MADE IN GERMANY
THE WORK OF FIVE
BOOK ARTISTS

CURATED BY GUNNAR A. KALDEWEY

UC SANTA BARBARA
COLLEGE OF CREATIVE STUDIES
2009
MADE IN GERMANY

We are all living in a Global World now. Internet and easy travel connects most parts of the world like never before. This is also the case for the contemporary book art scene. For many years artists produced artist books in Europe, South and North America and in several countries of Asia. We are connected with each other, often we know each other personally and something like a global style has emerged, similar to the contemporary art world.

But the artist books are not in the limelight – it is a much more intimate and quiet work to create a book than a painting. The gallery network does not appreciate artist books, because there is much less money involved. Therefore the book artists have developed alternative forms of presentation such as self-distribution and participating in book and art fairs. For years the most important meeting place has been the Frankfurt Book Fair, where every fall over 150 book artists from all over the world, but mainly Germans, are gathering. Another important event this year is the second Codex Book Fair at the UC Berkeley campus, organized by Peter Koch. This fair brings together over 110 book artists internationally, though mainly Americans from the USA.

There are also many museums in Europe and many colleges in the USA where artist books are shown on a regular basis. One of them is the University of California, Santa Barbara, where Harry Reese has built up over two decades one of the most impressive book art programs on the West coast and in the country, combining classes for students with well equipped printing studios and exhibitions.

About ten years ago a revolution happened in the book arts. Inkjet printing was invented and very rapidly this new, inexpensive technique to print color images replaced many traditional forms like etching, lithography, offset printing, etc. Photography gained more and more importance and any kind of image could be easily manipulated on the computer and printed out in whatever sizes was wanted – up to the endless roll on the Epson printer. Therefore today, the majority of artist books worldwide are printed by inkjet – or pigment prints, as the Germans like to say. But the key for the artist today with all these easy technical possibilities in this very lively experimental scene is to go back to their own roots, their own background and their own culture.

The history of the art of the book in the last hundred years in Germany is rather complex. The standard of printing was always very high and around the turn of the last century commercial publishing houses like Insel Verlag, Julius Zeitler, and Georg Müller produced books for an educated bourgeois audience, which today are collector’s items.
Even more appreciated are the illustrated books of the German expressionists (e.g. “Umbra Vitae” of Kirchner), the Dada movement (Arp, Schwitters) and the Bauhaus (Bauhaus Mappen, Kandinsky, Klee). There were many private presses – the most important one certainly is the Cranach Presse of Harry Graf Kessler. This all came to an end with the Nazi period and many of the best people emigrated to other parts of the world, spreading their ideas and accomplishments, nourishing art movements in their new environment.

After the Second World War there was a new beginning out of insulation. German Modern Art came soon in the forefront of the avant garde, and painters like Joseph Beuys, Gerhard Richter, Georg Baselitz and Anselm Kiefer produced many artist books, which are an important part of their oeuvre. At the same time the academic press books continued to mushroom, combining classical texts with conventional illustrations. In the 1970’s and 1980’s a new form of book making was created by movements like Fluxus or Conceptual art with inexpensive production techniques like color Xerox and offset printing. The book artist of today emerged who produces a book with his own concept, his own language of images and words, and often prints the small edition himself. This book art movement has existed now for over 30 years. It is very lively and with some remarkable results.

Five of the most active and important contemporary book artists of Germany are presented in this exhibition. Four of them were born more or less in the 1960s; Françoise Despalles and Johannes Strugalla belong to an older generation. Germany was unfortunately divided for over 50 years into East and West Germany and the development in the book arts was quite different. Two of the artists – Sabine Golde and Frauke Otto – grew up in East Germany with a rigid, but very profound training, while Tobias Lange and Till Verclas are from the more liberal education system of West Germany. They all have made artist books for over twenty years. Their work is of great beauty and quite different, but in common they all produce with meticulous care and precision. It is a pleasure to hold their books in one’s hand and appreciate the level of craftsmanship. They are also very innovative in form; not one book looks like the other. They are different in format and often new, unconventional materials like plastic, metal, wood, photosensitive paper and Plexiglas are used. It is like a firework of beauty, but in a very controlled way.

In the books of the women from East Germany the text has a dominating part, while the books from West Germany often have very little or no text at all any more – they are more versatile with contemporary materials. The books from East Germany tend to be smaller in format, the books of Till Verclas and Tobias Lange have a bigger production, more pages and larger editions. This reflects the historical and economic background, Frauke Otto and Sabine Golde both are teaching at the Hochschule Burg Giebichenstein in Halle near Leipzig, once part of the Dessau Bauhaus movement. Tobias Lange and Till Verclas live as independent artists in Hamburg.

Impressive examples of the earlier generation of book artists are Françoise Despalles, born in Paris and Johannes Strugalla from Mainz. They focused as a mediator between the scene in France and Germany, representing many artists from both countries at fairs and exhibitions. Meanwhile, Johannes Strugalla continued his own work and made collaborations with other authors and painters.

Each artist displays five books in the exhibition. This even spread gives the possibility to evaluate their work and individual development in the same proportion. What is very obvious is their own distinguished language, but also their mutual accomplishment to be in the forefront with the best of the artist book movement today. They have created exciting work, which has not been seen before and will last as documents of today’s global world in the long history of the illustrated book.

Gunnar A. Kaldewey
1961 Born in Nordhausen
1980-81 Studied painting at the Art Academy Berlin - Weissensee
1982-90 Trained as a hand bookbinder, finishing with a master exam
1990-97 Head of the book binding class at Burg Giebichenstein, Halle
1998-present Head of the paper making Studio at Burg Giebichenstein, Halle.
Lives in Halle

ARTIST BOOKS IN THE EXHIBIT
Nam June Paik, When too perfect, lieber Gott böse 17 copies Halle 2008
Wolfgang Niedecken, Kristallnacht 20 copies Halle 2001
Ying-Ming Hung, Saikontan 13 copies Halle 2006
Petri Tamminen, Erinnerungen 13 copies Halle 2006
Max Frisch, Tagebuchauszüge 10 copies Halle 2008
Statement · Frauke Otto

At first I wanted to be a ceramicist. But in East Germany the apprenticeships were regulated and I had to learn industrial book binding instead. After the final exam I quit right away and went for two years to the evening courses of the Art Academy in Berlin. I worked in many different positions before realizing my own books.

The making of books is creative and sensuous, but the intellectual part is in the literature, the reading and understanding. It is a little like cooking: You have your favorite poems and favorite dishes. The black and white print of the cookbook needs to be made alive. If successful it will be unforgettable.

The same experience I have with the texts of Bertolt Brecht, H.M. Enzensberger and Max Frisch. Their language is reduced to the essential and often I am so struck that I have to make a book with some of their works.

The most difficult thing is to realize a final version of the book that reflects my very first ideas. Sometimes it goes easily, often I need a long time. But this creative process is always full of adventure.

One thing is important: My books should be clear and simple in their appearance.
1964 Born in Leipzig
1988-98 Studied at the Academy for Graphic and Book Design, Leipzig finishing with a master exam.
2002-04 Taught at the Hochschule für Technik, Wissenschaft and Kultur, Leipzig
2006-present Professor for Book Art at Burg Giebichenstein, Halle
Lives in Leipzig

ARTIST BOOKS IN THE EXHIBIT
Friedrich Hölderlin, Mnemosyne 22 copies Leipzig 2006
Georg Trakl, Die Ratten 23 copies Leipzig 2007
Bertholt Brecht, Alles wandelt sich 23 copies Leipzig 2007
Mario Luzi, Jahr – Anno 23 copies Leipzig 2007
H.M. Enzensberger, Menetekel 23 copies Leipzig 2007
Statement · Sabine Golde

Since 1988 I have been making books, using a text as a presentation stage. The stage is the book in which I choreograph words with typography and my own interpretations. Reading means collecting. I see the book as a container of ideas and thoughts. It is a context of words and image and also a tactile object.

Another inspiration for me is contemporary music. I have produced books in small editions with text and compositions by John Cage, Erik Satie and Steffen Schleiermacher. Other subjects are poetry, short stories and philosophical essays.
Born in Berlin in 1960. Clemens-Tobias Lange studied painting with Emilio Vedova and Design with Ennio Chiggio at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Venezia where he finished his Diploma in 1987. He continued his studies at the Università de Venezia Ca’ Foscarì, department of oriental languages. The most important teacher of all for him has been the daily life in other countries, and his trips to China and Japan, the work in the Circus and in different typographic and artistic printshops.

In 1988 he founded his CTL-Presse; in 1996 he had the first collaboration with other artists in his EDIZIONI CTL. Since 2000 he has been part of the newly founded group of ‘book artists’ «13+» and he uses the webspace-portal with information on artist books, www.künstlerbücher.com. He not only makes artists' books, but works with traditional BW photography as well. The silver gelatine prints on papers prepared by him have been used in books produced in collaboration with Stephan Köhler and have been shown in numerous exhibitions in Europe, the USA and in Japan. Clemens-Tobias Lange lives in Hamburg, where he has his print studio.

ARTIST BOOKS IN THE EXHIBIT
OnniSanti, 15 copies, Georgia, Klagenfurt Hamburg 2007-2008
Qu Yuan, Ohne Wolken, 30 copies Hamburg 2006-2007
Chinghiz Aitmatov, Das Lied des Akyń, 100 copies Hamburg 2002
Catalino’s Letters, Mexico (with Stephan Köhler), 25 copies Hamburg 2000
Statement · Clermens-Tobias Lange

In our family, things were the same with books as they were with visits to churches during the summer holidays: it was a sure bet that my father was going to stop at each and every church to take a look at it with us instead of driving on to the beach. He was, after all, a priest. Yet he showed us literally countless old books, too. All I thought at the time was: So much dust...Then again, that might just be what schools the eye. Later on I saw lovely books because I helped out time and again in a booth at the Frankfurt Book Fair. Once there I disappeared frequently to go off and rummage through the wares at other booths. There I eyed wonderful books like the ones by Gunnar Kaldewey. While perusing them I fell into a dreamlike state for the first time and the thought came to mind: “...in the world of books we’re actually still at the very beginning. Infinitely more new works can still arise.” Back then I had already thought from time to time: In light of so much effort, something good could come out in the end instead. That is, when the work is done uncomplicatedly, in a flow and using one’s own ideas. Years later, following a number of highways and byways, and especially because I had meanwhile learned the joys of painting, I suddenly woke up and realized: I am a bookmaker. That was truly a radical turnabout. As a result of my having sold books so well in my youth at the Book Fair (not my books, books by Roswitha Quadflieg), it never even occurred to me that my future books might be more difficult to sell. What luck that it didn’t.

When I then had a small workshop of my own, I became aware of how it was affecting my life and my perspectives. While offering a sense of stability on the one hand, on the other it made me worry that if I spent so much time at the same place I would lose my open-mindedness, only to possibly, perhaps inevitably become one of those who make wearisome, ultra-boring books... Which is why I promptly fled and traveled to the lands of my dreams, to China and Japan, though not without studying the languages and cultures thereby. I discovered my world of inspirations.

In the meantime I know that the whole world, even the everyday sort, is full of inspiration. No matter where you go, no matter what you see, it’s all enough to make a good book out of it. Each book is akin to a journey through life. In the beginning it was more the texts that gave me something to work with. Nowadays I don’t necessarily need a text in order to tell something. Even as a boy rhythm had captured my interest. Rhythm as energy – not particularly referring to music, but to the course of the day, to life’s rhythm, or rhythm in images. I even found the function in ritual flows of events exciting. Rhythm is always important in a book. Each topic, each material fans the flames of constantly renewed interest, new desire, and calls for different content and new concepts. Questioning things is a key factor in order to design something convincing afterwards in terms of its form. The Japanese No theater actor Yoshi Oida once explained to me that he taught his actors to focus on achieving the perfect form when acting, but without placing themselves emotionally in the role. He said that when the form is acted perfectly, the acting is convincing. For me that was like meeting up with an old acquaintance on my quest. Because finding a form that arouses thematic content and emotions to the same degree is my motive for making books.
1953 Born in Düsseldorf, Germany
1976-82 Studies at the HfbK Hamburg (Hamburg College of Fine Art)
1979 Establishes etching studio
1982 First work in steel and wood
1999 Teaching assignment, Fachhochschule Hamburg (Hamburg College of Applied Art), Department of Design
2008 Fellowship at Academia Tedesca Villa Massimo in Rome
Lives in Hamburg

ARTIST BOOKS IN THE EXHIBIT
Till Verclas, Streifüge. 35 copies Hamburg 1998
Till Verclas, Atlas. 9 copies Hamburg 2001
Till Verclas, Ein Tag im August. 23 copies Hamburg 2003
Till Verclas, Meine Welt. 9 copies Hamburg 2004
Till Verclas, Der Aufstieg. 20 copies Hamburg 2007
Statement · Till Verclas

A Cloud

Several books already existed when I made the decision to give a conceptual home to those which were to follow. UN ANNO UN LIBRO is a declaration of intent, not a stipulation of thematic content. I have staked out a framework with the farthest possible reach. As a result, the books swing to and fro between catalogues of my sculptures, drawings and other works, straight through to artist’s books consisting of original graphic art – mostly without text.

Common to all the books, however, is that they concern themselves with my work. I’m not publishing other people, I’m publishing myself. The books are a part of my artistic work.

Sculptures, drawings, pictures, graphics always appear in series, sequences. Like a fleet of ships, they make their way along their course. They orbit a theme, sound its depths, describe it and consolidate it. Thus, it’s not an enumeration that takes place but a narration, a propagation of thought.

When I model a cloud out of clay, it doesn’t look like a cloud. It’s not possible to knead a cloud out of clay in the first place. But I can model lots of different attributes associated with clouds. What emerges then is something like the idea of a cloud.

The book has many pages, which makes it an ideal place for this approach.
Francoise Despalles (born 1941 in Paris) and Johannes Strugalla (born 1943 in Silesia) started their Despalles Edition in 1982. They divide their time between Mainz and Paris. Their printing facilities are in Mainz. In Paris they own a gallery. From the very beginning they distributed work of other book artists, like the French group Atelier des Grames or François Righi and the late German Paul Stein. In 2000 Françoise Despalles launched the idea to form “13+”, a group of 21 German book artists, who present their work together in exhibitions all over the world. Johannes Strugalla has printed many artist books in collaborations and also his own work.

**ARTIST BOOKS IN THE EXHIBIT**

- **Friederike Mayröcker, Gedichtkopfkissen.** 70 copies, Mainz 1994
- **Franz Mon, Weder senf noch Safran.** 78 copies, Mainz 2004
- **Serge Pey, L’horizon est une bouche tordue.** 99 copies, Mainz 1998
- **Ovid, Forma.** 44 copies, Mainz 2006
- **Johannes Strugalla, Sampling.** 50 copies, Mainz 2002
Statement · Despalles Editions by Johannes Strugalla

Is book making the desire to copy something or to play like a child? At first one copies and tries out like an adult – to speak, to sing, to draw and to write. Later one discovers the secrets – the first light switch, the first kiss, the first poem, the first paperback one tries to bind in a hardcover. One is amazed.

You want to study more: What is a picture, a text, a book? What happens when you try to make a picture, a text or a book yourself?

One discovers that folding a sheet of paper creates pages of a book, that text and image flow into each other, ideas are documented in an object.

Your fingers are following the faces of the type, your mind follows the words and transform them into images like on a stage: Your stage.

Later you discover that this stage, the book making of many centuries is dominated by big names from Rhabanus, Aldus Manutius to Iliazd and Tériade. Suddenly you realize that this challenge turns your play into serious work. A work I love to do.
This catalogue was designed by Gunnar A. Kaldewey. It was produced by Harry Reese, with assistance from Joel Sherman from the Department of Art, and Ted Nava and Megan van den Bergh from the College of Creative Studies. The exhibit and guest appearance by the artists was supported by the UC Santa Barbara Library, the Department of Art, the College of Creative Studies, the Department of Germanic, Slavic and Semitic Studies, the Department of English, and the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center. Thanks to Dean Bruce Tiffney and Professor Linda Ekstrom (the College of Creative Studies); Professors Sven Spieker and Wolf Kittler (Department of German, Semitic, and Slavic Studies); Holly Unruh (Interdisciplinary Humanities Center); Brenda Johnson, Dave Tambo, Sal Guerena, Kim Thompson, Susan Moon, and Michelle Martinez (UC Santa Barbara Libraries); Professors Colin Gardner and Tatiana Ginsberg (Department of Art); Professor Alan Liu (Department of English); Peter Koch and Susan Filter (the Codex Foundation); and, especially, to Sandra Liddell Reese.

A free on-line catalogue on the work displayed in this exhibit can downloaded at http://www.arts.ucsb.edu/faculty/reese/madeingermany/index.html

This catalogue and exhibit are dedicated to the late Judith A. Hoffberg..
FRAUKO ETVO
SABINE GOLDE
CLEMENS-TOBIAS LANGE
TILL VERCLAS
FRANÇOISE DESPALLES
JOHANNES STRUGALLA