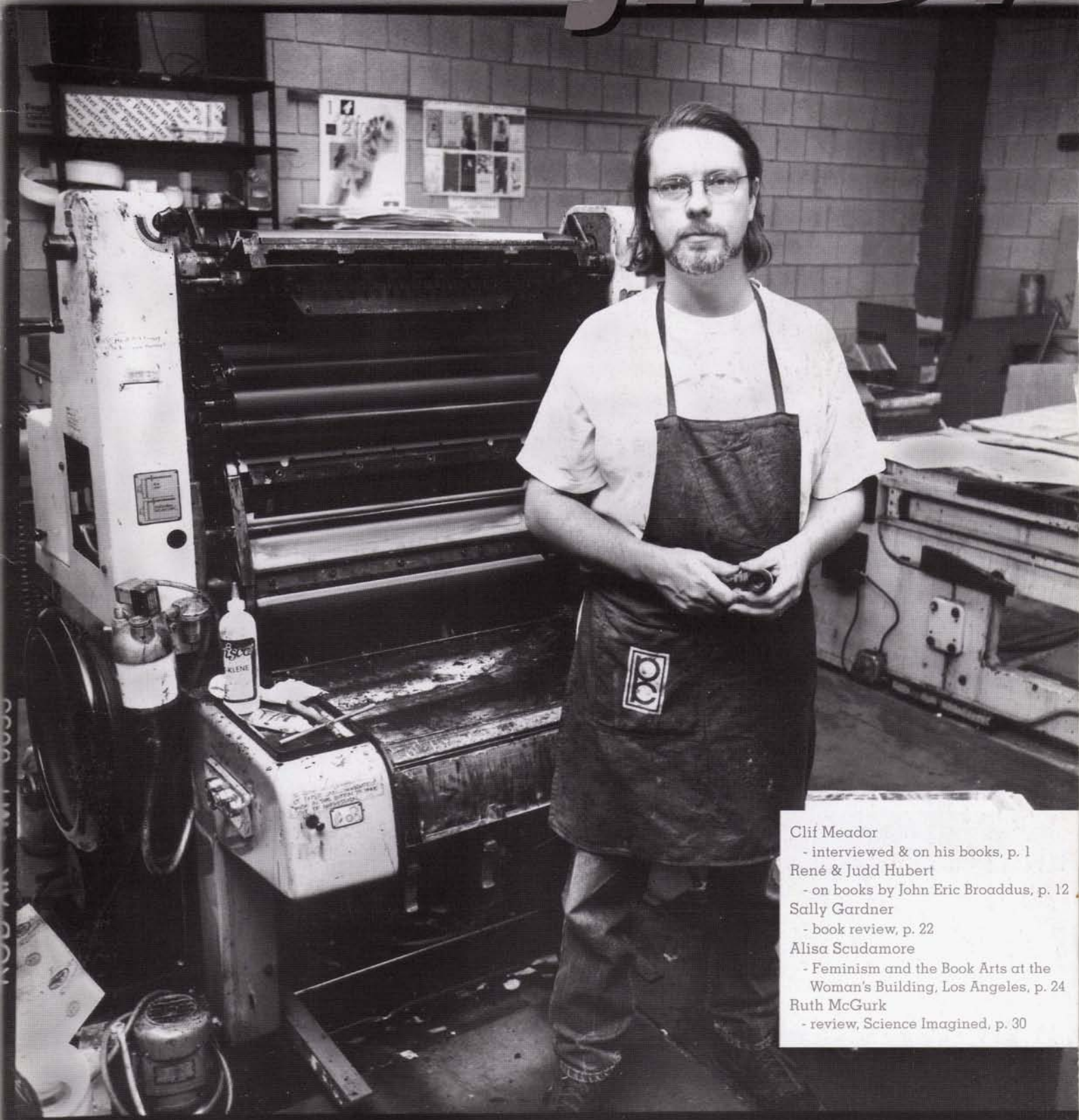


JAB7

Clif Meador & Solna offset press, Center for Editions, SUNY Purchase



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sound on

INTERVIEW WITH CLIF MEADOR

by Brad Freeman

Clif Meador's ideas and work intersect at the computer, the offset printing press, and the book. This interview took place at SUNY Purchase, Center for Editions in December, 1996.

CM: My involvement with the book comes from my involvement with the press. As a photography student at RISD [late 70s] I got interested in printing as an alternative way of presenting my work.

My interest in printing all along was that it was a productive system and not only a method of reproduction. One of the ways we made halftones was with auto screen film. We cut it into 4 x 5 pieces and shot it in view cameras, so that we were making pictures directly for printing. That was my introduction to the idea that printing wasn't necessarily only a reproductive process.

We'd had a photo history course and I remember being really impressed with Stieglitz' involvement with **Camerawork** where he considered the photogravures in **Camerawork** to be original prints. Sometimes they never existed in any other form but just as photogravures. And I was interested in getting away from the gallery as a way to disseminate my work.

BF: Where was that notion from?

CM: Probably from the leftover socialism from the 60s. We would take field trips to New York a lot and I remember being really appalled with the kind of people hanging out in galleries. It seemed like artists were making things that were decorative objects and that never fit in with my notion of what art was.

BF: When did the book come into your work?

CM: The book came in because I started doing printing. When I was an undergraduate I made brochures, folded pieces of paper - they weren't quite artist books yet.

They were artist brochures partly because it's hard to do a sustained effort when you're an undergraduate. So I would do a few press sheets. But you know how much work is involved in making a book, and there just wasn't enough time in a semester to make a book.

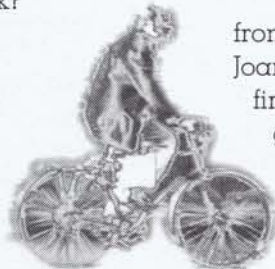
Nobody was teaching book structures or anything like that. There were people around interested in how the singular photograph was mute, and the idea that a photograph communicated more as part of a body of work. The relationships between photographs, or the narrative structure that emerges out of a group of photographs was an important idea to me. All that goes into the ideas about making books. And the little brochures I was making would have more than one image, they would have three or four with a little bit of text. I used text from the beginning. I think I've always written everything that goes into my books. The earliest stuff was small scale poetry rather than a big narrative text.

We were hand lettering in reverse on wipe-on litho plates at first. I found the way letters came out after being written backwards very appealing, because they looked kind of wrong. But when we got the offset press I was writing right reading with litho crayon. It looked crude and direct and the whole aesthetic was an effort to not disguise the nature of the process, but rather to embrace the cruddy quality of it.

The photographers thought it was dumb and the printmakers couldn't understand why I wanted to print photographs. So I didn't have a very good audience for what I was doing. I did some stuff that was completely drawn and that got a better response from the printmakers but the photographers didn't understand why that was photography. RISD at that time was very compartmentalized.

One day when I was a senior the Book Bus from Visual Studies Workshop showed up. [See Joan Lyons interview in *JAB4*, fall, 1995.] It was the first time that I had the idea that there were a group of artists trying to make books. I had very unfocused ideas about what a book was

guaranteed to change your consciousness



contd., from page 1

and what I was trying to do. It was very unclear. I was attracted to printing and I liked the idea that I could make art objects that weren't precious. But I didn't have a context to put that work into.

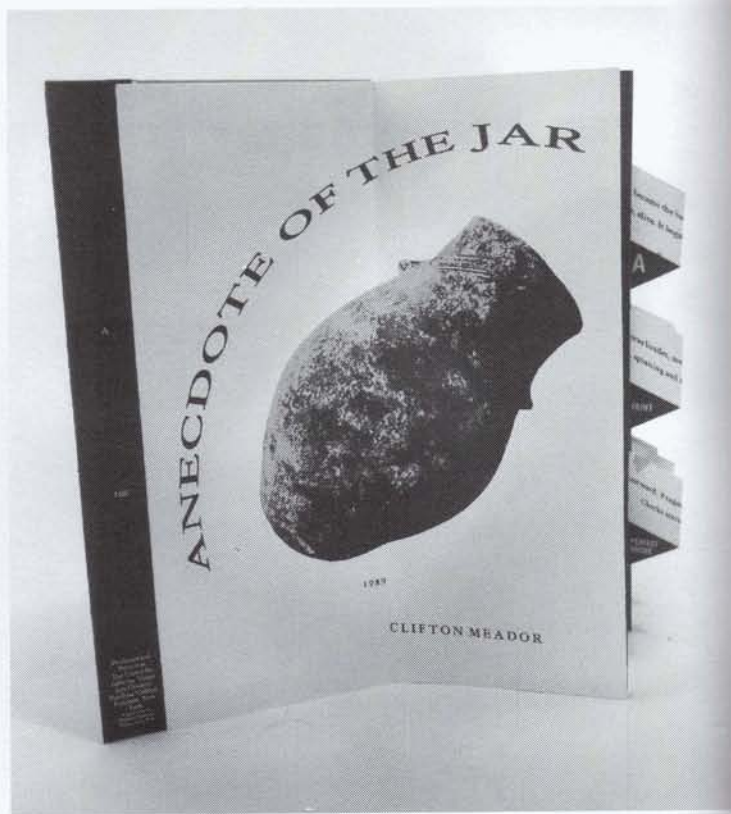
I was so excited about the work I saw in the Book Bus. It was inspiring. But I didn't have enough money to buy anything. However, now I had this idea that there was a group of people doing books. There were some books from Nexus Press in Atlanta, and I had always identified myself as a southerner. Oh God! Somebody in the south doing art! The whole idea of somebody doing art in the south was kind of a novelty to me. My experience hadn't been that it was a very cultural place.

Soon after graduation I was hired at Nexus Press by Michael Goodman and Gary Lee Souper. It was a CETA position - Comprehensive Education Training Act. That would have been August of 1980. Michael taught me how to print on the Hamada [offset press], which took a while.

CETA was an open ended program but the problem was that Reagan got elected and the first thing he did was cancel the whole CETA program. So I lost my job. Then I got a job at a printer called J.B. Richard. We printed a lot of low end offset stuff - forms. They had a little Hamada that hadn't been run in years and they hired me to run it. Eventually I ran a Harris [offset press] while the foreman watched. I became a really good pressman from the experience of working in the industry. That was my professional indoctrination as a pressman. In fact, I still carry a picture of that Harris in my wallet.

My journeyman printing days continued at Open Studio with Phil Zimmermann in Rhinebeck [NY] from 82 to 84. Then I became director of Nexus Press in 85 and stayed until 88. My most memorable experiences there have to be working on Bill Burke's **I Want to Take Picture** and the birth of my son James. I learned a lot at Nexus - especially the difficulties of publishing artists' books.

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Clif Meador, *Anecdote of the Jar*, 1989

A FEW BOOKS BY CLIF MEADOR:

Anecdote of the Jar, 1989, Purchase, NY, CM at the Center for Editions, 24 pages, 10" x 5"

CM: *Anecdote of the Jar* is based on the poem of the same name by Wallace Stevens.

Anecdote of the Jar (excerpt)

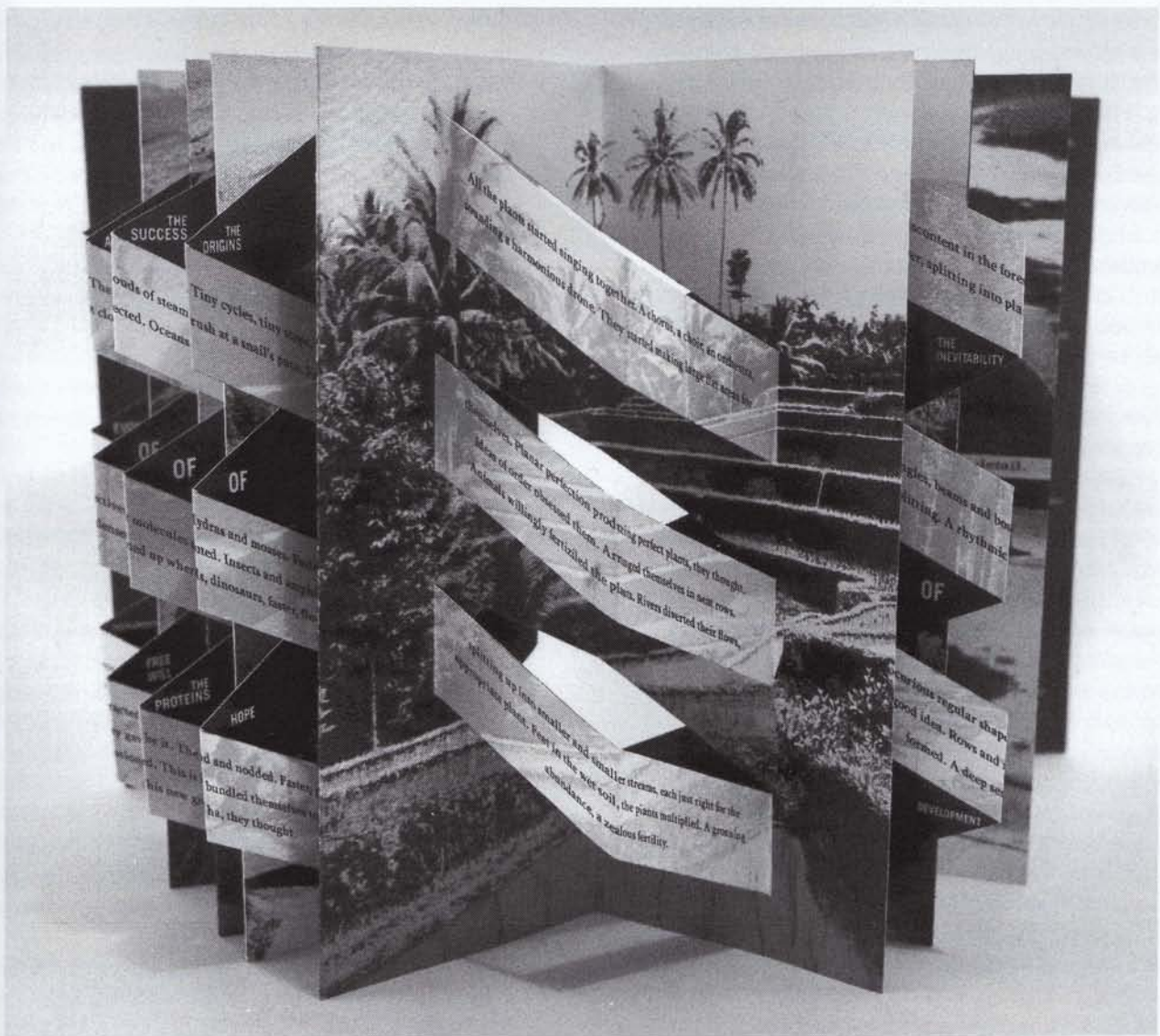
*I placed a jar in Tennessee,
and round it was, upon a hill.
It made the slovenly wilderness
Surround that hill.*

*The wilderness rose up to it,
And sprawled around, no longer wild.*

by Wallace Stevens

The structure is a combination of accordion fold with pop-up ribs that aren't glued into the page but are cut out of the page. As long as I was making a book that was sculptural I wanted it to remain a book. I wanted to think about how a text is performed in the space of the sculpture.

I was aware when I was making *Anecdote* that I was sick of sculptural books. And I had this one last idea that I really wanted to do, even though at the time I thought I was done with this kind of book. A lot of the bookwork that is sculptur-



Clif Meador, *Anecdote of the Jar*, 1989

al no longer interests me. It shows too well in galleries. It does the things that you want a book to do in a gallery situation. I now feel that it calls way too much attention to itself as an object. It doesn't take me outside the thing in any way. My attention is located in the object. I'm much more interested in books that take you outside the thing, because then the book becomes a window to a destination.

Wallace Stevens is one of my favorite poets. My reading of this poem is that it talks about the difference between nature and culture. When he placed a jar on a hill in Tennessee it subordinated nature. It also seems that the poem is poking fun at Tennessee, using it as a sign for the uncultured barbarian wilderness. I've always had a problem with the idea that culture and nature weren't the same thing and also that Tennessee is a symbol for the barbarian wilderness.

My version of *Anecdote of the Jar* is a response to that. I was thinking about the idea that

culture is just an expression of our nature; that our instinctual nature is to create culture. I turned it around by personifying nature, which is a big conceptual mistake our culture makes a lot, and I imagined the whole point of nature was to create culture. In my version there is a creation myth, the jar explodes, and creates everything, and all the outward signs of culture arise spontaneously out of nature waiting for humanity to inhabit it. I was trying to make it exactly backwards as how most people think about it.

I was thinking about the gyre of history when designing the form of the book. The idea is that as one influence is either waxing or waning another influence is either waxing or waning. There are interpenetrating spirals in history. The form of the book is meant to evoke this idea of the spiral. It also references the double helix of DNA, and the idea that there is some destiny in the genes.

The text is a little story I wrote and it came

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contd., from page 3

after the structure. I had some rough notes on what was going to happen on each page then I wrote it to fit. Sometimes I write to fit, sometimes I don't. It just depends.

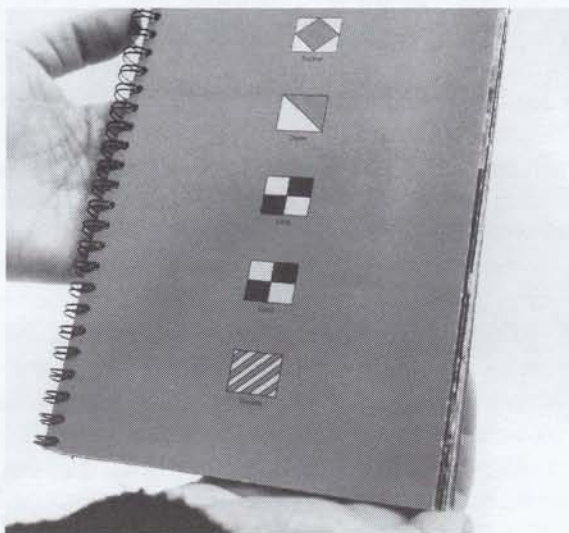
The images are found-imagery from Compton's encyclopedia, even though I knew I definitely didn't want to use appropriated imagery anymore. I had three more books that were in the works that were using appropriated imagery but it was too late to stop at that point. I often work on many books at once. In fact, I always have three or four projects in various stages of completion going at the same time.

The press here at Purchase [SUNY Purchase, Center for Editions] wasn't registering very well at that point, so I wanted a lot of forgiveness in the register of colors. Some of the printing is flat color on top of another color halftone, and some I used the same halftone with different colors. The famous Miles DeCoster method. The idea was that the press would hopefully come out of register. He was always, technically, an enormous influence just in the way he worked - the Chicago cheap and dirty school of offset printing. I don't print like this anymore. Now I'm attempting to make the technique more perfected. I'm trying much harder printing techniques that a few years ago I wouldn't have tried. Two, three colors; tight register.

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Sea Change, 1990, Purchase, NY, CM at the Center for Editions, 14 pages, 6.5" x 5.5"

CM: In **Sea Change** there is an opposition between a passenger ship and an aircraft carrier and a reef and a waterfall. The reef is a danger to the ships, but the ship becomes dangerous itself because it's a military ship.



Clif Meador, **FOXTROT OSCAR LIMA LIMA YANKEE**, 1991, three page sequence

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I've come to the idea that the edition size of my books reflects some estimation of the scale of the idea. So some books are a hundred copy idea, some are a hundred and fifty. I think **Sea Change** might be more of a eighty copy idea. I don't think I'll ever make a book with more than four hundred copies, mainly because of the problem of distribution. I am so bad at distributing my work.

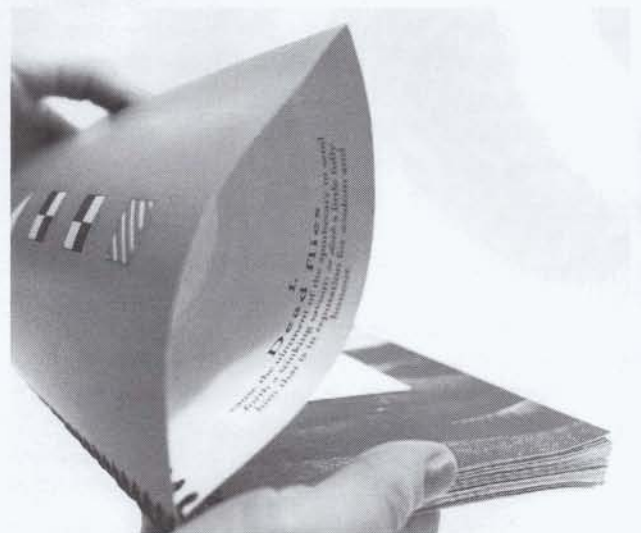
Maybe **Sea Change** is just a forty copy idea. I don't think it's that well worked out - there's a simple opposition of the two ships and the reef and the waterfall but I'm not really sure it goes very far. But thinking about the warship made me think about the nature of war. And that led directly to **Foxtrot Oscar Lima Lima Yankee**.

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Foxtrot Oscar Lima Lima Yankee, 1991, Purchase, NY, CM at Center for Editions, 57 pages, 8" x 5.75"

CM: This book has a sculptural conceit to it - there is a secondary text hidden in the book, which most people never realize. It's hidden inside the pages and it would be only by accident that people would discover this. [The sheets were printed on both sides then folded and spiral bound so that one side can't be seen unless the viewer spreads the fold and peeks underneath and between the fold.] There is a quotation from Ecclesiastes that runs through the book which I thought was about the nature of folly.

When I was growing up in the south, church was a very important part of our lives. In the south the Bible has a cultural weight that is a common cultural experience. So, in ordinary conversation people will reference the Bible as metaphors for creating comprehension in other people. "Oh, yeah, like Esau." People will understand what that



Clif Meador, **FOXTROT OSCAR LIMA LIMA YANKEE**, 1991

is about. I'm really not religious, but it's a big part of who I am, and that's from the culture of the south. So the text from Ecclesiastes was put inside the pages to reflect the idea that religion is at my core.

I wrote something that is sort of like a poem on the tabs in the center of each spread. It's supposed to reference children's books - it's set in Futura and kind of big. The book is a sort of primer about the nature of humanity. The warlike instinct is our great undoing.

I selected the pictures at the same time that I wrote the text. I had all these folders with the cut out pictures from the encyclopedia on a big table - all the time thinking about the writing. So I was writing and picking out the pictures at nearly the same time. The length of the excerpted text from Ecclesiastes determined how many pages there would be.

The last page spread has my text, "A city after war", dark purple printed over a bombed out city, with the text from Ecclesiastes underneath the fold, "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber; for a bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter". I was actually thinking about bombers because it's a picture of a city that has been devastated by aerial bombardment.

Ecclesiastes is a great grumpy piece of text. This was a watershed book for me in looking at my own idiocy. But I found a bigger idiocy in humanity that made me feel better.

This book was printed before the press got fixed. When the main bearings on the blanket cylinder were replaced this press started printing a lot better. You can see how it printed a flat tint screen - and it always put a line through the mid-



Cliff Meador, **FOXTROT OSCAR LIMA LIMA YANKEE**, 1991

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dle of the press sheet which is where the gears engaged and disengaged. Now it'll print a flat really well. That was twenty years of wear with a bunch of student printers. I think if it's just a few people trained to use it, it will last a lot longer. I only taught one or two students how to print and that was over a five year span. And every time I thought it was a bad idea afterwards. I think graduate students have a better case for wanting to learn how. It takes so long to get good at it. I used to think it took two years to learn how to print, but I don't believe that's true anymore. I think it takes longer than that. Maybe we're the last of the artists who're also offset printers. Who were the first? Did Eugene Feldman actually run a press? Todd Walker was the first artist I heard about who was actually running a press. I really like the quality of his film work. I remember looking at his film work and not being able to figure out how he did it.

Now I'm interested in having someone else print my work. I'm making more of the choices before I get to the press. You can preview things on the computer almost as if they were printed. Once you print enough that way the feedback loop gets completed and you can anticipate how things are going to look. People who don't have any printing experience can't anticipate what's going to happen from what they see on the screen because it's so different. There are so many points of interpretation from the computer file to ink on paper. A lot of my books are made in a printmaking type of way. I print a little bit and look at it, think about it, and print some more on it. On the latest book [**Long Slow March**, 1997] there's very little printmaking going on because the decisions are being made on the computer.

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Alabama Agricultural Agent Railroad Passes
1929-1930, 1994, Purchase, NY, CM at the Center for Editions, 39 pages (with one loose card inserted), 7" x 5"

BF: I really like the typeface of the title. What typeface is that? Or did you create it? It works very well small; why is that?

CM: I didn't make that face. It's Minion; a multiple master typeface which is a technology that allows for intermediate steps between other typefaces. One of the problems with digital type is that it's drawn at one size and then the computer scales it up or down. It doesn't change anything in terms of the relationship of the thick to the thins or the type

or the x-height or any of that. In fact, type needs to be drawn for each size it's going to be. As it gets smaller the counters need to be bigger, and the x-height needs to grow in relationship to the ascenders. The contrast to the letters needs to go down as it gets smaller. So, in multiple master typefaces a drawing is done for a small optical size and a drawing is done for a big optical size, then you can interpolate sizes using the computer. The title is set in a type that's designed to be used in the size that you see it. That's one of the things that makes it look good.

BF: Except the letter space between the "P" and the "A" is a little bad.

CM: The "P" - "A" kern is a little bad. It's not perfected. None of my typography is perfected. Minimum references old style, humanist typefaces.

The idea for **Alabama Agricultural Agent Railroad Passes** was that it was to be a portrait of my grandfather who was a veterinarian and worked for the railroad. The portrait was to consist of the passes that he kept in his wallet during a one year season. It's a kind of material history in which the passes talk about a significant moment in the south. It was the beginning of the "Great Depression" which hit the south much harder than the rest of the country. The south was already poor and the depression made it poorer. I grew up hearing stories about the depression. My grandfather had been an adult during the depression. And my maternal grandmother and grandfather were starting their lives as adults, so they were in adult life during the depression and there were lots of stories about how hard it was. My maternal grandmother was from Greensboro, Alabama which is where **Let Us Now Praise Famous Men** [James Agee and Walker Evans, 1941] occurs. She

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was there at the same time those guys were.

So I felt some connection to the depression; and then I thought of these railroad passes as standing in for that change happening. Whatever the character of that change was. There's not much change between 1929 and 1930 in the passes. A few companies changed. The railroad passes stand for a whole different kind of capitalism. There was much greater diversity of companies, the scale of capitalism was smaller. But now, for instance, there are two or three railroad companies in the whole country. At that point in the state of Alabama there were at least nineteen railroads. These were not even all the ones that ran through Alabama. Those were the ones that my grandfather had exchange rights with. There were a huge number of separate companies, all somehow coexisting, and serving as the center of transportation. The railroads would pay each other for use of tracks, and lease tracks. In cities there would often be several railroad stations because each company would erect stations if they had passenger trains. In Birmingham there was Union station where several railroad companies cooperated to build a facility, hence Union.

Then I wrote a little story about my grandfather which is printed on a loose piece of paper that is placed in between pages of the book. I like the fragility of that relationship. I like the tenuousness of the idea that that thing could fall out and then the whole book loses its context, because this one thing falls out of it. I love that idea because it talks about what history really is. It's just accidental connections that get made that produce the stories that make history. There aren't large stone tablets arranged in a central location that have the authoritative history written on them. It's accidental connections, it's pieces of ephemera that survive for us to look at.

I thought about how the financial system had conspired to imprison everybody in this collapse. Sharecropping was a big thing in the south, and when it came apart everybody was mired in it. You know bacon doesn't sink very fast in honey.

Having children and my children starting to grow up started me thinking about my past. Who I thought I was and what I thought my connection was to my own past, to my family. This book was the first thing I did that started to address those issues. A lot of what I've done since then has been about my own history. And I know everybody does that and it's all a bore... But I can tell these stories with the most authority.

THEY SAID THAT THE TRAINS

USED TO RUN ON TIME, BUT I KNOW THAT they didn't.

They were slow in those days, painfully slow. To get from Selma to Mobile meant changing trains and a long wait for that other train. And unbelievably dirty. The coal burning steam engines produced as much grime as a good-sized iron furnace and the windows on those trains opened.

Everything turned black.

I never knew him well, but I imagine him at night, on trains, chugging through the steamy south, going from one small town to another, looking at livestock. It was the beginning of the great depression, and the south suffered as much as anywhere did. He must have seen the collapse in slow motion, the way collapses

really seem, like bacon sinking in honey. Farmers unable to sell (and ship) their livestock for enough to pay their mortgages and taxes. Nickel cotton, later on, ruining whole plantations. Sharecroppers stuck, forever in debt, unable to leave, unable to grow enough to get ahead. In a way,

The Legacy of Greed.

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Nutritional Disease Throw Rugs, 1995, Purchase, NY, CM at the Center for Editions, 11 pages, 10.75" x 5.5"

CM: My father was a medical doctor and I worked in hospitals a lot as a teenager. Disease and sickness was a big part of growing up. We would sit at the dinner table and talk about disease with my father. He would tell us about interesting diseases that had picturesque symptoms or unusual symptoms. I still remember the really cute ones.

Nutritional diseases were a big part of the depression in the south because people couldn't get enough variety of food to eat. Especially during the winter when the fresh vegetables disappeared people started getting rickets and scurvy. In fourth grade in Alabama we had to take Alabama state history. There was a story they made us read about a little girl who developed scurvy during the winter and how the family spent all their money to buy a couple of oranges for her. They took their whole savings and bought her a couple of oranges. She ate the oranges, got a little better, then got sick again. That left kind of an impression on me.

BF: Both my parents are from the south. My mother grew up in Sylva, North Carolina; way back up in the hills. Her parents were dead by the time she was eight. She went to an orphanage along with her eleven brothers and sisters in Thomasville. Even when I was growing up, getting oranges at Christmas was special and important.

CM: We got oranges in our Christmas stockings. It didn't seem like a big deal to me but it was clear to my mother and father that it was symbolic of something - like doing well.

So, I was thinking about the poverty of the south and I was also working on the typeface that I was going to use in another book, **Long Slow March**. I was looking at a lot of typography.

The main industry in the south was still textile mills at that point. The textile mills started moving into the south at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, and that was the big employment. The companies were leaving the unions in the northeast and moving to the South where they could hire people for nothing. Barely enough to survive on; employ the whole family from the kids up in these big mills. If they chewed up a few of them - oh, well... If somebody fell into the loom, that was just too bad.

I was also looking at a lot of typography and

thinking about Fournier's ornaments. He was an 18th century French typographer. How could they be used as decoration in typography? I was starting to teach typography so I was thinking about the history of typography and doing lettering. It all came together one day when I was working with the brush and the pen.

I built this book [**Nutritional Disease Throw Rugs**] entirely in the computer. I made the type in the program Fontographer. I fiddled with it for a year or so before it was anywhere close to usable. It was still not quite usable, but I used it anyway.

I imagined a family living in the south, working in a mill, and eating just corn meal all winter along with fat back. What would happen to them?

BF: But the book is beautiful, the type is beautiful, the designs are beautiful... There is a striking discrepancy between that beauty and the ugliness and pain of disease.

CM: I was thinking about the deep impulse that people have to make beautiful things. People care about how they make things. It's kind of an odd idea maybe - but these people that work in textile mills might start thinking about making rugs, and because of their experiences with nutritional diseases they might make rugs of nutritional diseases.

This all really got started when I saw rugs from Afghanistan with Khalashnikovs [automatic rifles], and tanks, and helicopters, and mortars as the patterns in the rugs. I was imagining this culture in Afghanistan making these rugs that talked about the implements of war that they were embedded in. I bought one of these rugs in New York. They look like an oriental rug but they have instruments of war in them.

I imagined my own culture having a textile heritage in the south, and the rugs that they might make out of that. I know it's corrupt in a way. In some ways it trivializes a painful thing.

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Long Slow March, 1997, Purchase, NY, CM at the Center for Editions, 212 pages, 8" x 5.25"

CM: We lived in Selma [Alabama] in 1962 - 63. There was no civil rights protesting going on at that time in Selma but there was protesting in Birmingham. I was in an all-white school in first grade in 1963 during the bombing of the churches in Birmingham. We were taken out of school a couple of times a week for bomb threats. There were times when we would spend whole after-

noons out on the playground while the police searched the building. I have no idea why. At this point it would be entirely speculation. It could have been the Klan doing it, it could have been a black activist doing it. I would suspect the Klan first of all. Or crazy people who thought they were part of the Klan. The intention was to create an environment of fear and violence; to incite the white community. They were very afraid. They were terrified.

There were instances of integration that happened invisibly. My father was on the house staff of the University of Alabama-Birmingham Hospital at the time. One night they got together and decided to integrate all the wards in the hospital. They did it overnight and nobody ever said anything about it. People went to sleep in white wards and black wards. They woke up in the morning and people were distributed so there were black and white people together. Nobody ever complained because in hospitals people are powerless. But when they tried to do that with schools there was a little more resistance.

I became fascinated with the idea of the civil rights march [from Selma to Montgomery]. The journey was a metaphor for the rise out of slavery. It was symbolic for the whole struggle for civil rights. First, freedom from slavery, then equal rights as citizens.

I took the idea of the road being symbolic of the struggle from slavery to citizenship and made photographs of the road. I drove from Selma to Montgomery in 1994 and took pictures every half mile of the actual road that they marched on. Along side the road has just been declared a park to commemorate the march. I think it's a great idea. It's such an uplifting thing to me. The road is mostly four lane now and in my childhood I remember it being two lane. I remember the road from childhood because we drove that way frequently.

The book begins as a visual narrative of the road from Selma to Montgomery; as a record of the place where the march happened. It starts with a picture of the Alabama River and the Edmund Pettus Bridge. The Edmund Pettus Bridge crosses the river and it's at the foot of that bridge where the conflict with the troopers happened.

I had collected title pages from slave narratives which dated from the middle of the 19th century. These are a record of the depth of the struggle. Of how long the struggle has been going on. There's a huge literature of slave narratives, which I only became exposed to when I started thinking about this project three or four years ago.

I had read some Frederick Douglass and a few of the others. But I hadn't realized how profound this literature was and I was deeply impressed. In the first part of the 19th century the abolitionists used the slave narratives as evidence of their claims. In the last half of the 19th century the narratives were used to support the idea of equal rights. I imagined these title pages as hanging in the air over the road during the march.

As I was thinking about the struggle for civil rights I began to think about the rear guard action fought by white southerners trying to stop civil rights. And the apologists for a policy of separate but equal who fought civil rights. I found a pamphlet that was printed in Selma in 1965 right after the march, called the "Story of Selma". It was the excuse or apology of the white establishment. They were getting a lot of bad press and this was some kind of public relations tactic.

"The city council of the city of Selma in Dallas county recognizing the seriousness of the present situation in this community do affirm unanimously a belief in law and order."

Belief in law and order is code language for segregation.

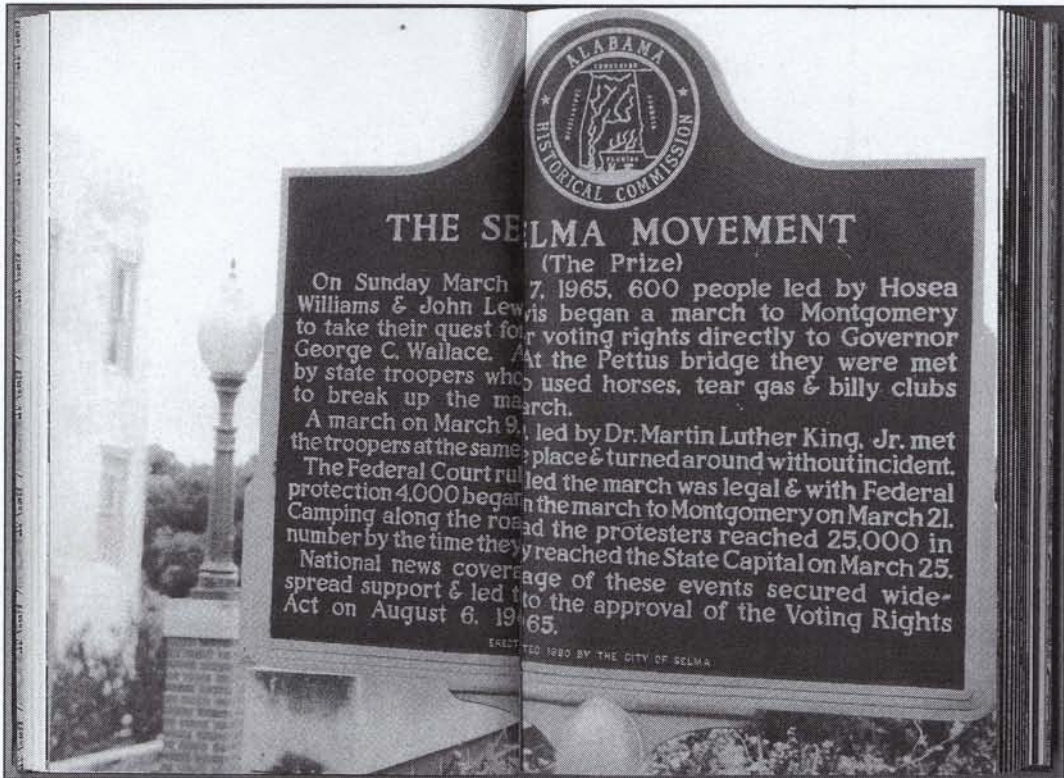
"Each of us strenuously oppose passage of the civil rights act of 1964, being mindful of the consequences to our community. We are confident that the overwhelming majority of our citizens believe with us that law and order must prevail and that there can be no other solution to this problem. However strong the provocation, calmness and self restraint by each of us is the greatest protection for all concerned in this time of crisis."

Get back to your shanties!

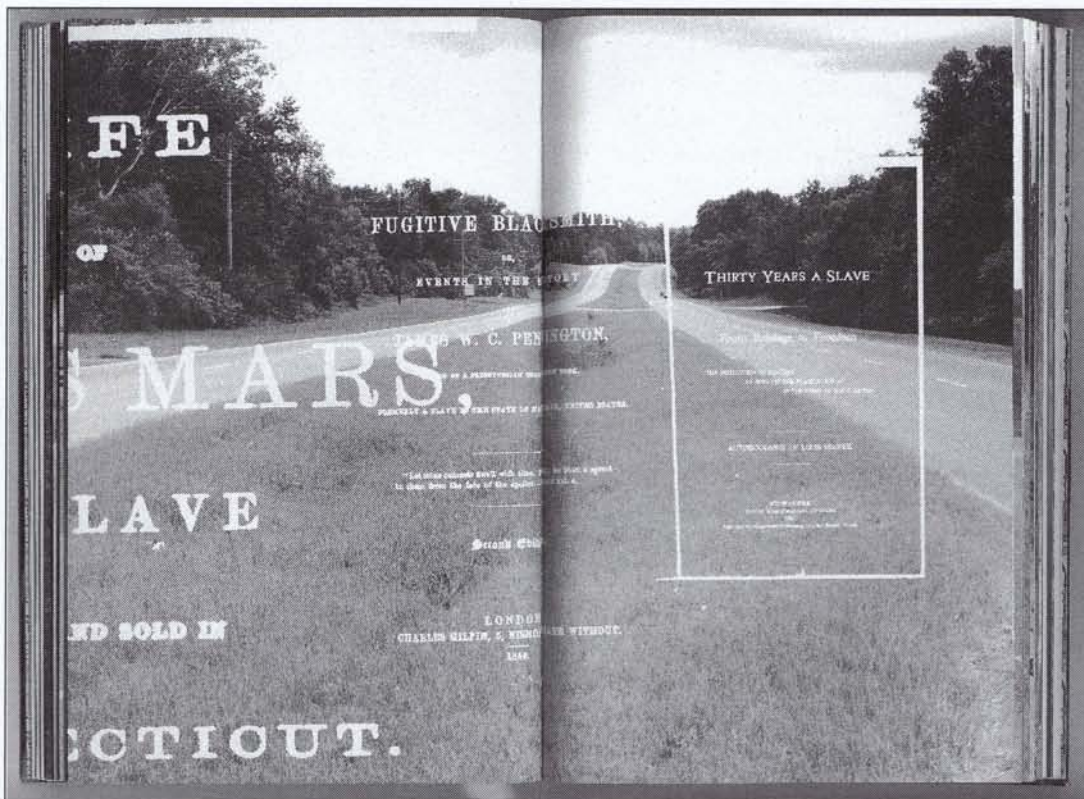
"We sincerely and earnestly recommend this course for the whole community with the heartfelt conviction that it is the best course at this time for the entire city and county."

What is so interesting is that the mayor of Selma at that time, Smitherman, is still the mayor of Selma. Things just don't change that fast.

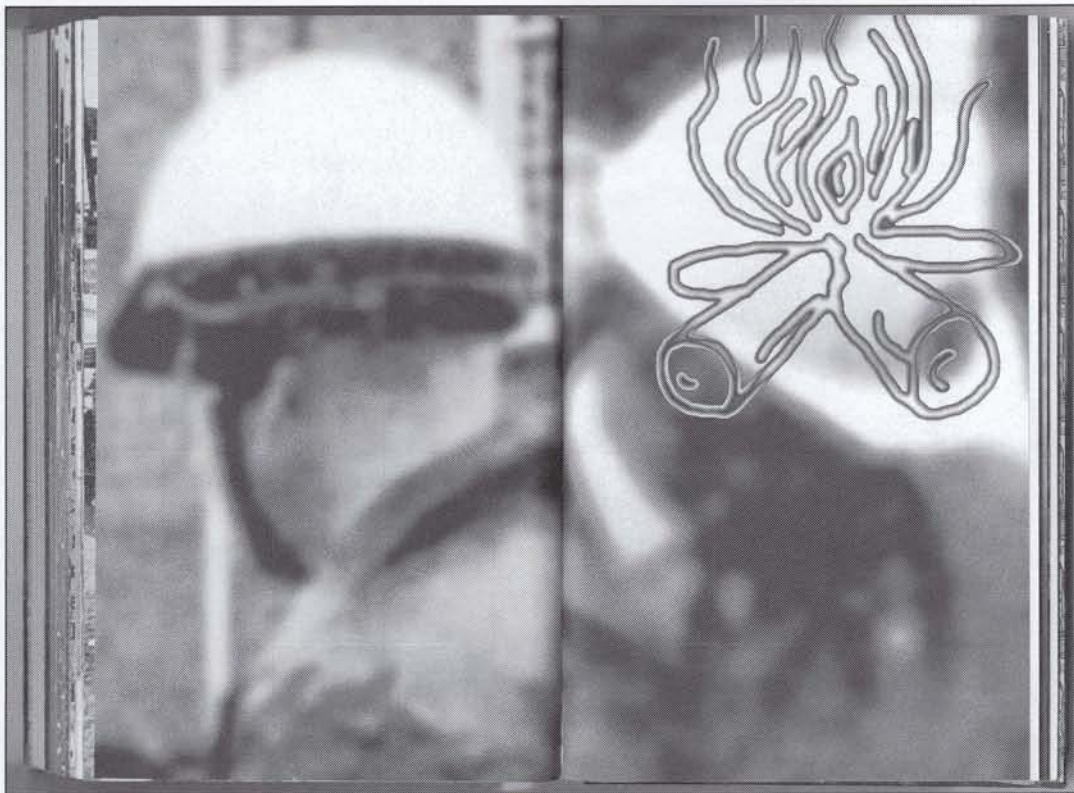
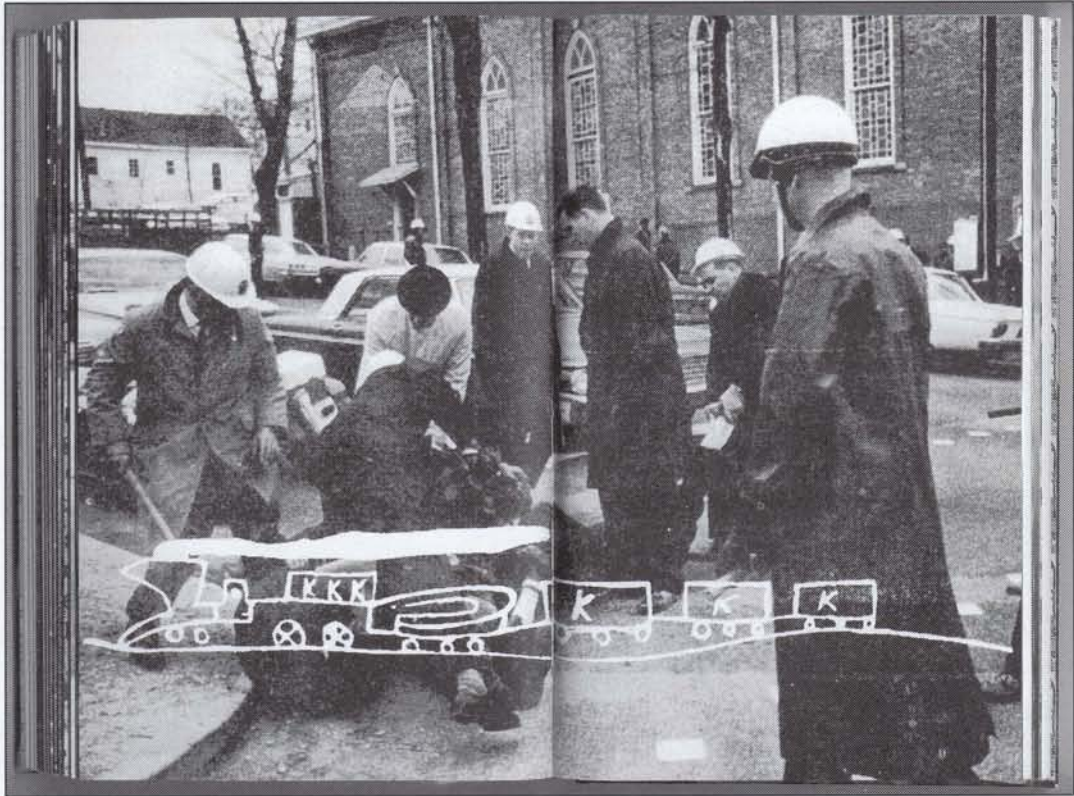
In the book the road is drawing closer to Montgomery and I thought of Montgomery as being the locus of the white resistance. That's where George Wallace was [governor of Alabama]. I reproduced the white press accounts of the march. The text floats above the images. They claimed that it was a lawless act. There were some funny quotes too, for instance, *"There has been no lynching or hanging in Dallas county in the last fifty years,"* - that from one of the city council members. Then another piece from the Montgomery Advertiser about why they shouldn't march on the highway. It was such transparent garbage that I felt like it deserved to be immortal-



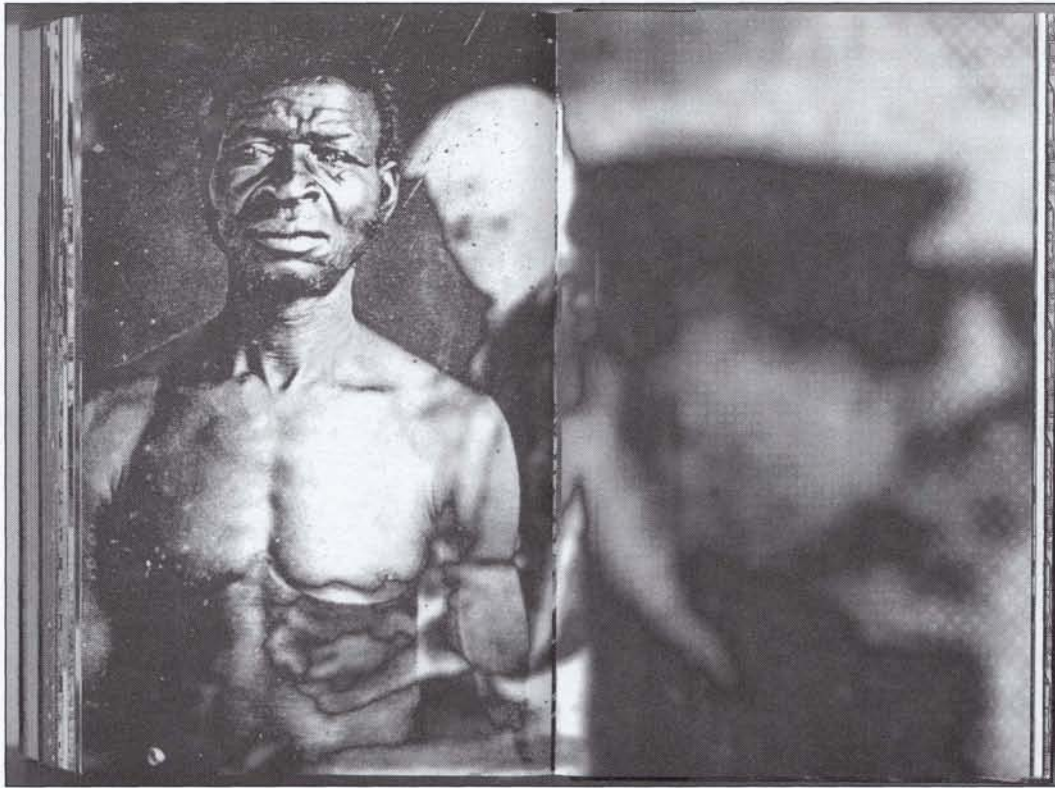
Clif Meador, Long Slow March, 1997



Clif Meador, Long Slow March, 1997



Clif Meador, **Long Slow March**, 1997, two page sequence



Clif Meador, *Long Slow March*, 1997.

contd., from page 8

ized. It's a voice that you hear over and over in the press. It's the conservative voice of fighting a rear guard action against change.

Then the road moves into the heart of Montgomery where there is a great architectural irony. The church where Martin Luther King, Jr. preached for years is right next to the capitol building where Jefferson Davis was sworn in as the first and only president of the Confederacy; which was the institutionalized resistance to the abolition of slavery. It's also the point at which the march terminated in front of the capitol building in Montgomery.

At this spot the book switches from two color duotones, pale gray-green, to three color printing with a much deeper, sicker green. The images are altered historical images. They don't stand as evidence of the march - they are suggestive of it. They're heavily Photoshopped. Knocked out of the image is a pictograph which is explained further on in the book. A pictographic warning that was apparently painted on somebody's house in Alabama was reproduced in a book called *A Fool's Errand*, which was about a northerner in the south in the 1880s. The inhabitants were warned by this pictograph that the Ku Klux Klan would surely do them harm if they didn't leave well enough alone. The pictographic images are floating on top of an image of state troopers barring the marchers from arriving at the foot of the capitol. I tried to make pictures that depicted the

establishment's reaction to the march. The Klan's pictographic warning is an analog to that in my mind. I wanted to make explicit what the nature of that warning was.

The following quotes are from *A Fool's Errand*.

"Do you mean to say that the old battle between freedom and slavery was not ended by the extinction of slavery?" asked the doctor in surprise.

"I suppose it would be," answered the fool with a hint of laughter in his tone, "if slavery were extinct. I do not mean to combat the old adage that it takes two to make a quarrel, but that is just where our mistake, the mistake of the north, for the south has not made one in this matter, has been. We have assumed that slavery was dead because we had a proclamation of emancipation, a constitutional amendment, and laws passed in pursuance thereof, all reciting the fact that involuntary servitude except for crimes should no more exist."

So the passage of the civil rights act, likewise, was no occasion for anything other than creating a foundation for a struggle of civil rights. The struggle continues. That would be the one line idea of this book.

The color of the book has been becoming hotter and hotter. From the neutral, cool greenish color to a more vivid green and now the opposite of green - red. The red is in a section that talks about the conflagration, at least an emotional conflagration, over

this whole issue, which was burning in the hearts of people - the fervent desire for civil rights. For centuries of injustice there should be a righting of this terrible wrong.

Now as we zoom in on Dr. King another color is added. The blue starts to neutralize the red. And this is the conclusion of the book. At the church where Dr. King preached a monument reads, "I had a dream." [The implication being that he no longer has that dream. He died for that dream.] You have to say that Dr. King's dream has not come to fruition. A failure, basically. The phrase from the famous speech on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in 1963, was, "I have a dream."

Meador's books are available from Printed Matter Bookstore at DIA, 77 Wooster St., New York, NY 10012

List of Cliff Meador's books:

Sunday at the Fort, Providence, RI, 1979
Four Cards, Providence, RI, 1980
A Short Letter to My Friends, Atlanta, GA
Landforms, Atlanta, GA, 1980
New Family, Atlanta, GA, 1981
Moments of Right Livelihood, Atlanta, GA, 1981
Similes, Atlanta, GA, 1981
Great Men of the Modern Age, Rhinebeck, NY, 1982
Cut, Rhinebeck, NY, 1983
Doom, Barrytown, NY, 1984
Pressure Vessel, Rhinebeck, NY, 1985
New Doors, Atlanta, GA, 1985
Stampland, Atlanta, GA, 1988
Rising, Converging, Atlanta, GA, 1988
You Were Traveling, Atlanta, GA, 1988
(G)reene(s), Purchase, NY, 1988
Up Cog Bridge Hope, Purchase, NY, 1988
Mighty Fortress, Purchase, NY, 1989
Anecdote of the Jar, Purchase, NY, 1989
Sea Change, Purchase, NY, 1990
Massive Infection, Purchase, NY, 1990
Testland, Purchase, NY, 1990
Foxtrot Oscar Lima Lima Yankee, Purchase, NY, 1991
Toy Soldiers, Purchase, NY, 1993
The Absent King, Purchase, NY, 1994
Alabama Railroad Mansion, Purchase, NY, 1994
A.A.A.R.P., Purchase, NY, 1994
Long Walk, Purchase, NY, 1995
Negative Books / Positive Produce, Purchase, NY, 1995
Nutritional Disease Throw Rugs, Purchase, NY, 1995
Long Slow March, Purchase, NY, 1997

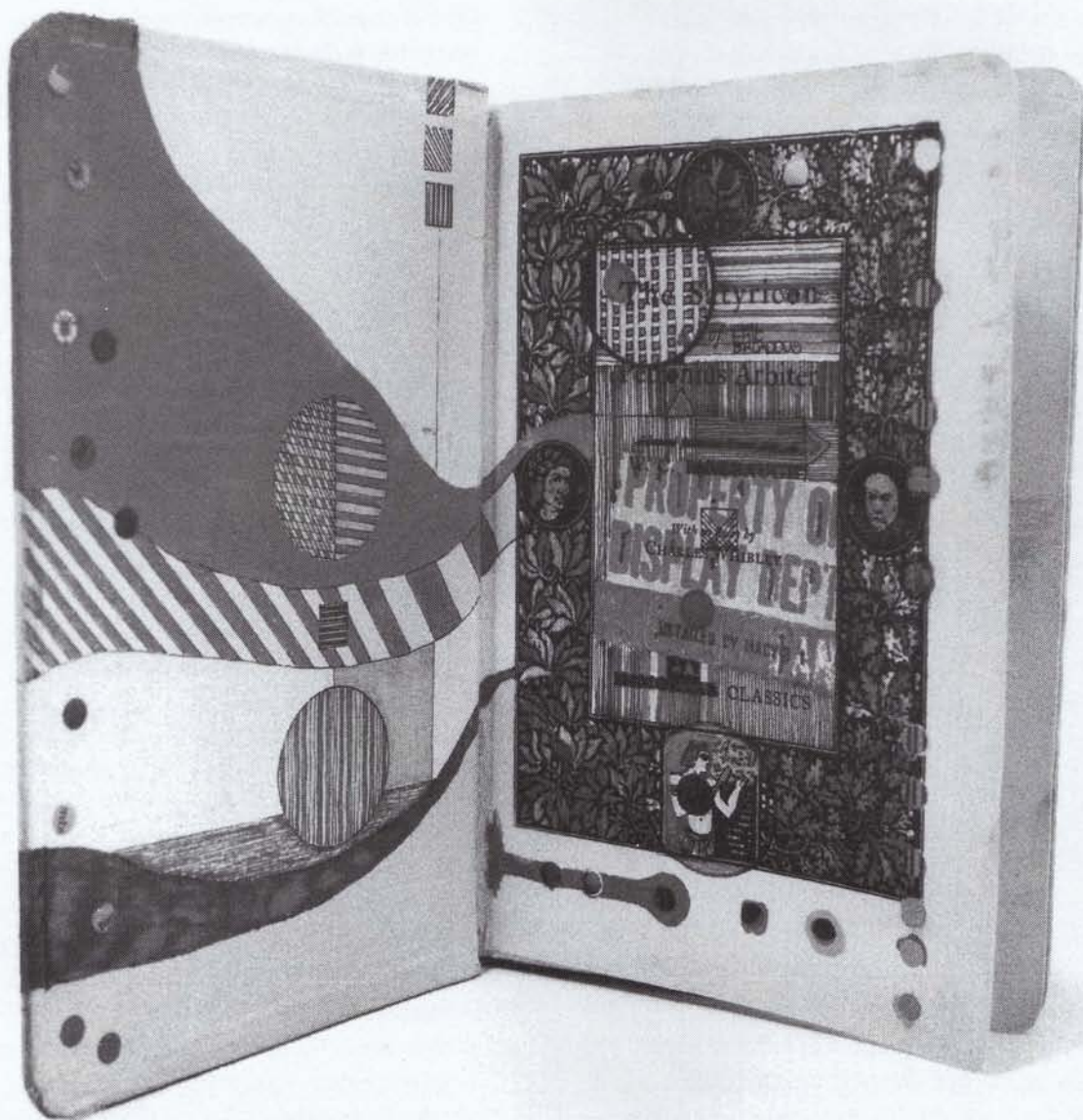
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John Eric Broaddus: A Fashioner of Books

Renée Riese Hubert and Judd D. Hubert

A painter by profession, a costume designer and masquerader on occasion, Broaddus owes his fame mainly to the books he produced between 1973 and 1990, the year of his death. Apart from **Sphinx and the Bird of Paradise**, published in 30 copies by the Kaldewey Press, the artist produced one-of-a-kind books, creating most of them from scratch or altering already printed and, at least on one occasion, illustrated volumes. Among his numerous productions, we have selected four to write about; two entirely hand-made volumes, **Turkestan Chronicle** and **Space Shot**, two altered books, Petronius Arbiter's **Satyricon** and a profusely illustrated book on French culture, **France I**. We feel, however, that a few brief comments on **Sphinx and the Bird of Paradise** may provide a useful introduction to his art insofar as his one and only multiple somehow bridges the gap between fashion design and bookwork.

Published by Kaldewey Press, **Sphinx and the Bird of Paradise**, Broaddus's "livre de peintre" appeared in an edition of 20 + 5 copies. The graphics consist of "color xerox" and cut-outs. Some pages have paste-ons, a procedure quite foreign to his one-of-a-kind-books, at least those we have seen. In keeping with the impressive style typical of most "livres de peintre", the book's large format allows considerable room for the artist's numerous cut-outs and the color xeroxes. However, compared to **Space Shot** and **Turkestan Chronicle**, the images appear somewhat diluted perhaps because the artist felt more at ease in dealing with lesser formats. The colored graphics feature animals, mainly cows, and costumed people, notably the "saint" produced and performed by none other than the artist in the late seventies. Actually, these fancy costumes reflect Broaddus's performance art at about the time he turned in earnest to bookwork. Paradoxically, both the sphinx and the bird of paradise remain noticeably absent from Broaddus's amply populated zoo! Unlike the Kaldewey volume - the artist's only multiple - the sphinx may well have enjoyed a kind of uniqueness despite its multifarious representations in Egypt and Greece, whereas birds of paradise may not even figure on the list of endangered species. Because both the imaginary monster and the spectacular passerine from New Guineau remain as invisible as the text itself, the title and, for that matter, the book become more and more enigmatic. Perhaps Broaddus has simply ventured a sardonic comment on the banality and precariousness of present day existence, so far removed from paradise and myths. But he may also have had in mind costuming, suggested by the spectacular feathers of birds of paradise, and disguise, characteristic of the



John Eric Broadus, *Satyricon*, 1973

ambiguous and inscrutable sphinx, often represented as a winged monster half woman and half lion. But there remains another possibility: sphinx moths and birds-of-paradise flowers. However, Broadus wrote *Sphinx* and not the sphinx in his title. As a result, the sphinx becomes a name character in an unwritten fable rather than the representative of a deadly species. As a matter of fact, *Sphinx* shows greater accuracy than "the sphinx" insofar as we can hardly label this imaginary personage, unlike that one-at-a-time bird, the Phoenix, a species. But we may perhaps identify *Sphinx* with the author, a maker of spells and riddles who in his one-of-a-kind books metamorphosed the very idea of a codex.

The title of *Turkestan Chronicle* appears at the end of the volume, provided we consider the brightly colored geological relief map with its square window as the front cover. If *France I* gives any indication, the windowed front

binding of *Turkestan* rather than its flat back marks the true beginning, for the profusion of colors and cut-outs abates and almost disappears toward the end. Read in reverse, the chronicle would start rather sparsely but soon reach a sustained profusion, climaxed in the embossed and windowed cover. The word "chronicle" in the title evokes the journal of a voyage recounting day to day sights and events. But we can hardly account for the book in terms of a time-bound narrative for it contains no other texts than the title and the author's name, situated, so to speak, "fuori muri," while the graphics consist entirely of abstractions accountable in terms of intensity rather than representation. Moreover, painting, the dominant medium, as well as sculpture and architecture, both of them present because of the numerous cut-outs, windows, and reversible perspectives, have very little to do with a chronicle apart from the reader's ingrained habit of assuring

progression and continuity simply by turning the pages. But perhaps we can regard the book as a gallery of paintings where the gallery manifests its omnipresence as building and display center through, and by means of, the various cut-out spaces. Indeed, viewers can freely move back and forth according to the direction in which they turn the leaves. In this respect, **Turkestan Chronicle** has much in common with the angled vistas of the Frankfurt Museum of Contemporary Art which advantageously displays itself in the act of exhibiting its collections.

Although we may interpret **Turkestan Chronicle** as recording a take-over of the library world by the fine arts—by painting, sculpture, and architecture—we may also regard it in more modest terms as the dressing or costuming of a book. Broaddus, indeed, had acquired notoriety thanks to the fanciful as opposed to fashionable costumes he designed; and, as we have already intimated, his **Sphinx and the Bird of Paradise** features colorful costumes, many of them displayed by the artist himself in the course of highly theatrical "happenings". Unlike his paintings and his books, his imaginative clothing belongs to performance art. In any case, alterations, cut-outs, and the bold matching of colors in his bookwork take on additional meanings because of his abiding concern with costume design. Far from destroying volumes, he dresses them in the most exquisite finery.

From the front cover on, the incredible color display with its ever renewed designs and spatial incisions strongly suggests that this book discourages and even defies reproduction. Moreover, it avoids any sort of repetition. Because of the predominance of mixed as opposed to primary colors, we can hardly reduce its luminous scale to tried if not true moral and psychological clichés. When we open the book, we might view the adjoining left and right sides as modified extensions of one another and point to their well-balanced similarities; but we can hardly make the same sort of claim when we compare the back and front of the same leaf which show few signs of kinship or continuity. Even the cut-out voids that each side inevitably shares completely change their appearance by associating with different color patterns and cut-out shapes. Merely by turning the page, the reader discovers a new world. Taken individually and, so to speak, out of context the various pages rarely present a unified vision because of the deliberate juxtaposition of unrelated color patterns, all of them painted, but producing the illusion that the artist has glued together various qualities of paper so as to form a collage.

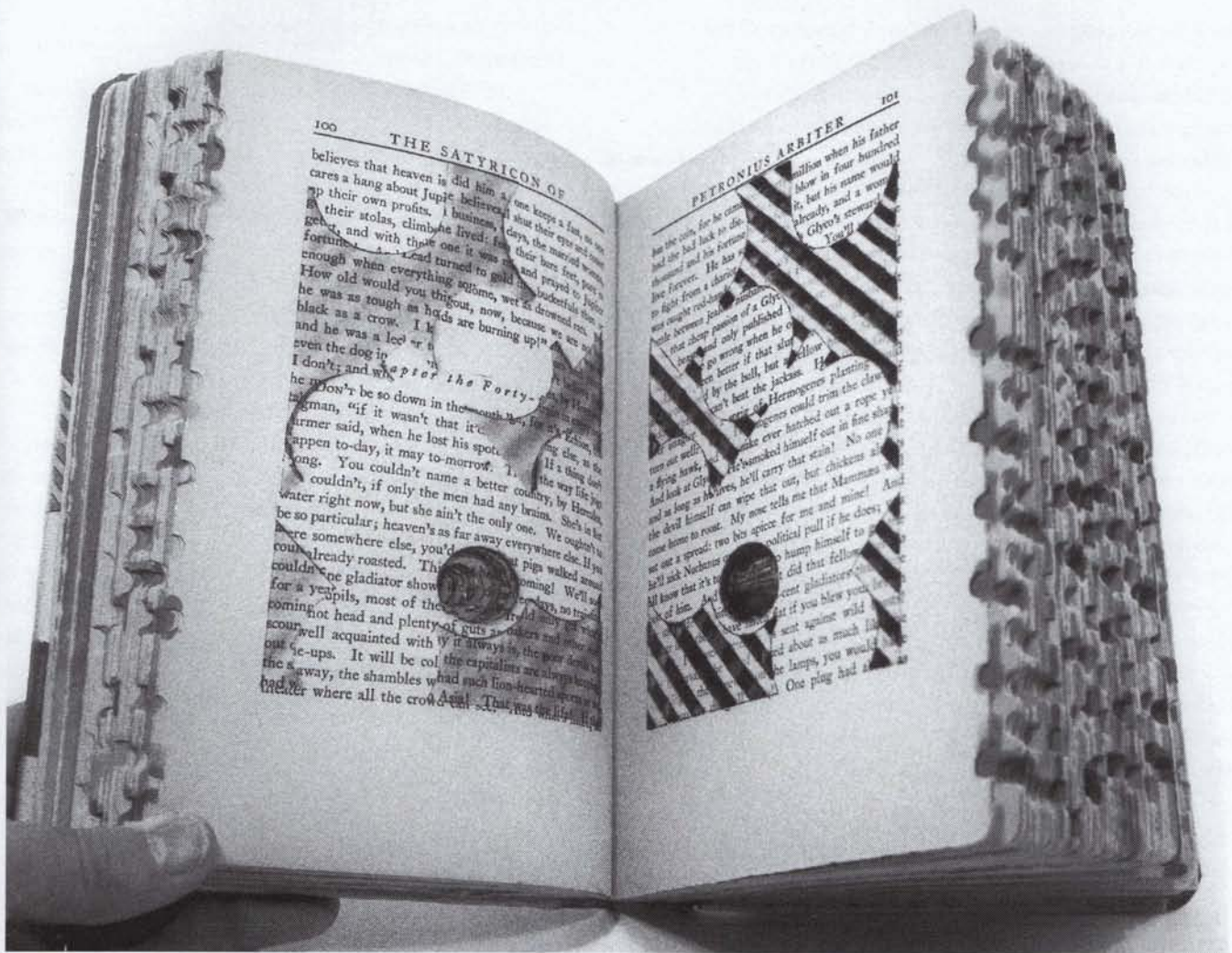
No less than the painted patterns, the angular and circular cut-out windows display, whatever their shape or size, impeccable outlines. For this reason, they never appear haphazard or accidental but always display the

signs of painstaking artisanal work. These windows function in two quite different ways: in the first place, they permit or, better still, force the viewer to peer through pages instead of merely scrutinizing the uninterrupted or undisturbed spectacle of a self-sufficient picture; in the second place, they create additional patterns among the color displays of a given page. Thus, three dimensionality not only characterizes the book or gallery as a whole, but clearly marks the individual leaves. In moving from a given level—from a given page—our eyes, instead of merely viewing straightlined hollows, must retain the complexities of already registered patterns and combine them with the newly revealed layers and their opening windows.

Turkestan, the only descriptive word in the title, suggests an imaginative, if not entirely imaginary, concatenation of regions together with a medley of different epochs, peoples, and languages. It assembles in a few pages China, Mongolia, and Turkey, even more remote chronologically than spatially, together with their rich cultural associations. Lands of brightly colored rugs and exotic costumes appearing along an unending silk road produce a myriad of analogous and varying patterns. Thanks to his suggestive abstract paintings and voyeuristic windows, the artist succeeds in combining landscape with pageantry. Each page tells its own wordless story while participating, in varying degrees, in the adventures of all the others. Indeed, from the black end-paper we can glimpse a pin-point of light emanating from the square window at the beginning.

The square window framed by the ornate front cover summarizes in a single concentrated view what the book holds in stock. The opening pages extend and multiply this initial perception of several layers of shapes and colors pressing against the regular red rim of the window. Within the open book, dissonant colors flash into view, for instance stretches of intense pink followed by equally assertive patches of green or yellow. Determinedly spread across the pages, disseminated spots show the impossibility of any chance of containment. While cut-out triangles slanted at varying angles to and from each other suggest irregular motion and displacement, rigorously parallel criss-cross stripes, occupying the center of the page, provide, thanks to the support of subsequent leaves, temporary consolidation. Toward the end of the book, lighter and less concentrated scenes emerge as though to prevent the book from reaching too riotous a climax.

We may wonder to what extent we can treat as a book a bound volume containing no lettering or signs save for scattered dots devoid of context. Does such an artifact provide textuality even in the broadest or loosest sense of the term? The very notion of narrative or even of sequence seems irrelevant. It would appear that Broaddus's colorful and multipatterned book can in no way have



John Eric Broadus, *Satyricon*, 1973

a referent outside itself. We view colors and lines undergoing kaleidoscopic transformations. We can, however, treat *Turkestan Chronicle* as a book-shaped artifact at once continuous and discontinuous where each page interrelates with all the others and yet remains separate. In a sense, each page suffers from a sort of blind spot in relating to others. While shunning textuality in any form, *Turkestan Chronicle* borrows its shape, its architecture, its conventions from ordinary books. In this instance, Broadus has retained the idea of a codex instead of using an actual printed volume as in *Satyricon* and *France I*. Unlike most other book artists, he has in *Turkestan Chronicle* completely eliminated rather than simply displaced elements. The full page, where word and image usually come into their own, undergoes curtailment by means of holes and cut-outs. But how can we label such curtailment an absence or a lack? Their shapes alone create positive patterns, esthetically meaningful designs. They participate in the shifts performed on the page and throughout the book. The page itself becomes active whether in the center or at the margins. Craftsmanship makes its presence

felt everywhere, for instance in pages suggesting wallpaper and in perfectly ordered dark geometrical surfaces. Exacto knives, scissors, and other incisive instruments have left their traces in conjunction with the more painterly gesture of splashing fine dots of color.

In spite of the ever changing iconography, in spite of the emergence of incredible new color schemes and divisions, we can hardly accuse Broadus of following a random approach in the *Turkestan Chronicle*. The bas-relief front cover with its many elevations, sculptured as well as painted, and framing a square window, simulates a mountainous landscape while providing entry to the still hidden flat surfaces of the opening book. It promises depth and expansion without any trace of uniformity. Spectacle upon spectacle, cutting into each other and imbricating their contributions, become ever more more clustered and colorful. They also shift from rectangular and triangular outlines to circular and even organic shapes, from centrality to marginality. The final pages of the textless book appear lighter in color and less charged with content. Has the journey through time and space come to an end? But the

tiny hole pierced through the end-paper brings us all the way back to the beginning as though to produce a reversible closure while reminding the reader that penetrating scrutiny matters more than anything else to us in *Turkestan Chronicle*.

Like *Turkestan Chronicle*, *Space Shot*, 1987, consists of 16 leaves of Arches paper and, apart from the title and the artist's name, dispenses with textuality. And as in *Turkestan Chronicle*, Broaddus, by means of paint and incisions, so transforms the Arches sheets that they become almost unrecognizable. Indeed, the reader has the quickly dispelled illusion of viewing intricate collages, consisting in one instance of imitated ruled paper. Predominantly black and white, suggestive of typography, the pages nevertheless display a wide range of illumination and obscurity as well as regular patterns alternating and sometimes clashing with scattered spots. Nevertheless, order always manages to prevail over the inroads of chaos. The cut-outs consist of impeccable rectangles and squares forming a series of windows which, by partially overlapping with the openings on the following or preceding leaves, transform each page into an incipient three dimensional object. The interplay of flat painted surfaces and of recurring volumes contributes significantly to the architecture of the book. Early in the volume, the squares, by undergoing slight but systematic distortions, actually suggest a forward thrust into space. Later, an ambiguously shaped space shuttle, by simulating a building, momentarily provides an appearance of stasis.

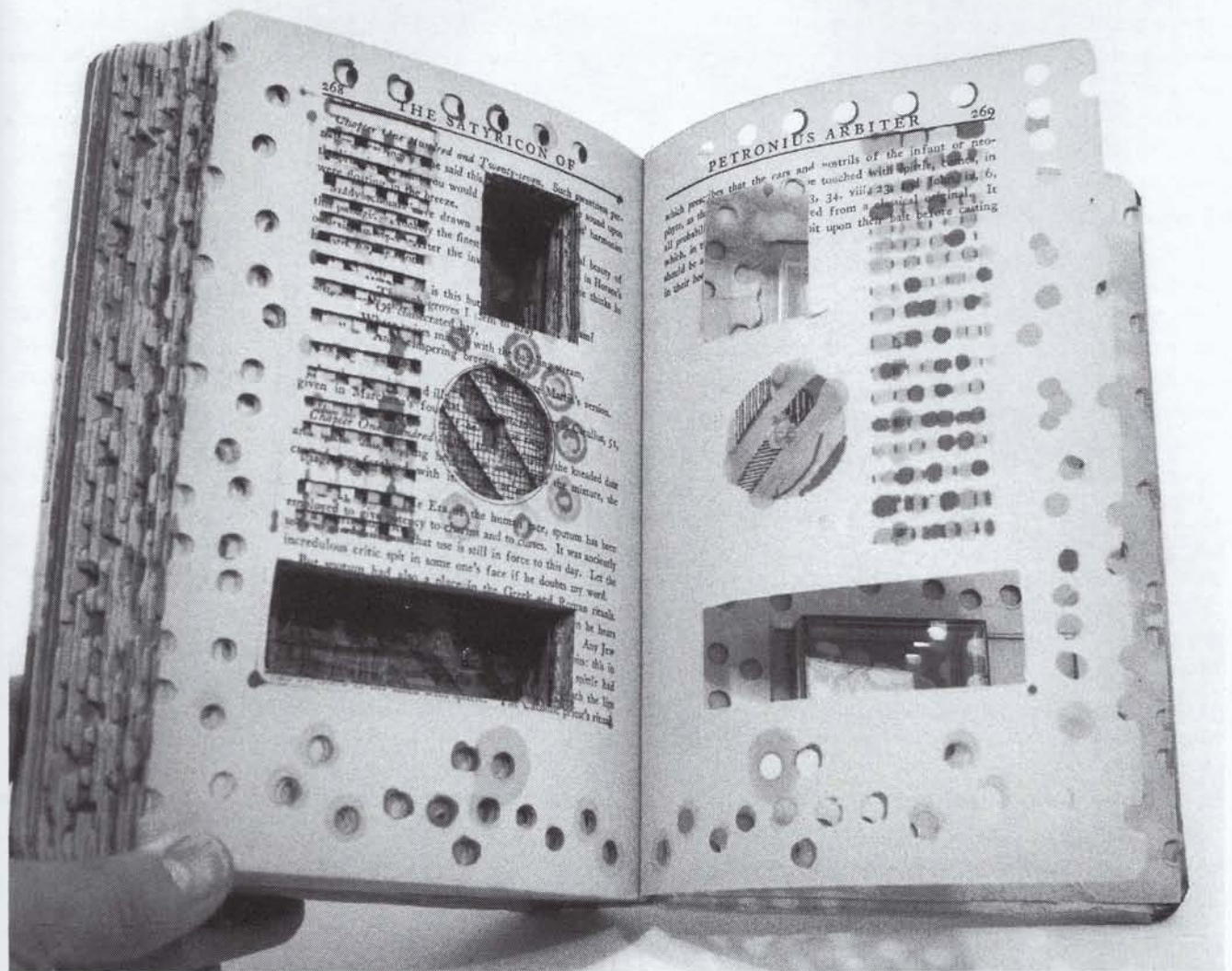
In spite of the absence of textuality, *Space Shot* suggests a plausible narrative or perhaps a set of conflicting narratives as opposed to *Turkestan Chronicle* which evokes atmospheres. Thus, the former relates more closely to fiction, the latter to the recording and ordering of experiences, imaginary of course. Perhaps the intermittent presence of a human figure invites us to discover a story within the illuminated pages particularly when we peer through the windows on each page for a preview of what will happen next. Moreover, the perception that the astronaut holds his arms glued to his body and his legs pinned together puzzles the mind. Later on, the apparently immobilized body of the protagonist becomes more flexible, harmonizing with wavy movements stimulated by curving lines made visible in sets and series. More and more clearly defined and recognizable, the astronaut detaches himself not only by leaping from the earth but also, because of his position, by jumping from the page. The partially cut out figure can swing with the leaf in contrast with the gigantic profiled head, perhaps that of the artist, firmly imbedded on the following page. If the astronaut should make good his escape, the profiled head would nonetheless remain imprisoned forever and the reader would still

fail to move freely within an inextricable labyrinth of entrances and exists.

In keeping with a space voyage, rigorously precise geometrical shapes prevail except when, on two occasions, the astronaut begins to float through space. Introduced on the very first page, this astronaut, as we have stated, makes his figurative presence felt throughout the volume, for we view his emplacement within the space ship rather than the craft itself. Contained at first by the space machine, he eventually becomes its container, and except for a page situated toward the middle of the book, where his emplacement in the machine assumes the shape of a sarcophagus, he succeeds in maintaining a distance between himself and the craft until his final departure, perhaps for a dreamlike floatation in space. In spite of its rigorous geometry, the space shot, according to the most optimistic scenario, serves as a means to attain a purely oneiric end and fulfill a pleasing fantasy. In addition to its instrumental function, the space ship, or rather the astronaut's emplacement within it, would, according to this scenario, provide costuming, one of Broaddus's favorite occupations, as a sort of preliminary to his wish-fulfilling flight through space.

The reader, at his or her own risk, might also derive from the book a more threatening account based on various mythologies, for instance the Fall according to Genesis, but with no Eve in sight! Or, better still, the reader might invoke the fall of Lucifer according to Milton, or perhaps the fall of Icarus according to classical mythology even though nocturnal darkness has replaced Apollo's burning shafts. Ambiguity manifests itself not only in the possibility of translating the images and especially the cut-outs into conflicting narratives, but in the title itself. By entitling his book *Space Shot* rather than, let us say, "Space Launch," the artist suggests photography; and indeed, several of the mainly black and white plates suggest camera work in spite of the predominance of painting and, because of the cut-outs, sculpture as well as architecture. Moreover, the frequent use of silver suggests silver prints while the hole traversing the entire book and moving from a square to a pinpoint evokes a lens. In any case, *Space Shot*, adorned with a plethora of stars—with the Milky Way—deals most succinctly with mankind's perplexed presence in the universe.

Broaddus did not immediately create from scratch his own books. Indeed, his first full-scale venture into bookwork consisted in altering an already published volume: a second-hand copy from a modestly priced edition of Petronius Arbiter's *Satyricon*. We may wonder whether he knew in 1973 of Tom Phillips' *A Humument*, completed in its initial version that very year, but that had appeared in installments since 1970. Broaddus does not go as far as



John Eric Broadus, *Satyricon*, 1973

Phillips who, in altering *A Human Document* by means of paint and erasure, sparingly used the words of the original text to create his own narrative. Actually, Broadus, who never showed the same concern for texts as the British artist, more often than not produced, as we have seen, pristine volumes quite devoid of words. The *Satyricon* provided him, nonetheless, with a new medium situated at a place favoring the closest encounters of typography, painting, and sculpture. As a result, his altered volumes appear at once old and new, traditional and subverted. Unlike Phillips, who devoted his efforts to transforming again and again a single novel, Broadus appropriated a wide variety of texts, ranging from a classical novel to an informative book on French culture and a scientific journal. In the latter two instances, he had to force not only words, but also images, to function in a purely esthetic environment that their authors could never have foreseen.

Though not an illustrated book, Petronius' *Satyricon* provides a particularly meaningful example whether we look at the Roman narrative with its precocious picaresque

features or at Broadus's restructured pages. The artist chose for his ministrations the 1927 reprint of this classical text, boasting of a preface and a learned introduction. The ordinary paper of this inexpensive edition fails, of course, to live up to the imaginative displays featured in the text. Broadus's bright colors and sharp cut-outs close this gap while making the text, which scarcely remains visible through radiant color screens, quite unreadable. Nor does Broadus attempt to provide visual equivalents of, or referents to, the checkered careers of Petronius's characters. Nor can we claim that the artist enhances the subject matter of the book for he uses the pages to display his own sequences, to build his own continuities or discontinuities.

In confronting the paper surface, treated both as a canvas and as plastic material, he relies on complementary techniques: the application of bright colors covering the printed text so as to produce a painterly display and the multiplication of architectural features by strategically incising the page. Through both color and form a new order arises and the various elements of book production

unwittingly provide a basis and an outlet. Occasionally he leaves a page almost untouched so that the violent glow of the following page with its repetitive horizontal or vertical lines will impose itself all the more intensely. In fact, the brightly colored lines assault the viewer by their blatant visuality, aided and abetted in this endeavor by the cut outs and the punched holes. Broaddus succeeds in transforming the page and displacing conventional uniformity by means of straight lines—a few bent ones occur toward the end—excisions and punctures forming together intricate patterns. This abundance of lines, colors, and voids remains under strict control while nevertheless displaying undeniably explosive qualities.

Thus, Broaddus alters the book by adding striking unadulterated colors and by carefully subtracting parts of pages. Little holes, exiguous areas of absence, disseminate their geometrial shapes over the page. Their order, their presence, and their density vary from leaf to leaf. Punching holes may render the page defective, although in stationery it usually provides a gateway toward order. Broaddus, of course, subverts such utilitarian practices. By providing the viewer with glimpses of another page, the punched holes and cut-outs disrupt the continuity of the volume, for, in addition to progressing by turning the pages, the viewer moves through them. Broaddus has arranged voyeuristic marriages between the two sides of each leaf without infringing on its autonomy or radically modifying its shape. While providing a multiplicity of visual patterns, the cut-out sections of the page and even the small punched holes function as windows permitting the reader to have access to several pages simultaneously. By leading to repeated interaction, these coordinated viewings render the otherwise fixed images unstable and allow them to generate motion.

In the *Satyricon* alone, perhaps because of the poor quality of the paper, Broaddus makes use of clear adhesive tape so as to modify the sizes of the rectangular openings and evoke the transparency reminiscent of window panes. But the presence of tape in this metamorphosis of an old book into a new one ironically suggests a temporary repair job rather than professional restoration. Moreover, punched holes and tape suggest secretarial activities rather than artistic techniques and procedures. Detracting from the very idea of craftsmanship, they point to the make-shift practices of some, but by no means all, pop artists. Because punching holes and pasting belong on the same level as the ordinary paper of the edition selected, we somehow feel that Broaddus may have engineered a clash between low brow and high brow art—between tinkering and cheapness on the one hand, and the assertion of uniqueness on the other.

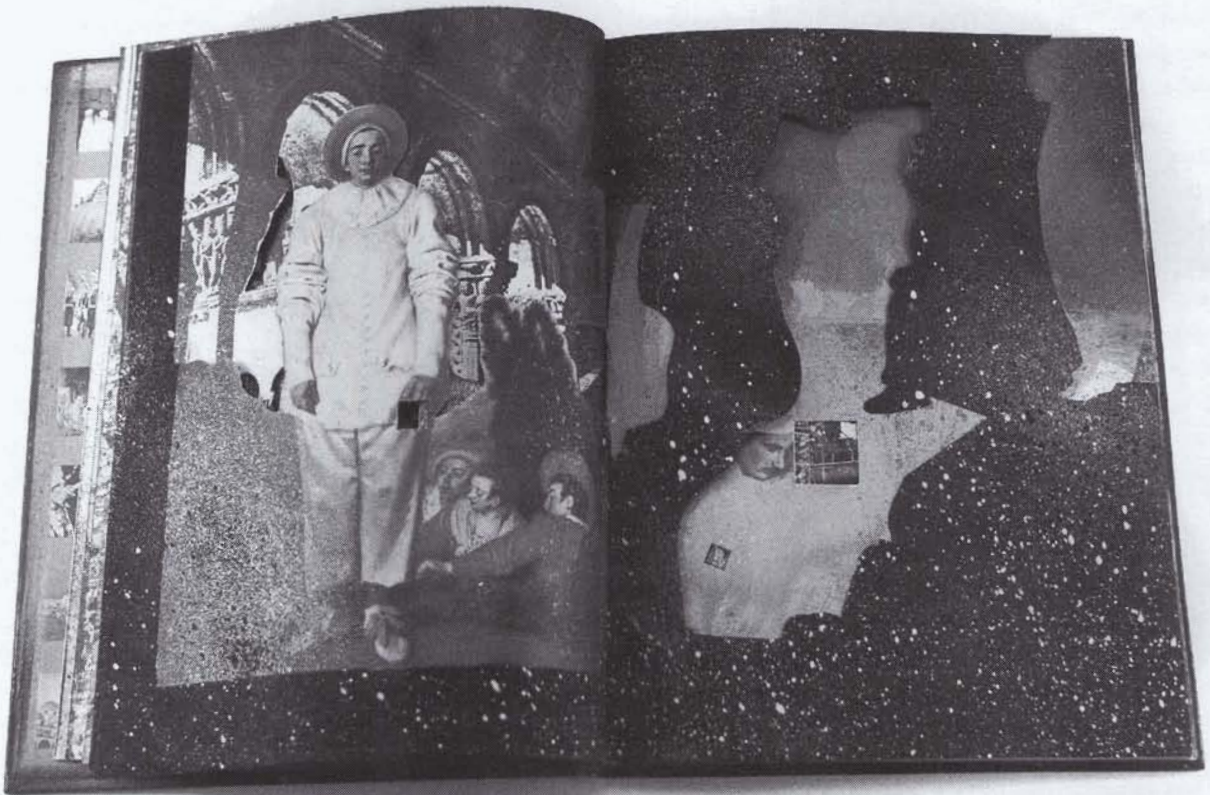
Several pages bear a stamp stating that "this book is

the property of the display department". Broaddus insists once more on the idea of appropriation in much the same way that he reverses the notions of old and new. This repeated formula also provides a proper designation for a book which alternatively displays and hides texts. At the end of the volume, two little plastic containers house a miniature pair of spectacles and the circular confetti of punched out holes. Thus, he gives a new meaning to the tiny clipped out pieces of paper by preserving them as remnants ready for recycling if not as relics of martyred leaves. Taken out of context from the standpoint of their usual fulfilling function, they can henceforth exist as art, because of their newly acquired uselessness.

By contesting in different ways the fixity of the page, the punched out holes on the pages and the confetti in the box introduce the notion of scattering, of casual dissemination as opposed to the order established by the architectural structures we have outlined. The transgressive spectacles beheld in turning the pages add transparencies to transparencies, windows to windows while designating boundaries and combining viewer and vision. On the back cover of the book we read *Memoirs of a Dragonfly* as though the episodic progression of the *Satyricon* had undergone a total metamorphosis. The title of the book fails to appear on the front cover, supplied by Broaddus as a replacement for the original binding. Thanks to a colorful design, Broaddus has appropriated the book before the reader has a chance to open it and discover its subject matter. By this shift of titles, the artist displaces and reverses standard practices and, in so doing, reasserts his freedom.

Housed in an old fashioned metal case, functioning perhaps in the manner of Pandora's unsettling box, the manipulated object combines protection with imprisonment. The box has its own window: a glass pane which, when rubbed with a cloth, enlivens the dormant punched paper circles and entices them to dance. Thus, the artist has recourse to a new magic trick in giving more life to the altered book which a rare brushstroke or a waving line had preserved from lifeless regularity. He has intermittently made himself present before reaching the final signature.

Broaddus altered *France I* fairly late in his career. Unlike *Satyricon*, *France I*—the first in a series of volumes describing various lands and peoples—contains not only informative texts but a wealth of illustrations displaying aspects of French sites, art, culture, and customs. A well-known literary scholar, John C. Lapp, the book's editor, practically guarantees its pedagogical reliability. Altering such a volume must have presented the artist with a formidable task, for instead of covering up, decorating, and cutting out regularly ordered letterpress, he had to deal with texts sharing page space with illustration and photographic



displays, many in full color. Whereas in *Turkstan Chronicle*, which also involves geography and history, he had a free hand, in *France I* he had to conquer and occupy the territory both strategically and tactically. *France I* stands out as Broaddus's most ambitious project for not only did he have to meet head on traditional practices in manufactured books, but he also had to assert his own creative methods against an impressive array of consecrated artifacts.

As Broaddus does not seek to clarify, embellish, or improve upon the informative texts and images of *France I*, we might describe his aggressive relationship with the volume as metaphorical or, more precisely, epiphorical. In relating to *France I*, he sets against the discontinuities inevitable in such all-encompassing "guidebooks" a continuity all his own. We might even say that he spreads his easily recognizable signature over the entire volume, which, from a book partly devoted to commenting on various artistic genres, metamorphoses into an art object combining, like *Turkstan Chronicle*, painting, sculpture, and architecture.

In altering *France I* both by addition and subtraction, Broaddus produces clashes between otherwise unrelated arts and unsuspected interrelations among various aspects of French life. Because the alterations taken in their entirety function contrapuntally, these clashes acquire a pleasing musical quality rather than the disturbing associations characteristic of, let us say, pop art. Thus, Broaddus's harmonies transcend the instructive ordering of the textbook from which they derive. For that reason, we can reasonably suggest that not only has he altered the book, but France and the French as well in terms of his own creative approach.

The book opens with a picture of the Arc de Triomphe du Caroussel, cut-out within the arch so as to form a doorway or window giving simultaneous access to French civilization and to Broaddus's privately ordered universe. A broad black band covering the bottom of the page suggests the reversal of the military triumphs commemorated on the Arc as opposed to the artist's more peaceful conquests, for instance, on the other side of the leaf, a bright self-referential abstraction. An aerial view of Ile de la Cité follows. Broaddus has cut out the river on both sides of the island, leaving intact only the bridges. It so happens that, on the other side of the leaf, the cut-outs produce harmonious patterns within a blue abstraction ever so lightly overcoating the book's table of contents. As in *Turkstan Chronicle*, cut-outs produce completely different effects when viewed from opposite sides of the leaf. Johanna Drucker has discussed this feature. In *France I*, however, the cut-outs derive much of their evocative power from the amputated photographs and letterpress. Thus, the

artist has added negation and deprivation to absence.

By cutting away large sections of pages, Broaddus, either with malice aforethought or "hasard objectif," establishes astonishing connections between well-known monuments as well as between them and his own imaginative creations. And this technique, present throughout the volume, brings epiphoric relationships to new heights. Thanks to the proximity of shapes and colors, the cut-out itself can now and again function as a monument in its own right. By clever cutting, a cute photograph showing children observing an artist drawing, it would seem, their portraits, metamorphoses on the other side of the leaf into a gigantic statue consisting of Watteau's famous Arlequin partly framed within a dark blue Broaddus abstraction. On another page, the exiguous heads of two (no doubt) famous chefs and an isolated arm emerge from a remarkably complex abstract painting unfortunately invisible to them.

The book reaches a climax in the treatment of "la Place de l'Etoile." By systematically cutting out all the radiating avenues, Broaddus has generated, starting with the reverse side of the leaf, a series of concentric abstractions. In this particular instance the alterations not only derive from, but, to a certain extent, duplicate in another medium the radiating effect contrived by Baron Haussmann and his architects. The other side of the cut-out leaf shows an almost perfect circle, repeated in ever diminishing sizes on the following four leaves which relate only indirectly to the originating Place de l'Etoile, which has thus triggered a systematic displacement from the real Paris to an essentially formal universe. Once the circles have abated, the book tries once again to assert its useful presence, but without really diminishing encroachments by the artist. A map of France showing by accumulations of dots population densities in various regions manages to blend in with Broaddus's well known propensity to disseminate spots and splashes of color throughout his abstractions. One of the last alterations features, on one side of the leaf, the cut-out portrait of Madame de Pompadour and, on the other, the front of the Roman theater in Orange together with an expanse of water and a monumental statue. Surrounded by one of Broaddus's most compelling abstractions consisting of colored splashes against a black background, this assemblage, by creating a fairyland effect, lands us in another world. Thus, in *France I*, Broaddus may very well have produced the ultimate surreal book.

By combining abstract painting with a profusion of geometrical cuts, Broaddus has produced books unlike any others. In fact, they may have more in common with imaginative literary works such as Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*. Nonetheless, we might establish a connection, as we already have, to Tom Phillips or even draw par-

allels with Tim Ely and Terry Braunstein. Indeed, *Turkestan* deals as carefully with a fantastic geography as Ely in mapping out imaginary spaces while his sculptural cuts offer some similarities with Braunstein's sculptured book alterations, which, in a somewhat different manner, allow the reader to penetrate into the volume.

Judd D. and Renée Riese Hubert are professors emeritus at the University of California, Irvine.

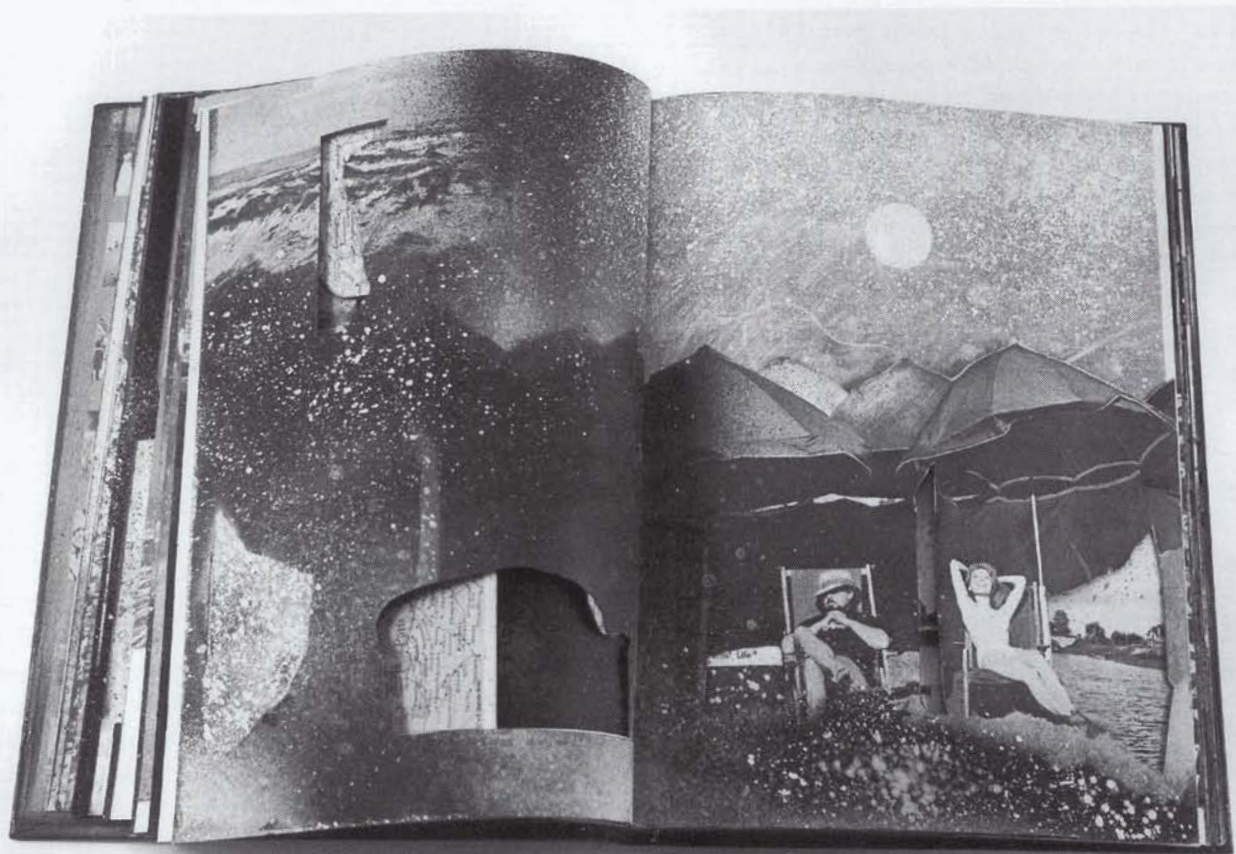
Works consulted:

Drucker, Johanna. *The Century of Artists' Books*. New York: Granary Books, 1995.

Spin 1/2: *Books, Paintings and Memorabilia* by John Eric Broaddus. New York: Center for the Book Arts, 1990.

Stackel, I. M. "Conversing with Artist John Eric Broaddus." *Fiberarts*, September, 1984.

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John Eric Broaddus, *France I*, n.d. mid 1980s

Date: Fri, 7 Feb 1997 21:27:55 -0500 (EST)

From: SGard@aol.com

Subject: bad girls for brad

Brad-

Sorry this lost all the italics and formatting in the translation to email—

Is this OK? Do you want me to change anything?

Sally

In the LIFE
Portrait of a Modern Sex-deviant
Sally Gardner

At first glance, **In the LIFE, Portrait of a Modern Sex-deviant** appears to be an old issue of **LIFE** magazine from the '70's or before when the format was larger than now. Wording on the cover and in the credits reveal the "magazine" to be a lesbian-theme parody of **LIFE**, presumably created by lesbians ("We Are Everywhere", and "Finger In The Dyke Productions").

The fifteen pages that follow contain a photo-essay and article (layout and writing style in the manner of **LIFE**) entitled "A Day in the Life of a Bull-dyke." The first spread has a huge picture of a woman with closely cropped hair, sitting in men's underwear on a bed, with a naked woman asleep behind her. The caption reads,

"6:45 A.M. The day begins, like so many before, in a strange girl's bed with a smoke. As the plumes curl around her, Sally (or Sal as she likes to be called) contemplates the 24 hours to come."

The photos and text in the remaining pages are presented as a chronological narrative of Sal's day, and include social and biological explanations of the lesbian lifestyle from the perspective of the non-gay onlooker / narrator.

The execution of the parody is done exceptionally well. The overall design is striking, the photos are gritty, journalistic-style snapshots of Sal's life, and the writing is snappy and smart, recreating the glib writing style from **LIFE**. The use of a parody of **LIFE**, though, serves a specific purpose in the argument of the piece as it becomes a depiction of society's generalizations about lesbians.

Although it is entertaining, **Portrait of a Modern Sex-Deviant** transcends the danger of cliché by mingling the predictable misconceptions about lesbians, with articulate and more-realistic-sounding quotes (quips, actually) from Sal.

"Gynecologists also report that the lesbian has larger-than-average sexual organs, accounting for her almost constant state of arousal."

Then, as Sal is donning a man's suit and a fake

beard in order to go cruising (successfully) for straight women, she has this to say,

"The tradition of women 'passing' as men doesn't mean we want to be men. It means we want male privilege: in a word, equality. Cross-dressing also points to the superficiality and absurdity of gender role definitions. The fact that I can put on male signifiers so easily, and as a result be treated so differently, proves that gender is a set of constructed codes used to blatantly disenfranchise the female class."

There is irony in the fact that Sal is a more interesting and complete character than the article's fictional author seems capable of comprehending. This lapse in credibility between the voice of society and Sal's voice seems to be the point of this whole piece, in other words, that society is clueless about lesbians while its worst fears might be true. But that this message comes autobiographically from a group of naughty girls in Winnipeg makes **Portrait of a Sex Deviant** a wicked delight.

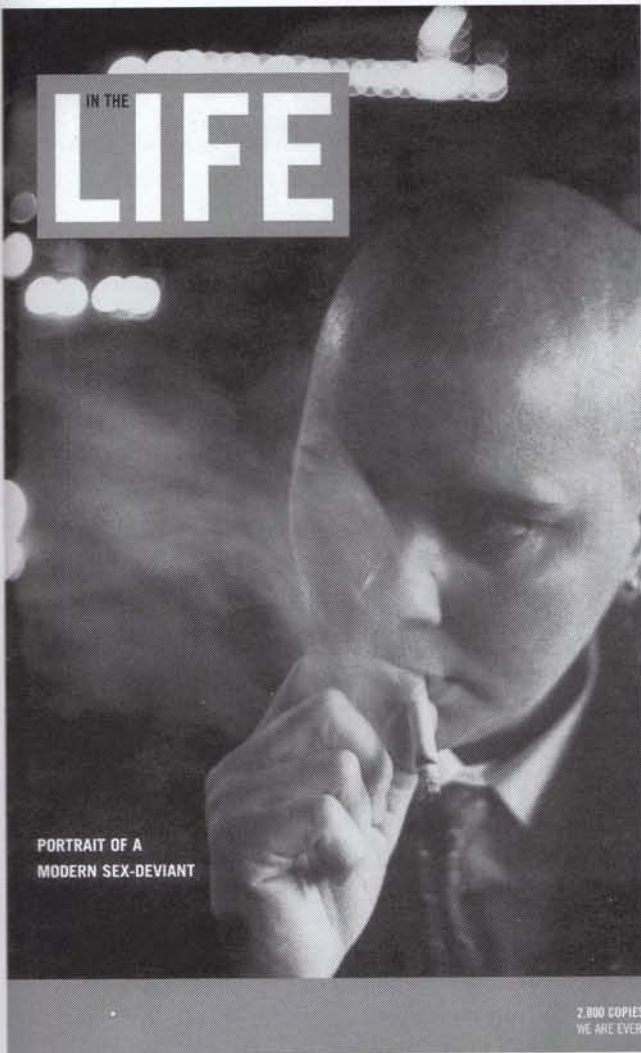
In the LIFE, Portrait of a Modern Sex-deviant is available at Printed Matter Bookstore at DIA, 77 Wooster St., NYC, 10012

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●-----JAB BOOK PICK-----●

Lucy Soutter, **ART THEORY MADE ME CRY: AN ANECDOTAL THEORY BOOK**, 1995

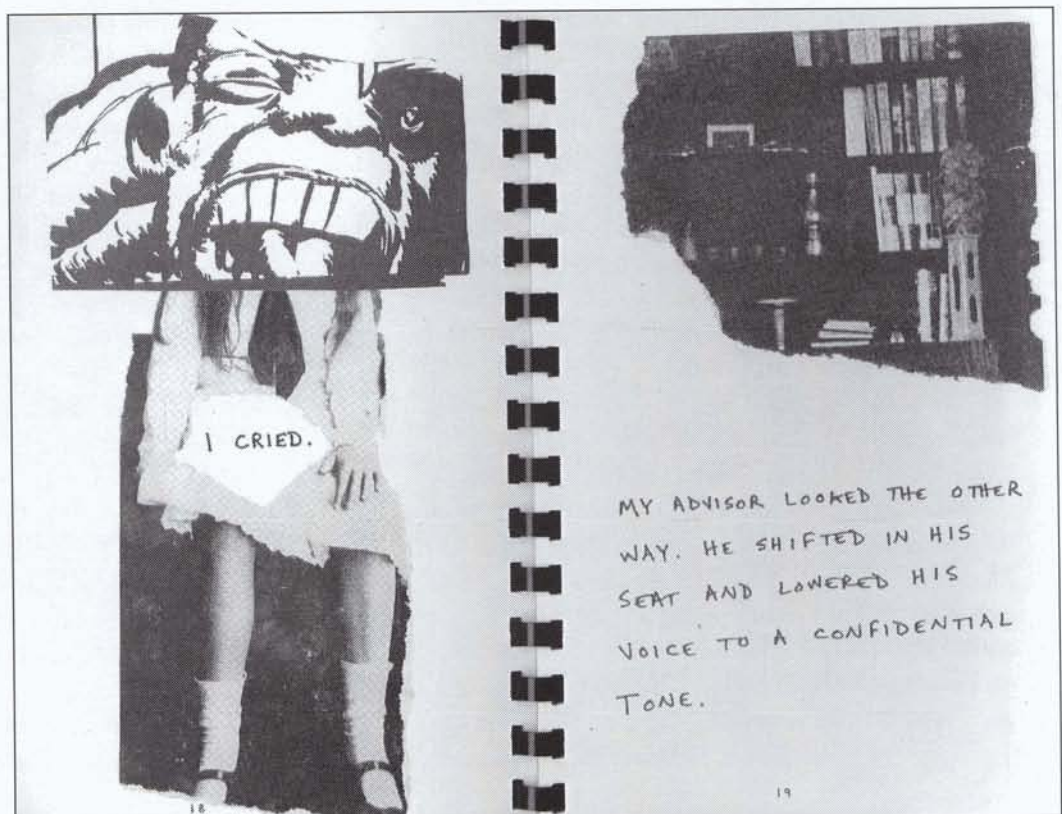
One great thing about this book is that the title contains all the issues and contradictions in the whole work but doesn't give them all away. This is a poignant, smart, funny piece about the discrepancies between being an artist and having "art" presented in its contemporary critical guises. The title gives plenty of clues about the split between the abstractions (often alienatingly jargoned and snoozily uninteresting) of critical theory and the emotional traumas real (living, for instance) artists experience in the presence of its obtuseness. Soutter is never present in this piece, it is always just her voice and her surrogates which we have access to, but there are moments when the visual images by which she indicates her own subject position are particularly communicative — as in the opening where she uses the legs (slightly, unconsciously open) of a young girl sutured to a monster head (theory nightmare) in opposition to



Shawna Dempsey & Lorri Millan, **IN THE LIFE**, 1995

a page in which bookshelves stand for the “advisor” who has lowered his voice to a “confidential tone.” All the perversities of the power relations of academe are present here — the authoritative voice, the gender roles, the prescribed positions of artist/critic, and also, of youthful perception and older control. Soutter’s voice poses a certain (albeit ironic) tone of the “lived” against the formulae of the critical — this is not so much a piece about the coming of age as it is a piece about the fundamental distinction between making and speaking about, between being an artist and being an academic. Would that they need not be so different. — The Eds.

ART THEORY MADE ME CRY is available at Printed Matter Bookstore at DIA, 77 Wooster St., NYC, 10012



Lucy Soutter, **ART THEORY MADE ME CRY: AN ANECDOTAL THEORY BOOK**, 1995

Feminism and the Book Arts at the Woman's Building, Los Angeles

Alisa Scudamore

In November, 1973 the Woman's Building of Los Angeles opened its doors to become the first institution dedicated to the creation of a "new art community built from the lives, feelings, and needs of women."¹ The quintessence of its founding was the Feminist Studio Workshop, an art program established by three prominent figures in the emerging women's art movement: painter Judy Chicago, graphic designer Sheila de Bretteville, and art historian Arlene Raven. Under the tutelage of these three women and with the help of several other vital figures of feminism and art, hundreds of women were provided with the opportunity to define their own experience of female identity through the exploration of art.

From the Feminist Studio Workshop came an important body of work in the printed arts and specifically in the format of artists' books. The main focus of this discussion will be the collection of artists' books printed at the Women's Graphic Center as a part of the art education program at the Woman's Building in Los Angeles, and how these books represented both an innovative application of feminist themes as well as the skilled use of the recent convention of the artist's book.

Historic Precedence

The Woman's Building of Los Angeles took its name from the temporary exhibition building of women's arts and crafts collected from around the world for the World Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893.² This anchored the 1973 Woman's Building to a tradition of faith in the feminist perspective and capability in the arts. The Chicago version of the Woman's Building came at a similar time of progress in women's rights as it was situated in the midst of struggle for suffrage begun in the mid-1800s. The exhibit was a landmark achievement for American women as it brought artists from around the world to discuss women's roles in cultural and political issues in addition to their contributions in art.

The actual building at the Columbian Exposition was designed by the first female architecture graduate of MIT, Sophia Hayden. It became the site of the first Woman's Congress which provided a forum to share experiences and ideas on the situation of women on an international level. The original Woman's Building housed what were considered to be the fine arts of painting and sculpture but also the decorative arts that were commonly associated with women's handiwork: embroidery, tapestry, pottery, glass work, vase painting, enameling, and even metal and furniture design. Not only did this recognize the achievements

of many women artists, but it also acknowledged the artistic value of work outside the male-dominated arenas of painting and sculpture. This was similarly achieved in the feminist arts of the 1970s and at the Feminist Studio Workshop as traditional female crafts like weaving, embroidery and other decorative arts experienced a resurgence and new innovations such as performance art, installation, and the printing arts were explored.

Though it served a completely different purpose, the 1893 Woman's Building became an appropriate model for the 1973 version in Los Angeles. As Sheila de Bretteville points out, the most famous work of the original building, the mural on the north tympanum entitled "Modern Woman" by Mary Cassatt, illustrates the common theme linking the two enterprises.³ The main panel is an illustration of women acting out the allegorical scene "Young Women Plucking the Fruits of Knowledge and Science"⁴ — an activity which was controversial for the time, but boldly depicted by Cassatt in large scale mural form and with the modern innovations of impressionistic painting. This noble and unprecedented representation recognized the potential of women when allowed to independently pursue education. This notion along with the camaraderie represented by the women picking fruit would be echoed in the objectives of the founders of the Woman's Building in Los Angeles as they provided a place for women to share ideas and experiences, and to pursue education and the arts independently from the entrenched tendencies of older institutions.

Establishing a Feminist Point of View in the 1970s

In order to appreciate the climate in which these artists worked, the historic context of the artwork produced at the Woman's Building requires particular attention. The radical notion of expressing a feminist point of view emerged as this movement experienced a resurgence in the 1960s. In the realm of the arts, the concepts of a neutral and universal form of expression attempted in abstract painting which dominated the postwar modernist aesthetic was experiencing a collapse. Instead, the proponents of civil rights, second wave feminism and the anti-war movement viewed art as a means for voicing difference and sought new subject matter and mediums of artistic representation. As a result, new communities were established based on these acknowledged differences in point of view. For feminist art, it resulted in the eventual transformation of traditions as the position of female identity became its own theoretical and aesthetic branch. The investigation of unique viewpoints didn't necessitate isolating difference to that particular community. For example, as Chicago put it, feminist art was a chance to "transform our circumstances into subject matter. . . [and] to use

them to reveal the whole nature of the human condition."⁵

In Los Angeles and the West coast, a strong community of feminist artists was forming in response to the lack of representation of women in exhibits, in art education, and in gallery and museum positions. The "Art and Technology" show at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in 1970 didn't include a single female artist and resulted in the founding of the Los Angeles Council of Women Artists involving over 200 women.⁶ As the acknowledgement of a feminist point-of-view gained acceptance, and women in the arts began to unite and network, the foundation was secured for the development of the new branch of feminist arts.

The growing number of feminist artists in California is well illustrated in the field of art education with the establishment of the first Feminist Art Program by painter Judy Chicago at Fresno State University in 1970.⁷ Chicago introduced this program to the California Institute of the Arts the following year where she joined artist Miriam Shapiro, designer Sheila de Bretteville, and art historian Arlene Raven. It was at CalArts that the collaborative project Womanhouse was accomplished in 1972; this effort would become representative of the exploration of the different mediums and subject matter that would continue to be worked out in feminist art. Also at this time, the Woman-space gallery opened up in Los Angeles, and the West Coast Conference of Women Artists was held at CalArts. Slowly a discernible combination of feminism and art began to unfold. As defined by Faith Wilding, feminist art of the 1970s was an "art that consciously focused on the political, social, and/or personal experiences of women, and that attempted to deconstruct the myths of femininity and the traditional representations of women."⁸

Founding of the Woman's Building

After two years at CalArts, the leaders of the Feminist Art Program found themselves to be continually frustrated by the restraints of working within an established institution. Even though CalArts was one of the most progressive art schools for its time, it still fell victim to the entrenched structures of "sexism, gender roles, hierarchies, and established critical frameworks (of modernist practice)."⁹ In response to this dissatisfaction Chicago, de Bretteville, and Raven opened the Woman's Building with the objective of providing a forum for women's art education that was independent from established institutions and their historic systems of criticism, theory, and aesthetics. By combining the arts with other activities, there would be a greater opportunity for the interchange of ideas and the creation of a more comprehensive and supportive feminist community.

In addition to the Feminist Studio Workshop, the Woman's Building housed three women's theater groups,

three galleries, a feminist bookstore, an auditorium and performance space, a thrift store, a feminist travel agency, a cafe, an arts and crafts store, and offices for various cultural groups. The Center for Feminist Art Historical Studies was founded, and it held the largest collection of slides or art by women. Over the course of its existence, the Woman's Building, hosted many feminist speakers and several conferences featuring women writers, designers, architects, film and video artists, and ceramicists.

Printing at the Feminist Studio Workshop

The activity of printing played an important role at the Feminist Studio Workshop from the very beginning of the Woman's Building. As the head of Women's Design at Cal Arts in the early 1970s, founding member Sheila de Bretteville saw the importance of the printing arts for communicating the message of the intensifying feminist voice. The aspect of multiple production by printing allowed art to reach a larger audience as opposed to other mediums that were limited to a single original work. In 1972 an exhibition entitled "Women in the Printing Arts" was organized by Helen Alm and Sheila de Bretteville and encouraged the discussion and distribution of printing arts by women from around the country. Los Angeles, as the site for the Woman's Building, was also significant in fostering the printing arts as a means for women to challenge and express different aspects of the female identity. Graphic arts were already well-suited to the mass-mediated dream center provided by Los Angeles. For years people had been coming to the West coast to realize their dreams, and specifically to Los Angeles. Plus, the West coast didn't have the same entrenched traditions of the East coast that prevented "unconnected" newcomers from breaking into industries like publishing or the arts. De Bretteville once described Los Angeles as a place where "women could publish themselves without asking permission from anybody else... No one mediated what women had to say."¹⁰

Book artist Susan King joined with de Bretteville to teach the first students of the Feminist Studio Workshop in the use of graphic equipment. Originally there were only Vandercook and Chandler and Price letterpresses in the curriculum, but later the program expanded to include offset printing for those interested or experienced in its application. Certain budgetary limits were involved as students paid a small tuition fee to take part in classes at the Workshop and full-time instructors received about \$3000 per year. By 1981, almost a decade after its inception, the non-profit Woman's Building initiated the Women's Graphic Center Typesetting and Design Service to help fund the education and art making programs.¹¹ Several women who had been trained or involved in the printing arts in previous years were involved in this enterprise

including Susan King, Anne Gauldin, Sue Ann Robinson, and Sue Mayberry. Photo typesetting, design, production, stats, and printing were among the services offered. Additionally, studio space was rented out to generate supplemental income.

The Printing of Books

The books printed at the Women's Graphic Center program can be classified into two categories: individual works by artists with printing experience or previous class instruction, or projects completed in a Workshop class as part of a collaborative assignment. The class printing projects tended to use the traditional printing techniques of the letterpress therefore emphasizing the process of producing works of fastidious printed quality. Most of the books by individuals were offset printed and were more concerned with the overall message whether it was one of personal experience or one with a explicit social agenda. Because of their specific objective, these books tend to present a more cohesive and powerful overall statement. As a body of work, they illustrate some major issues in the relatively new areas of feminist and book arts. The following discussion will focus on several of these books in an effort to examine how the book artists at the Feminist Studio Workshop contributed to both fields by combining feminist themes with the format of the book.

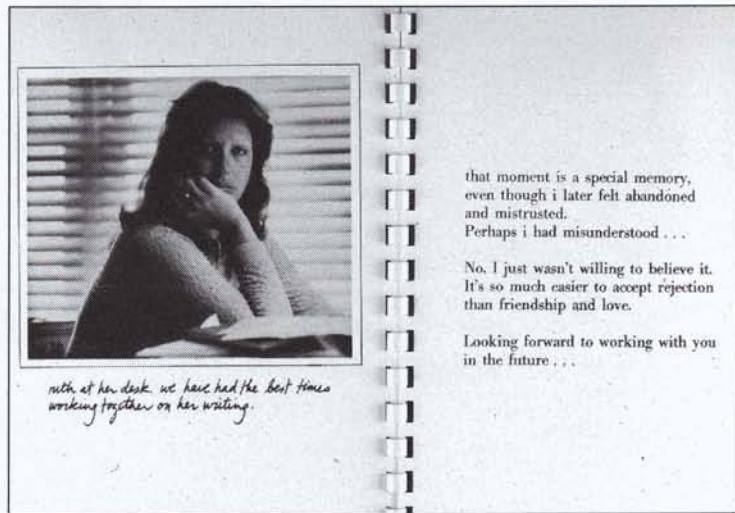
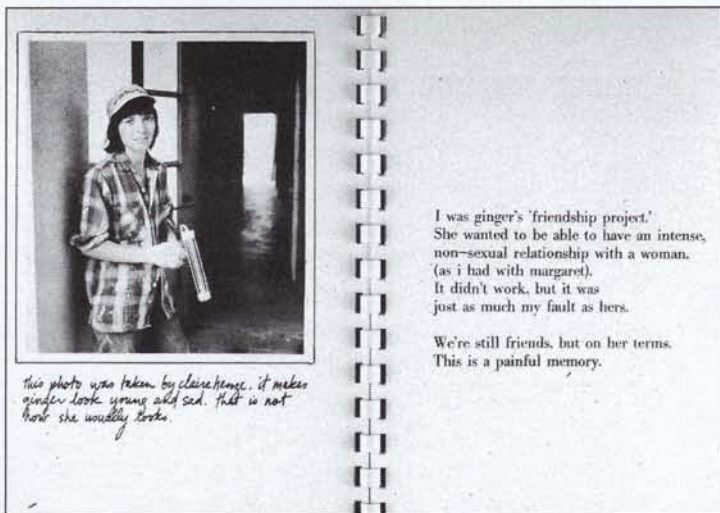
These works represent a wide range of adaptations of the book format as a means of expression. While some are more attentive to the overall presentation and aesthetic, others are more concerned with the communication of a specific message. Different levels of consciousness to the book form are represented as some approach a more personal, diaristic condition while others attempt to convey a certain social agenda. Whatever the emphasis, the results are a number of truly powerful statements about the question of female identity.

Class Projects

Though not as compelling in terms of significance to the feminist arts, the group projects completed at the Women's Graphic Center should not be overlooked. Their importance lies in their function as instructional exercises in printing for a number of students who could potentially go on to create their own books. As an artist-in-residence at the Woman's Building through a grant from the California Arts Council, Bonnie Thompson Norman and her class at the Workshop produced a group of well-executed books including *Logical Confusions: A Collection of Aphorisms, Epigrams, and Silly Sayings, Look Ahead Los Angeles!*, and *Once Upon A Moment* as a part of her 1989 curriculum. Of particular interest is *Once Upon A Moment* in which students combined their work from a writing workshop to create an anthology of poetry with the various interpretations of growing up as a woman including menstruation, adolescence, and mother-daughter relationships. The book opens concertina-style, and it plays upon several feminine associations printed in purple ink and decorated with pastels. Despite the collaborative strategy, *Once Upon A Moment* integrates the fineness of well-executed letterpress printing and strong personal statements bound by a cohesive theme.

Artist's Books by Individuals

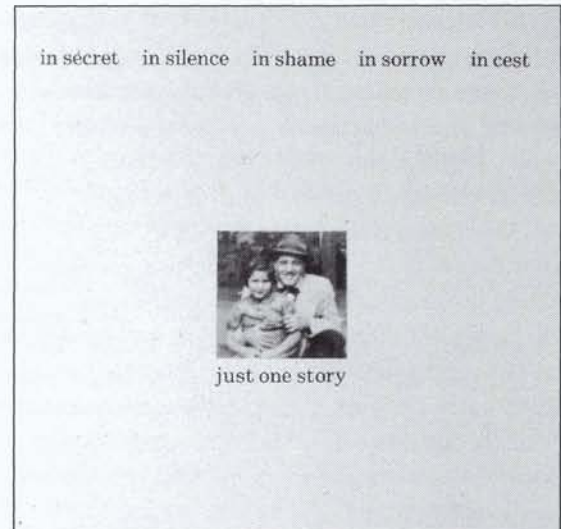
One of the common pretexts for bookmaking at the Workshop involved the use of consciousness-raising subject matter, often in areas that had rarely been attempted before as artistic material. The difficulty of pioneering these topics was the possibility of confronting personal and painful issues as well as taking the risk of shocking the potential audience. Artists Michele Kort and Rachel Youdelman took such risks when they addressed the topic of lesbian relationships in their books, *Some of My*



Friends (1975) and *Let's Fall In Love* (1973).¹² The subject of intimacy between women and even the topic of intimacy written by women had had little representation in the arts at this time. Kort's *Some of My Friends* has a solid pink cover and opens with a quote from Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*. The main spreads include a photograph of a friend on the left and text describing the author's relationship to them on the right. The passages generally describe a turning point, often how the relationship fell apart. The repetition and the impassiveness of each narrative create a disturbing journal-like collection of failed relationships that maintains a particular distance for such a personal subject.

While Kort applies the book form as an ironic catalogue, Youdelman uses it in a different manner to address the topic of lesbianism. In *Let's Fall In Love*, an image of a woman driving a car is repeated on consecutive pages in an almost flip-book fashion to animate her as though she is speaking. Below each picture is a one line caption of what driver appears to say. The book has a simple construction; the paper is folded and stapled into a booklet, and the pictures are photocopied photographs colored-in by hand. It begins like the title, "Let's fall in love," and ends asking, "why shouldn't we fall in love?" Using a seemingly straightforward approach, Youdelman suggests the complexity involved in something as simple as falling in love when a new set of issues is confronted as they are for two women.

Merle Fishman and Sue Mayberry attempt a similarly untraditional subject matter by confronting the trauma of incest from a feminist perspective in their book *in secret in silence in shame in sorrow in cest* (1979). It utilizes the sequential aspect of book pages in order to create a progressively poignant testimony about the suppressed issue of incest. Each spread has a photograph on the left side and text made up of poetic memory fragments on the right side. In the photograph a father kneels with his arms around his small daughter as they both smile at the camera. The same photograph is repeated on every spread, but gradually getting larger until the violent grip of the father's hand on the child's body is revealed. The text is composed of various poetic fragments arranged in different type sizes and spacing configurations and seems to parallel the development of the picture as it becomes more dynamic and frantic in its fervor as well as typographical presentation. Fishman and Mayberry use the page-turning progression of the book to create a disturbing climax and end it with an informative passage about incest in a consciousness-provoking gesture to the reader. They successfully use both text and image to provide a disturbing glimpse into the psychological and physical damage inflicted by the avoided subject of incest.



Merle Fishman and Sue Mayberry, *in secret in silence in shame in cest*, Feminist Studio Workshop, 1979

27

Suzanne Lacy addresses the related subject of bodily ownership and control from a woman's perspective, but with a very different approach. Better known for her performance art, Lacy was active in many events held at the Woman's Building and often made books in conjunction with her performance pieces. In *Falling Apart* (1976) she pays particular attention to the effects of the materials and process of bookmaking. The book is made from brown paper like that of a disposable grocery bag and is bound tightly with black string. The text is mostly typewritten (only twenty copies were made), except for a few handwritten parts in red ink. The entire book is wrapped several times in an ace bandage and secured with a metal medical fastener forcing the reader to take part in the ritual of unwrapping and wrapping the metaphorical "wound" of the book with each reading.

Once inside the book, Lacy opens with the statement, "Violence is not always what it seems." Included are an assortment of appropriated elements including comic strips, newspaper clippings, and photographs. She creates "definitions" for phrases like "fallen woman", and even inserts a "Bill of Sale" for her own body. The various

images and texts are fraught with references to physicality and violence, crime, possession, the body, and touch. Bodily wounds are reiterated as Lacy places impressions of hand prints, gauze, and ropes in red ink over several pages. The overall effect is a shocking revelation of the commonality in acts of violence committed against women. Using the format of the book allows Lacy to assemble a collection of references to make a powerful and cohesive statement on a loaded feminist topic.

With the same poignancy, Lacy addresses the subject of rape in her most famous work *Rape Is* (1973). In contrast to *Falling Apart*, however, she strips the contents down to a powerfully simple and direct use of the book format. Again the reader is forced to make an entry into the book that resonates metaphorically by breaking a red seal on the cover. The main pages are plain white, marked only by the black type of the text. On the left of each spread are the words, "rape is", and on the right is a short account of some instance of rape, sexual assault, or harassment. The passages range in psychological level and situation from a glance in the street to the court room of a rape trial. By using solid red end pages, Lacy creates an effective metaphor of wounding which complement the black type that blemishes the pureness of the white pages. The end result is a compelling summation of the everyday acts of both psychological and physical aggression experienced by women.

Like Lacy, artist Cheri Gaulke was an active participant in many aspects of the Feminist Studio Workshop, and her book *Golden Lotus* (1977) pays similar attention to presentation that Lacy's work did. Gaulke's is a less conventional application of the book as it is made up of small square pages affixed to a delicate strip of white gauze-like material. The book in its closed state folds up concertina-style into a small rectangle and sits atop a shiny black lacquer platform. The pages are made up of simple pictures and short captions and alternate between a demonstration of bonsai tree pruning and an illustration of the process of Chinese foot binding. This ancient Chinese tradition of tightly wrapping women's feet deformed them in such a way that prevented the women from walking. By juxtaposing this horrible custom with the treatment of the bonsai tree, Gaulke emphasizes the tendencies of society to manipulate nature for the purpose of conforming to prescribed standards. These examples of the distortion of nature create a powerful metaphor about the pressure placed upon women to conform to the common notion of beauty and servility as defined by society. Gaulke's utilization of gauzy material and the oriental style pedestal in addition to the formality of presentation result in an essence of ritual that only strengthen metaphor and demonstrate a unique engagement with the book form.

Interestingly, both Gaulke and Lacy are attentive to the process of experiencing their books that seems to correspond to their interest in performance art. Though more conventional in the use of the book, Lacy's *Three Love Stories* (1978) attains a performance-like quality as it narrates three tales about women in relationships in a lighter, more tongue-in-cheek fashion than previously seen in Lacy's work. Each story uses photographs of bodily organs which act out the one line captions on the bottom of the page. The first piece is a story of heartbreak showing an actual human heart inside a jar as it is smashed to pieces, stitched back together, and placed into a new jar. The text describes a woman giving her heart away to a man who breaks it. Though she "pulls it back together" in the new jar, she is "never quite the same".

The second story is about dependence, and Lacy becomes a character in the plot as she manipulates real human lungs in the photographs. She dramatizes the dependence theme by collapsing and expanding the lungs to show her 'reliance' upon them for every breath in sustaining life. The third and final story entitled, "Under My Skin: A Pornographic Novel", is composed of photographs of various internal organs positioned on a bed. The narration describes a seduction told by a woman. The scene ends with a picture of the digestive organs displayed, then wrapped in the sheets with a ribbon and the climactic words, "'Take me,' she moaned, 'I'm yours.'" The witty duplicity of the text in combination with the images of internal organs reveals the absurdity in the stereotypes of roles played by women in relationships.

Lacy's *Travels With Mona* (1978) serves as both an artist's book and a documentary of a performance piece. With a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, Lacy and Arlene Raven created a witty comment on the status of women in the arts in the form of a fold-out postcard collection typical of tourist mementos. Each postcard has an image of Lacy painting a canvas with a paint-by-numbers Mona Lisa at a different art historical monument where she draws inspiration from places like the Louvre, Milan, Kassel, and the great temples of Mexico. Raven narrates Lacy's journey with observations like, "But this Mona is an imitation made in the image of Leonardo. . . She smiles but does not speak." In describing the artist, Raven writes, "she is a universal hallmark of woman—mysterious, self-enclosed, silent. She is the European artistic tradition at its highest level of aspiration. At the start she is unfinished."

In Kassel Lacy measures the buttocks of the sculpture of Hercules, an historic figure that best epitomizes masculinity and classically trained artistic representation. In response, Lacy and Raven make a sarcastic comment on the historic standards of art that seem to be permanently

fixed in stone by the masculine European tradition. Lacy is depicted as the art student following the accepted artistic traditions that have dominated centuries of art making without allowing it to stray from a very limited point of view. In an entertaining and artful fashion, Lacy acknowledges the long-suppressed feminist voice in the art world.

This last piece by Lacy provides an potent model for the challenge women have confronted in the arts that has been recognized in the United States since the Woman's Building of 1893. As demonstrated by the books previously discussed, the numerous programs at the Feminist Studio Workshop, and the diversity of groups committed to the Woman's Building, this challenge presented a body of new subject matter to be explored through art. Under the new notion that art could serve effective social and political functions in addition to aesthetic ones, the printing arts thrived at the Workshop. But whether these books were intended to fulfill a specific social agenda or to engage in a personal, therapeutic examination of experience, all of them were committed to challenging the conventions of art in the search for new modes and voices of expression, and particularly ones united by feminism.

The Woman's Building closed in the early 1990s as a result of what de Bretteville considered to be changing needs in the feminist artistic community. Additionally, the variety of unresolved issues like essentialism that were intrinsic to the exploration of the feminist experience made communities like those formed by the Woman's Building vulnerable to ideological divisions and these issues may have played a part in the eventual end of the program. However, the ideas and opportunities offered by the Feminist Studio Workshop have influenced many prominent artists, art educators, and spectators to the women's art movement who continue to pursue the recognition of a feminist perspective in the art world. The need for a supportive community was fulfilled, and women were encouraged to take risks in the expression of art that they might not otherwise have taken. Like the previous Woman's Building at the 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the one in Los Angeles was a landmark achievement for women. The historical and cultural circumstances of the Woman's Building are essential in considering the books produced at the Feminist Studio Workshop, yet these books achieve a level of significance in both the book arts and feminist arts that allows them to stand on their own.

1 Faith Wilding, *By Our Own Hands: The Women Artist's Movement, Southern California, 1970-1976* (Santa Monica, CA: Double X, 1977), 85.

2 Maria Karras, *The Woman's Building Chicago 1893 The Woman's Building Los Angeles 1973-*, (Los Angeles: Women's Graphic Center, 1975).

3 Sheila de Bretteville, in interview, New Haven, CT, Nov. 1, 1996.

4 Maud Howe Elliot, ed., *Art and Handicraft in the Woman's Building* (New York: Goupil & Co., 1893), 25.

5 Norma Broude and Mary D. Garrard, "Introduction: Feminism and Art in the Twentieth Century," *The Power of Feminist Art*, (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1994), 41.

6 Faith Wilding, "How the West Was Won: Feminist Art in California," *Women Artists News*, Summer, 1980, 14.

7 Faith Wilding, "The Feminist Art Programs at Fresno and CalArts, 1970-75," *The Power of Feminist Art*, (New York: Harry Abrams, 1994), 38.

8 Wilding, 42.

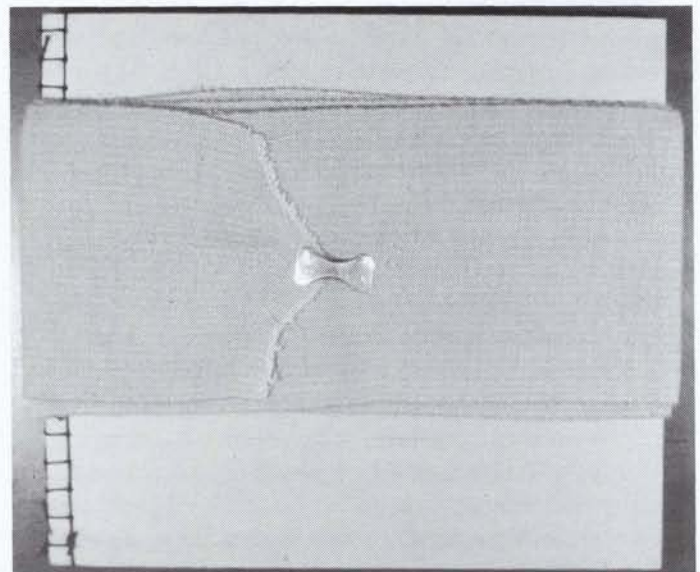
9 Wilding, 47.

10 Sheila de Bretteville, telephone interview by Moira Roth, July 12, 1993.

11 Michele Kort and Terry Wolverton, *The First Decade: Celebrating the Tenth Anniversary of the Woman's Building*, (Los Angeles: Women's Graphic Center, 1983), 14.

12 Youdelman's *Let's Fall in Love* was printed at CalArts in 1973.

- end



Suzanne Lacy, *Falling Apart*, Feminist Studio Workshop, 1976

"SCIENCE IMAGINED": A REVIEW

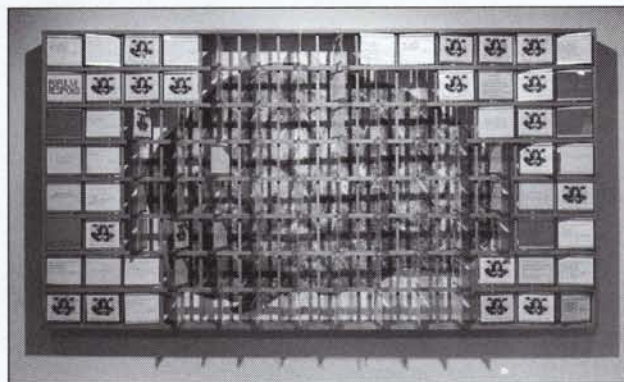
by Ruth McGurk

"Science Imagined", an exhibition of artists' books was held at the Berkeley Art Center [Berkeley, CA] from October 27 to December 29, 1996. The selection process was done in two ways; 47 books came by invitation and 33 more were vetted by a jury of Susannah Hays, the curator, Robbin Légère Henderson, the director of the Art Center and Robin Rider, the special collections librarian at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

The theme was interpreted variously with the degree of science involved differing widely. Collaborations were encouraged and mostly took the form of female artists collaborating with male scientists. That these men were also loved ones and working in applied sciences led to books about meteorology, wastewater treatment and artificial intelligence. The glamour of big science also took a back seat to a simple interest in natural history. Several artists chronicling their own scientific education testified about the bugaboo science has become for nonscientists and hinted at its shortcomings. Others treated scientific keystones such as the periodic table as decorative elements. Some fetish and fortune-telling books left science behind altogether and belonged in another show: Antiscience Imagined.

In a theme show like this, some amount of muddle was to be expected. Not every book was going to be a successful blend of the topic and the form. The organizers were at the mercy of the invited artists to come up with engaging work. There was no way of knowing if their responses to the topic would prove to be inspired or at least entertaining flops until the books arrived. At the opening I was impressed with the variety of the work. On subsequent visits I examined all the books and discovered my favorites. I judged the show a success on the basis of these gems.

Diane Jacobs' **Card Catalog** was particularly striking. Its complicated structure was more reminiscent of an Advent calendar than a card catalog but no matter. It rewarded a quick glance or prolonged attention with visual and verbal treats. She launched the project with an ink blot etching of her own design; then, solicited responses by printing, "What does it look like for you?" on each card with instructions on the back. The 74 responses she received mostly came from college students hip to psychological testing. In the piece these cards were mounted in a grid and juxtaposed with interpretative material excerpted from **Rorschach Content Interpretation** by Edward



Diane Jacobs, **Card Catalog**, 1990's

Aronow and Marvin Reznikoff. Jacobs printed these two's diagnostic categories letterpress. What made the piece entertaining was the interplay between seemingly arbitrary psychological categories and the scrawled comments of the artist's de facto collaborators. I liked the "Mip.", responses that show intellectual pretentiousness as "an armadillo—it's a form of anteater, you know" and the "Arej.", rejections of the card, "Anything but a frog. Nope, doesn't look anything like any kind of amphibian" the best. I also learned that seeing squashed tomatoes, peg-leg sailors or Joseph Stalin in an ink blot indicates a sadomasochistic orientation. Who knew. I wasn't inclined to quibble that **Card Catalog** didn't belong in the book phylum. Its book-like qualities of a readable text and turnable pages that furthered the narrative were enough for me.

Sonya Rapoport's collaboration with scientists at Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, **Horizontal Cobalt**, was also a standout. It considered the element cobalt over time from its uses in alchemy to its behavior in nuclear reactions. The book was done on computer paper and was hung horizontally. It required considerable neck strain to read the text which was vertical. In it Rapoport compared the secrecy of the alchemists to that of the physicists at the nuclear research facility at Livermore, California. "Everyone knows what goes on and no one knows much." The integration of the text and images was exemplary. Her drawings and xerox transfers faded into blue and sepia text blocks. The prominent image of a gnome referred to the medieval German belief that the presence of cobalt in silver ore was the work of gnomes, *kobold*.

The loopy, cryptic comments of two highway engineers were featured in Anne Schwartzburg's **Making Space**. The book was in two sections. One, consisted of captioned drawings made from video stills in which the engineers appear to draw their intended road in midair and the other, of

transcriptions of their conversations with indications of what they were doing while they were talking. The gist of the book was to show how much they communicated by gesture. Passages such as, "You said, you know, just (1) you know, get some, (2) We went with a max slope here, (3) and that's what I did.", would be footnoted by stage-direction-like commentary, ie., "Got up. Crosses the room. Returns to the table." The two-sided accordion format was somewhat awkward; it did justice to the flow of video-inspired images but made reading the more traditional text a floppy proposition. The best highway argot was "chasing grade".

Leda Black's **Disquisition on Method**, a three-ring-binder circus of a book was chockful of questions: "Did mathematics exist before humans?"; records of home experiments: she built a maze for some mice but they climbed out; and self-discovery: "One reason I'm not a scientist: I always find the exception more interesting than the rule." Black's deadpan account of a failed Skinner experiment, "Our rat stopped responding to all stimuli and cowered in a corner. My lab partner and I thought this was astounding. The professor told us to ignore the result." was one of many sharp observations. Appropriately, the book was in the form of a laboratory notebook.

Dorothy Yule's **Memories of Science** addressed the theme of leaving behind the sciences for art in rhyming verse.

*"Young scientists - and I was one -
learn to observe the smallest thing:
the tireless energy of ants,
the ceaseless song the crickets sing."*

The text was interspersed with a series of hand-colored pop-ups including butterflies in mason jars and magnetism as it relates to the electric motor. I could have done without the finicky qualities of the book's miniature scale but overall it was a nicely finished piece.

In Mandy Richmond Dowd's altered book, **Skull Fractures and Brain Injury**, she took a medical text and cut a square hole out of the center; then glued handfuls of pages together and left the rest free to turn. She lifted passages from the text and stamped them in the margins. Although she used the voice of the original author, her choices were geared to show the changes in the attitude of the medical authorities over the last fifty years. Here are two examples;

"The conviction that all injured workmen are liars and malingerers until proven innocent is to be condemned."

"This is supposed to be a scientific book. In

writing these case records many of them recall a bit or a whole of an amount of sentiment."

Lisa Kokin didn't pretend to any great knowledge of chemistry in her book titled **Chemistry** but did manage a lot of wry pairings of scientific terms and found photos. Flash point showed a pointed bra and an equally pointed smile; uncertainty principle, two men in an embrace.

Finally, my pick for the funniest book was Jane Starosciak's **Entropy and the Speed of Light**. It consisted of a line, an asterisk, a bibliography and a record of rejections from libraries which did not consider it an adequate return on their \$7.50 investment and wanted their money back.

(The catalog for the show can be obtained from BACA, 1275 Walnut St., Berkeley, CA 94709 (510) 644-6893.)

- end

Bookmaking: Summer Workshops at Visual Studies Workshop

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January seven

hi Brad, I'm using someone's pc and I'm scared. this type is all big and I'm even more scared. so I made it out here despite sitting next to the unbomber on the airplane. no joke. A foreign woman boarded late, she was with a group and none were seated together. on the last hour of the flight before the stop over in salt lake city, she was holding something under her jacket on her lap and she kept moving her hands underneath the jacket and making scraping noises as if she were filing her nails with a metal nail file. I kept glancing over b/c it was so suspicious. She was fully aware that I was looking and sometimes she'd stop. when I got a view of her nails they were chewed down dirty wet little nubs and I started freaking out. from what I could see the thing looked like a little brick of coffee grinds packaged in foil and I was hoping she was having a nicotine fit or something, and maybe it was tobacco? I was in the window seat and I decided that she was totally going to blow us up but it was probably only strong enough to wreck about ten people so I got up to go to the bathroom and as I did she got up, concealing her secret under her coat, and went to the front of the plane where she handed it off. I was in such a hurry getting off that plane that i left something (a tackle box w/beads and stuff in it) on it and refused to go back (i called later and they're mailing it)...so anyway, i'm going to try to avoid terrorists in the future.

I've just been here four days. i'm going to Kinko's today to update my resume, bc i cant find anyone with a mac. I'm going to fax to jobs from the sf paper tomorrow bc i really NEED to be working SOON (so I can move to sf.) If you could get me in touch with your friend out here I'm forever grateful.

I hope you're having an enjoyable winter break, and hope to hear from you soon.
Take care,

Lana Frye

Lana Frye

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the jet skis

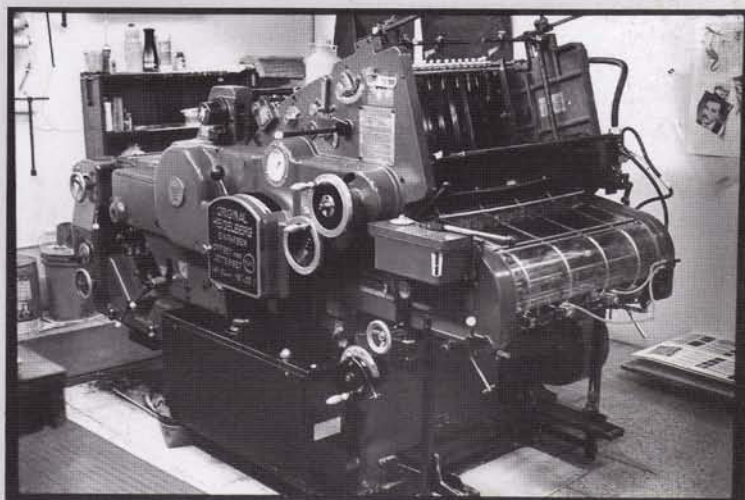


Lewey Lake, Adirondack Park, New York, 1996

with BRE T-SALT

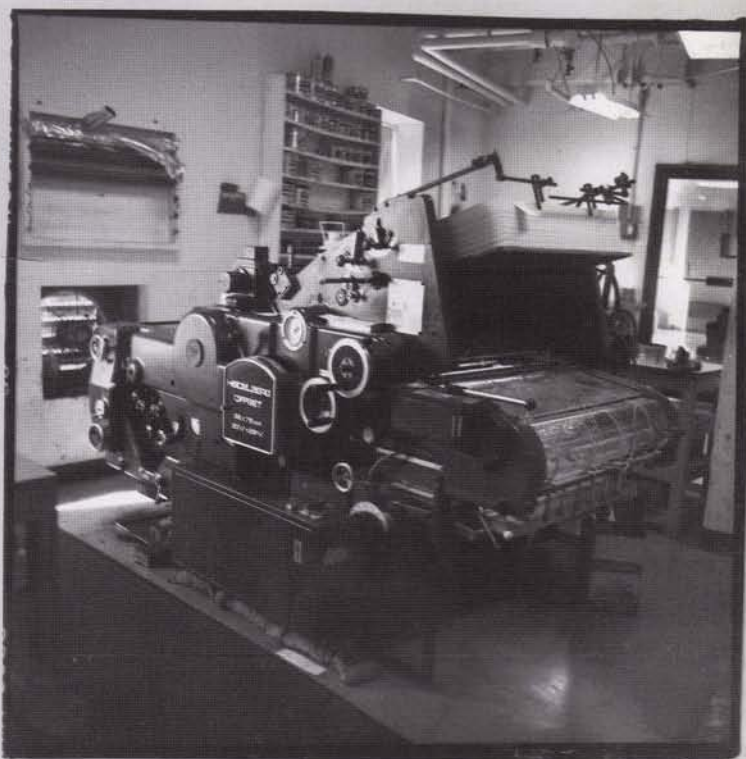
Davidson 500, Lake House, Tallahassee, 1979

Presses I have known
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Brad Freeman



Heidelberg K, Visual Studies Workshop Press, Rochester, NY, 1986

Hamada 700, Pyramid Atlantic, Washington, DC 1988



Heidelberg K, Borowsky Center, University of the Arts, Philadelphia, 1991