, another is substituted to complete the word.

Kemplen was one of the curators of 'Rebound' at the Site Gallery last year in Sheffield (later seen at the Hardware Gallery), where participating artists were given copies of *Stranger than Fiction*, a biography of Jeffrey Archer. The fact that Penguin were happy to donate 150 hardback copies of this work perhaps says as much as any of the artists, most of whom reacted to Archer's reputation as much as to anything inherent in the book. Quite a lot of violence was meted out – the book was variously pulped, put through a washing machine, hollowed out, glued silent, turned into a stage for some particularly nauseating pornography, had a bolt driven through it,

was transposed into an icon for gold worship; Erica van Horn treated the problem differently, returning it with a note saying 'Unfortunately for me, Michael Crick's biography of Archer is well-written, so even while I despise his subject matter I have to respect the research and the presentation ... I fielded a lot of questions from people all along as to why I was reading this book. Was I actually reading it? I gave Jeffrey Archer a lot of attention and discussion time ...' – her solution was to close the question by covering the book in brown paper. ■

a place apart, Roger Towndrow, designed and printed by the Minnesota Center for Book Arts, Edition 25, £75

This book, with its ten olive green wood and lino-cut images, was produced while Roger Towndrow (senior lecturer at Falmouth College of Arts) was artist in residence at Minnesota Center for Book Arts. It is a gentle piece, pulled down to earth by its thick cardboard outer covers, which bear an emblematic print on the front, and by the variations of mood within. It seems a response which accepts moments of solitude without celebrating them, depicting them in both geographic and mental terms, choosing spaces that range from the intimate – the bath, the attic – to the open landscape, comparing physical aloneness (the studio) and social exclusion. The images shoulder the main weight, backed by a minimal, suggestive text. It's a pity it's so expensive. ■

... to relieve friction, Tim Staples, 1996, Open edition, \$25

This is the third in Tim Staples's series of books stimulated by his find of a pile of washers abandoned by the roadside, each of which he views as 'a brick in an architecture of washers'. *Under Pressure* (see AM179) took the form of a flower press whilst the new one, like the second, *to distribute load*, is a low-key little book, quietly translating the qualities of the metal tools into textual

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THE LONDON ARTISTS' BOOK FAIR 96

15 • 16 • 17
November 1996

Concourse Gallery
Barbican Centre
London EC2

Friday/Saturday
10am-7.30pm
Sunday
12am-7.30pm

Admission Free

terms, editing out all but the essentials. A single small image showing two rusty washers, parallel but separate, along a metal bolt acts as an anchor for any reader unfamiliar with the previous work, and the spacing of the sparse narrative makes it anyway self-

evident that the subject is the tension of emptiness between isolated entries in proximity to one another, whether they be words, letters or washers. The fact that the image is glued on one side only neatly creates another empty space between it and the page.

Through the Looking Book: Thirty Years of Circle Press 1967-1996,

National Theatre, Nov 12-Jan 4.

Related exhibition, Poetry Library, Royal Festival Hall, Nov 12-Dec 15.

John Berger, platform reading from his Circle publication, *Pages of the Wound*, Lyttleton Theatre, Dec 12, 6pm, £3.50. 0171 633 0880. A history of the Circle Press, *The Looking Book*, by our very own **Cathy Courtney**, 0 901 380 717, to be published Nov 11.

Book Works has been awarded £50,000 by The Prudential Awards for the Arts (visual arts category) for new work.

The London Artists' Book Fair, Concourse Gallery, Barbican Centre, London EC2, Nov 15-17. For details see Artnotes p21.

Bound to Happen, Hardware Gallery, Nov 7-30, launches books by Steven Hoskins and Sarah Bodman, published by Dutch company, PlaatsMarken (Making Space). Wed-Sat and by appnt.

The Body & The Book, curated by Dr Stephen Bury, Old Operating Theatre and Herb Garrett Museum, 9A St Thomas's St, Southwark in Dec. 0171 955 4791 for details.

Big Painter, Small Publisher, books from Jacob Samuel Editions, Rocket Gallery, 13 Old Burlington St, London W1X 1LA, to Jan 25.

Starting from Scratch: the Story of Writing and Printing, John Rylands University Library, University of Manchester, 150 Deansgate, Manchester to Jan 31.

Les Bicknell has been commissioned to make a bookwork to launch the publishing facility at Manchester University. The work, edition of 25, explores 'the landscape as a metaphor for human relationships', one to remain in the University Library Collection. Manchester is one of the rare libraries to make its artists' books easily available to browsers. He is working on a residency with members of the community with a Ladywood library of Birmingham.

It will tour to other libraries in the area.

Freud's Coat and related sculptures by **Paul Coldwell**, Freud Museum, 20 Maresfield Gardens, London NW3. 0171 435 2002. Nov 26-Dec 24.

Enitharmon Press's latest publication, **Pendle Witches**, Paula Rego and Blake Morrison, designed by Sebastian Carter of Rampant Lions Press. Deluxe edition (£325), printed by Paul Coldwell at his Culford Press. Regular edition £25 (£45 signed copy). Contact Culford Press, 151 Culford Road, London, N1 4JD.

First MA Book Art students' final show in Britain, Camberwell College of Arts, Peckham Road, Nov 29-Dec 10.

Objects Of Our Time, Crafts Council Gallery, 44a Pentonville Rd, London N1, 0171 278 7700, Dec 5-Feb 16.

Rebecca Salter's Rondo from Jill George Gallery, 38 Lexington St, London W1, 0171 439 7319. **Susan Jokhanecht's** books and CD-Roms from Gefn Press, 5 Elmwood Road, London SE24 9NU. **Tony Kemplen's** books can be purchased from the artist at 29 Meadowhead, Sheffield S8 7UA.

Liliane Lijn has been awarded a grant by the London Production Film Award to produce a 20-minute video based on *Her Mother's Voice*. Due Spring 1997.

Poetry reading by **Thomas A. Clark**, Nov 3, 3-4pm, Camden Arts Centre. Poet/author in residence, Oct 18-Nov 10, he will create a site-specific text piece and will be available Fridays and Saturdays throughout the project with a display of his books printed by Moschatel Press, Arkwright Rd, London NW3, 0171 435 2643.

Imagined Lands, curator Alec Finlay, exhibition of Scottish postage stamps, City Arts Centre, Edinburgh, Nov 10-Jan 6. Can be contacted at 17 Gladstone Terrace, Edinburgh EH9 1LS.

Contact **Tim Staples**: 69 Farm Rd, Weston Super Mare, Somerset BS22 8BE.

■ Interview with Alec Finlay

This interview with Alec Finlay has been largely by correspondence rather than by means of a recorded meeting, in this case an appropriate working method since Finlay's 'Folio Series' and related 'Under the Moon Series' have mostly taken form through written communication between the publisher, writer and artist who, in many cases, never meet.

Cathy Courtney: You grew up in an environment where words and images were natural currency and where poetry was integrated into the landscape at Stonypath, the garden created by your parents, Ian Hamilton Finlay and Sue Finlay. Would you tell me a little about those years?

Alec Finlay: I always find talking about my childhood a little strange. As with anyone else, I haven't really got anything to compare it to. Of course, I did grow up in a place which was, or seems in retrospect, very different, unusual. But it was all I knew, and I really only became aware of the difference by stages, and mostly through hindsight. In many ways it was a very ordinary country childhood – going for the milk, getting buses, walking up and down the road to school, bike rides, lambing, parish fêtes and so on (though not nearly as pastoral as that makes it sound, there were winters, too). I still think of myself as a country boy. For instance I didn't go to my first gallery opening until I was in my early 20s – so despite my mother and my father's involvement with the art world, and the growing fame he had as an artist, I didn't really know anything about that until I was grown-up. Anyone who knows him and my mother will, I think, understand that. I still find gallery openings one of the strangest – and quite often the most appalling – things in the world.

I was born in 1966. I grew up with the garden: I'm the same age as it is, which is not the same as being born into an already complete garden at all. As it was made from a bare moorland, it was only beginning to become a 'proper' garden as I grew up. I can still just remember when you could see out of the garden – when it was continuous with the moor – whereas now it feels very separate, more like an island, and I'm very aware of how the trees have grown with me and then beyond me, how, from being isolated elements they have become a wood. That is still quite magical to me – perhaps it touches me more than any of the more artistic elements – this thing of a wood having grown up to shelter what was once bare landscape and rough moor grasses. When I think of the garden I seem to have as much feeling for little things, like the bog cotton as a silhouette against the sunset or playing around the old ash tree, as I do for the works of art; not that I reject those, but my strongest memories from childhood are more for these smaller things.

I do remember that the Battle with Strathclyde Region was a big awakening – but that wasn't really to art, more to warfare! The whole public prominence of the dispute wasn't easy at that age (I would be a blushing 17).

CC: What about the texts in the garden?

AF: I seem to have got used to the idea that a stone or wooden inscription sited in the garden was referred to as a 'poem'. I am sure that had an influence on me; for one thing it meant that I didn't particularly place poetry within a closed literary thing, or even within book covers. Words have, I suppose, been very associated for me with things – boats or on tree plaques. When I was very young we would all, as a family, go for walks and – at my father's suggestion – this would be to 'see the vale', the view to the sunset from a rise on the hills to the west – but I was never very sure exactly what this vale was that we were looking for.

I have so little consciousness or memory of taking in art or poetry as formal things, it would feel disingenuous for me to make any kind of step-by-step approach from growing up there to the Folios. If I wanted to truthfully make a statement about what influenced my work it would be something much vaguer. It would be something I could only call 'childhood'. And the country. And the seasons and the landscape. And family. There are many things I'm lucky to have which came from that upbringing and which led me to make my work, but they seem to have come to me by osmosis. If I made something more of them than that, it would make my work too much a product of that place and my father's work, and really I'm not sure that it is. I don't want to make a big play of resisting the common interests that we share, and I have chosen in some of my editing and publishing to identify myself with his work, but in terms of my publishing I don't think one thing follows from the other. He is an artist and I'm not (but that isn't the most helpful way to make the distinction, either ...).

CC: What images were on the walls of your house as you grew up?

AF: The first work of 'art' I remember was a print of Botticelli's *Primavera*, which was in Mum and Dad's bedroom/work room/sitting-room. I remember how strange the trees looked compared to the ones I played around in the garden – the rowans and wild cherry. I suppose I recognise now that this strangeness – it was really quite eerie, almost ghostly, especially the figures in the painting – this strangeness is *art*. But that recognition reinforces how strange the painting seemed at the time, just to see it hanging on the walls. Years later, I read William Carlos Williams' poem *The Botticelian Trees* with his line about 'the alphabet of the trees ... ' but for me then, aged five or six, nature wasn't an alphabet at all. The

Ian Stephen
& Will MacLean
Folio envelope and
Buoyage Morning
Star Folio 4/4 1993



alphabet comes later, along with hindsight ... and publishing!

CC: Did you ever make books as a child?

AF: I did do one, aged about eight, with my father. He used my drawings of warplanes, Stukas and so on. I think it took me about an hour to do all the drawings. Obviously I could only do it because I had no inkling of what an artist's book was.

CC: What early reading was important to you?

AF: The next important influence was when I did finally begin reading poetry. Aged 17, I saw a book called *For Love*. I think I rather hoped it would be a kind of manual – which it was, after a fashion. It was a book of love poems by Robert Creeley. I'm still very fond of them and also the book itself – Yeats says somewhere how we can never disassociate these early memories of art or poetry from books and covers, and for me it's the white and blue on the cover and the strange photo of Creeley with his jazzer's beard, his one eye and a small black statue of a crow.

From there I went on to read people like Cid Corman, Lorine Niedecker, and I began to actually look through my father's books. He knew most of these poets, which became interesting to me in itself. It was a little later that I began to be interested in some of these as *books*. The Corman books were little traditional Japanese books made in some monastery – very beautiful. And I also enjoyed Thomas A. Clark's booklets as well.

There was a whole shelf of tiny booklets and I was aware that most houses and shops didn't have books this size. Later on I discovered all of the Concrete Poetry my father had and by that time I was much more aware that these were important, rare works.

CC: How did the idea of the Folios take root?

AF: The Folios began a year or two after I finished university when I was 22 or 23, something like that. They came from a mixture of influences. I had helped publish a poetry broadsheet and was keen to do something which would have this display aspect but be more focused. I had no design training at all

and no real contacts with printers or designers. All that came slowly. I was so clumsy; I'm amazed the first issues worked at all.

The Folios are partly a response to a small budget but also wanting to make something that was beautiful. And the idea that poetry and image should be seen at the same time was also important. I knew I didn't want to do just a magazine or another broadsheet, and I hadn't the money to do books. Eventually I came up with the simple landscape format, with a mid-fold, and I called that a Folio. The Folios all had a few poems – always a sequence or single body of work, always previously unpublished. For instance, the first was a Haiku Calendar, with an arc of 12 haiku by Santōka (translated by Cid Corman) and a line drawing by Walter Miller, printed letterpress. The first ones had more of a letterpress 'look', fine papers and so on.

The early Folios were really an apprenticeship. I was lucky that I chose a small enough project to begin with, so I could focus on finding a resolution to simple problems. I was aware of the whole question of how poems and visual images actually sat together on a page and the way the eye catches them; this fascinated and perplexed me. It still does. The way colour, type and paper all changed the feel and meaning of a work. I knew I didn't want the Folios to be just 'illustrated' or 'illustrative'. I can't say whether I always achieved that.

CC: What about the idea of the envelope for each Folio?

AF: The idea of the envelope came from a poet friend in Vermont who gave little envelopes of mimeographed poetry away – quite a realistic response to the problems of selling the work as I later realised! The envelope gave the Folios protection and they were 'utilitarian', which suited my Scottish eye. The envelope also said something about how the Folios were made because the whole thing was done by post, by correspondence. That was really very important. I realised a lot of these things in hindsight. I remember coming across a line in Robert Duncan's *Stein Book* (a homage to Gertrude

Stein) which I chose as a motto: 'A correspondence is poetry enlarged'.

CC: Was the principle of four in a series and by subscription established from the beginning? How does each take its place within what you have described as an overall aesthetic that, in retrospect, you see has emerged?

AF: I wanted some kind of unity or identity to the Series as a whole. I had the idea to do four Folios a year as part of an annual series people could subscribe to. Looking back, I enjoy the variety – Schwitters and Robert Lax in the same year, part of the same thing. There is a playfulness in that. There was never time, nor perhaps the need, to make each series cohere. The series just represent the next phase and, I suppose, benefit from whatever new possibilities I became aware of at that time. When I started I wanted to make something which would have a fixed form and look – to create something as beautiful as a row of Penguin cream- and orange-spined books. But then something would always come along that needed its own solution and so that fixed identity never lasted. The Schwitters Merz Folio (*Folio 2/2*) blew open the standard format. His poems couldn't be contained in a small horizontal landscape so instead he got a kind of circus poster printed on sugar paper.

All the Folios have to fold down to fit into the envelope – that became the most basic determining factor. Sometimes I still hanker after that common identity but – knowing I will never achieve it – I also realise that the more I publish the more common elements between the different works become clear. In general the accompanying visual image is, in Tom Clark's words, 'lyrically abstract', something not too formal but also not simply a narrative illustration. An example of that would be Edda Renouf's drawing for the Estonian Jaan Kaplinski's poems, *Folio 5/3: A Language I do not Know*. I can remember crying when I saw that drawing – it so perfectly brought together the feeling of the poems. This thing of beginning from a group

of about 30 of Jaan's poems, working through them, editing a very tight sequence of four poems and then Edda bringing her vision – although the Folios are small, there is a great satisfaction in the completeness of that.

The identifiable aesthetic of the Folios is really only something I can define by the sense of feel, or measure, they have as a whole – in the way that a wood is more than a group of trees. I like that there are 24 in the complete series, one day's worth made over six years.

CC: Can you talk about the collaborative process? Do you tend to introduce the writer and artist to each other's work? Is their contact direct?

AF: My role was to choose people who might work well together. If I have any gift at all, it is not as a designer or publisher *per se*, but more an intuition of what might work in this way and who might respond well to whom. I enjoy the fact that you can't really separate who did what in a Folio. Each one was made slowly, through correspondence and suggestion and, inevitably, the roles crossed over. It helped that the letters slowed things up, gave some time for thought and that it was all done in stages: myself and the poet; myself and the artist; myself and the printer; something slowly realising itself.

In terms of the poets I've published, there aren't many Scots (and even fewer English poets!). In fact, the list is hard to make any sense of as a tendency. A few of the poets are well-known – Michael Longley (*Folio 5/1: Birds and Flowers*, the title is an echo of DHL's *Birds, Beasts and Flowers*) or John Burnside, but it is noticeable how many of them are from other shores – America, France, Italy, Estonia, Japan, Hungary, Chile, Russia. I'm not sure exactly why that is. Perhaps a lot of the poetry being written here is too descriptive – and that only leads to the less interesting kind of illustrative projects.

Collaboration to me is like Schiller's aphorism on friendship: 'Friends are not made they are recognised'. It is born of natural sympathy. I think every artist or poet

works from that – some work through it alone, some work together. I am not at all sure that those are opposite ways of working, just different. Most of all I love the secret and unexpected correspondences that appeared as if by magic in each issue between three people who might well never have met yet who build up a working relationship. Like when I asked Rosmarie Waldrop to send me a translation of something by Fritzi Mayröcker and when, some months later, I opened the response there was a poem collaging letters of Clara and Robert Schumann and Brahms and I was listening to a tape of Clara's piano music at the time. Or the Chilean poet Cecilia Vicuña telling me that 'EK' (my Scots name) in Maya means 'black, the colour associated to Chikin, the setting sun and ink knowledge'. I understand better through making the Folios that art is a way to allow these hidden connections to uncover themselves. I hope the coincidences and delights that these creative friendships have brought me are embedded in the work itself.

In my childhood a lot of the people who came to Stonypath were letter carvers or people who were collaborating on the garden or with my father in some other way, so I suppose that way of working was instinctive to me, although I approach collaboration in a different way from him.

CC: Can you tell me about the collaboration between Sam Hamill and David Connearn for Folio 5/4: Morning and Evening?

AF: The poet Sam Hamill (who is I think the best living translator of Japanese poetry) lives in Washington State and the artist, David Connearn, lives in London. On the morning and evening of the same day they each made a translation or a drawing. When these were placed together, the Folio was a perfect balance of word and image. Rather than through a sympathetic response of an artist to a poet's work, here was a case of two people, thousands of miles apart, who never met or corresponded, whose work was already in sympathy. I enjoy that very much.

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CC: Many of the artists you have invited to take part in the Folios are not people usually associated with poetry?

AF: I enjoy seeing their work placed alongside a poem which makes a direct emotional statement, for instance the Sol LeWitt or the new book with John Burnside and Callum Innes. I don't at all think the work of these artists lacks emotion to begin with, but it is interesting to see the effect of this proximity to the poems.

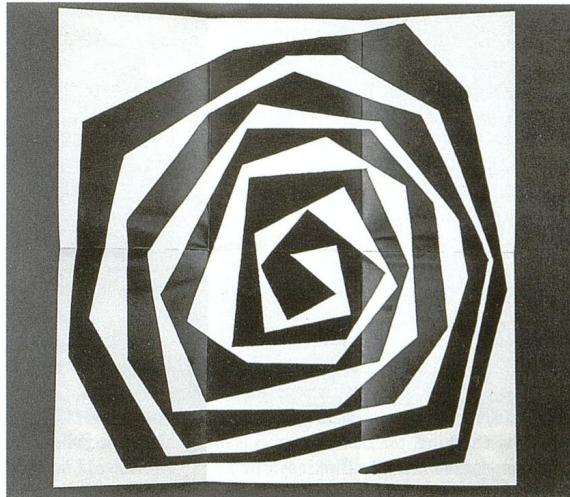
CC: Occupancy (Folio 3/4) seems to embody many of the themes that recur in the Folios?

AF: *Occupancy* features a map and accompanying text by the American writer Barry Lopez, who is best known for his study of the Arctic, *Arctic Dreams*. Lopez's work is somewhere between travel writing, nature writing, anthropology and philosophy. I know that it has been enjoyed by many artists here – Hamish Fulton, Tom Clark, Ian McKeever – partly because they are interested in that geography but also, I think, because of Lopez's wonderful descriptions of light and dark, of natural effects, which take on a philosophical dimension in his writing.

My first idea was to do a Folio exploring notation – the maps and writings he made in a place – because I wondered what lay behind *Arctic Dreams*. It was Barry's suggestion that we did a map of his own home-stead on the McKenzie River in Oregon. Again, I liked the idea of including a well-known prose writer in the Folios, of him working in an art form and a publishing idiom which was unfamiliar. The Folio was really about how you come to know a place and come to occupy it rather than owning. I'm not sure he would have made such a personal work if it had been for a book with a large print-run. I wonder if making something with a young publisher in Scotland, whose work wasn't much seen in shops, didn't in a way free him?

I like this way of bringing an artist or writer into the Folios and having made something which is very much recognisable as their work but made within the Folio idiom. For instance, I think Hans Waanders's work is wonderful – he is a Dutch artist mostly making rubber stamps and books, always about kingfishers, 12 years of kingfishers! Because of the time involved in making his bookworks, the editions are very small. Anyway, we did a very simple Folio with two haiku about kingfishers by Shiki, again translated by Cid Corman, and Hans

Sol LeWitt
Echo Morning Star
Folio 4/3 1993



did three kingfisher rubber stamps. I enjoyed this Folio very much; and now people can buy a Hans Waanders bookwork for £6.

Some of the poets and artists I like best – Tom Clark, Cecilia Vicuña or my father's work – have the ability to take traditional materials and modern idioms and fuse them. Somehow they find a balance that seems to preserve the best of both – clarity, beauty, humour, warmth or a quality of lament – allowing a genuine openness that I don't always find in the more conventional 'avant-garde' artist's book. I would hate to lose those things. Hans Waanders's work has the same feel for me – uncontrived and touching. The reason I keep publishing is because of Hans and Tom and Cecilia.

CC: The voyage and the boat image recur in the work a lot. Can you tell me about the way in which boats and water are part of your sensibility?

AF: Most people in Scotland have this love of the sea; I'm sure I caught some of that affection for fishing boat names and the shipping forecast and so on from my Dad. The poems in *A Semblance of Steerage (Under the Moon 1/1)* by Ian Stephen – a poet from Lewis who used to work as a coastguard – are all written on rudders or, in one case, a mast. Some of the poems are probably sailing round Stornoway harbour right now. I also published a little anthology of poems about the shipping forecast, *Impending Navigation Bright (Under the Moon 1/2)*.

CC: How does there come to be a Cartier-Bresson photograph in Bird From the Wood (Folio 4/2)?

AF: The Cartier-Bresson photo is the only work I published which wasn't made especially for a Folio. I found out, by chance, that he had photographed the area that the poet whose work features in this Folio, Rocco Scotallaro, came from – Matera, right down on the 'instep' of Italy, very poor peasant land. The photograph dated from the same time Scotallaro died (in 1953, when he was only 30).

CC: What responses did you get when you first published the Folios?

AF: I remember showing a friend of mine a Folio, a young French lass who is a Biologist and a dancer, and who doesn't have much feeling for art in books or poetry. She looked at it and asked, 'What is it?' – which I couldn't really answer. A few minutes later she said, 'Oh, it's a gift,' and that pleased me very much, that the Folios might feel something like a gift – something small, which speaks of affection.

I have just been reading Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs of her husband, *Hope Against Hope*, where she describes his sense that his first listeners, always specially chosen friends, were in a sense collaborators on the poem. The poem reached its complete form through them – not necessarily because of amendments they suggested but because their ears had the ability to hear and that reading became the place in which the poem found its form in the world. I find

http://www.obsolete.com/work_of_art...html

this kind of thing much truer to my experience of art or poetry than the conventional 'closed' notions of authorship and genres.

CC: How do you perceive the role of poetry in the artist's book?

AF: One thing that has reassured me about my need to work with poetry – or from poetry – is that over the years, and especially since I began lecturing about poetry and artists' books, I have found poetry a very useful way of approaching the artist's book. Some critical considerations of poetry provide a clearer and more precise statement of the activity and implications of making artists' books than much of the contemporary theorising from within artists' book circles. I am thinking, for instance, of Susan Howe's writings on Emily Dickinson or an essay like Olson's *Projective Verse*. I suppose that this is where you could begin to see a line of thought or influence in my work; this derives not from my father's work, but is influenced by his bookshelves.

To begin with, the idea that poetry shares something of the same material and philosophical characteristics as other art forms, for instance, the sense in Concrete Poetry that the poem has a spatial dimension and can be considered as a 'thing' – and in my father's work, how a poem in a garden is a composition made from words and natural elements. The garden's search for a synaesthesia of words, materials and meanings seems to me to be echoed in the work of a poet like Emily Dickinson, whose poems were sewn in packets, carefully arranged, whose use of grammar and her handwriting, even her decorated letterpaper, are all part of her poetry, integral to its meaning.

CC: How do you place your publications within the context of the artists' book 'world'?

AF: At the moment there is a lot of attention being given to the artist's book as a very particular, separate entity. This seems to me to have exacerbated the extent to which this relatively new genre is cut off from other art forms. But I am not sure that I can or want to separate my pleasure in a Hans Waanders book from my pleasure in certain books of poetry, or vice versa – both give me delight because they are such a personal response to the world.

I suppose I feel ambivalent about the whole artists' book phenomenon. There are alliances within artists' book circles that are

very important to me, but these exist alongside other friendships and crucial influences on my work which extend into completely different fields. I'm sure I'm not alone in this.

CC: You work in other fields, too?

AF: My other main concerns are writing, editing and curating. I have been editing the collected works of Hamish Henderson, a Scottish poet, folk-singer, folk-song collector and translator. A wonderful man and an inspiration. Of course, folk-songs seem a long way from bookworks but there are always connections. In folk-song – and especially in relationship with poetry in Scotland – you find a useful undercutting of authorship. I find some echoes here with the way I feel about the Folios, which have no single author but which, I hope, are still one thing, a unity, in the same way that a folk-song is usually something that has been passed on through many people's hands. I need that relationship with song, with a shared art form.

I am also curating an exhibition of Scottish postage stamps, designed by Scottish artists. We will print 100,000 of these and show them in an exhibition called 'Imagined Lands'. Once you get the stamps and the currency, then you pretty well have your independence. Anyway, it's a small start. Call it my National Service.

CC: What has your recent publishing work been?

AF: When I finished the Folios last year I began to plan some new book projects, larger things. The first one is a 'book' with Callum Innes and the Scottish poet John Burnside, *Evidence*. I hoped these would all be 'book' books, with hard covers, spines, end papers and so on. But when I looked closely at the design, I realised that a standard book format would never allow for the right relationship between the poems and Callum's watercolours. In the end – and through a logic that seems, at this time, rigorous – the solution was something which combines elements of the Folios and a book. I realise that this apparently incontrovertible logic is also just as much a product of my own mind and that someone else would reach a different solution. I suppose I just have a Folio-shaped mind. The Folios are like a small glade, a clearing in which a kind of meeting can happen.

CC: Will you be at the Book Fair?

AF: Yes. I will be launching *Evidence* and

another new book with Cecilia Vicuña, *Palabra e Hilo* (*Word and Thread*, translated by Rosa Alcalá). The Hebridean landscape seems, as Ian Stephen would say, 'a helluva' long way from London, or vice versa. I'm here in Edinburgh, somewhere between the two. It's enough for me if each year I can sell some Folios at the Artists' Book Fair and get a walk along the west beach on Berneray. I mean by that that my feeling for Scotland is strong and abiding. ■

*For details see box p46

With special thanks to Camberwell College of Arts Research Project, The Art of the Book 1960 to the Present Day, for financial assistance in making this supplement possible.

Books

Paul Graham

Julian Stallabrass

Paul Graham, Andrew Wilson, Gillian Wearing and Carol Squiers, London, Phaidon Press, 1996, £19.99, 0 7148 35501.

Paul Graham's *Hypermetropia*, on show at the Tate Gallery earlier this year, was a sequence of colour photographs taken from Tokyo rooftops. They marked the stages of a journey taken, Richard Long-fashion, in a straight line from dawn to dusk, running in the direction of Mount Fuji. The photographer's progress can be tracked from the detail of the pictures, but the *terrain vague* of urban Tokyo is never exhausted and, aside from the mountain, there is no element in these photographs which appears more significant than any other. Long before the journey is over, as the cast of the pictures changes from orange to blue, and the light swings from behind the camera to in front, Mount Fuji is lost in smog.

The theme of banality's inescapable presence in consumer society is at the centre of Graham's photographic practice; it was there even in the first Becher-inspired pictures he took of housing estates in the late 70s, and it has found a logical terminus in his examina-

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