

# FROM PICASSO TO SOL LEWITT

**ARTISTS' BOOKS AFTER 1950**  
(english version of the Magazine)

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Museum Meermanno | House of the book

15 March to 13 July 2014

FROM **PICASSO**

TO **SOL LEWITT**

ARTISTS' BOOKS SINCE 1950

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This exhibition was made possible by **KB** Koninklijke Bibliotheek  
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Hans Brokken

Guest Curators for the exhibition and authors of the Magazine:

José Brokken-Zijp and Hans Brokken.

Collections presented:

Brokken Zijp Foundation of modern and contemporary Art (BFA), Liempde, The Netherlands.

Museum Meermanno (MM), The Hague, The Netherlands.

Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB), The Hague, The Netherlands.

Location: MUSEUM MEERMANNNO, THE HAGUE, Period: April- July 2014.

## I Introduction

At the second half of the nineteenth century the *first livres the peintre* were issued in Paris. These books differ in design as well as in content from the illustrated books published before. In the *livre the peintre* a classical and renowned literary work was published together with new illustrations made by a well-known contemporary artist, such as Manet, Picasso or Toulouse-Lautrec, at the request of the Publisher. These books were usually printed in a limited edition on handmade paper and often provided with a specially designed cover <sup>1</sup>.



Figure 1: El Lissitzky and Vladimir Mayakovsky, 1923.

Almost at the same time that the first *livres de peintre* appeared on the market Stéphane Mallarmé wrote his famous poem *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*. It was first published in an magazine in 1897 and later on, after his death, in book form in 1914 <sup>2</sup>. In this poem he used in a special way words and word combinations which he also distributed in an unusual way over the pages of the book.

Text areas became also image areas. Moreover, he also added

large blank areas to further enhance the visual character of the poem. With this poem Mallarmé exceeded the limits of poetry and entered the domain of the visual arts. In the early twentieth century, the Futurists in Italy developed this innovative approach in poetry further. New combinations between text, type-faces and other visual elements were also tried by the avant-garde in Russia in the first quarter of the last century. A famous example of this last group is *Dlia Golosa* made by Vladimir Mayakovsky and El Lissitzky in which image and text were typographically fully integrated <sup>2</sup> (Figure 1). Moreover, visual elements in this book were in-part abstract. This book still has nowadays a modern image. This innovative

<sup>1</sup> Paul van Capelleveen, Sophie Ham, Jordy Joubij, *Voices and Visions - The Koopman Collection and the Art of the French Book*, Waanders Publishers and Printers, Zwolle, Nederland, 2009. Robert Flynn Johnson et al., *Artists' Books in the Modern Era 1870 – 2000 - The Reva and David Logan Collection of Illustrated Books*, Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, San Francisco, USA, 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, Granary Books, New York, USA, 1994/2004. Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du livre d'artiste*, Jean-Michel Place/Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France. Rene Perrée, *Cover to Cover – het kunstenaarsboek in perspectief*, NAi uitgevers, Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 2002. Susanne Swarts et al., *Artists' Books - Caldic Collection*, Waanders Uitgevers, Zwolle and Museum Fundatie, Zwolle en Heino Wijhe, The Netherlands, 2009. Hans Dickel, *Künstlerbücher mit fotografie seit 1960*, Maximilian - Gesellschaft, Hamburg, Germany, 2008. Renate Goldmann et al., *I hate Paul Klee – Papierarbeiten und Künstlerbücher aus der Sammlung Speck*, Leopold Hoesch Museum, Düren, Germany, 2011. Clemens von Lucius, *75 ARTIST BOOKS - The Kaldewey Press - A catalogue raisonné*, Verlag Hermann Schmidt Mainz, Germany, 2011. Arnaud Desjardin, *The book on books on artists books*, The Everyday Press, London, UK, second edition, 2013.

approach in the Visual Arts and poetry was further developed by the Dadaists and Surrealists in the second quarter of the last century<sup>2</sup>.

In the 1950s the use of visual elements in poetry increased leading to a lot of global activities in the field of concrete and visual poetry<sup>2</sup>. At the same time artists' books also changed considerably in content and form. Next to the more exclusive book discussed above a new type was published: inexpensive and plain artists' books with a strong visual character for which the artist supplied often both text, image and form.



Figure 2: Dieter Roth, 1965, Coll. MM.

Sometimes these books were also manufactured by the visual artist himself and in general of each new book multiple copies were made<sup>2</sup>. Well-known examples of this new type of artists' books are, *Daily Mirror* and *Four basic kinds of straight lines* of, respectively, Dieter Roth and Sol LeWitt (Figures 2, 3).

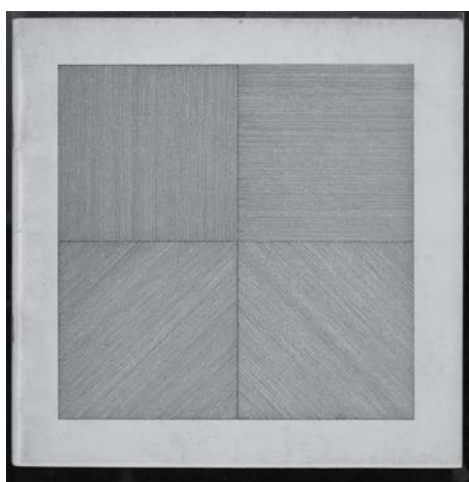


Figure 3: Sol Lewitt, 1969, Coll. BFA.

Despite their low purchase price the amount of copies sold of these new type of artists' books was usually low. Initially only a few people were interested in these new artists' books and distribution alongside the official channels hardly occurred. Generally these books were given away by the artist or art gallerist to potential customers and after some time the left over stock was frequently destroyed to save storage costs. However, for many (younger) artists an artist book became an attractive art form. Without involving the official art circuits, they could distribute their art work to the public and inform them about their own ideas and

opinions about art, man and society. A lot of new artists' books were published, frequently produced by the artists themselves or by specialized non-profit organisations such as as Printed Matter and Boekie Woekie. After 2000 also the interest of the public in this new art form increased and gradually also art musea started to show these books in exhibitions. At present, several art musea and national libraries have build up large collections of these books, such as the Museum of Modern Art in New York, The Victor and Albert Museum in Londen and Bibliothèque National in Paris. Nowadays, artists' books are a mature and versatile art form which are produced by many artists worldwide in many different forms using a broad variety in approach and content.

The exhibition in Meermanno opens with some classical examples, including works by Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse and Fernand Léger (Figure 4a). Then a selective overview is given of artists' books made since 1950 in Europe and USA, including also artists' books made by

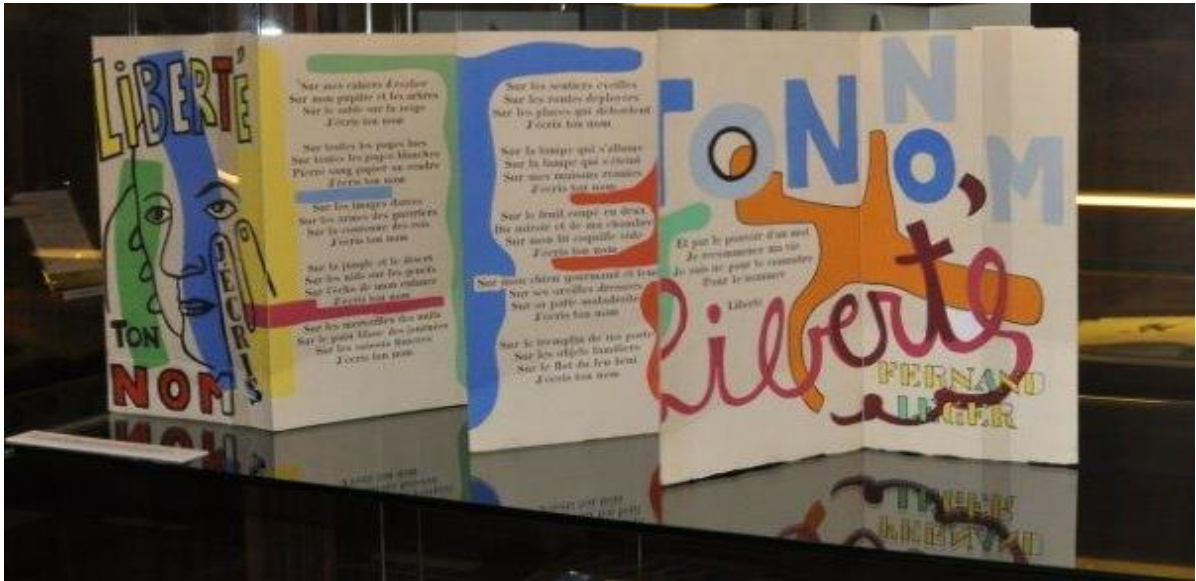


Figure 4a: Fernand Léger and Paul Éluard, 1953, Coll. KB.



Figure 4c: Marguerite Duras and Ann Sperry, Coll. MM.

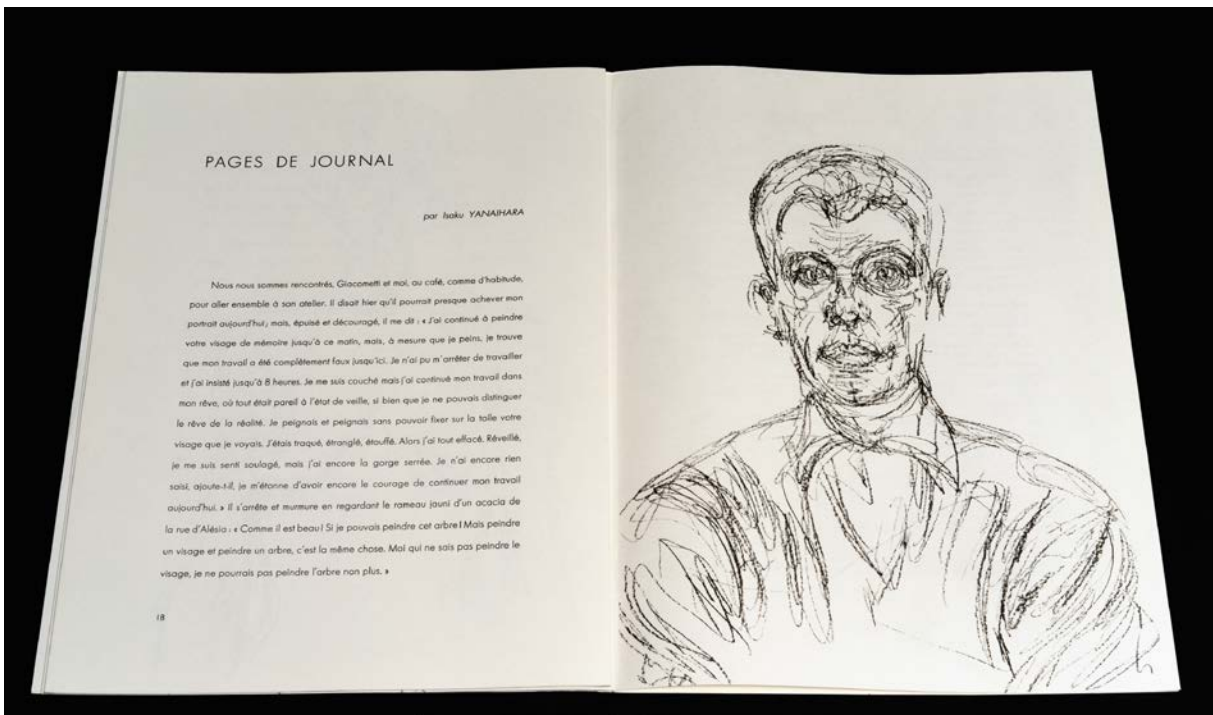


Figure 4b: Alberto Giacometti, 1961, Coll. BFA.

artists who are closely related to the main streams in visual art, as artists' books of artists who produced these books more in line with the traditional book art (Figures 4b, 4c).

After 1950 various authors have tried to define when a book can be called an artist's book. A large number of definitions were proposed, but mutual agreement was not obtained<sup>1,2</sup>. For the selection of artists' books made for this exhibition the following definition was used<sup>3</sup>:

*"An artist's book is a original work of art in book form, made in one or more copies, in which the artist has had an essential or dominant influence on approach, content and form".*

Having such an definition is important to separate artists' books, for example in libraries, from other books such as art catalogues and specially designed books. In the Netherlands, the number of collections in the field of post-war artists' books is limited and certainly those in which international art is well represented. About 200 artists' books made by 60 artists are shown in the exhibition. These books were selected from three collections, namely from the Brokken Zijp Foundation of modern and contemporary Art (BFA), the Museum Meermanno (MM) and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB).

## II. Content of the exhibition

The exhibition *From Page to Space* was shown at four different musea in Europe in 2011-2012<sup>4</sup>. This exhibition featured a selection of about three hundred contemporary artists' books made by more than 90 artists. The selection was focussed on books with a clear book object-character and the books were chosen from two public collections in Germany and Portugal. The exhibition was organized by Guy Schraenen in collaboration with Bettina Brach. The catalogue published about the exhibition showed how large the variety is in book related art works but also showed that artists' books exhibitions are well suited to give an overview of the global development in visual art since 1950. This exhibition was the source of inspiration for setting up the current exhibition in the Museum Meermanno in The Hague.

Building on this line of thought, we came to a subsequent subdivision of the exhibition in six themes, shown in six different rooms. In the first room artists' books are shown in which both the verbal and visual contribution are important. The focus in the next room is on artists' books made by Dieter Roth and Ed Ruscha. Both are considered to be the most important contributors to the development of the artist's book during the sixties and seventies of the last century. In the third room books are shown in which the artist used mainly line, form and color to express his ideas and (almost) left out any verbal information. Verbal information in the form of short sentences, words and/or letters play a dominant role in the artists' books shown in next room, whereas the following room contains artists' books with clear book-object character. Artists' books about installations are shown in the last room (Figure 5a). This subject was chosen because the initial plan was to show also several

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<sup>3</sup> This definition will be discussed in more detail in another publication about the artist's books of herman de vries.

<sup>4</sup> Guy schraenen and Bettina Brach, *From Pace to Space – published paper sculptures*, Weserburg Research Centre for Artists' Publications, Bremen, Germany and Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, Portugal, 2011.



Figure 5a: Sol LeWitt, Installation Room, Coll. BFA.

installations of Daniel Götting specially made by him for this exhibition. Limited financial support forced us to cancel this plan.

In general, all the artists' books are shown in glass vitrines. For most of them only two pages are shown to the public. Some artists' books are

presented also outside the glass vitrines to offer the visitor the possibility to take the book into their own hands and look in the book themselves. To inform the visitor more about the other content of the books and about the ideas of the artists involved several film clips and specific internet connections are available too. To relate the exhibited artists' books to the other work made by the same artist, other art works of several exhibited artists are also shown on the wall of the rooms.

### III. Artists' books with verbal and visual information

The *livre de peintre* always contained text next to visual information. Generally, the images shown were ment to be initially mainly illustrations of the text <sup>1,2</sup>.

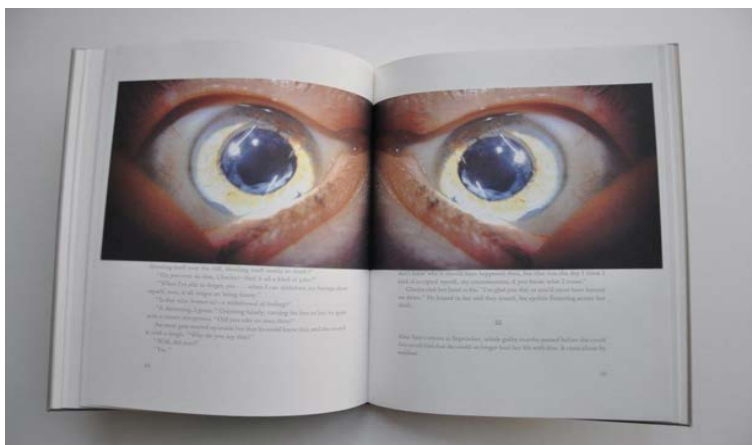


Figure 5b: Louise Bourgeois and Arthur Miller, 1992, Coll. BFA.

Later on the illustrating role of these images decreased. Gradually, the influence of the artist on content and form of the book became larger and the visual part became more important. Verbal and visual information were brought into closer visual harmony, whereas at the same time the connection in content of both parts became lesser dependent. More often these parts were provided by a contemporary artist and writer/poet with a common view on art,

human and/or society or even only by the artist her/himself. Well-known examples are respectively, *Rouveyre* made by Matisse, Apollinaire and Paul Eluard (1953) and *Jazz* for which Matisse provided both parts (1947). Characteristic for all the published *livre de peintre* is that expensive paper choices, complex printing or hand made etching was commonly used for producing the book. To guarantee also the exclusivity of this product the number of copies published was limited.

Quite a number of different definitions for an artist's book was published <sup>1,2</sup>. Nowadays some authors conclude that all the published *livre de peintre* are actually artists' book <sup>1,2</sup>. As

can be seen from the definition mentioned above we conclude that only the more recently published *livre de peintre* can be called artists' books<sup>3</sup> (Figures 4b, 4c).



Figure 5c: Richard Tuttle and W.H. Auden, 1991, Coll. BFA.

After 1950 a large number of artists' books with both verbal and visual information was published. Several of them are luxurious editions published in a small number of copies and their appearance and content are closely allied with the more recently published *livre de peintre*. Well-known examples shown in the exhibition are, for instance, *Homely Girl* by Louise Bourgeois and Arthur Miller (1990) (Figure 5b), *Early Auden* of Richard Tuttle and W. Auden (1990) (Figure 5c), *Tao Te Ching* of Gunnar A. Kaldewey and Bun-Ching Lam (1997) and *Plots on Loan* of Raymond Pettibon (2001) (Figure 5d).

Apart from these exclusive publications also less luxurious artists' books which contain verbal and visual information have been published after 1950. These books were usually published in a larger number of copies, using inexpensive printing technologies and paper types. Examples of this type of artists' books shown in the exhibition are: *Another water*, of Roni Horn, *Walking passed Standing Stones Cairns Milestones Rocks and Boulders* (2000), of Hamish Fulton (1992) and *Leotard* of David Shrigley (2003). Their appearance is quite different from the recently published *livre de peintres*. They belong to a new type of artists' books, which will be discussed in more detail later on.

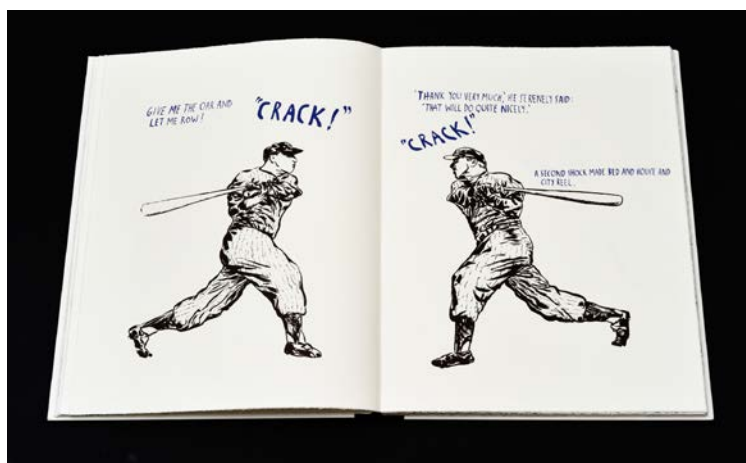


Figure 5d: Raymond Pettibon, 2001, Coll. BFA.

The verbal information in the artists' books described here may be chosen by the artist him/herself, such as in the books mentioned above of Horn, Tuttle, Kaldewey and Pettibon, or may be written by themselves as is the case for Shrigley. In *Hiroshima Mon Amour* (1985-1986) (Figure 4c), writer and artist were different persons and Gunnar A. Kaldewey was only the publisher of this book<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> This book is edition 11 of the Kaldewey press. See Clemens von Lucius, *75 ARTIST BOOKS - The Kaldewey Press - New York - A catalogue raisonné by Clemens von Lucius*, Verlag Hermann Schmidt, Mainz, Germany, 2011, pages 164-167.



#### IV. Artists' books made by Dieter Roth en Ed Ruscha <sup>2, 6, 7</sup>

In the second half of the fifties a group of young artists vehemently rejected the established art views of museums and art education institutions and the dominance of some leading artists in the art market. Also the glossy nature of art magazines and the focus of these magazines and art museums on a small, mostly financially prosperous elite disturbed these artists very much. They started to control their carriers themselves and formed their own international groups of like-minded persons, such as the group of fluxus, conceptual or minimal artists. They informed the public directly themselves about their art by publishing a new type of artists' books and artists' magazines <sup>8</sup>. These plain artists' publications were commonly made using inexpensive printing technology, such as xerox and offset, standard paper types and inexpensive binding methods. Moreover, in these artists' books the use of verbal information is generally limited and figures often dominate the content of these books. In general, the number of copies made of each artist book edition was large. Initially, the interest in these publications was small. One reason for this lack of interest was their low price, which made them unattractive collector's items. Often many copies were destroyed by the publisher in order to save storage costs and by careless use by individuals. Nowadays, the importance of artists' books as a special art discipline is well accepted and the interest in these plain publications is now large, despite the often high antiquarian prices of these books. Art museums and institutions, libraries and private collectors all over the world are building up large collections of artists' books made after 1950. Leading artists in the development of this new type of artists' books are Dieter Roth and Ed Ruscha.



Figuur 6: Ed Ruscha, 1971, Coll. MM.

Ed Ruscha (1937) published in 1963 his first artist's book entitled *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*. This title describes the content of the book in a banal and precise manner. This printed booklet has a

cheap and little surprising appearance and contains a series of simple black and white printed photos of something as banal as different gasoline stations alongside the road. Words are reduced to a minimum (only title, artist name, petrol station and place). With this book Ruscha wanted to emphasize that the reality of everyday life is often boring, ugly and uninspiring. Similar small books were made by Ruscha later on (Figure 6). One of them, is called *Dutch Details*. This contains printed photos of houses alongside a canal in Stads kanaal

<sup>6</sup> Sometimes the artists' books were printed much later than the handmade one. This is indicated by mentioning several years in the subscription of the Figure.

<sup>7</sup> Dirk Dobke, Thomas Kellein, *Dieter Roth - Books + Multiples – Catalogue Raisonné*. Hans Jörg Mayer, London, 2004.

<sup>8</sup> Philip E. Aarons, Andrew Roth, *In Numbers - Serial Publications by Artists since 1955*, JRP/Ringier Kunstverlag, 2009. Gwen Allen, *Artists' Magazines – An Alternative Space for Art*, The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 2011.

n The Netherlands. These photo's were made by Ruscha in the context of the exhibition *Sonsbeek buiten de perken* (1971), in which Ruscha was one of the participated artists<sup>9</sup>.

The conceptual and minimalistic approaches used by Ruscha in this first serie of artist's books were very innovative at that time. After this first serie he gradually changed the subject and content of his artists' books and brought them more in line with the subject of his paintings, which often use as theme the ambivalent relationship between written words and images<sup>10</sup>. Ruscha itself regards his artist's books as the most important part of his entire oeuvre. Ruscha's early books have stimulated many other artists in the second half of the last century to create their own plain artists' books and to use especially fotografic images in these books.

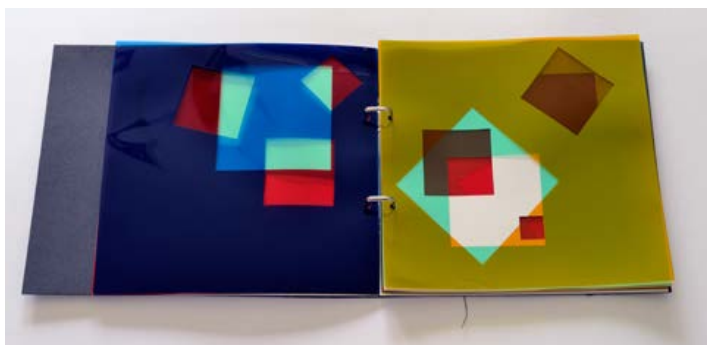


Figure 7a: Dieter Roth, 1956/1976, Coll. BFA.

The Swiss artist Dieter Roth (1930-1998) played a leading role in visual art during the second half of the twentieth century. He made his first artist's books in the second half of the 1950s. Until his death in 1998, more than two hundred artists' books were published. The artist's books by Dieter Roth differ in nature and appearance; they are often experimental and innovative in form and always have a serial

character and contain multiple "pages" (Figures 2, 7a-9). Most of them are machine printed and manufactured in a large number of copies. Even of his handmade books several copies were made by him. Often there are small differences between the copies printed. Dieter Roth usually was actively involved during printing and he experimented further during the production process. The "page" he used is not always of paper (Figure 7a). Sometimes he also experimented with the book form and the object-character of the book (Figures 7a-8, 9) or used earlier made artist's books or earlier printed images as a starting point for a new artist book (Figures 2a, 8, 9).

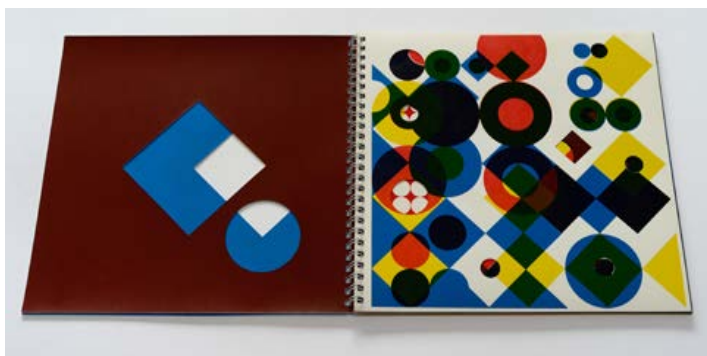


Figure 7b: Dieter Roth, 1954/1976, Coll. BFA.

In his first artist's books Dieter Roth is influenced by the artistic views of his teacher Max Bill, who was a constructivist himself. Some of the earlier books are specially focused on concrete poetry, a movement in which he initially was actively involved. Later on, the unconscious and the chaotic became more important subjects and ultimately he made his own person and the inability

<sup>9</sup> Hans Ebbink, *rKD Bulletin* 2013/2, 2013, pages 37-45.

<sup>10</sup>Collaborations, *Parkett*, no. 55, pagina's 24 -60, 1999, chapters about the art of Ed Ruscha.



Figure 8: Dieter Roth, 1974, Coll. BFA.



Figure 9: Dieter Roth, 1974, Coll. BFA.



Figure 10a-b: Ellsworth Kelly, 1999, Coll. BFA.



to understand himself the main subject of his art (Figure 9). After 1980 his artist's books are often journals in which his daily concerns are reported in detail.

He also tried to create his art very spontaneously and quickly, for instance in his *Schnell Zeichnungen*, to prevent the influence of logical thinking on the process of making and to disconnect the intuitive and the logical train of thought in this process. Current psychological insight has shown that friends usually are better able to understand a person than the person itself, because a human being has a limited ability to understand oneself. Also some psychologists, nowadays, believe that the argumentation given by a person to explain his actions are based on later formulated logical thinking. Decisions are taken intuitively by a human being in the brain, later on a logical explanation is invented by the brain to explain the decisions made.

Especially these considerations are put forward in his videos and more recent artist's books. They stimulate the viewer or reader to think about things like the meaning of his/her own observations, self-knowledge, decisions and their relationship to other persons.

Dieter Roth regarded his artists' books as the most important component of his entire oeuvre. Nowadays, these books are considered to be as very imaginative, original and inspiring. Meanwhile the international appreciation for his art and specifically for his artist's books is large. The influence of Dieter Roth on the generation of younger artists nowadays seems to be even larger than the early artist's books made by Ed Ruscha, who are more bound to stricter principles and often focus on the use of photography only.

## V. An artist's book as a visual form: focus on the use of line, shape and color<sup>11</sup>

In the fifties and sixties a number of young artists rejected the art of the Abstract Expressionists and COBRA artists. These artists expressed in their art their direct personal emotions. The rebelling artists tried to avoid the presentation of these emotions in their art. They focused their art on displaying the everyday reality and tried to achieve this by pushing back the direct personal emotionality in their work, as much as possible. They started to publish a new type of artist's book with the aim to bypass the established art world and contact directly a broad group of art loving public. They decided to make inexpensive and plain books with a predominantly visual content<sup>2</sup>.

One of the first artists who followed this line was Ellsworth Kelly. He made his first artist's book by hand in 1951 and called it *Line Form Color* (Figures 10a, 10b). Unfortunately, the Guggenheim Foundation rejected his request for financial support for publishing this book<sup>12</sup>. Much later, namely in 1999, the originally handmade version of 1951 appeared in printing. *Line Form Color* contains hardly any verbal elements, just visual information, such as

<sup>11</sup> Artists who treat the linguistic or verbal elements of the book as visual elements will be discussed in the next chapter. See also Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, Granary Books, New York, USA, 1994/2004.

<sup>12</sup> Clare Bell, *At Play with Vision: Ellsworth Kelly's Line, Form and Color*, chapter in *Ellsworth Kelly, A Retrospective*, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, New York, USA, 1996. See also: Harry Cooper, *Intensive Unabhängigkeit: LINE, FORM, COLOR von Ellsworth Kelly*, Harvard University Art Museum, 1999.

monochrome colored pages, pages consisting of two or three color areas and pages with a few simple geometric shapes<sup>13</sup>. By using these elementary forms and color combinations Kelly minimized the direct personal emotions in his work of art, similar to what was done earlier by Lissitzky, Kandinsky, Mondrian and Max Bill. Kelly explained in 1951 in a letter to his friend that this art is also suitable to be placed in the modern new buildings which arose in many cities after the Second World War<sup>12</sup>. Nowadays *Line Form Color* is seen as a pre-minimalist work of art<sup>12</sup>.

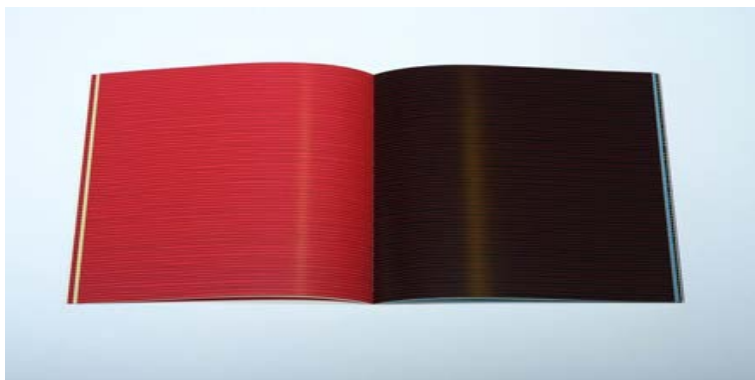


Figure 11: Sol LeWitt, 1975, Coll. BFA.

The American Sol LeWitt (1922-2007) and the Dutchman herman de vries (1932) started to use artists' books as art form around 1960 to inform a wider audience about their art<sup>2,14,15</sup>. They chose to focus their art on representing the reality and to give the spectator freedom for own interpretation by reducing as much as possible the direct personal emotions in their

artwork. They also believed that it was no longer possible to make a unique masterpiece. This is one of the reasons why they chose, like Dieter Roth, for a serial or sequential approach without hierarchy in their work. They used plain materials and avoided after 1960 to use (oil) painting as an art form. The development in their art can be easily followed also by looking at their artists' books. In these books the emphasis of both artists is on the content of and the conceptual idea for the book. Always multiple copies were made of each book. Both artists regard their artist's books equivalent to their other art works.

Initially both artists used in their books simple geometric forms, such as a point, line, square, circle, cube and pyramid next to black, red, blue and/or yellow colors (Figures 11, 12, 13a, 13b, 13c). These geometric forms were distributed over the page by using chance<sup>16</sup> and/or a grid structure. Often, several or all pages in the book belong to one set, which is based on a specific idea. While both artists used a simple vocabulary of geometric forms and

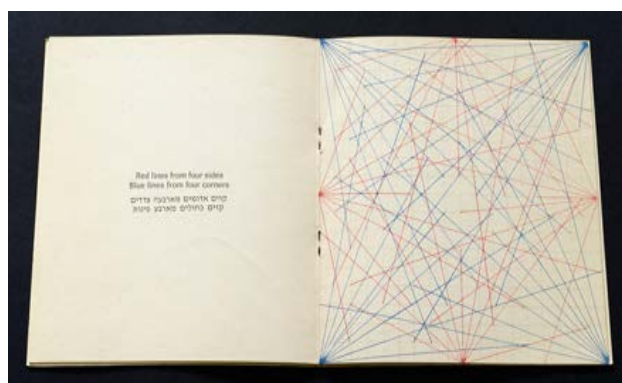


Figure 12: Sol LeWitt, 1975, Coll. BFA.,

<sup>13</sup> The book *Line Form Color* was described by Ellsworth Kelly in 1951 as follows: "a book which shall be an alphabet of plastic pictorial elements and which shall aim a new scale of painting, a closer contact between the artist and the wall, and a new spirit of painting to accompany modern architecture".

<sup>14</sup> Giorgio Maffei, et al., *Sol LeWitt – Artists' books*, Viaindustriae, Sant'Eraclio di Foligno, Italy, 2009.

<sup>15</sup> herman de vries, Anne Moeglin Delcroix, Didier Mathieu, *herman de vries - les livres et les publications - catalogue raisonné*, Centre des livres d'artistes, Saint-Yrieux-la-Perche, France, 2005.

<sup>16</sup> Sol LeWitt used chance as a composition tool intuitively, whereas herman de vries used the random number tables of R.A. Fischer and F. Yates in his chance methods. These tables were based on scientifically correct mathematical chance calculations<sup>15</sup>.

primary colors in their earlier artists' books, these books are filled with complexity and surprise for the reader/viewer. Around 1975, both artists started to use (also) series of photo's made by themselves in these books (Figure 14) and herman de vries decided to use also natural materials gathered by himself in nature (Figures 15a, 15b). It's amazing that the similarity of the early artists' books made by these two artists has not been recognized before.

Later on Sol LeWitt distanced himself gradually from his initially strict conceptual views on (his) art and the medium artists' books in particular. This resulted among others in artist's books for which he followed a less stringent approach and chose a more frequent and more dominant use of color and a more complex composition.

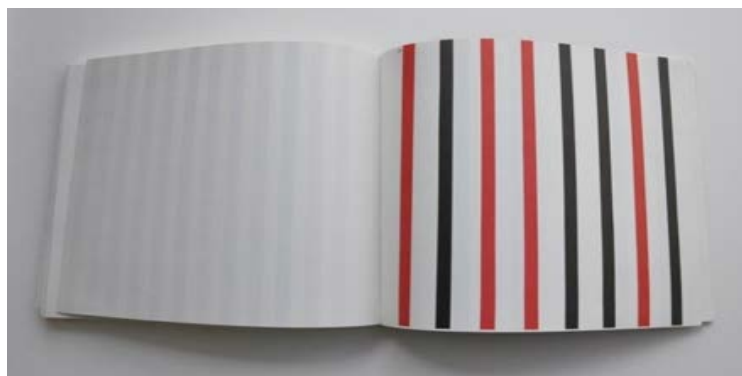


Figure 13a: herman de vries, 1968-1972, Coll. BFA.

(Figure 16). With a few

exceptions his later artist's books are still dominated by visual images and the use of words is kept to a minimum. Around 1975 herman de vries started to use plant materials he found in nature in his artist's books. Apart from this material aspect, the differences between the early and later artist's books of herman de vries are smaller than for Sol LeWitt. Moreover, from the beginning onwards he has always made artist's books, with philosophically oriented (handwritten) poems/statements or word fragments. These will be discussed later on in more detail.

A lot of other artists have also made artists' books, which are focused on presenting their ideas using mainly visual information<sup>2</sup>. A few of these artists' books from the collections of BFA and MM are shown in the exhibition. These books were made by John Baldessari, Christian Marclay, François Morellet, Sigmar Polke, Gerhard Richter, David Shrigley, Cy Twombly, Richard Tuttle, Bernard Villers and Jan Voss (Figures 5c, 17–19d).

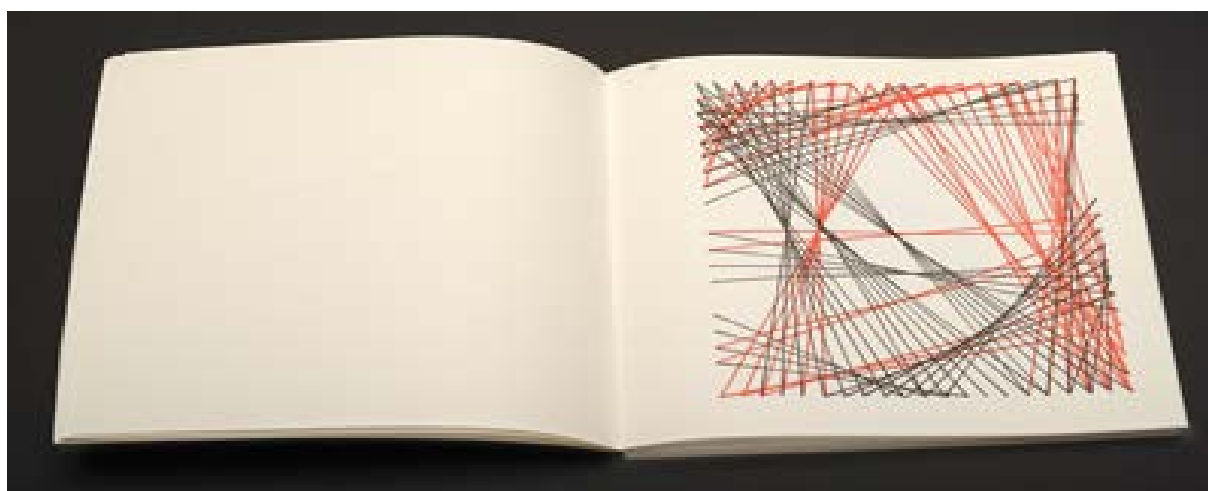


Figure 13b: herman de vries, 1968-1972, Coll. BFA.

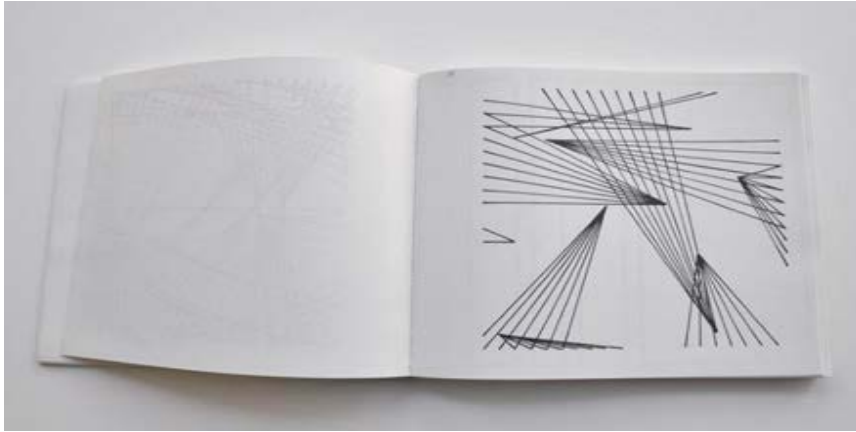


Figure 13c: herman de vries, 1972, Coll. BFA.



Figure 14: Sol LeWitt, 1977, Coll. BFA.

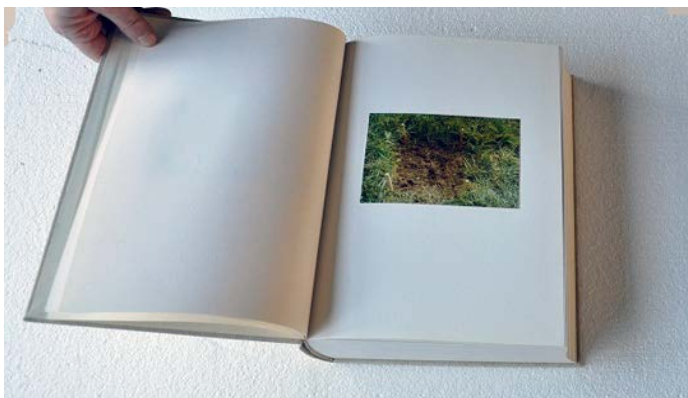
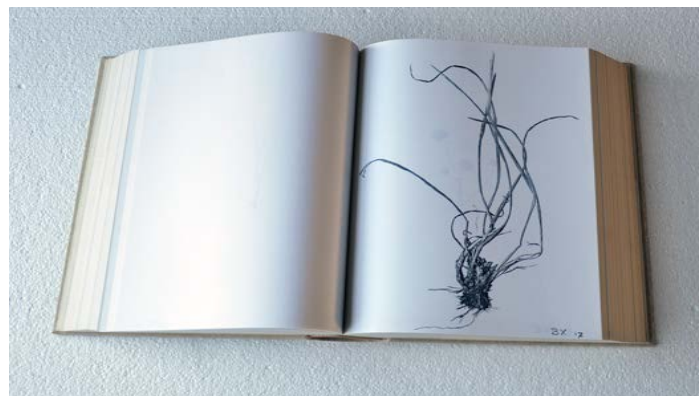


Figure 15a and 15b: herman de vries, 1975/1979, Coll. BFA.



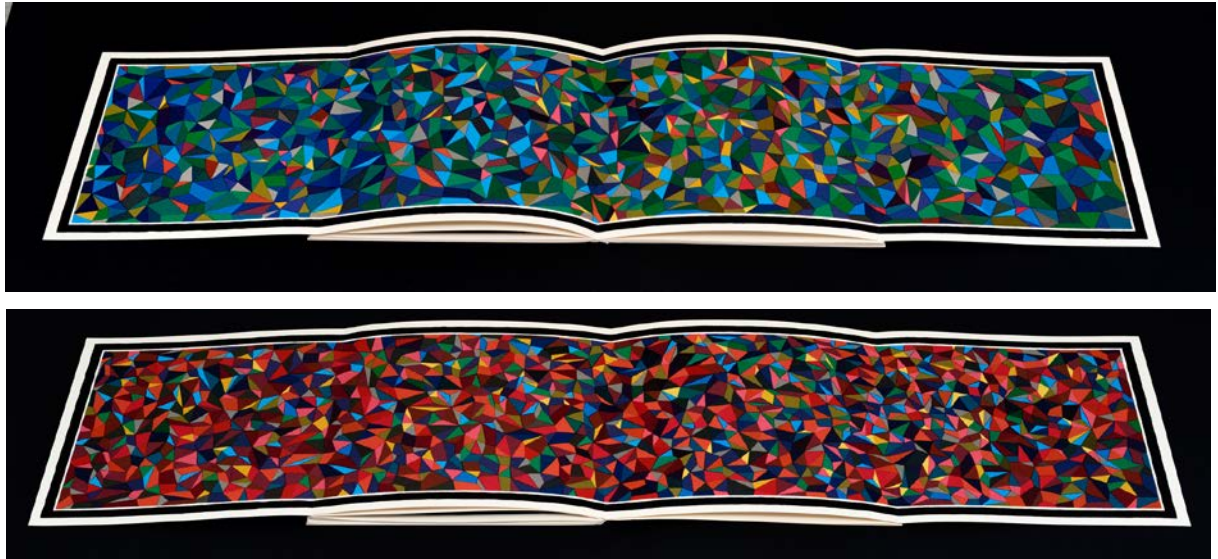


Figure 16a and 16b: Sol LeWitt, 1990, Coll. BFA.

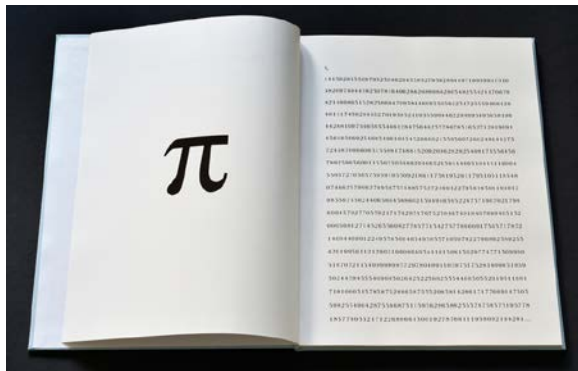


Figure 17a: François Morellet, 2001, Coll. BFA.

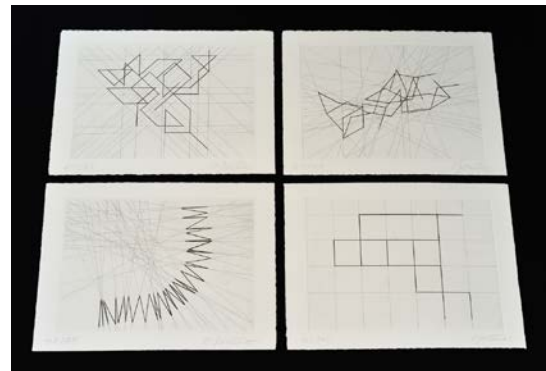


Figure 17b: François Morellet, 2001, Coll. BFA.



Figure 18: Gerhard Richter, 2010, Coll. BFA.



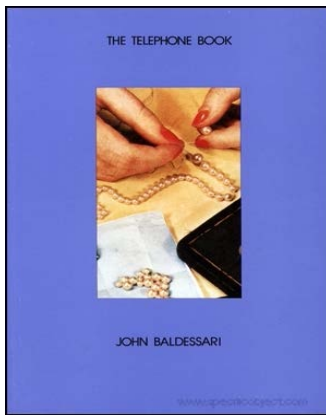


Figure 19a-b: John Baldessari, 1988, Coll. MM.



Figure 19c: David Shrigley, 2003, Coll. BFA.



Figure 19d: Jan Voss, 1989, Coll. BFA.

## VI. Artists' books as verbal exploration: focus on the use of letters, words and/or short sentences<sup>2, 17</sup>

In 1897 Stéphane Mallarmé published his famous spacious poem *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*. In this he used special visual accents such as extra blank spaces between words and lines and completely blank pages and the use of a wide variety in type and size of letters in the same word and within a sentence. With this poem Mallarmé exceeded the limits of poetry and entered the domain of the visual arts. The use of visual elements in



Figure 20: Antoni Tàpies, 1975, Coll. BFA.

experimental poetry was further developed in the twentieth century by the Russian avant-garde, the Italian Futurists, the Dadaists and Surrealists. They managed to further liberate the poetic language of the literary and typographical conventions of their time. After the Second World War an international group of concrete and visual poets continued with these experiments in poetry. They stimulated several visual artists in the 1950s and 1960s to use similar language based elements in their artwork. The artists' book turned out to be an excellent art form to realize this. In addition, quite a number of artists, such as the conceptual and/or minimalist working artists, expressed their doubt, about the way language was commonly used. Therefore, some of them, for instance Sol LeWitt and Bernard Villers, decided to limit the use of language in their artists' books to an absolute minimum. Others tried to broaden the understanding of language by the reader/viewer. They started to use single letters or words, which were sometimes arranged on the page with aid of chance, special combination of single words, short statements or a special reordering of the lines of text. Dieter Roth was one of the first artists who frequently used these elements, but also Antoni Tàpies (Figure 20), herman de vries, James Lee Byars, Paul de Goede, Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Christopher Wool and Raymond Queneau (Figures 21a–24) used them, as can be observed from their artists' books shown in the exhibition. A playful use of letters and words can bring the viewer/reader also to new insights, as was used by Claes Oldenburg, Ulises Carrión (Figure 21b) and John Baldessari in their exhibited artists' books.

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Figure 21a: Raymond Queneau, 1982, Coll. MM.

In the 1980s the resistance of many (younger) artists against the use of language in their art work diminished gradually and they became interested in combining verbal and visual

<sup>17</sup> Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, Granary Books, New York, USA, 2004, chapter 9.

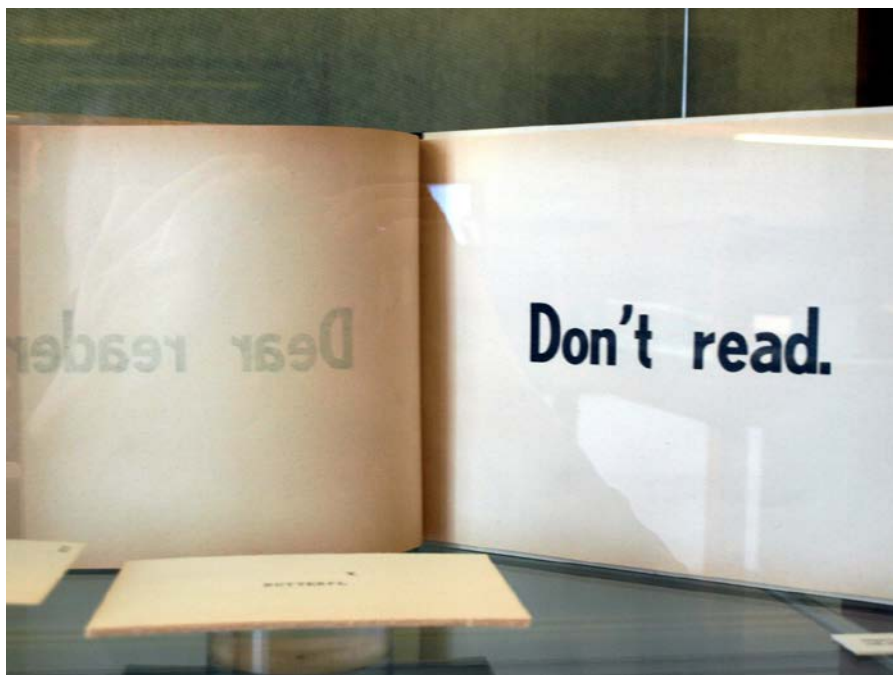


Figure 21b: Ulises Carrión, 1973, Coll. MM.

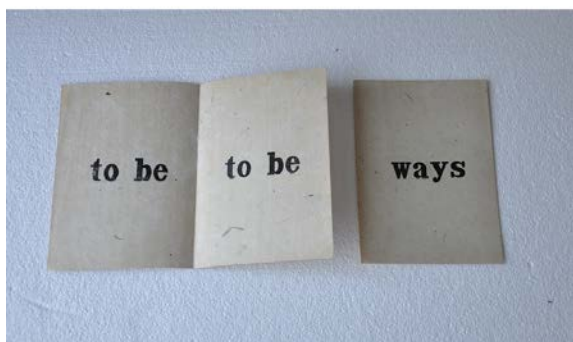


Figure 22a: herman de vries, 1974, Coll. BFA.

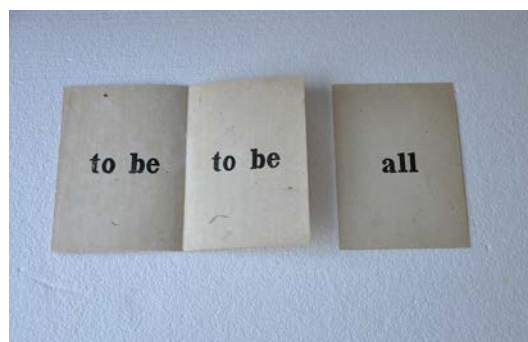


Figure 22b: herman de vries, 1974, Coll. BFA.



Figure 23a: Anri Sala, 2010, Coll. BFA.

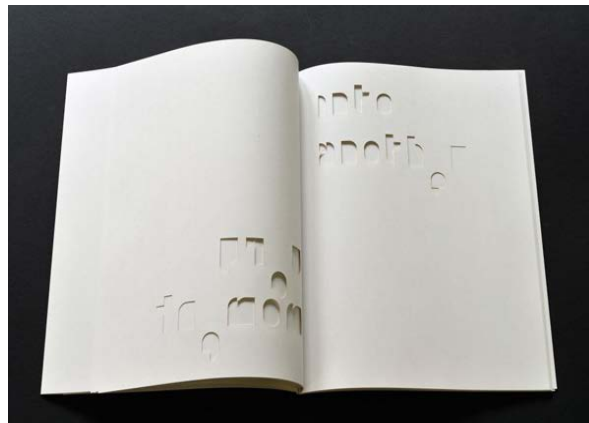


Figure 23b: Cerith Wyn Evans, 2009, Coll. BFA.

elements in a more balanced way within their books. Sometimes the text was written by the artist themselves, such as in artists' books of David Shrigley and Thomas Schütte. In other books the artist choose special line fragments of a writer, poet or film producer. This applies to the books of Raymond Pettibon (Figure 5c), Anri Sala (Figure 23a) and Cerith Wyn Evans (Figure 23b). However, many artists still avoid, even nowadays, the conventional use of language in their art works.



Figure 24: Christopher Wool, 1991, Coll. BFA.

The progress in computer and reproduction techniques, such as Xerography and Offset, had also a large impact on the development of the artists' book. This offered the artist the possibility to take the publication of their books in their own hands and produce them for more affordable costs. This progress broadened also the scope of the easy use of design tools, such as choice of letter type, language and composition on the page. How different it is to make a book with aid of the computer or with the

classic printing technology, is indicated, for example, in the book *Généalogies* of Martine Rassinoux and François Da Ros, presented in the exhibition. The use of these new reproduction techniques caused more accidental printing errors on the (paper) supports used by the artists. Sometimes the occurrence of these "errors" was stimulated to happen by actions undertaken by the artist her/himself, such as Christopher Wool did (Figures 24). These artists use these "errors" in a creative way to realize a new work of art<sup>18</sup>.

## VII Artists' books as book-objects<sup>19</sup>

The previously mentioned exhibition named *From Page to Space* was held in 2011 in various museums in Europe. This exhibition focused on the artists' books with book-object character. This exhibition showed how interesting an art work can be when one combines a book-like shape with paper as material. The collections of the Museum Meermanno and the Brokken Zijp Foundation contain many artists' books of this type. In these books the emphasis is, in general, on the inventive use of paper, of color and of a three dimensional form. Often sculptural forms are used without any verbal explanation/exploration. Sometimes, the use of visual, verbal and sculptural elements are more in balance in these book-object artists' books.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Wool, *Porto-Köln*, Verlag de Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, Germany, 2008.

<sup>19</sup> *From Pace to Space – published paper sculptures*. Uitgever: Weserburg Research Centre for Artists' Publications, Bremen, Duitsland en Serralves Museum of Contemporary Art, Porto, Portugal, 2011.



Figure 25a: Richard Tuttle and Rakusa, 2001, Coll. BFA.

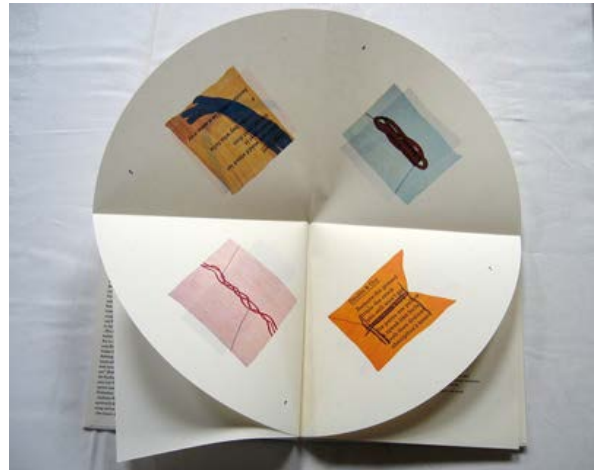


Figure 25b: Richard Tuttle and Charles Bernstein, 1998, Coll. BFA.



Figure 27a: Damien Hirst, 1996, Coll. BFA.



Figure 27b: Tauba Auerbach, 2011, Coll. BFA.

The American artist Richard Tuttle made a lot of artist's books, which are very different in size, shape and appearance (Figures 5c, 25a-b)<sup>20</sup>. These books were often made on the occasion of a solo exhibition and explore a broad range of possibilities such as the relation between the space of the book and the exhibition space. Sometimes he worked in close cooperation with the designers at the museum in question. All the books are characterized by a subtle interplay between the third dimension, color, shape and letter/word/text. Some of these works have a book-object character. In this exhibition several of his smaller sized book-object books are shown.



Figure 26: Sjoerd Hofstra, 1994, Coll. MM.

Of a different character are the artist's books made by the Dutchman Sjoerd Hofstra (Figure 26). In his book the third dimension plays a predominant role. While this is not directly visible to the layman, when he opens the book and turns the pages, he actually uses in his books advanced technical constructions, which involve elaborate production methods. They are works of art that show a comprehensive

vision and structure which cannot be reached in any other way<sup>21</sup>.

In addition, there are artists' books in which (in part) the third dimension plays an important role and which appearance corresponds to the well-known pop-up books. Examples are, for instance, *I want to spend the rest of my life everywhere, with everyone, one to one, always, forever, now* made by Damien Hirst (Figure 27a) and *Margins* (1975) made by Ulises Carrión. For younger artists this type of artists' books is attractive too. For example, for Tauba Auerbach, a 33-year-old American artist. Several of her recently made artist's books were shown at the Whitney Museum in New York, including *Taubach Auerbach [2.3]*, which is also exhibited in this exhibition (Figure 27b). Of an entirely different order are the artist's books made by Fransje Killaars. Her art works are dominated by color and color contrasts and the use of fabric as material. This is also the case in her artist's book *Full Color* from 1997 (Figure 28).



Figure 28: Fransje Killaars, 1997, Coll. MM.

<sup>20</sup> Miguel Fernández-Cid, Dieter Schwarz, *Richard Tuttle - Field of Stars - A Book on the Books*, Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea, 2002.

<sup>21</sup> Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, Granary Books, New York, 2004, pages 106-109.

## VIII Artists' books about installations

The young German artist Eva Hesse was probably the first who made a spatial installation for a gallery exhibition in New York in 1966<sup>22</sup>. This inspired Sol LeWitt and many others to take advantage of this new art form. Nowadays installations as a work of art are frequently shown in galleries, museums and the open (public) space. A large number of these installations has a temporary character or is located in buildings or in places that are difficult to access for the viewer. Characteristic for this new art form is that the artist makes a concept for the installation, in advance. The proposed work is not always realized. Lack of funding often prevents the execution of the concept. When the proposed concept is realized, but when the installation is only temporary, the amount of information available afterwards is generally limited to an initially proposed concept and some photos of the actual installation. Fortunately, some artists have taken action to fill in this gap by also presenting information about their installations in book form.

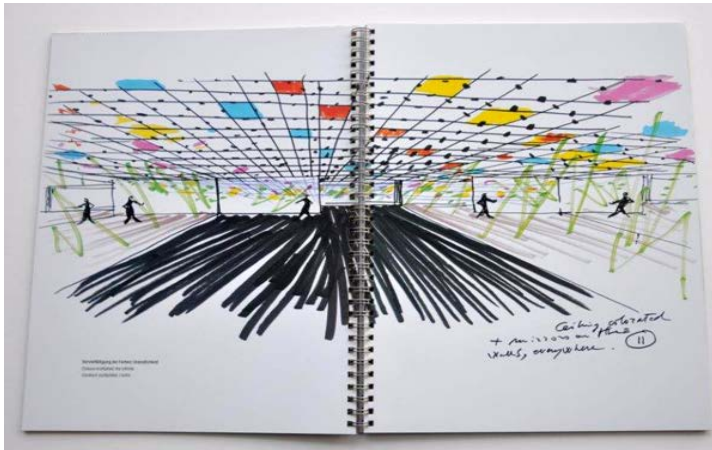


Figure 29: Daniel Buren, 2001, Coll. BFA.

We call such a book an artist's book when the artist has an essential or dominant influence on approach, content and form. Important is also that the (photo) material presented in the book are made by the artist himself, or under his severe guidance. In contrast to mere documentation, the role of the artist needs to be clearly visible in concept, content and actual execution of as well as the installation itself as in the book made about this installation.

In the last room artists' books about installations are exhibited. The choices made are characterized by installations which are closely linked to an architectural building. The building used for the installation can be either an exhibition space or a building specifically designed by the artist for his installation. The books shown are about temporary installations made by Daniel Buren,



Figure 29: Daniel, Buren, 2001, Coll. BFA.

<sup>22</sup> The installation was called "Metronomic Irregularity II", Fischbach Gallery, New York, 1966. Later Sol LeWitt, who helped her with installing it, remarked: "it was really a magnificent piece and a way of liberation for me in my own work. I think it was one of the very earliest examples of installation art...It had a strong and direct and specific effect on me". See essays of Veronica Roberts page 22 and Lucy R. Lippard pages 57,58 in: Veronica Roberts, Lucy R. Lippard, Kristen Swenson, *Converging lines – Eva Hesse and Sol LeWitt*, Blanton Museum of Art, Austen, USA, 2014.

Daniel Göttin and Sol LeWitt (Figures 29–30) and about permanent installations made by Vasarely and James Turrell (Figure 31).

Sol LeWitt and James Turrell made several permanent installations in the Netherlands. For instance, several Wall Drawings of Sol LeWitt<sup>23</sup> can be observed at the Gemeentemuseum in the Hague and the Bonnefanten Museum in Maastricht and installations of James Turrell are present in respectively Kijkduin and Museum De Pont in Tilburg. Daniel Buren and Daniel Göttin has created temporary installations in many parts of the world and also in the Netherlands<sup>24</sup> (Figures 29-30).



Figure 31: James Turrell, 2000, Coll. BFA.

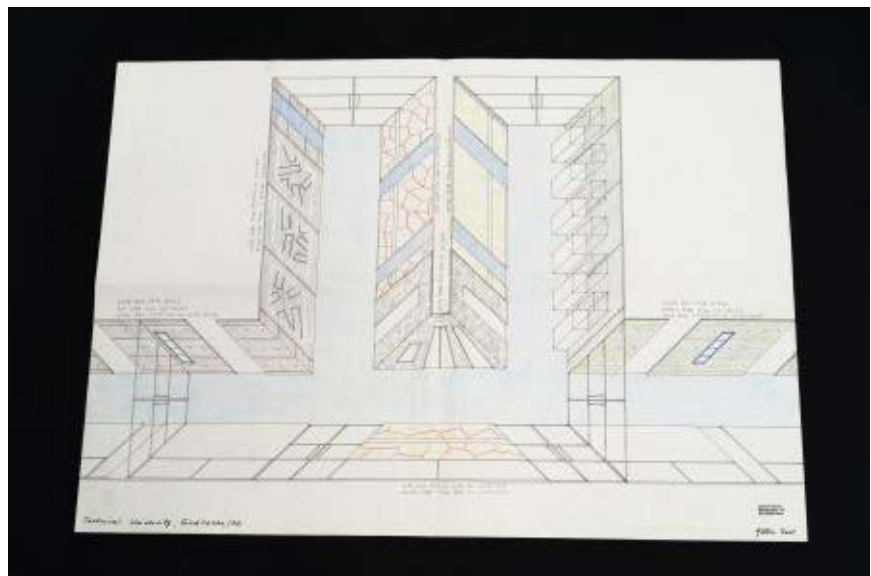


Figure 30: Daniel Goettin, 2002, Coll. BFA.

<sup>23</sup> Chris Teerink made a DVD about the installations of SOL LEWITT in the Netherlands in 2012; DOC.EYE.FILM/AVRO, distribution: DOC.EYE.FILM.

<sup>24</sup> The installation made in the Technical University in Eindhoven is still on view; see [www.tue.nl/kunstcommissie](http://www.tue.nl/kunstcommissie).



## Figures

- 1: Vladimir Mayakovsky and El Lissitzky, *Dlia Golosa*, 1923.
- 2: Dieter Roth, *Dailey Mirror - Kwadraat-Bladen*, De Jong & Co Steendrukkerij, Hilversum, the Netherlands, 1965; Coll. MM.
- 3: Sol LeWitt, *Four basic kinds of straight lines*, Studio International, London, UK, 1969, first edition: 500 ex., not signed and/or numbered; Coll. BFA.
- 4a: Fernand Léger and Paul Éluard, *Liberté, j'écris ton nom*, Seghers, Paris, France, 1953, edition 212 ex., numbered 197; Koopman collectie KB.
- 4b: Alberto Giacometti, *Derrière le Miroir; Giacometti, no 127*, Maeght, Paris, France, 1961, first edition, not numbered and not signed; Coll. BFA.
- 4c: Marguerite Duras and Ann Sperry, *Hiroshima mon Amour - Synopsis, 1985-1986*, Edition Kaldewey New York, USA, first regular edition, 50 ex., signed by Ann Sperry; Coll. MM.
- 5a: Artists' books of Sol LeWitt about installations, Coll. BFA.
- 5b: Louise Bourgeois and Arthur Miller, *Homely Girl a Life*, Peter Blum Editions, New York, USA, 1992, Volume II of the special edition, 100 ex., signed and numbered 42/100 by Louise Bourgeois and Arthur Miller; Coll. BFA.
- 5c: Richard Tuttle and W. H. Auden, *Early Auden*, Hine Editions, San Francisco, USA, 1991, first edition: 80 ex., signed and numbered 4/80 by Richard Tuttle; Coll. BFA
- 5d: Raymond Pettibon, *Plots on loan*, Brooke Alexander Editions Inc., and David Zwirner, New York, USA, 2001, first edition: 250 ex., signed and numbered 85/250; Coll. BFA.
- 6: Ed Ruscha, *Dutch Details*, Stichting Octopus, Deventer, the Netherlands, 1971, not signed and not numbered; Coll. MM.
- 7a: Dieter Roth, *Picture Book*, Hansjörg Mayer, Stuttgart, Germany, 1956/1976, volume 1 of Collected Works, standard edition 1976, 1000 ex., not signed and not numbered; Coll. BFA.
- 7b: Dieter Roth, *Children's Book*, Hansjörg Mayer, Stuttgart, Germany, 1954/1976, volume 1 of Collected Works, standard edition 1976, 1000 ex., not signed and not numbered; Coll. BFA.
- 8: Dieter Roth, *Bok 3b/3d*, Hansjörg Mayer, Stuttgart, Germany, 1974, volume 7 of Collected Works, deluxe edition 1974, 100ex., signed and numbered 58/100 by Dieter Roth; Coll. BFA.
- 9: Dieter Roth, *Copley Book*, Hansjörg Mayer, Stuttgart, Germany, 1966/1974, volume 12 of Collected Works, standard edition 1974, 1000 ex., not numbered and not signed; Coll. BFA.
- 10a, b: Ellsworth Kelly, *Line Form Color*, Harvard University Art Museums, Harvard, USA, 1951/1999, second edition 1999, not numbered and not signed; Coll. BFA.
- 11: Sol LeWitt, *Lines & Color*, Annemarie Verna, Zürich, Rolf Preisig, Basel, Switzerland, Marilena Bonomo, Bari, Italy, 1975, first edition, not signed and not numbered; Coll; BFA.
- 12: Sol LeWitt, *Red blue and yellow lines from sides corners and the center of the page to points on a grid*, Isreal Museum, Jeruzalem, Israel, 1975, first edition, not signed and not numbered; Coll; BFA.
- 13a,b,c: herman de vries, *random objectivations*, 1968 – 1972, Amodulo, Milano, Italy, 1972, first edition, 1000 ex., not signed and not numbered; Coll. BFA.
- 14: Sol LeWitt, *Photogrids*, Paul David Press, Rizzoli, Italy, 1977, first edition, not signed and not numbered; Coll. BFA.
- 15a,b: herman de vries, *16 dm<sup>2</sup>*, Lydia Megert, Bern, Switzerland, 1976/1979, first edition 1979: 50 ex., signed and numbered (49/50) by herman de vries; Coll. BFA.
- 16a, b: Sol LeWitt, *Complex Forms*, Annemarie Verna, Zürich, Switzerland, 1990, 15 ex., signed and numbered (10/15) by Sol LeWitt; Coll.BFA.
- 17a, b: François Morellet, *Constructionen mit der Zahl  $\pi$  – Constructions with the number  $\pi$* , Chorus Verlag, München, Germany, 2001, first special edition: 75 ex., signed and numbered 47/75 by François Morellet; Coll. BFA.
- 18: Gerhard Richter, *Sindbad*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, Germany, 2010, first edition: 800 ex., not numbered and not signed; Coll. BFA.
- 19a,b: John Baldessari, *The telephone book (with pearls)*, Imschoot uitgevers, Gent, Belgium, 1988, first edition, not signed and not numbered; Coll. MM.

- 19c: David Shrigley, *David Shrigley*, BQ Köln, Cologne, Germany, 2003, first edition, not numbered and not signed; Coll. BFA.
- 19d: Jan Voss, *Detour*, Hansjörg Mayer, Stuttgart/London, Germany/UK, 1989, first edition: 1000 ex., numbered 627/1000 and signed by Jan Voss. Coll. BFA.
- 20: Anthoni Tàpies: *Peintures, Gouaches*, Maeght, Zürich, Switzerland, 1975, first edition: not numbered, but signed by Anthoni Tàpies; Coll. BFA.
- 21a: Raymond Queneau, *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*, Gallimard, Paris, France, 1982; Coll. MM.
- 21b: Ulises Carrión, *Ulises Carrión*, Printed Matter, In-Out Productions, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1973, first edition not signed and not numbered; Coll. MM.
- 22a,b: herman de vries, *to be all ways to be*, temporary travelling press publications 2, herman de vries, Kathmandu, Nepal, 1974, first edition: 150 ex., not signed but numbered 101/150 by herman de vries; Coll. BFA.
- 23a: Anri Sala, *Why the Lion Roars*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, Germany, 2010, first edition: 800 ex., not numbered and not signed; Coll. BFA.
- 23b: Cerith Wyn Evans, *Delay*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, Germany, 2009, first edition: 500 ex., numbered 132/500 by Cerith Wyn Evans; Coll. BFA.
- 24: Christopher Wool, *Cats in bag bags in river*, Museum Boymans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, the Netherlands, 1991, first edition, not signed and not numbered; Coll. BFA.
- 25a: Richard Tuttle and Rakusa, *White Sails*, Annemarie Verna Galerie, Zürich, Switzerland, 2001, first edition: 250 ex., signed and numbered 114/250 by Tuttle and Rakusa; Coll. BFA
- 25b: Richard Tuttle and Charles Bernstein, *Reading Red*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, Cologne, Germany, 1998, first edition: 800 ex., numbered 782/800 by Richard Tuttle; Coll. BFA.
- 26: Sjoerd Hofstra, *Elements of Geometry by Euclid*, 1994. ZET, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, first edition, signed and numbered (10/10) by Sjoerd Hofstra; Coll. MM.
- 27a: Damien Hirst, *I want to spend the rest of my life everywhere, with everyone, one to one, always, forever, now*, Booth-Clibborn, London, UK, 1996, first edition, not signed and not numbered; Coll. BFA.
- 27b: Tauba Auerbach, *Tauba Auerbach [2,3]*, Printed Matter and Tauba Auerbach, New York, USA, 2011. First edition: 1000 ex., signed and numbered 746/1000 by Tauba Auerbach; Coll. BFA.
- 28: Fransje Killaars, *Full color*, Fransje Killaars, Amsterdam, the Netherlands, 1997, first edition, signed and numbered; Coll. MM.
- 29: Daniel Buren, *Les Couleurs Traversée*, Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, Cologne, Germany, 2001, first edition: 1100 ex., not numbered and not signed; Coll. BFA.
- 30: Daniel Göttin, *Proposals for a wall installation at the Technical University Eindhoven*, Daniel Göttin, Basel, Switzerland, 2002, original Drawing. Coll. BFA.
- 31: James Turrell, *House of Light*, Gendaikikakushitsu, Tokyo, Japan, 2000, first edition not numbered and not signed; Coll. BFA.