

University of Southern Queensland

Disrupted Meaning:

A study of subverting logic through artists'

books

A Dissertation submitted by

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For the award of

Doctor of Philosophy

2014

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Abstract

This dissertation will discuss artists' books as a form of visual arts practice that has been developed primarily since the 1960s. Works associated with this term can be distinguished from books in general and even books containing works of art, in that artists' books are works of art in and of themselves. In particular, this dissertation will focus on non-narrative, nonlinear or disrupted artists' books that require alternate or reinvented methods of reception and interpretation as they put forward different experiences to those of traditional books. In order to approach this focus from a theoretical perspective, which is currently lacking in existing literature on artists' books, there are four key areas that will be examined, as they will provide the context for the examination of non-narrative artists' books.

The first is an account of artists' books in general, where a brief history and various conceptual and material approaches related to their practice will be outlined. Secondly, modes of narrative communication conducted both through books and in society in general will be discussed. This is important for the dissertation because it will outline related book and narrative conventions that the particular works in question will be shown to depart from. The third field that will be considered concerns aesthetic debates. In order to situate non-narrative artists' books in these debates, the presence of an illogical signifier or non-narrative occurrence in a visual work will be explored as a potential aesthetic element. The fourth field to be examined addresses the processes and effects related to non-narrative ordering in literary, film and visual works in general. Once the aforementioned areas have been addressed, specific nonlinear or disrupted artists' books will be discussed. This discussion will be carried out in terms of content, structure, reader role and experience and alternate methods of comprehension that may be required, so that the various ways in which such works depart from traditional books can be considered and responded to. Through these considerations, this dissertation will identify the potential relevance and functions of non-narrative book works as a mode of contemporary art practice.

The dissertation does not seek to examine overt structures of meaning, but to investigate disruptive or illogical spaces that arise within a work. This is the gap in existing literature that will be filled, thereby providing a theoretical basis for the viewing and discussion of non-narrative artists' books.

Certification of Dissertation

I certify that the ideas, discussions, interpretations and conclusions presented in this dissertation are entirely my own effort, except where otherwise acknowledged. I also certify that the work is original and has not been previously submitted for any other award.

Candidate

Endorsement

Principal Supervisor

Associate Supervisor

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr David Akenson for his consistent support and guidance over the past three years. He has shown a great deal of enthusiasm for the research, and I am grateful for his patience and the countless hours he has devoted to supervising this project.

I would also like to thank my associate supervisor Dr Kyle Jenkins, whose reassurance and direction helped guide my research towards its completion.

I thank my previous lecturer and friend Stephen Spurrier for stirring my interest in working with artists' books during my undergraduate studies. He has continuously supported me and encouraged me to work creatively.

In addition, I would like to acknowledge the financial support I have received from the University of Southern Queensland, without which this research would not have been possible.

I am grateful to Kathy Pingel and Arthur Johnson for venturing outside of their academic fields to proofread sections of my work. I would further like to thank Kathy for her ongoing personal support and encouragement.

I offer my thanks and appreciation to my grandmother Patricia Pingel, who has been a great advocate of my learning and art practice for as long as I can recall. I thank her for taking the time to read this document, and value the interest she has shown in the material.

I thank my parents, Mark and Tracey Liesch, for their personal and financial support. With my siblings Adam, Brittany and Benjamin, my parents have attended many art events and provided assistance and encouragement without which I could not have progressed this far.

Finally, I would like to thank my fiancé Simeon Johnson, who has constantly given me his support and reassurance during this time. I appreciate the interest and pride he has shown in my work, and I am grateful for the time he has devoted to asking questions, listening and attending events. I am especially thankful for his ongoing positivity.

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