

= History of cardistry =

Cardistry is a portmanteau of cards and artistry . The art form of card flourishing , commonly referred to as cardistry , grew out of simple flourishes used in close @-@ up magic by magicians in the 1990s to early 2000s . Chris Kenner 's notable two @-@ handed Sybil cut from his 1992 publication Totally Out of Control has carried great influence and gave birth to a series of advanced flourishes which today represents the foundation of the performance art . Sleight of hand pioneers Dan and Dave popularized cardistry on the world stage with their instructional DVD releases from 2004 and 2007 . Journalist Kevin Pang of Vanity Fair characterized the art of card flourishing as , " It 's yo @-@ yo tricks performed by cardsharps with the street cred of a Parkour video . There 's a name for it : cardistry . "

= = Roots in magic = =

When conjuring tricks with playing cards became popular around the 19th century , magicians would often include card flourishes in their performances to demonstrate their sleight of hand abilities . Unlike tricks , flourishes were intended to be visually impressive and appear difficult to perform . Some of the first flourishes to be documented include the Charlier Cut , Riffle Shuffle and Thumb Fan . Several sleight of hand bestsellers , such as S. W. Erdnase 's The Expert at the Card Table from 1902 ( which shared roots in gambling and cheating at cards ) , emphasized the importance of incorporating flourishes into tricks . Up until the 2000s , card flourishing were considered a mere subsection of close @-@ up magic and not an independent performance art .

Cardistry is a portmanteau of " card " and " artistry " . It involves the use of hands to create cuts , displays , fans , patterns and sequences through the use of playing cards . Various armspreads , cuts , shuffles and springs can be used . The intent is to create a captivating motion and beautiful display . The effects are limited only by the types of cards used , the imagination , and the degree of manual dexterity of the performer . The presentation is typically neither " illusionary " nor purportedly " magic " . At least in part , the color and form of cards affect visual perceptions of the act . The visual style of the art form is often associated or compared to juggling , hackey @-@ sack , mimes and even skateboarding .

= = Five Faces of Sybil = =

In 1992 , American magician and David Copperfield producer Chris Kenner published Totally Out of Control , a successful instructional book explaining magic effects with playing cards and other household objects . Among the many sleights featured was a two @-@ handed card flourish on page 125 called " The Five Faces of Sybil " . Using all fingers , Sybil ends with the deck divided into five distinct packets . Kenner himself describes Sybil in his book as " a quick cut flourish to demonstrate skill and dexterity " . The flourish spawned a cycle of two @-@ handed cut creations and formed the cornerstone of what is now known as cardistry . Journalist Kevin Pang of Vanity Fair magazine noted that " every cardist can deftly perform Sybil the way guitarists can run through a blues progression " .

= = An art form = =

Los Angeles @-@ based magician Brian Tudor was one of many performers heavily influenced by Sybil . In 1997 , he released a three @-@ volume VHS tape dubbed Show Off , one of the first instructional products made by a known magician to only feature flourishes . Tudor 's tape was well received , with some critics describing the flourishes and cuts taught as " eye @-@ popping " . The most notable invention from Show Off was the one @-@ handed Revolution Cut , a variation of the common Charlier , where the top packet spins an additional 180 degrees .

In 2001 , twin brothers and Sybil enthusiast Daniel and David Buck ( known as Dan and Dave ) released Pasteboard Animations , another flourish @-@ only instructional VHS tape . Although

produced as a low @-@ fi home video and relatively short compared to Show Off , it sold hundreds of copies at hotel lobbies and magic conventions at a cost of \$ 25 . In a Genii magazine review of the Magic Live convention in August 2001 , the twins flourishes and Pasteboard Animations tape received mixed responses . Renowned magic historian Jamy Ian Swiss remarked :

" It was an excellent show , though opinion was definitely mixed about the Buck boys , who sat and stared at their hands while oddly racing through flourishes . It serves no function except as eye candy . It 's juggling , and juggling and magic are two separate things . Nevertheless , it 's fucking cool to watch . Cool is cool is cool , capital C cool . And magic is traditionally uncool . It 's always been the geeky kids . "

In spite of the mixed responses from the traditional magic scene , Dan and Dave continued with their cardistry creations . In 2004 , with the help of Kenner , the twins released an instructional DVD on cardistry named The Dan and Dave System . The System is perceived as having officially separated advanced card flourishing from card magic and defined the style of cardistry . Filmed with digital movie cameras at film studios and professionally edited , the critically praised \$ 30 DVD inspired thousands of sleight of hand artists all over the world to embark on cardistry . Four years later , the twins released a three @-@ disc DVD set known as The Trilogy , showcasing some of the most comprehensive and difficult flourishes ever created . Retailing at \$ 85 per copy , The Trilogy is the bestselling cardistry release of all time , having sold more than 25 @,@ 000 units . Pang wrote that just about every cardist lists either the System or The Trilogy as the reason they got into card flourishing .

In a 2015 interview , Singaporean cardist Kevin Ho mentioned that cardistry grew in popularity during the 2000s because of promotion through social media and journalistic coverage . Another cardist from Singapore , Huron Low , explained :

" A lot of new doors are opening . Earphone companies and watch companies want to see product placements [ in our videos ] . And there 's a lot of focus now on cardistry as a lifestyle brand ? caps , T @-@ shirts . "

= = Cardistry convention = =

In response to the growing cardistry community , Dan and Dave organized the first cardistry convention and interactive conference to promote the performance art in 2014 , called Cardistry @-@ Con. The convention saw interviews , panel discussions , live performances , exclusive video screenings , workshops , contests and giveaways . The 2015 convention was attended by journalists from magazines such as Vanity Fair and Wired as well as television stations , all of which helped further popularize cardistry as an art . Its growth has been associated with its availability with the availability of videos , lessons and podcasts , which tend to make the art more transparent and available to all who are interested .

= = Tools = =

Decks of playing cards are an essential part of the cardist 's tools . Ordinary playing cards will do . However , they are not fungible goods ; and some have the opinion that those chosen should be particularly adapted to the task , even though they can be rare and relatively expensive ? flexibility , stickiness , colors and decorations ( both front and back ) vary . However , older grimmer cards , sometimes called " poop decks " , are preferred by others .

= = Gender imbalance = =

It is no secret that cardistry , like magic generally , is populated mainly by males . Some have observed that the split is roughly 9 to 1 , male @-@ to @-@ female . The reasons and remedies , if any , are subject to dispute .

= = List of notable practitioners or creators = =

