

# The Mexican Centre for Book Arts

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## ABSTRACT

In Mexico there is a gap in Book Arts, there is an incredible history in traditional books and creativity for their innovation. However, there is not an institution focusing on connecting the practice of librarians, publishers, artists, artisans, bookbinders, readers, among others. We do have many important international book fairs, bookshops and libraries, but we are not at the forefront as USA and UK in the book arts scene. All this suggest that there is an entrepreneurial opportunity to establish as soon as possible a cultural institution. So, how do we imagine *The Mexican Centre for Book Arts*? This project will develop in long-term collaboration, community and cooperation. Not only within Mexico, it will encourage the networking and opportunities between other countries and other Centres for Book Arts already established.

**Keywords:** Mexican, book, arts, collaboration

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This paper will outline the current context of book arts practice, distribution and collections with some key studies, how do we imagine *The Mexican Centre for Book Arts* with an artistic process of imagination, and finally it will determine the future work with a methodology as a graphic designer.

### 1.1 The book arts practice, distribution and collections now.

By the time that book arts have been more and more a conscious practice for a wide spectre of creators, the Artist's Book has been studied in terms of meaning, innovative formats and historic moments. But if we look forward in this globalized world, where there is an increasing interest in creating, promoting and collecting them through traditional and digital platforms. What should new generations of book artists be doing? Considering every project do not have a recipe, it is unique and powerful in its way.

There are few artists around the world and being more specific, even fewer book artists who have the possibility to travel around the world to attend

art book fairs, workshops and symposiums to show and improve their production, skills and services. This small group are privileged because they can notice what is happening around the world in a contemporary way. They establish connections between exhibitors and institutions, but also they subtract ideas ready to apply in following projects. Peter Rutledge Koch is a privileged American man who has attended many artist book Fairs in his life and after several years, he decided to run its own artist book fair in California, USA. *CODEX* which is held biennially is one of the main art book fairs now and it is highly appreciated by the international art scene. Its dates match perfectly with one of the most important antiquarian book fairs, in this way investors, collectors and book lovers are gathering in same places and buyer circumstances.

In words of Ulises Carrion (1997), 'Only museums and collectors (and I refer specifically to museums and collections in the richest countries well know for their imperialist views on the geography and the history of culture) can have any interest in identifying, dating and registering the so called ten best works in a particular field.'

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*The Chelsea College of Arts, Artists' Books Collection* documents widely the relationship of contemporary artists with the book, as a form of artistic practice from the early sixties. Established in 1970 by Clive Phillpot who is nicknamed the godfather of artist's books and 'in response to the production of books as 'democratic multiples' by conceptual artists such as Ed Ruscha, Lawrence Weiner, Sol LeWitt, Marcel Broodthaers and Ian Hamilton Finlay, it is one of the oldest and most prestigious collections in the UK.' (2017)

On the other hand, the Mexican Martha Hellion (1999) has been a critical thinker who speaks and confronts opinions about cultural studies surrounding the book arts. Her creations, writings, curatorial practice and archives have marked fundamental directions on the way book arts are approached. Her vision has a strong subject knowledge and she has collaborated with other key contributors in the last decades of Book Arts, to mention some of them: Ulises Carrion, Felipe Ehrenberg, Patricia Lagarde, Magali Lara, Carla Rippey, Alex Dorfsman, Clive Phillpot and Damian Ortega.

These networks have expanded her practice in book arts not only as a creator because she has been a curator, exhibitor, distributor, judge, writer, publisher, architect, teacher, etcetera. In my young experience and considering all these perspectives, new works reconsider the high standards of quality in book arts and new ways of reading that communicate the intention of the author(s).

## **2. MAIN BODY**

In Mexico there is a gap in Book Arts, there is an incredible history in traditional books and creativity for their innovation. However, there is not an institution focusing on connecting the practice of librarians, publishers, artists, artisans, bookbinders, readers, among others. We do have many important international book fairs, bookshops and libraries, but we are not at the forefront as USA and UK in the book arts scene. So, how do we imagine the Mexican Centre for Book Arts?

### **2.1 How do we imagine *The Mexican Centre for Book Arts*?**

*The Mexican Center for Book Arts* seeks to be a meeting point for creators, librarians, collectors, bibliophiles, among others in an international level, establishing a connection with other centres and institutions with similar lines of research, education and production in cities such as New York, London, China, among others. Initially, our mission is to foster and promote book arts and artist-led publishing between Mexico and UK through collaboration, education and distribution.

The Mexican Center for Book Arts will be founded in 2019 by Rafael Morales Cendejas in Guadalajara, Mexico. It will be the first not-for-profit organization of its kind in the nation. Being one of few contemporary arts organizations dedicated to the art of the book, and the only location in Guadalajara at which the Guadalajara International Book Fair is well known worldwide. Visitors will view book arts exhibitions in the context of an active, working studio. In keeping with the Center's mission, our exhibitions endeavour to place book art practice within the larger context of contemporary art, exploring the book as object, as media, and as a site of resistance.

*The Mexican Center for Book Arts* will promote active explorations of both contemporary and traditional artistic practices related to the book as an art object. The Center seeks to facilitate communication between the book arts community and the larger spheres of contemporary visual and literary arts, while being a model organization locally, nationally, and internationally within the field. We will achieve this through different cultural strategies such as exhibitions, classes, public programming, literary presentations, opportunities for artists and writers, publications, and collecting.

### **2.2 Future work**

There are four main aspects of communication to develop in the following months, the branding identity, the website structure, interview the

managers of London Centre for Book Arts and introduce the project to potential partners.

### 3. CONCLUSION

This research is finished in terms of that we detected that in Mexico there is a gap in Book Arts, which means that there is an entrepreneurial opportunity to establish as soon as possible *The Mexican Centre for Book Arts*, a long-term project that will require cooperation and collaboration to make a community impact in the international book arts scene.

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