

**DISSEMINATION
OF KNOWLEDGE**

“Nobody looks at art anymore.
We should make works direct for
reproduction “

John Baldessari, 1969

“An artist’s book is a work solely
created by the artist’s decisions.
It is produced by the best methods to
achieve quality in unlimited quantities.
It should be available at a moderate
price wherever books are sold”

Paul Bianchini, 1997

Dissemination of knowledge

Questioning the seemingly inherent
paradox both in the term “dissemination of
knowledge” and the term “artist’s book”

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Is the title of the Opening Panel, “Dissemination of knowl-
edge,” not contrary to the “expanded field” in the sense that
it indirectly presupposes an elitist concept of “knowledge”
to be distributed to the ignorant masses?

The two invited speakers, focusing on the “artist’s book”
were both questioning the phenomenon in one way or another,
by dealing with the paradox of the artist’s book – an object
seemingly exclusive and available at the same time. During our
exchange of opinion, we were discussing this paradox further.

While *Max Schumann*, the active executive Director of *Print-
ed Matter* who is organizing the New York Art Book Fair since
2006, wanted to discuss the recent “renaissance” of artist’s
book activity in the digital age compared to the extended
financial crises within the mainstream publishing industry; the
intention of *Victoria Browne*, the founder of KALEID editions,
winner of Birgit Sköld Awards for Excellence in Artist’s
Book, was to show how the artist’s book are “multi-layered,
mass-produced expression of uniqueness,
a democratically affordable widely distributed material
object” and “collated participatory projects”.¹

How to define the "artist's book"? Even in the informed world of contemporary art, the efforts to define what an "artist's book" is, seem to have been in vain. Paradoxically, the problem of defining the term comes from the success of this term itself, partly due to the general nature of the word "artist" since whatever publication dealing with the relationship between artists and books has claimed this name. In other words, the success of the word "artist's book," rather than diminishing confusion, has resulted in even more confusion. That is why, Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, philosopher and curator, who has analysed the phenomenon in one of the world's most elaborate survey *Esthétique du livre d'artiste*,² is suggesting another approach. Instead of starting within the discourse where the term "artist book" circulates, with words in a discussion of words, she is inviting the reader to have a closer look at the things themselves. According to her, there are two ways of answering the question of the artist's book and its history, departing from two ways of seeing the history of the artist's book: either chronologically looking for the "first," or trying to get hold of the change of paradigms, when "a rupture in culture leads to a change that is not passing," when the phenomenon becomes paradigmatic "because of its subsequent influence" and reception.³ Since very little comes out of the first alternative, that of chronology within an archaeological perspective, Moeglin-Delcroix goes for the second alternative, i.e. a change that is not passing. She uses the distinction between "event" and "advent," borrowed from Merleau-Ponty, to characterise this change.⁴

The year 1962 is chosen as "the advent of the artist's book" and Ed Ruscha as the artist considered widely as the creator of the "Paradigm for artist's books."⁵ According to Moeglin-Delcroix, the spirit of the book of Edward Ruscha (born in

1937) *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*, containing photos and texts, is similar to that which inspired Pop Art of the same period. From an iconographical point of view, Pop Art brings images of modern urban life into art and, from the technical point of view, "it takes art out of the "artistic" (from its craft, handmade and subjective dimensions) by using industrial techniques of reproduction and the multiplication of pictures in series. Quoting Ed Ruscha: "I am not trying to create a precious limited edition book but a mass-produced product of high order."⁶

Parting from Ed Ruscha's book, she is highlighting three significant features in the artist's book from its beginnings to the present. The three features she is referring to, serves my intention of highlighting the seemingly inherent paradox both of the term "dissemination of knowledge" and the term the "Artist' book."

The first feature concerns the nature of the work of art, the second, the freedom of the artist and the third, a new relationship to the public.

First of all, concerning the nature of the work, it is a matter of making art available to the largest number of people, i.e. in the sense of "dissemination," but not in the form of reproductions of *a priori* works of art *but in the form of works from the outset to be reproduced*.⁷ The very existence of these books is a critique of the traditional idea of the work of art because "they aim to make their creation compatible with the mass market."⁸

Secondly, regarding the freedom of the artist, these books do not exclusively constitute a critic against the traditional

definition of the work of art, but also the world of art, since producing these books is a way for the artist to be independent of the art system. Quoting Ed Ruscha again: ... "I get to be impresario of the thing. I get to be *majordomo*, I get to be creator and total proprietor of the whole work."⁹ In other words, the artist herself can control the whole circulation of production, distribution, and reception, independently of the commercial art system.

Thirdly, regarding the relationship of the artist to the public: as the artist remains the owner of her work, this is closely linked to throwing into question the status of art as a "status symbol" and as commodity, as speculative merchandise reserved for a small number of wealthy collectors.

Anne Moeglin-Delcroix's point is that the question of the work of art as something not to be sold "but to be given or even exchanged, is fundamental to the artist's book. The aim is not to add a new class of objects to those already existing on the art market, *but through them to create or to instigate another relationship to art, one that is not commercial.*"¹⁰

In addition to Edward Ruscha, Moeglin-Delcroix is also putting forward Daniel Spoerri (born in Romania in 1930), as somebody who, by "making the information about the work become a work itself," his book being at once invitation, catalogue and work, fulfilled an ideal, "intrinsically bound up with the artist's book" – thus *an alternative way of disseminating art.*"¹¹ Spoerri wanted to make "a total book," the reason why he is compared to

the French author Stephane Mallarmé. However, while for Mallarmé this "total" book would have been a "spiritual instrument," in the case of "artist's book" it is rather a "concrete spirituality" in the sense that it provides "both theoretical principles and tangible examples." There is no doubt that the artist's book, which is too often associated with Mallarmé's thoughts about the book, "is a lot closer in spirit to *Picasso's work with painting, characterised by a marked taste for reality, for research and experimentation, for a mixture of means of expressions.*"¹²

Using very different means, "Spoerri the sculptor was as radical as Ruscha the painter," in the sense that both changed the rules of the institutional game from within. The point is that the artist is no longer exclusively a producer of images or a creator of objects, but language becomes another means of artistic expression, long before the arrival of "conceptual art." In other words, the artist's book coincides with the loss of the medium-specificity of art. There are no more specific artistic techniques, "one does not "make" the artist's book, in the same way that one paints, sculpts, draws, engraves. *One uses the book, one uses photography, one uses words as, at the same time, one would also use the body, the moving picture, the record, the postcard, the poster etc., because one has something to say with it.*"¹³

At this point it is tempting to use Stephen Wright's *Lexicon of Usership*, referring to Wittgenstein about the language used by all, but owned by none, and "Usership represents a radical challenge to at least three stalwart conceptual institutions in contemporary culture: spectatorship, expert culture, and ownership."¹⁴

To sum up Anne Moeglin-Delcroix's way of reasoning, there is no sense, talking about "artists of the book" or "artist's book makers" as one might speak of painters or sculptors, that is to say, of professionals of a technique," but rather of somebody with no particular speciality, "designating a creator which is a technician of no specifically determined training and for whom all means available are valid as long as they serve his aim."¹⁵

Nowadays, this versatility is commonplace for young artists. Walter Benjamin's reflections in the 1930s on the loss of *Aura* due to the reproduction of the work of art,¹⁶ do not cope with the more complex society of the 1990s and beyond. This "massification of the aura" pointed out by Gianni Vattimo,¹⁷ is by consequence contrary to a democratisation of art, since what is lost is the *aesthetic experience* of the work of art as such. Another logic – that of inversion – is initiated by the artist's book. Paradoxically, the artist's book is publically accessible, however private at the same time, in the sense that the process of reproduction is what produces the artist's book.¹⁸

Both speakers in the Opening Panel highlight this paradox. According to Victoria Browne, the artists' books in KALEID editions is an "extension of a self-publishing practice." She brought with her some artists' books, letting people in the audience look for themselves that this is about "mass-produced expressions of uniqueness; democratically affordable artworks; vehicles for self-promotional material: collated participatory projects or interactive haptic experiences." As for Max Schumann, by curating exhibitions such as "By Any Means Necessary Photocopies Books" and "The Politics of Accessible Printing," and by

referring directly to the "renaissance" of the artist's books in the midst of the downfall of the mainstream publishing industry, exemplifies the perfectly normal paradox of the artist's book elaborated in my argument.

1 Quotations from the abstracts of Max Schumann and Victoria Browne.

2 Anne Moeglin Delcroix, *Esthétique du livre d'artiste*, Éditions Jean-Michel Place/Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, 1997.

3 Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, "1962 and after. Another idea about art" in *Guardare, raccontare, pensare, conservare, quattro percorsi del libro d'artista dagli anni '60 ad oggi (looking . telling . thinking – collecting Foru directions of the artist's book from the Sixties to the present*, book published on the occasion of an artist's book exhibition in 2004 in Casa del Mantegna, Edizioni Corraini, curated by Anne-Moeglin-Delcroix, Liliana Dematteis, Giorgio Maffei and Annalisa Rimmaudo, p. 27.

4 The distinction between "event" and "advent" is borrowed from the philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty in "Le langage indirect et les Voix du silence", in *Signes*, Paris, Gallimard, 1985 p. 77.

5 Clive Philipot, "Some contemporary Artists and Their Books", in *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Source Book* (Joan Lyons ed.), Layton, Gibbs M. Smith Inc., Rochester, Visual Studies Workshop Press, 1985, p. 97.

6 Ed Ruscha in John Coplans, "Concerning Various Small Fires. Edward Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications", *Artforum*, vol. III, no 5, February 1965, p. 25.

7 "De la reproduction de l'art à l'art de la reproduction", pp. 31-37, in Anne Moeglin

Delcroix, *Esthétique du livre d'artiste*, Éditions Jean-Michel Place/Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, 1997.

8 Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, "1962 and After Another Idea about Art", 2004, p. 28.

9 Edward Ruscha, in *Edward Ruscha*, Paris, Centre Georges-Pompidou, 1989, p. 85.

10 Moeglin-Delcroix, *ibid*, p. 29.

20. Moeglin-Delcroix, "1962 and After Another Idea about Art", p. 31.

11 *Ibid*, p. 34.

12 *Ibid*, p. 31.

13 Wright, Stephen: "Usership", pp 66-67, in *Towards a Lexicon of Usership* (2014) Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, NL, (edition 1000), pdf.

14 Moeglin-Delcroix, "1962 and after. Another idea about art", p. 15.

15 Walter Benjamin, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, Penguin Books, 2008. "Kunstverket i reproduksjonssalderen og andre essays."

16 Gianni Vattimo, "Una cultura della conservazione et della memoria?" in "La Memoria Esposta", the exhibited memory, *Nuovi Argomenti* no 20, 1986, p. 37, quoted from Moeglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du livre*, p. 36.

17 Moeglin-Delcroix, "De la reproduction de l'art à l'art de la reproduction", in *Esthétique du livre*, pp. 35-36.

Dissemination of Knowledge

Victoria Browne
KALEID editions

Historically, the form of the book has been considered the classical repository and universal technology for the dissemination of knowledge. With the advent of digital reproduction, including the transition from page to browser, artists are redefining the role of the book by means of self-publishing, demanding the dissemination and activation of *conceptual content*.¹

Between 2009–2016, KALEID editions represented European-based artists ‘who do books’ as an extension of my self-publishing artistic practice. I distributed to leading institutions worldwide including MACBA, MoMA and the V&A Museum for future public access and academic research. Submissions were received annually from hundreds of artists across Europe and a curated collection was represented online and at major art book fairs.

Artists’ books are ‘compositionally complex thoughts’, attracting an interdisciplinary approach and processed through medium and material-based printing for different channels of dissemination. For example: mass-produced expressions of uniqueness; vehicles for self-promotional dispersion; everyday affordable artworks; exquisitely crafted book arts; collated participatory projects; or, interactive haptic experiences.

The following artists’ books give evidence to support this statement, explaining the rationale, content, choice of materials and print technologies, channels of dissemination and types of audience engagement. All six bookworks were selected for the annual KALEID showcase and are held in major public special collections internationally.

¹ Gottlob Frege’s *Begriffsschrift* written in 1879 defines conceptual content as compositionally complex thoughts.

What to Do, Wat te Doen, Sebastiaan Fontein

“About ten years ago, I visited a party. I met a few people whom I didn’t know and they asked what kind of work I do. I told them that I’m an artist with a job on the side. Then some of them gave me unsolicited advice on how to make money with art. For example: ‘Make contact with gay people. They have no children, lots of money and a refined taste.’ I thought that this was well meant, but also a little strange. When I got home from the party, I wrote down the advice. After a few years I showed the collected advice to a friend. She was very enthusiastic and advised me to make a book on it.”

Wat te Doen was originally published in Dutch for a local audience at an accessible price and was designed to attract attention with its use of both colour and text. Fontein began representing *Wat te Doen* at local art book fairs. Through the ensuing conversations with his audience, the artist realised that the unsolicited and often amusing pieces of advice translated across national boundaries.

The subsequent edition, published in both Dutch and English, was presented to an international audience as an authentic social commentary on the way artists are perceived.

What to Do, Wat Te Doen was awarded the Arts Libris Prize in Barcelona and the Sheffield Artist’s Book Prize, leading to a solo exhibition in England. Fontein continues to represent himself at art book fairs, on social media and through a website and online shop for his self-publishing imprint.



1st Edition of three hundred, 2010,
2nd Edition of five hundred, 2012,
3rd Edition of five hundred, 2015.
Designed by Ingeborg Scheffes.
BASBOEK Publications Imprint, Holland.
Laser printed by Drukmotief BV on
fluorescent red 90gsm paper

To the Extend of / \ | &, Sigrid Calon

Calon's practice focuses on large-scale installations derived from XL Embroidery. Recognising a hidden language within the visual outcome of her designs, she proceeded to dedicate two years experimenting with gridding systems on paper. The result was an in-depth investigation into a 3x3 grid, computer processed for eight different embroidery stitches to achieve 120 different compositions.

A Risograph machine can print eight colour stencils, generating a possible 28 two-colour, 56 three-colour and 72 four-colour combinations. The artist's book presents every permutation of the gridded composition, bound together as a collection. Each combination appears only once, intricately weaving colourful patterns into challenging abstract works.

"I received emails from everywhere to order my book! It was overwhelming and unimaginable. I also did a lot of art book fairs and it completely changed my own practice in a positive way."

To the Extend of / \ | & was awarded the Best Dutch Book Design Prize. The publication, supported by printed ephemera including posters, stickers and badges, led to further art installations and design commissions for textiles, eyewear and infographics. Calon continues to represent herself at international art book fairs, on social media and through a website with an online shop.



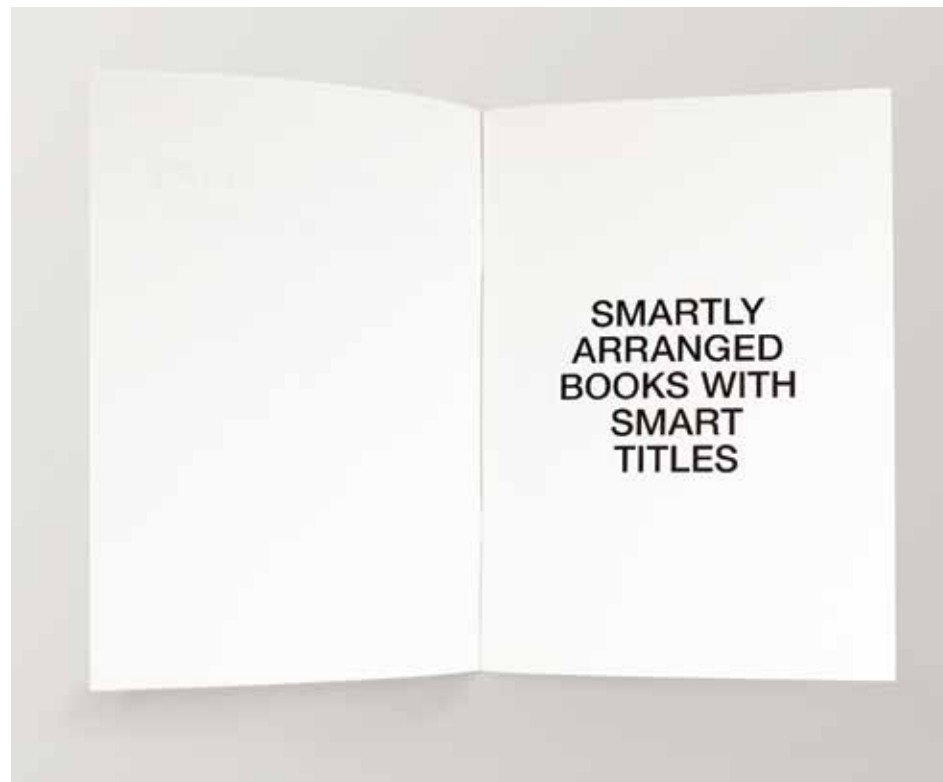
Edition of four hundred and twenty, 2012.
Conceived and printed by the artist at
the CN Lab, Jan van Eyck Academy, Holland.
Bound by Handboekbinderij Geertsen in
Nijmegen. Risograph RISO MZ1070 printed
on Da Costa Blauwitt 100gsm paper.
ISBN 978-90-819796-0-3

Contemporary Photography, Paul Paper

Paulius Petraitis is currently pursuing a PhD at Middlesex University London and publishes under the pseudonym Paul Paper. *Contemporary Photography* is the result of Petraitis' immersion in art photography between 2011 – 2013.

Observing how the Internet and social media have facilitated an increase in networking among contemporary art photographers and in the influence they have on each other, Petraitis posed the question "How much of contemporary art photography can be categorised into certain trends or tropes, like emoticons and emojis in their simple-to-read iconicity?"

The photobook presents Paul Paper's text renderings of these categorised photographic motifs and acts as a tongue-in-cheek challenge to art photography. The book is published by Lodret Vandret, part of the online community of *Do-It-Yourself* and *Do-It-With-Others* practitioners that fosters new projects across borders and cultures. The staple-bound, accessibly priced booklet is represented by the publisher at international photobook fairs, art bookshops and online.



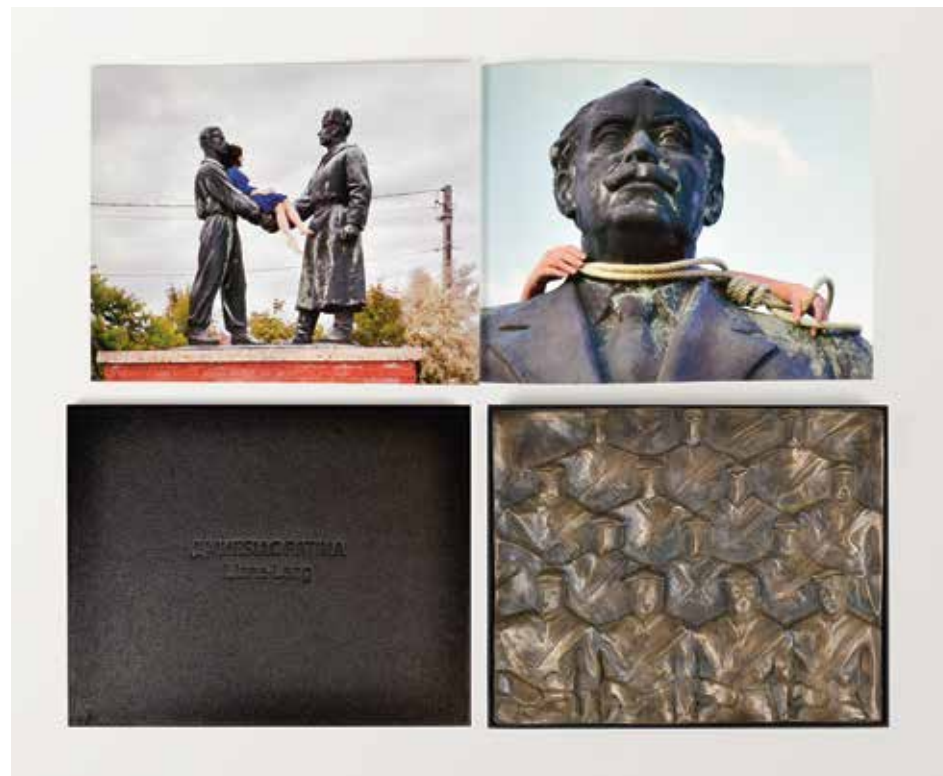
Edition of five hundred, 2013.
Vandret Publications Imprint, Denmark.
K-Offset printed and saddle stitched.
ISBN 978-87-92988-06-5

Amnesiac Patina, Liane Lang

KALEID editions' inaugural art commission is an original sculptural photobook incorporating patinated bronze resin casting. In it, Liane Lang examines Communist-era monuments and acts of political iconoclasm. Her photographs document statues relocated in Budapest's Memento Sculpture Park, whose authority is subverted through the interventions of life-like body casts made in the artist's studio.

"This is my first artist's book and I'm enjoying the process of bringing together the haptic sculptural element of my work and the photographic into one object. The sequential and contained format of the book broadened my way of thinking, creating new narratives and conceptual connections within my practice."

The commission was intended to re-present to a wider audience elements of an ambitious, on-going, photography project the artist is engaged in. The outcome saw Lang's photographs enter public collections for the first time and introduced her artist's book to private collectors who were already familiar with her large-scale C-Type prints and time-based media. *Amnesiac Patina* was awarded the Birgit Skjold Memorial Trust Prize for Excellence at The London Art Book Fair, 2014.



Edition of twenty-five, 2014. Maquette by the artist. Commissioned by KALEID editions, London. Digitally printed on an Epson R3000, St. Cuthberts Mill Bockingford paper 190gsm. Printed, cast and bound by KALEID editions

**I can highly recommend the Gestapo
to everyone, Victoria Browne**

The artist's book expands on Browne's contribution to *Sigmund Freud and the Play on the Burden of Representation*, a curated installation by Joseph Kosuth at the 21er Haus, Vienna's museum of contemporary art, in 2014.

What began as a free booklet shown and distributed during an exhibition at the Freud Museum London, culminated in a wall installation and publication in collaboration with the Sigmund Freud Museum Vienna. *I can highly recommend the Gestapo to everyone* features tipped-in plates of Sigmund Freud's unoccupied home in Vienna, which obscure his personal artefacts relocated in London.

The artist's book underlines the fallibility of print; citing five biographies published between 1957 – 2009, that each present as true, an inaccurate account of Freud's evacuation from Vienna. Substantiated further through the Internet, the apocryphal tale of Freud's wry humour is perpetuated and convincingly recasts myth as reality.



Edition of one hundred and fifty, 2015.
Photographs and layout by by the artist.
KALEID editions Imprint, London. Printed
on an HP Indigo Press by F.E.Burman on
Mohawk 148gsm, Ecowhite 150gsm and
Smooth Lith Gloss 130gsm paper. Foil
blocking by Benwells Ltd.

Legend: An A to Z of the Lea Valley, Hilary Powell

Supported with public funding from the National Lottery through Arts Council England with additional support from UCL Institute of Making, UCL Public Engagement, UCL Graduate School, UCL Urban Laboratory and Newham Council.

Popuppupup involved local businesses, ten apprentices and crafts people working alongside Hilary Powell to assemble and run a public production line, where making became performance over three days in East London's Lea Valley, a designated area of regeneration as part of the Olympic Games legacy.

The outcome is *Legend* a collaborative hand crafted artist's book, outlining a poetic A – Z list of the facts and fiction of an historically industrial area in the throws of change. Each pop-up page is a moving vision of an urban landscape as pylons collapse, tower blocks grow and metal scrap piles high.

Popuppupup was documented by film throughout the production, generating evidence to support Powell's future research projects and available to view online: www.vimeo.com/116776043

The publication was shortlisted for the Ruskin Drawing Prize 2015, awarded the Birgit Skiold Memorial Trust Prize for artists' books and acquired by every national and academic collection that KALEID editions visited.



Performed over three consecutive days as an edition of forty, 2014. Collages, drawings and intaglio prints by the artist. Offset-litho printed, laser-cut and hand-bound.