

EN SPACE





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Instructor, cover art & design: Heather Green

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DOUGLAS KEARNEY'S PERFORMATIVE TYPOGRAPHY

by Aída Esmeralda

Translating Polyphonics onto the Page

What if we thought of the style and character of a typeface as a voice? How could these polyphonic typefaces, each with their individual histories, contexts, and origins in specific cultural moments, lend themselves to performance on a page? These are just a few questions posed by the work of poet, interdisciplinary performer, and librettist, Douglas Kearney. In this brief consideration, I engage with the “performative typography” of Kearney’s poems, point to some of his influences, and briefly describe parts of his composing process.

Kearney is known for the experimental work he’s published in a wide variety of mediums from poetry collections, to operas, to musical collaborative projects. His writing is thematically concerned with his experience as a Black man in the U.S., politics, African-American history, and Black musical production. Part of his process for experimentation involves the invocation of merging and mingling voices all speaking simultaneously through the poem— a sonic confrontation, “imagining, layering, and interruption.” This is made possible by his rigorous manipulation of collaged text that feels sculptural and alive, reaching to and from different moments in time and place. Take, for example, his poem “Falling Dark at the Quarters.”

Here, Kearney has found and compiled



language from a variety of sources including a contemporary tag confirming the pure cotton makeup of an item of clothing. But in stark contrast and right beside the tag is the bold, playful typeface and upside-down words spelling out the typically jovial saying, “A hard day’s night.” However this playfulness is quickly disrupted at a key linguistic and syntactic point after the “g.”

A new and violent reference is brought forth through the quick nod to the historically derogatory insult for Black people. At the same time, the layers of ill handwriting and numbers create more references to the idea of a sale or purchase, yet another association of slavery. As the title places our attention to the act of falling, several of the type compositions mention descent and are pointing downwards. From afar, the composition holds various visual allusions, from a flag to a person bent over picking cotton, the sharp, rupturing lines and angles of language become the joints of a body.

For Kearney, these layerings are an interesting exercise in legibility where the “visual hierarchy of depth” created by the overlapping and enjambed

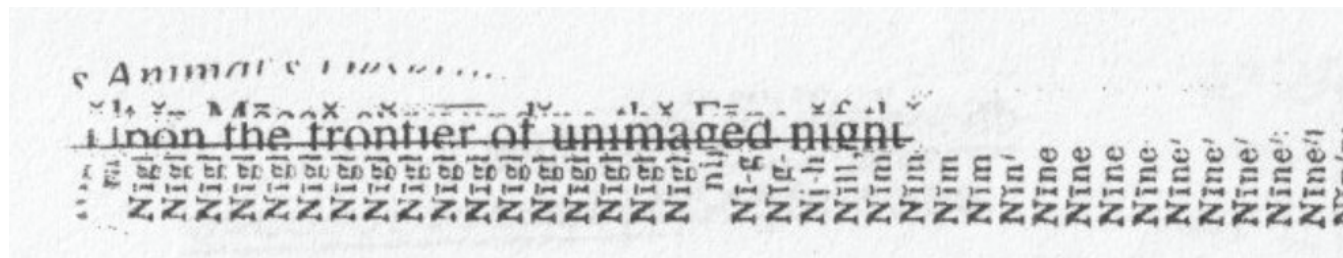


“Falling Dark at the Quarters”

type allows for syntactic and of depth” created by the overlapping and enjambed type allows for syntactic and synaptic cues and associations. The solitary, ghostly presence of the “for” conjures an uneasy feeling due to the unknown destination of the preposition “for.” Where does it fall? Though our brains tend to trust a serif type, here the clear legibility of the “for,” in unison with the other voices lifting off the page, makes us ruminate on the impossible temporal distance and duration of time needed to grasp the everlasting, enduring effects and griefs of chattel slavery. The lonely “for,” placed across from what appears to be a named entry, opens the poem up to the question of what (or who) is the direct object of the sentence(s) and to whom (the subject) does it belong? The stakes of Kearney’s considerations for language, voice, and visual cues are high.

These poems are not meant to just be experienced as “gimmicks or special effects—” they’re each a performance rooted in rich research and visual-linguistic construction. The poems embody the process of Kearney’s writing and personal engagement with memory, archive, music, and print culture.

To make these poems, Kearney typically starts by sketching lines of language, general shapes, movements, and layers. Especially interesting is the way that Kearney imagines and hand-draws different typefaces in the drafting process. His intimate engagement with typefaces follows his belief that “every bit of type is telling [us] to do something.” He then uses programs like Microsoft Word or Photoshop to compose and manipulate each element. For Kearney, this process feels in proximity to the practice of “sampling,” a



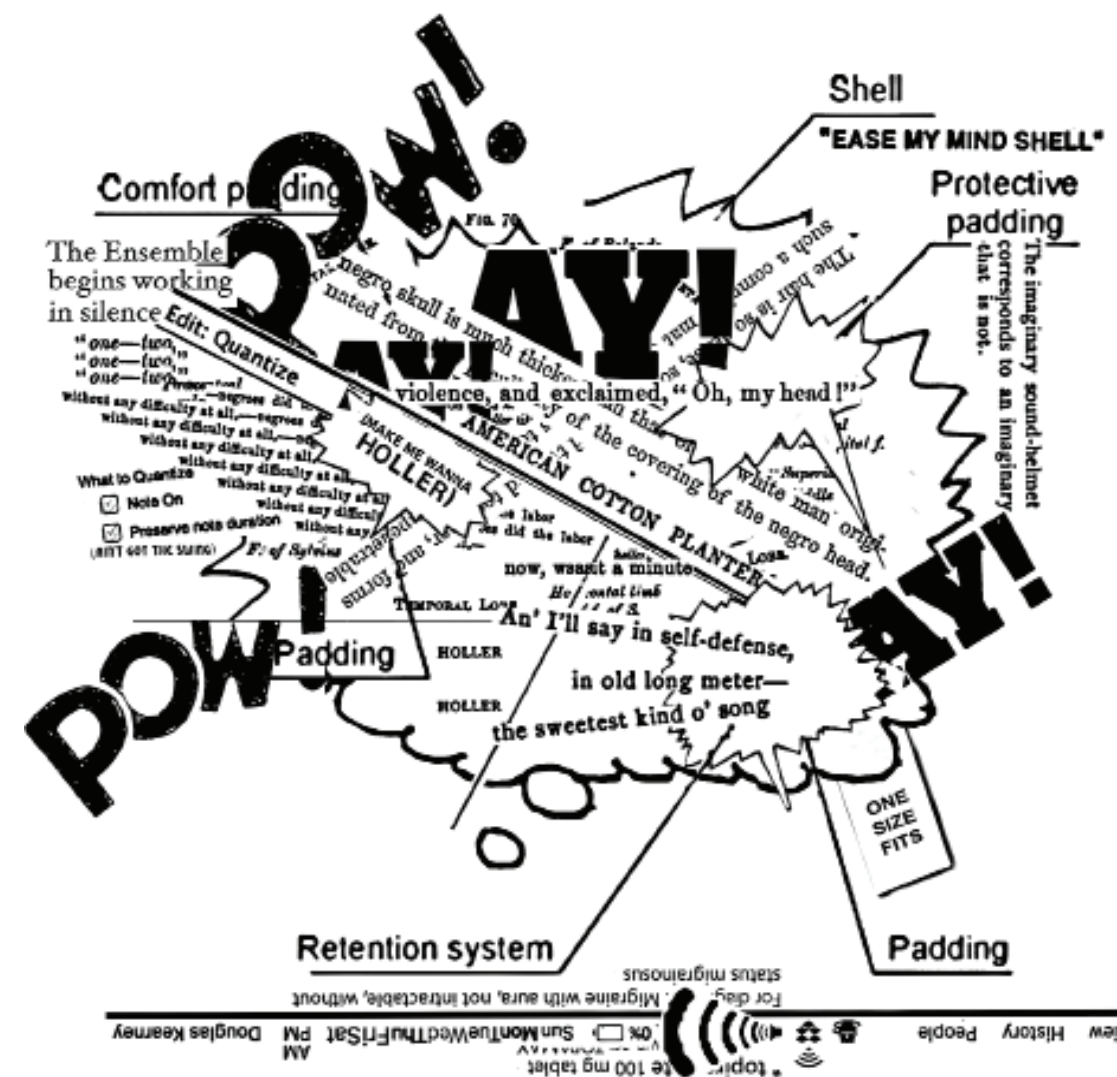
from Susan Howe's "Debths"

process commonly used in music production. In which snippets of sound, dialogue, and instrumentation are taken, edited, and embedded into an entirely new musical context. By sampling, musicians are able to maintain specific elements of an audio snippet (ie. timbre), thus incorporating musical allusions and easter eggs to their songs. Similarly, Kearney's amalgamation of typefaces produces a cacophony of sociocultural and historical pointers.

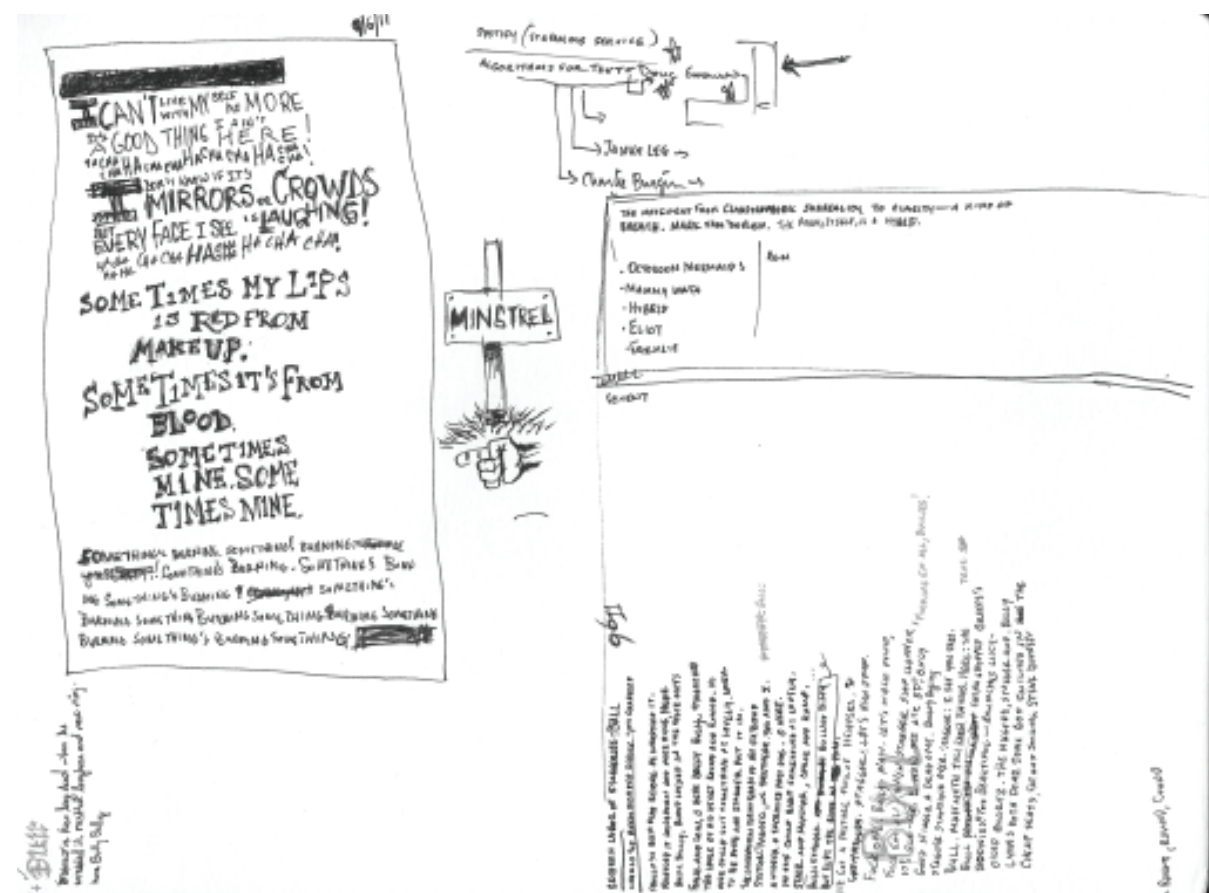
Though not originally influenced by poet Susan Howe, Kearney does point to her

use of sliced language in recent projects such as *Debths* as a point of departure for his innovative syntax and aesthetics. He is particularly interested in how the cutoffs of words in Howe's letterpressed poems create fragmented units of sound and image.

The fragmentation and destabilization of written and/or printed language are useful mechanisms when thinking through and alongside several voices (ie. voices in the media, voices of family and ancestors, voices of performance characters)—it allows the polyphonic thinking and research process to



"Ease my mind shell"



Scanned image of Kearney's drafting process for "Minstrel" and "Seventh Labor of Stagger Lee: Bull"

be translated directly onto the page.

Consider the above poem from a project Kearney is working on in which he imagines what he calls "rhetorical armor" for Black people. In each poem, Kearney combines a piece of armor, in this case a helmet, with a Black musical genre, here the "Field Holler." In a recent publication on the futurefeed webpage, Kearney describes this poem as a meditation on "work and the impact on [his] mind...how being mindful of [his] mind" becomes a type of labor too. Thus, the helmet is a protection from external threat but also a container for internal creation. How are the various semiotic and semantic cues coming

together to present a critique? A prayer? A map? A dream? The intersection of all of the above is an immensely intriguing place to think.

Though Kearney mostly composes digitally, I'm still thinking about his initial drafting process. I'm thinking about how letterpress printing and layering type in this way would add an even more tactile depth to the language-building endeavor. What does it mean to feel the weight of the type of a line of language, of feeling, of voice, in your hand? What does misregistration and illegibility open us up to feel?

All quotes were taken from Douglas Kearney's interview on *Between the Covers*, a TinHouse Podcast hosted by David Naimon. Photos taken from *Poetry Foundation*, *futurefeed*, and *smoking glue gun*.



left: The Banks
of a River(2016)
Felicity Bristow

{book}

books

corinne phillips

How do you define a book?

Colloquially we have a common understanding of what the book as an object is; books hold meaning, stories and/or knowledge. This definition falls short, as many objects can hold meaning. Physically speaking a book has a cover, pages, a spine. This definition seems concrete, objective, fair, but unravels as we begin to tease apart the pieces. What is a cover? What is a page? What is a spine? To Paul Harris each page is a jar of dirt. To Felicity Bristow, pages are petri dishes, filled with berries, seeds, and flowers collected from walks along the bank of the river Tweed (left). To Adriana Groeneveld, the cover and spine is an old wooden cabinet holding the handcrafted pottery pieces that act as “pages” of her story. It appears that the definition of a “book” is only as limiting as the artist’s imagination. The further we delve into defining, the less sure we become of our answers. Attempting to define a book is a lot like trying to define art itself. Wherever we find a suitable definition, an artist will inevitably find a way to push the boundaries of what we think we know. The following artists’ work is less centered on the creation of books, and more on creating a sense of “bookness”. Their art intentionally pushes against and consequently reshapes and reforms the definition of a book.



The form of each {not} book speaks to its contents. The jars in *Soil Stories* are meticulously spaced along brilliantly lit, long, white shelves, displayed like precious artifacts in a museum. It's an interesting choice for a subject matter so common; dirt. In this setting, however, the dirt becomes rather remarkable. It's immediately obvious that no two samples are the same. Patterns emerge in the colors and shapes within each identical vial. The jars seem to document space and time objectively, but removed from any textual context, the viewer must find connection between samples themselves. Like Bristow's petri dishes, these books bridge the gap between the scientific and the personal.

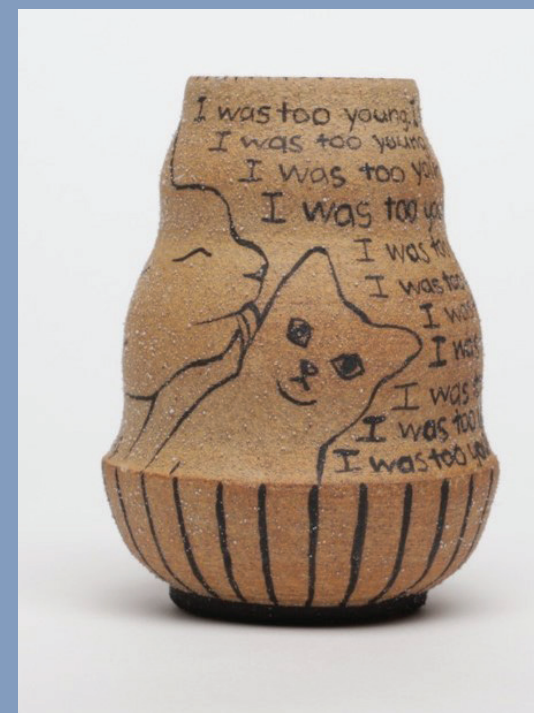
Some {not} books deal solely in the personal. The *Cabinet of Compartmentalization* holds fourteen distinct "vessels" that

each tell a story about the artists' experiences growing up in the catholic church. Some remain abstract; a delicately painted dandelion suggests growth, resilience, and ostracization. Others are more direct. One pot, featuring a cat grooming a kitten, reads over and over in childlike handwriting "I was too young". The piece is both heart wrenching and healing; Groeneveld writes, "By tucking my finished jars into a cabinet, they are stored in a body that is a placeholder for my own".

"By tucking my finished jars into a cabinet, they are stored in a body that is a placeholder for my own"

{Not} books expand our understanding of what makes a story. They allow for narratives that do not occupy linear space and time. In works like Groeneveld's, the form successfully articulates the indescribable nature of human memory, while Harris and Bristow's works attempt to catalog an infinite and expanding universe. {Not} books reveal and interrupt the limitations of traditional books.

Left: *Soil Stories* (2020), Paul Harris for Ecotopian Libraries
 Right: *Cabinet of Compartmentalization* (2022), Adriana Groeneveld



BY CARI MUÑOZ



CECILIA VICUÑA

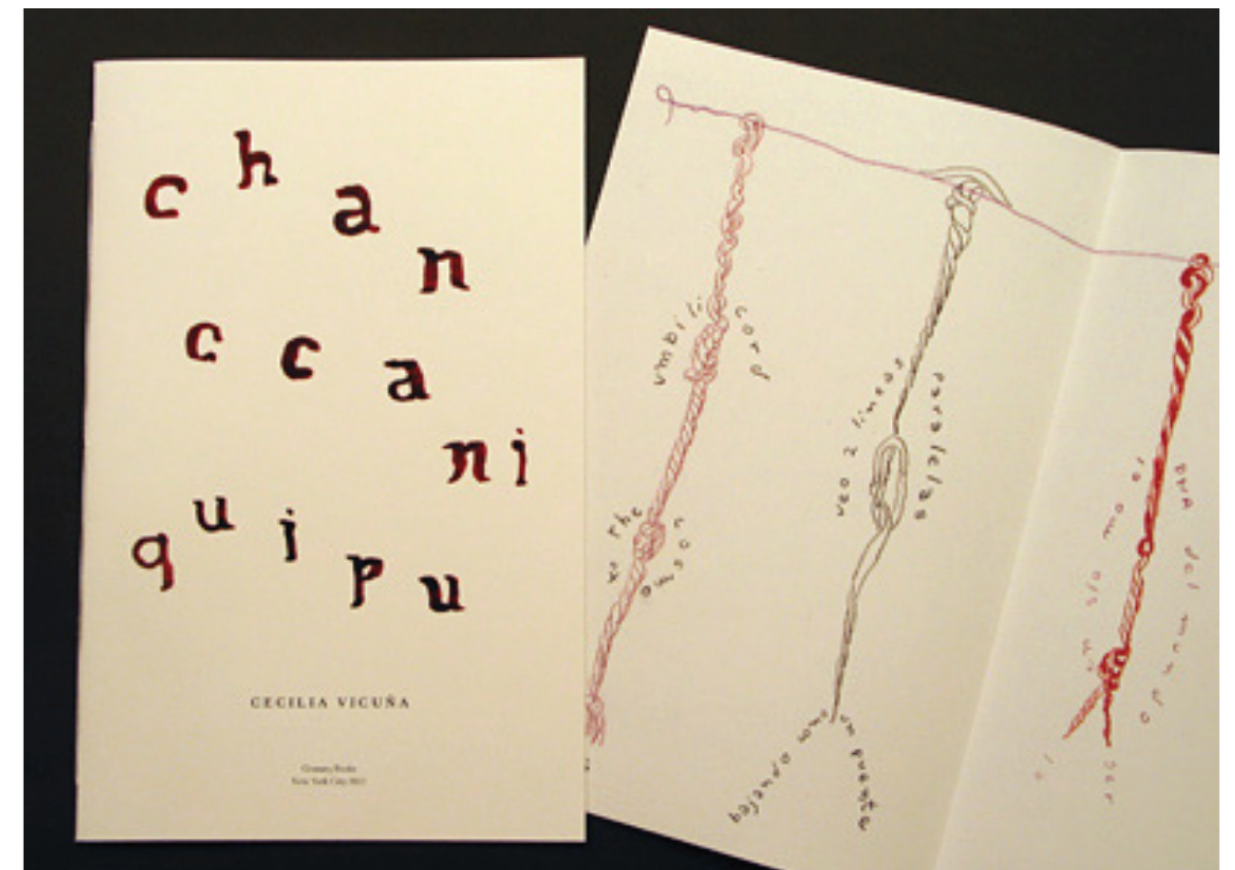
meral, site-specific installations in nature, streets, and museums combine ritual and assemblage. She calls this impermanent, participatory work 'lo precario' (the precarious): transformative acts that bridge the gap between art and life, the ancestral and the avant-garde. Her paintings of early 1970s de-colonized the art of the conquerors and the 'saints' inherited from the Catholic Church, to create irreverent images of the heroes of the revolution."

When we think of the beauty of word and word creating that happens in poetry, we are forced to consider the page as a space for endless possibilities. The true art of poetry is the fact that it forces more from us as readers and writers and asks us to engage language from every angle possible. Chilean poet, Cecilia Vicuña, is an amazing example of the way poets engage language beyond the space of the page and push for us to consider the world around us as living poetry.

To understand Vicuña and her revolutionary approach to poetry, it is important to understand who she is. The following biography comes from her website, ceciliavicuna.com, "Cecilia Vicuña is a poet, artist, filmmaker and activist. Her work addresses pressing concerns of the modern world, including ecological destruction, human rights, and cultural homogenization. Born and raised in Santiago de Chile, she has been in exile since the early 1970s, after the military coup against elected president Salvador Allende. Vicuña began creating 'precarious works' and quipus in the mid 1960s in Chile, as a way of 'hearing an ancient silence waiting to be heard.' Her multi-dimensional works begin as a poem, an image that morphs into a film, a song, a sculpture, or a collective performance. These eph-

Vicuña's work in her Quipus, and beyond, show the full range of multi-disciplinary approaches to a poetics that devotes itself to anti-colonial language building. Her work moves between English, Spanish, and Quechua. Quipis is a Quechua word that translates to knot. She has made many iterations of the Quipu since 1972, including "El Hilo Azul" (1972), "Quipu Menstrual" (2006), and "Quipu de Lamentos" (2014), to name a few. All of these seek to recreate the 5000-year-old tradition of textile and knot cording used by communities in the Andes as a record-keeping device for tax obligations, census data, calendrical information, military organization, music, poems, and historical narratives.

As for her Chancani Quipu (Granary Books, 2012), language, textile, color, and knotting all become linguistic devices to create a truly visual poem. This iteration was published by Granary Books, they write, "Each Chancani Quipu was produced entirely by hand. The poem was "printed" on unspun wool using stencils made by the poet who also knotted the threads. The quipu is tied or bound to a 16 in. bamboo spine from which it hangs to about 48 in. when installed. The work is housed in a hand-stenciled box (18 1/2 x 18 1/4 x 4 in.) made by Susan Mills. Silicon Gallery Fine Art Prints in Philadelphia printed the drawing and the pamphlet in full-color." Alongside this piece there is a pamphlet entitled Instruction Manual & Orientation to Various Meanings.



CHANCCANI QUIPU

The following is from the pamphlet:

“Chanccani Quipu reinvents the concept of ‘quipu,’ the ancient system of ‘writing’ with knots, transforming it into a metaphor in space; a book/sculpture that condenses the clash of two cultures and worldviews: the Andean oral universe and the Western world of print.

In Chanccani Quipu breath metaphorically imprints the unspun wool floating as a shadow or unstable mark on the outer hairs of a river of fleece.

The floating words take the place of knots, and the fleece takes the place of the twisted threads.

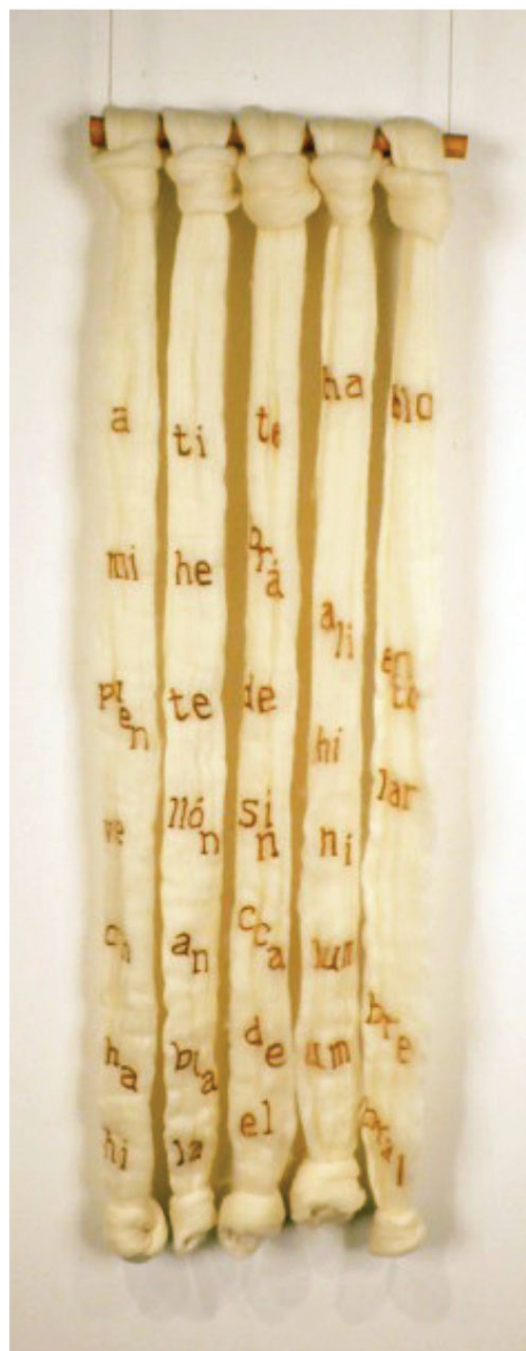
No record of a historical or archaeological quipu constructed with unspun wool, or with words ‘printed’ on wool has been found.

Chanccani Quipu may be a command or a plea (depending on the tone of voice).

It is a prayer for the rebirth of a way of writing with breath, a way of perceiving the body and the cosmos as a whole engaged in a continuous reciprocal exchange.

In Quechua the writer/reader of the quipu was called: quipucamayoc (khipukamayuc), literally: ‘the one that animates, gives life to the knot.’ ”

—Cecilia Vicuña



When we think of book arts, and particularly the artist book, we sit with the many ways that we put forward a text. Sometimes as word on a page, as images, as pockets of hidden pages, however, Vicuña pushes the artist book even further. She asks us to imagine textures and knotting as a form of language.

She asks us to step away from a Western framework of poetry and the book and to look towards indigenous knowledges to give touch and body to the book and revolutionize poetry and book arts. To imagine a approach to both these artistic medium with a care-centered approach that works alongside land and the ancestral.

A Glimpse into Medieval Bookbinding

By: Ashley Gaskin



One of the most artistically studied medieval manuscripts is the Lindisfarne Gospels, dating back to ca. 710-721. In the Medieval period, books like these were constructed utilizing many trades people such as leather workers, scribes, and artists. It was not uncommon that books were created more so for nobles and people with prestige than common folk, since they took an immense amount of time, effort, and resources to make. In order to develop a codex that served the purpose of being an art piece as well as an informative script, the most important part was to start with the paper.

Paper began with either the calf, goat, or sheep. Their skin became the parchment for the book through a grueling process, which included: killing the animal, hanging it upside-down to drain the blood, skinning and purifying the skin, removing the hair, and stretching the skins into their new lives as paper (Quandt, Noel2001, 14). Although the skins were usually imperfect, the scribe usually cut portions from the skins that had the least number of imperfections (called the prime cut) and the scraps were thrown away. Text and decoration were the next steps in creating a medieval manuscript.

Text was written on ruled lines forming columns on the page. Laying out how the text would sit on the page was tremendously tedious for the scribe, not only because of how many folios there could have been, but also because of the quills medieval peoples had access to. A person could only write downward with quills, meaning letters had to be divided up into several strokes! (13). The scribe was also responsible for decorating the text.

One of the most common decorations in these manuscripts was penwork flourishing (20). Penwork flourish-



Medieval parchmenter, Stadt-bibliothek Nürnberg, Amb. 317.2°, fol. 35r (source: Wiki-media)

ing was done around the first letter of paragraphs and could consist of paintings within letters.

The last step in completing a medieval manuscript was to bind the book. One type of binding, much like a paperback, is called a limp-binding (22). Another option was to use wooden boards to protect the quires. These boards, were mostly sewn onto the quires with leather or fibers to create, what we call now, Coptic binding. Different types of books had different bindings. For example, a gospel book belonging to a noble would look different from a book from a monastery.



Lindensfarne Gospel, Chi-Ro, Northumberland, ca. 715-7210.



Limp Binding, Zustand vor der Restaurierung (Cod. Guelf. 858 Helmst.)



Coptic Binding, Cover of the Carolingian Gospel Codex Aureus of Sankt Emmeram. ca. 870

All in all, medieval manuscripts offer similar purposes and contain similar traits to modern artists books through their tedious construction and artistic qualities. Paper wasn't as easily accessible to the average person and required intense knowledge about leatherworking and skinning. Text could only be written by hand and sometimes took years for one scribe to complete a book with decorations included. Finally, the bindings of these books were more protective, asserting the importance of some books compared to others.

While these books are a part of history in the way that they were made, they are also a part of our history – they contain past memories that have once been forgotten and we continue to learn from them.

Citations:

Kwakkel, Erik, *Books Before Print*, (13-22) Arc Humanities Press, 2018.

Noel, William G., Quandt, Abigail B., *Leaves of Gold: Manuscript Illumination from Philadelphia Collections, "From Calf to Codex"*, (14-20) Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2001.



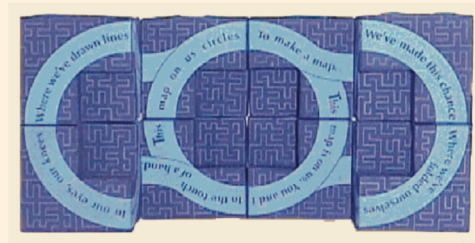
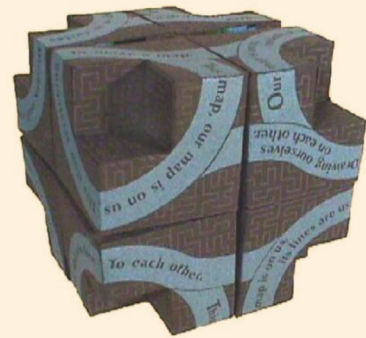
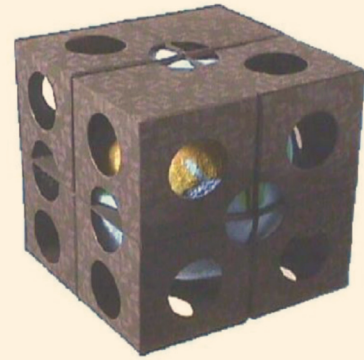
LINDA SMITH INSIDE CHANCE &

by Amber Mongelluzzo

In 2000 the artist book world was changed drastically, as artist Linda Smith and poet Alberto Ríos collaborated to make *Inside Chance*. The artists took a unique approach to make the book look like a die, with the home of the number cut out to see the earth (Public.ASU).

The most impressive part of the book is the mechanics of it—folding out endlessly to make different shapes, while the poem can be read from any direction. The significance of this artwork does not stop there; the book has a handmade paper touch and the poem is letterpress. The world is made out of casted cotton linter, which was pigmented with blue dye and then painted with acrylic gouache (Public.ASU).

The shell, or die, that covers the earth and has a pressed on, was printed on Somerset Velvet—a sturdy, handmade printmaking paper made from 100% cotton rag (atlantisart.co.uk). The poetry, written by Alberto Ríos, is only 8 lines long. However, because of the structure of the book, it can be read 26 different ways (news.Arizona.edu). The measurements of this book are 4 inches by 8 inches tall, 4 inches by 8 inches wide, and 2 inches by 4 inches deep.

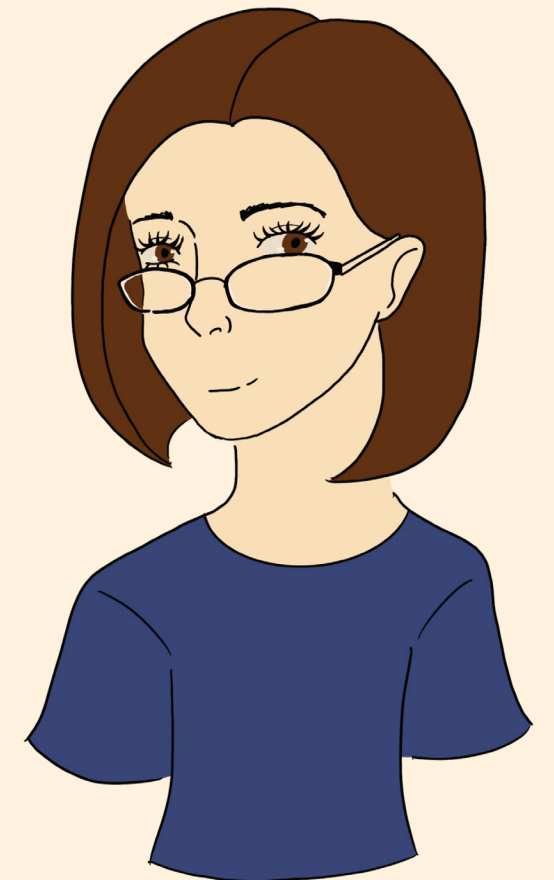


(Photos from Public.ASU)

Linda Smith, also known as Picnic Press (established in 1993), is local to Phoenix, Arizona. Along with *Inside Chance*, she has published three other books throughout her years, as well as taught workshops, held exhibitions, and collections (Public.asu). Her other published books include: *House of Cods* in 1996, *Dam Domino Book* in 1993, and *Three Poems for Two Voices* in 1992.

Exhibitions include: The Book and Paper Arts Biennial 2000, The Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts in 2000, School of Art, Arizona Museum for Youth, Mesa, Arizona in 2000, 11th Annual Pop-Up and Movable Book Exhibit featuring handmade movables, The University of Arizona Library, Tucson, Arizona, December 1998 - January 1999, The First Columbia Biennial Exhibition of Book and Paper Art, The Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts, September 18 - October 30, 1998, *Westward Bound*, University of Utah Marriott Library, Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers, and Utah Calligraphic Artists, traveling exhibition to six locations in the western United States in 1998, *Art of the Book '98*, The Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild, traveling exhibition to seven Canadian locations in 1998 - November 19, 1999, *Art and Soul of the Handmade Book*, Blue Heron Gallery, Vashon Island, Washington in 1997, *Pressing Matters*, Terminal four display cases, Sky Harbor International Airport, Phoenix, Arizona in 1997, *Turning The Page* in 1996, Honolulu Printmakers International Book Arts Exhibition in 1996, *Artists and Eccentric Books*, Braithwaite Fine Arts Gallery, Southern Utah University, Cider City, Utah in 1994, and *ARTLAND, A Celebration of the Family Farm*, Arizona Museum for Youth, Mesa, Arizona in 1994 (Public.asu).

All of Linda Smith's artists books are interactive in some way, whether it be a pop up or being able to manipulate the imagery, Smith's books are truly astonishing.





LETTERPRESS:

A Psychological Perspective

Haley Daniels

Historically, letterpress was used as a means of output. In the 15th century, Johannes Gutenberg developed the movable type printing method which allowed printing to serve as a way to communicate information to the masses in a rather fast and economical fashion. In printing, there was a focus on maximizing efficiency... and much of these principles were followed until the 19th century. Around the middle of the 19th century, letterpress and metal typesetting saw a decline in use. There was an emergence of photosetting and small desktop machines, as well as the introduction of Letraset. Following this, digital type and on-screen methods eventually emerged with litho and xerographic printers. By the mid 1980s, letterpress had been rendered outdated in the face of these high-speed low-cost digital methods.

How has all this maximizing of efficiency and focus on output affected us as a society?

Occupations have been centered around efficiency and have not considered the effects of such processes on wellbeing or mental health. Humans require occupation to maintain wellbeing (Gutman & Schindler, 2007), but mere occupation is not enough... it must have value and meaning.

In the later part of the 19th century, the Arts and Crafts movement, being led by William Morris, emerged as a reaction to this industrialization. Morris believed the promotion of happiness and wellbeing of citizens should be fostered in society. He was in opposition to the preoccupation society developed with cheap labor, mass production, and the maximizing of profits at the psychological expense of workers.

How does this look in society now?

While we still see the focus of mass production and maximizing of profits in many ways in this 20th century, there has been an increasing number of references to mental health and wellbeing in day-to-day life, the workplace, and the media. The World Health Organization describes mental health as a state of mental well-being that enables us to cope with the stressors, realize our abilities, learn and work well, and contribute to our community that underpins our individual and collective abilities to make decisions, build relationships and shape the world we live in. They state that mental health is a basic human right, and it is crucial to personal, community and socio-economic development.

How has this translated into Letterpress?

Letterpress has seen a rebirth in the 20th century. Since we have digital methods to take care of mass production printing needs, we now see the use of Letterpress emerging in a different light. Since its rebirth, focus has shifted from the output – mass produced printed media – to the process. The shift in focus from production and efficiency to the focus of process in Letterpress may beget positive effects on wellbeing.

What does this mean?

Where we lost value and meaning in the processes of output and maximized efficiency, the rebirth of letterpress has given a new approach to this art form. We are seeing the convergence of occupation and of maintenance of wellbeing. As a society, we are starting to recognize the importance of our mental health and that we have a right to our wellbeing. As one's occupation is intertwined with their health and are thus needed to experience a meaningful life

and improve wellbeing (Jessen-Winge et al., 2018), we are starting to recognize the importance and necessity of having a fulfilling occupation. Letterpress occupationally may be incredibly fulfilling and reap many psychological benefits as its process allows for much value and meaning to be derived, especially in comparison to digital print occupations. As being a human being in this experience of life requires maintenance of wellbeing through an occupation that has meaning and value, Letterpress in its rebirth may have an extra special significance.

According to the Value and Meaning in Occupation model (Persson et al. 2001) it is posited that activities must have concrete, symbolic, or self-reward value.

- There is concrete value in occupation if it strengthens one's capabilities or produces tangible results.
- There is symbolic value if it has personal, social, or cultural meaning.
- Occupation also has self-reward value if it is enjoyable and engaging.

You can argue that digital creative techniques may contain aspects of such values, but they far pale in comparison to letterpress.

Letterpress is a physical process that requires discipline, patience, tactile development, and confidence. Producing tangible results through one's cultivation of these capabilities allows for much concrete value in one's activities to be achieved.

- When working in a digital interface, these capabilities become obsolete.
- Working digitally allows us to be very precise, but physical letterpress requires structured work where one must be systematic and precise, this is because letterpress's physicality creates the possibility of failure. When there isn't a button to simply "undo" a mistake, letterpress may present more complications and a

need for discipline and patience.

- To fail in creative processes is essential, whether in iterations of failure that lead toward ultimate success; or reflections on failure where struggling with uncertainty leads to contemplation and an ability to manage ambiguity (Smith & Henriksen, 2016).
- Because imperfection is inevitable, it is embraced as part of design.
- As perfectionism and concern over mistakes are reliably associated with depression, anxiety, and stress... the ability to fail present in Letterpress and the cultivation of one's capabilities this creates and requires allow for the experience of concrete value.
- There is also concrete value in the production of tangible results.
- When working on a digital interface, there is a disconnect between the hand and eye, with a computer as an intermediary. With this, we become removed from our holistic relationship with the physical world. Not only does printing occur elsewhere, we also thus have a disconnect from our tangible results when working on print digitally.
- Such a disconnect is why digital techniques pale in comparison to letterpress when it comes to deriving concrete value.

As the heritage and rebirth of letterpress give it significant social and cultural meaning, the opportunity for deriving symbolic value becomes much more apparent in this process over digital alternatives.

- In an occupation, there is symbolic value if there is personal, social, or cultural meaning.
- In the shift from output to process, there is much personal meaning in Letterpress. Now not being necessary for mass production printing, Letterpress is pursued for the personal appreciation and love of the craft or process.
- As those who pursue Letterpress are part of a select group of likeminded

individuals who value and utilize this niche craft, there is much social meaning in this craft. As social creatures, group membership is essential to human wellbeing. It represents identity, purpose, and belonging, and satisfies the fundamental psychological need for meaningful connections to others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995).

- The rebirth of Letterpress and its use involve ample cultural meaning. There is much historical knowledge and principles of typography. The culture of Letterpress itself has carried these techniques into its rebirth in value. Letterpress is our heritage, and there is much appreciation of its authenticity and nostalgia. This nostalgia concerns a collective past, one that is shared among practitioners, upheld through tradition, and representative of heritage and culture (Adams, 2018). This shared collective past and history of Letterpress create the ability to derive much cultural meaning

With letterpress as a printing method no longer needing to be a necessity, we see designers displaying a genuine want for it. In this, there is much self-reward value in the craft.

- In the shift from output to process, there has been a different creation of intrinsic motivation for pursuing Letterpress.
- Through this shift, there is motivation for the activity itself because it is inherently gratifying and rewarding. Having intrinsic motivation serves much more for the experience of self-reward as opposed to having extrinsic motivation by achieving an outcome through the focus of output.
- For an occupation to serve in maintaining a positive wellbeing, it must have meaning and value in self-reward by being enjoyable and engaging. Participating in intrinsically motivating activities is essential for wellbeing (Ryan & Deci 2000).

Overall, there is much importance of pursuing an occupation that is in line with something that is going to give you purpose. It must have value and meaning and not come at great psychological expense. As human beings, we are meant to live a life of fulfillment. We are starting to see our right to our wellbeing and incorporating that thought into our workplaces. For those who have a love and appreciation for Letterpress, it may be as good as it gets occupationally. There are many occupations where one can derive meaning and value and in a lot of ways, many things are about perspective. However, Letterpress has unique characteristics that do not require much in finding a healthy perspective and rather foster positive growth. Through the necessity of discipline, making calculated choices, failing, and reflecting, Letterpress provides us with the ability to develop new insight. Sure, it is possible to become frustrated with this, but becoming frustrated over such things says a lot about one's current wellbeing. Letterpress provides ample opportunity to provide maintenance for our wellbeing and develop in a way that is very healthy for human functioning. Failure is something that should be embraced in life. Cultivating our capabilities is also something essential to the human experience. We learn through Letterpress how to maintain our humanness.

There is a reason as human beings that much of what has transpired in a society involving output and maximized efficiency has been taxing on us psychologically. I feel we are all innately aware that many of these aspects of society are not in line with our natural state of being. As something commonly reported by artists and craftspeople (Gutman & Schindler, 2007), one who enjoys Letterpress may experience a flow state. The experiences they describe – reward, accomplishment, mastery, self-esteem, and purpose (Burt & Atkinson 2012) – are central to models of wellbeing. If we do not experience flow state in our occupation, it is of my opinion that we should not settle for anything less than what would fulfill us in this way. I know this may not always be easy as we all come into this world at different levels of difficulty and


have to do what we must to put food on the table and a roof over our heads. However, many of us settle for our unfulfilling occupations and leave behind our dreams. Many people have started with nothing and have found gratification when they come into alignment with something that fulfills their wellbeing. The difference in these people is that they listen to their hearts and don't give up on what it's telling them. I believe we all have a life's purpose and a right to a life of fulfillment, no matter how hard it may be for us all individually, we just have to find it. We all have a right to be in harmony with our environment and doing something we love that fosters our wellbeing in positive ways. If this is Letterpress for you, then oh man are you in a lot of luck. One of my favorite books of all time is *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho. There is a quote that says "You will never be able to escape from your heart. So it's better to listen to what it has to say". In life, we have two options... we can follow our hearts, or not. But our dreams will never fade even if we turn our backs on them.

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Links

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A collage of various art supplies including scissors, paper scraps, and a book spine. The central focus is a white book spine with the title 'SCRAPS & SPINES: CHEAP ART THROUGH BOOK MAKING' and the author 'BY MORGAN MAXFIELD'. The spine is surrounded by colorful paper scraps, including a blue patterned piece, a yellow star, and a piece of orange paper. The background is a dark, textured surface.

SCRAPS & SPINES:

CHEAP ART THROUGH
BOOK MAKING

BY
MORGAN
MAXFIELD

Although it should be, art is not always accessible. Whether it is the lack of art within public education or the sheer price of supplies, it tends to be treated more as a privilege than a guarantee. There should be no world in which someone is completely unable to create art because of financial barriers, which is why cheap art is so vital.

When referencing “cheap art”, the Bread and Puppet Theater tends to come up, as Peter Schumann’s *Why Cheap Art Manifesto* encapsulates not only what cheap art even is, but why it is necessary within the art world.


“ART has to be CHEAP & available to EVERYBODY. It needs to be EVERYWHERE because it is the INSIDE of the WORLD.”

-excerpt from Peter Schumann’s *Why Cheap Art Manifesto*

Book arts, also called Artists’ Books, is a prime example of how cheap art can be incorporated into someone’s practice. The components that make up a book can be broken down into three primary categories: the cover, the spine, and the pages. Not one of these elements has to be crafted with expensive materials.

A cover, for example, can be made out of paper or wrapped cardboard (decorative or not) - both options that can yield an appealing result. Paper covers can be decorated by hand in a multitude of ways and do not inherently have to be any thicker than the pages inside. Pamphlet book structures work beautifully with paper covers and can look just as polished as hardcovers can. However, if drawn to creating a hardcover, wrapping thin cardboard or book board with paper rather than book cloth can also provide a less expensive option.

Depending on the book structure, spines can be constructed with PVA glue, which Elmer’s brand white school glue is (currently costing around \$11.99 for an entire gallon). When a book structure does require sewing to be involved, using dental floss is one of the most inexpensive options while still being quite durable. Not only is it waxed, which is the standard in bookbinding, but the threads are sturdy and tightly twisted.



It is a very common occurrence for people who tend towards creating art to passively collect scraps of paper or “random” materials throughout their life. Finally using these items within books is the perfect space to use said materials that are otherwise just sitting in a box or on a shelf. Old pieces of decorative paper or discarded drawings can be used within pages or as endsheets. They can be collaged or prominently displayed throughout a book. Pages can even be made of scraps entirely. One of the primary appeals of creating artists’ books is that there are very few ways to do it incorrectly. There is not a singular display of technique that makes a book “good”, but rather the concept and creativity behind it that does.

Art forms such as book arts do have more expensive options for materials, and at times using lower-cost materials can come at the price of any given piece being far from archival, but many mediums have very few, if any, inexpensive options. If they do, the inexpensive materials are so substandard in quality compared to the higher-cost counterpart that the process of using said materials is far more difficult.

It is considerably harder to paint if your store-brand acrylic separates or if your brushes fall apart with anything close to regular use. However, it is not considerably harder to glue or sew through printer paper (which costs an average of one cent per sheet) than it is 300 lb watercolor paper (which costs much more than one cent per sheet). These two papers may have many differences, but the fact that one is widely affordable, as well as obtainable, is also a difference worth noting. Printer paper may have fewer fibers or a less intricate production process, but it can create pages for a book all the same.

This being said: being able to make art without spending sizable sums of money on materials should be an option for all mediums, but as of this point, it is not. Finding mediums and artistic spaces where it is an option (even more so when it does not compromise the quality of the work), however, is not something to gloss over or ignore. Bookmaking is a perfect example of this: a place to put creativity (and finally use old materials) without the inherent barriers of cost.



Erica Mena

and her Anti-colonial,
Wellness-Driven Artistic
Practice

by Nicole Arocho Hernández



Pictured: Gringo Death Coloring Book

Erica Mena is a Puerto Rican poet, translator, and book artist. They hold an MFA in poetry from Brown University, an MFA in literary translation from the University of Iowa, and an M.Phil in Criticism and Culture from the University of Cambridge. Their book *Featherbone* (Ricochet Editions, 2015) won a 2016 Hoffer First Horizons Award. Their translation of the Argentine graphic novel *The Eternaut* by H.G. Oesterheld and F. Solano Lopez (Fantagraphics, 2015) won a 2016 Eisner Award. Their artist books are collected widely. Most recently they created the artist books *Puerto Rico en mi corazón*, a collection of letterpress printed broadsides by Puerto Rican poets in response to Hurricane Maria, printed in Spanish and English; and *Gringo Death Coloring Book* by Raquel Salas Rivera with collaborator Mariana Ramos Ortiz. They have taught Book Arts, Translation, and Poetry at Brown University, Mills College, Harvard University, and elsewhere. They currently live in Fiskars, Finland.

I am new to book arts, and whenever I try something for the first time, I look for another Puerto Rican who has done it and from whom I can learn. Erica Mena became that person for me in book arts. Her beautiful broadsides for *Puerto Rico en mi corazón*, which later became an anthology I love dearly, left me breathless. And then experiencing the carousel book *Gringo Death Coloring Book*, I stopped on my tracks and felt deep in my gut something akin to kinship and immense gratitude. I hadn't connected emotionally with any of the other works we have seen in class or at the ASU collection visit, so it was a breath of fresh air, and a big motivation, to experience these two works. My creative writing practice deals with the centuries-old colonization enterprise in Puerto Rico, my homeland, and seeing what Mena does with book arts, in collaboration with other artists, to bring across unquestionably anti-colonial works of art, helped me feel like this medium can also do

radically political work that can complement my poetry.

Apart from book arts projects, Mena has an embroidery project showcased in her website as well. "(k)not work" project consists of a series of old black-and-white postcards of various landscapes in San Francisco ("Left My Heart series) and Finland ("Wish You Were Here" series) that have brightly-colored french knots constructed over parts of the classically beautiful scenery. The needlework on the back of the postcards is highlighted as well. This extension of her artistic practice reminds me of map-making and meditation-like techniques of art making. With these postcards, Mena explores the connection between mental health, physical wellbeing, community, and unvalued feminine art-making (embroidery):

(k)not work approaches the importance of social connections with family, friends, and community, and the role femme people have been traditionally allocated as the manager of those ties, and the isolation of being disabled. These threads make visible the desire for connection in invisible illness, and the invisible labor of caretaking and social connection, on material relics of the past.

Alongside this project, Mena published an essay that made me think more deeply about the interconnectedness of textile/book arts, creative writing, neurodivergence, and disability. "Tying Knots: A Language of Anxiety" speaks to the barriers and difficulties that Erica Mena has found as a disabled adjunct professor in an academic system that does not provide protections to those whose labor it depends on. Last year, I started to learn more about my own neurodivergence and the ways it limits my functionality and productivity in graduate school, which is always fast paced,

making me reach my limit every few weeks. For many years I have felt like a failure for not being able to produce and to live in what I now recognize as an inhumane pace of life and life-shortening expectations of productivity in a capitalist-colonialist model of learning and teaching in academia and elsewhere. Mena writes:

I think a lot about ableism in academia, especially as someone in a fundamentally precarious and undervalued position (though Brown compensates substantially better for adjunct work than anywhere else I've taught). I think that if I were given the support, the resources, I, individually, with all my disabilities and neurodivergences, needed to do my best work, I would be capable of some pretty interesting thinking, and some pretty astonishing art, and some important teaching. And I think about how many other minds and contributions are missing from this world, because of the demands being in academia comes with, and the cost of those demands being so much higher for some people than others. I think about this, and I mourn my own loss of place, of home, within an institution that was one of the places I've felt most at home. I mourn what my students are losing by not having me to my fullest, or at all, and what all of us are losing by the systemic exclusion of people with differing capacities and abilities. I wonder what we could be learning, under different circumstances.

I am anxious about the lack of teaching opportunities that I have access to after graduating from my MFA this May (and of practicing art that may not be considered "productive"). Becoming an adjunct for a few

years seems like the only certain path I have now. Knowing that I may not have the capacity to teach in academia as an adjunct due to the high teaching loads and lack of healthcare and accommodations makes me sad but also angry. Why can't it be better? Universities have so much money and yet artists and teachers without tenure cannot have access to them.

Reading Erica Mena's essay about her experience as an adjunct and with her neurodivergence, mental illness, and disability, made me feel seen and understood. Her openness about these issues, as well as her anti-colonial and unapologetically Puerto Rican book art is an inspiration to me. I hadn't really thought of book art as something that I could integrate into my decolonial poetics but Erica Mena's work has made me think otherwise. I am inspired by the ethics, artistry, and trajectory of her work.

For more on Erica Mena's work, please visit her website: <https://acyborgkitty.com/>.



ERGODIC LITERATURE

Ergodic literature is a type of literature that requires its readers to actively engage with the text in order to generate meaning. Reading has become a different beast here. The term “ergodic” is derived from the Greek words “ergon” and “hodos,” which mean “work” and “path,” respectively. When “reading” ergodic literature, you must literally work to find the path, or else make one of your own by determining points of interest within a text and following the golden thread of their connection. This type of literature challenges traditional notions of authorship and reader participation— the reading experience is appreciably different between each individual reader, and one can argue that the reader is, therefore, a co-author in the text of their own experience. As a result, this genre is often associated with experimental or avant-garde literature.

Ergodic literature can take many different forms. In fact, this is one of the most interesting aspects—Ergodic Literature Is an attitude, not a form. One common example, though, is the hypertext narrative. Hypertext narratives are digital texts that allow readers to navigate through a network of interconnected chapters, cells, fragments, “bits”, or links. Each piece may contain text, images, audio, or video, and readers can choose which nodes to access and in what order. The result is a non-linear narrative that allows for multiple paths and interpretations, bringing the text closer to the experience of a video game, role-play game, or the retro “choose your own adventure” novel. One of the earliest examples of hypertext narrative is Michael Joyce’s 1992 work, “Afternoon, a story.” In this work, readers navigate through a web of interconnected nodes, each of which contains a fragment of a larger story. The reader must actively construct the narrative by choosing which nodes to access and in what order, creating a reading experience that is different for each reader.



Image credit: Eric Gonzalez

ERGODIC LITERATURE

The question of reader experience is explored at length in Ulises Carrión’s essay, “The New Art of Making Books.” In this seminal work in the field of artists’ books and book arts, Carrión argues that the traditional book form was no longer adequate for contemporary artists and writers who were looking to explore new forms of expression. He repeatedly makes a parallel between the “old art” and the “new art”, or the “old book” and the “new book.” He is fundamentally arguing that in order for a book to utilize its maximum capacity, it must interweave content and form, and use the unique powers of a book— that fact that it is tactile and temporally located— in order to generate an experience unique to the abilities of the book. Carrión’s essay is closely related to the concept of ergodic literature, as both emphasize the role of the reader in the construction of meaning. Carrión argued that artists’ books should be seen as objects to be interacted with, rather than simply as containers of information. He believed that artists’ books could challenge traditional notions of authorship, reader participation, and the nature of the book form itself. Carrión was interested in the potential of technology to transform the book form. He believed that artists’ books could incorporate multimedia elements such as sound, video, and interactive elements to create new and innovative reading experiences. He also believed that artists’ books could be distributed through alternative channels such as mail art, self-publishing, and independent bookstores. These aims and ideas are fully realized in today’s hypertext narratives, with their fluid interweaving of text, interaction, sound, and image. Like ergodic literature, artists’ books challenge traditional notions of authorship, reader participation, and the nature of the book form itself. Both emphasize the importance of active engagement with the text or object in order to generate meaning. Both also incorporate elements of interactivity, experimentation, and innovation.

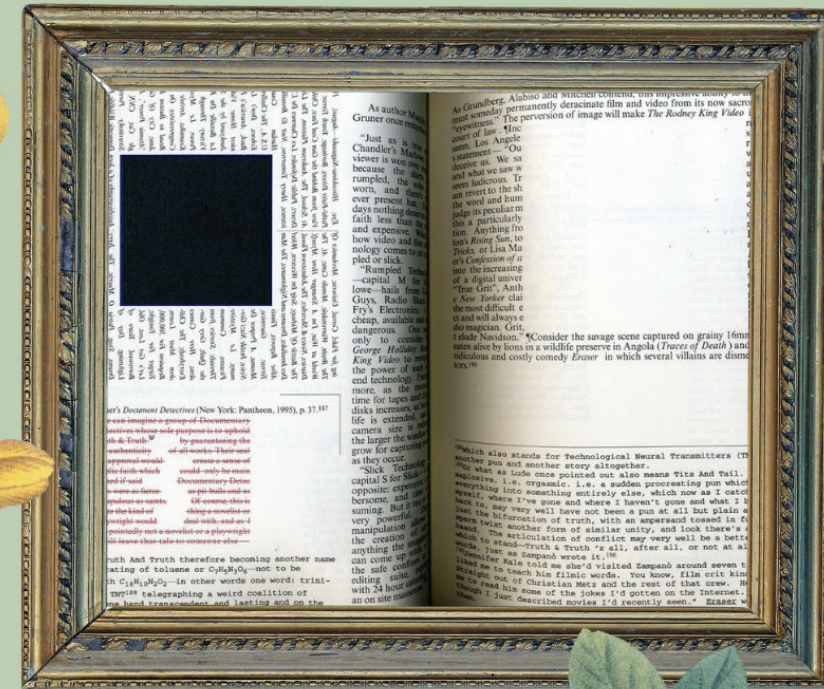


Image credit: thestingingfly.org

BY MORGAN SMITH

ERGODIC LITERATURE AND POSTMODERNISM

A popular example of ergodic literature is Mark Danielewski's 2000 novel, "House of Leaves." This novel is known for its complex formatting and layout, which includes footnotes, sidebars, and multiple narrators. In later editions, the text is presented in multiple colors, and with extended appendices that provide more background to some of the background characters. By utilizing letters, footnotes, and annotations, Danielewski utilizes the form to mimic the content, "embodying" the themes of textuality, truth vs. fabrication, analysis, and reader-author relationship. Danielewski also makes physical the emotional resonances of the book—the fact that many of the main characters are experiencing psychological crises after interacting with the material. Throughout the book, the reader must actively engage with the text in order to make sense of the story, understand the emotional resonances, and progress through the plot, and the physical layout of the book is an integral part of this reading experience.

Ergodic literature is also often associated with postmodernism, a literary and cultural movement that emerged in the mid-20th century. Postmodern writers often used techniques such as fragmentation, intertextuality, and metafiction to deconstruct traditional literary forms and challenge traditional notions of authorship, narrative structure, and truth. Postmodernism is fundamentally interested in the fragmentation of self, the ways that we can depict a dissolving and dissolute mind on the page.



One of the most famous postmodern writers is Jorge Luis Borges, an Argentine author who is known for his short stories and essays. Borges was interested in the nature of reality and the limits of human knowledge. Many of his stories are structured as puzzles or intellectual games that challenge the reader to think deeply about the nature of language, perception, and reality, and are often pointed to as predecessors of hypertext narratives. Most science fiction writers are indebted to Borges for his keen consideration of the role of writer in considering the possibilities of science, the text, and reader experience.

Another postmodern writer is Italo Calvino, an Italian author who is known for his experimental novels and short stories. Calvino was interested in the intersection of literature, science, and technology. His novel, "If on a winter's night a traveler," is structured as a series of fragments, each of which contains a different story. In order to piece together the narrative, the reader must find their own path through it. Personally, this is the form of literature I find most satisfying—meaning is generated naturally as the reader finds the points of interest and intersection between the fragments, creating a reading experience that is unique to them and them alone.

For writers and book artists, ergodic literature can provide a means of exploring new and innovative forms of storytelling. It necessitates a blending of art forms, an attention to both the text and the book, a marriage of the two halves to create greater meaning than either could produce separately. Ulises Carrión said it best: "In the new art the writer assumes the responsibility for the whole process. In the old art the writer writes texts. In the new art the writer makes books."

PAPER SIZING: A BRIEF HISTORY

Written By: Victoria Isles

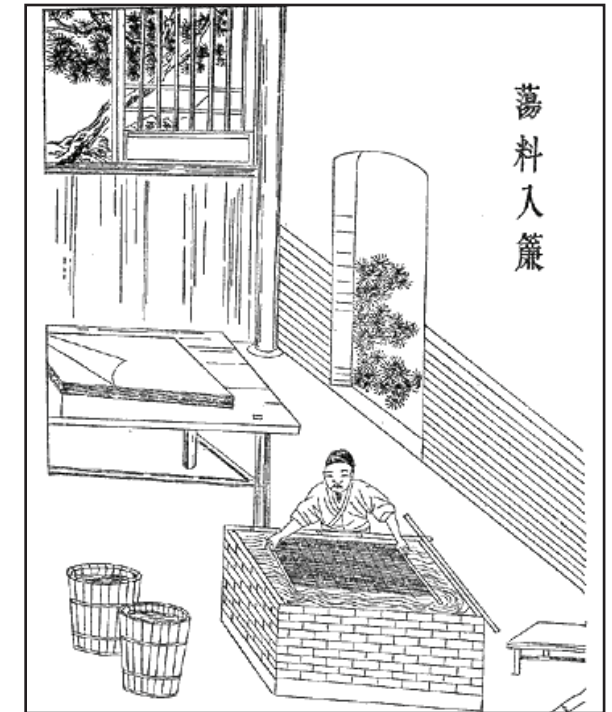


Photo Provided By: Papermaking Wiki



Photo Provided By: Victoria Isles

There are a lot of things that go into crafting a good sheet of paper. If you want to use any kind of ink or paint on paper and have it not feather out, you need sizing. No, not the dimensions of the paper, but an additive that you add to the paper pulp or brushed on the paper once dry. Paper sizing comes in two easy categories: internal sizing and surface sizing. Those can be broken down into far more complicated categories dependent on their chemical makeup. We're keeping it easy here. In our current time, sizing formulas are chemical based and each company holds their formulas super top secret, but sizing has been made from natural ingredients since the beginning of paper.

Paper as we know it today started first in China by Ts'ai Lun between 50 AD and 120 AD. For a very long time, there was

no sizing added to paper. Unfortunately, it is very hard to pinpoint when and what sizings had been used in Eastern paper before its expansion into Europe. However, evidence shows that animal based glues, rice and wheat starches, lichen and gypsum were all used at one point or another as surface sizings. Rabbit based glue was very common in Japanese paper, but sizing was believed to be applied by the individual artist manually, rather than the paper being made with sizing already added.

When paper making moved west, different types of paper were starting to be made. Eastern papers are made with longer fibers, which lends well to stronger, thinner papers. Western paper is made with shorter fibers and is usually thicker and softer. The Fabriano Mill was playing with gelatin sizing as early as 1276.



Photo Provided By: Fabriano

They were number 1 in paper innovation. By the 1300's, gelatin was experimental, but by 1337 animal-based gelatin quickly became the most used sizing in Europe. It was brushed on and it would be thinned or thickened to work specifically with the pulp the papermaker had made. It would give the finished sheet of paper stability, strength, and that coating necessary for it to be used for any process involving a wet media. Alum became a recommended addition because it helped stabilize the gelatin, keep it from molding, and increased its ability to repel water and retain ink. At some point, to quicken the process, groups of freshly made paper were dunked into a big pot of the sizing and then run through a press to evenly distribute the gelatin to quicken the process.

As time went on, by the 18th century, papermakers in Europe were trying many different things to make sizing with. The

Dutch used fish. Barcelona used clippings of parchment (which is animal skin, so that makes sense) to make sizing. The German's made a sizing from cheese, of all things. It was the wild wild west of paper making and papersizing. And I guess something worked better than others, if we still have surviving paper from these times made with those odd things. However, gelatin was still the most commonly used for a very long time, until more chemical sizings were created.

Chemical based sizings are used in the mass production of printing paper for photographers and digital artists, more so than fine art papers used by traditional artists. You know all the different papers you can buy for your printer? You walk into a store for some printer paper and there are a hundred different choices and they all say the same thing? Use this one for glossy photos, that one for matte photos, that other one for documents, etc etc. What do you

choose? How are they different but the same? All of those papers have different sizings and each of the sizings are a carefully guarded company secret. Canon's formula is going to be much different from Epson's formula, and they'll both be different from Nikon's formula. Probably. We don't know, they are a secret after all. But they all affect how the ink from the printer absorbs into and lays on the paper.

TLDR: Sizing is added to paper to

help ink and paint stay where it's put down and to make the paper more stable. History has seen a lot of things used to make sizing. But if you're not making paper by hand yourself, you don't really need to worry about it.



Photo Provided By: Victoria Isles

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Blessings of a Flock

Lyzette Armendariz



Paper is one of the most delicate objects to have been created by humans centuries ago. Its exact origin is not precise, but the earliest known recollection of the material comes from the Chinese Han Dynasty in AD 105. Since then, paper's been used to create some of the most intricate works of art, ranging from words of written text to shadow play (also known as shadow puppetry), as well as origami, which is the Japanese art of folding a piece of paper into a specific shape.



A single sheet of paper contains no inherent meaning alone, as it only serves as a blank canvas for the individual using it. In the art of origami, the significance of a sheet of paper is based on the shape you fold it into. Origami cranes were first given and received as tokens of admiration and loyalty during Japan's feudal period. Cranes are one of the most graceful bird species that happen to represent devotion, dignity, and an open mind. Due to their proportionate size, these great, long-legged birds, with their intricate dances, easily became a regal symbol as they fascinated people. Today cranes are the most practiced origami structure among both beginners and professionals. In some mythological tales, crossing paths with the bird is considered a positive omen for oneself.



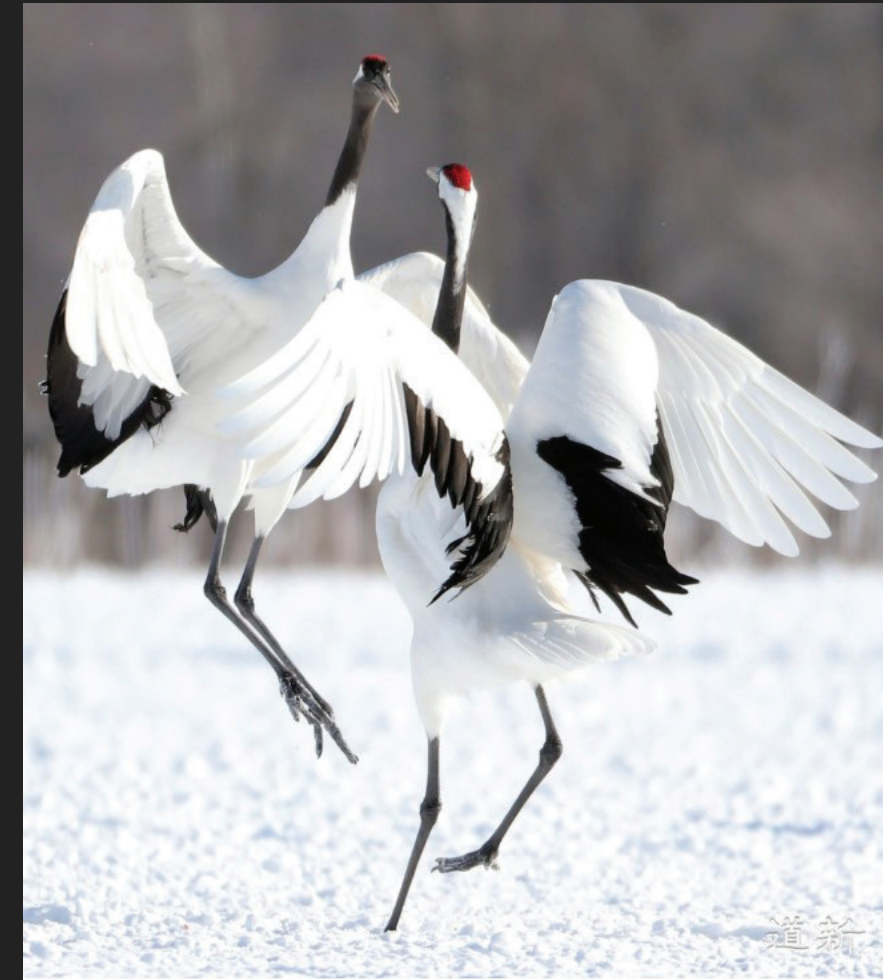
Senbazuru, a Japanese expression that means "a thousand cranes," may also refer to a set of origami cranes that are linked by a single thread. The thread suggests a strong connection between each bird. In Japanese culture, cranes are considered a mythical animal that symbolizes longevity as they are believed to be able to live for thousands of years. In the past, it was widely believed in Japan that if you folded enough cranes, your wish would come true. The most popular wish people asked for was for good health whether for themselves, family members, or a friend. The wish could only be made after folding a thousand paper cranes which took much effort.



The Hawaiian people also adhere to a similar tradition. Finding a lifetime partner was essential for getting married long ago in ancient Hawaii as it had been in many other cultures. For native Hawaiians this is because they wanted to emulate the marriage of their deity Huihionua. His union with Keakauhulilani was said to endure for more than 20 generations. During the 1960s, Hawaii adopted the Japanese custom of origami due to the story of thousand paper cranes. They thought if it could grant a wish, then it could bless a marriage. Soon after, it was incorporated into their marriage preparation. By the wedding day, a thousand paper cranes would be made, with one more added by the groom. This extra crane goes to guarantee the symbolization cranes often bring longevity and happiness to the newly wedded couple. Thus the Hawaiian tradition of 1,001 paper cranes.



With a singular sheet of origami paper and a few folds, you can create a miniature version of this elegant bird.



Writing and layout by Lyzette Armendariz

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YOSUKE OONO

by Carmen Cruz Leon

Yusuke Oono was born in Germany in 1983 and graduated in Tokyo, Japan where he studied architecture. With his background in architecture, he established himself by constructing books outside the realm of traditional methods. One of the distinct book compositions delivered a unique display almost like a diorama, using a mechanism within a book that can be opened up to 360 degrees.

The process of making the book starts with printing out the designs first and then placing them into the laser cutter. Where the pages will be intricately cut and then threaded together, so the pages are kept in place when they are open. To ensure his product is up to his own standard, he utilized 3d rendering applications as appraising tools to estimate the appropriate structure within each page. Furthermore, these renders enabled him to make relevant predictions such as illustration placements

The purpose behind each book design was the incorporation of unique functionalities aside from the traditional bookmaking method. Where you can open the book and flip through each page, or open the book in 360 degrees so it can be displayed. By displaying it opened it creates another form of the book where it then can be a sculpture. The viewer can still be able to see the story being told it's just in a fixed state, just like a diorama you can see the layers from each page that has allowed it to create depth. The themes centered around the book are fairy tales which makes it appealing to the audience. While others may enjoy the 3d aspect of the book being able to interact with it by displaying it in its circular form. The reason why the book can be displayed at 360 degrees is due to the pages being arched into an arc that it creates a curricular shape when it is expanded. By keeping the exterior design simple, the illustrations can enhance the persuasiveness of storytelling.

This fundamentally challenges the ideology behind traditional bookmaking by incorporating different craft styles to enhance the structural and functional designs of a book and not just the illustrative capability. It can be locked in place where it can display intricate illustrations. It has not only the physical aspect of display in 3d form but also the illustration itself and the layering has the 3d aspect since it layers on top of more illustrations. It still accomplishes the idea of how books tell a story with the illustrations going around. Yusuke took it upon himself to explore outside classical methodology by making books using skills inspired by architecture to promote the creative usage of space and dimension. Others will consider it to be revolutionary for the new format of books. It is interesting to see how his passion for architecture and experience can be applied to something on a smaller scale and make it into a book.

On the next pages, there are pictures of some of the books that he has made.

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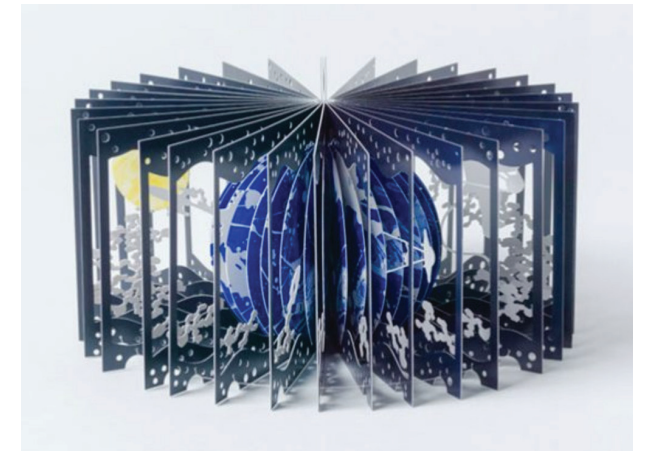
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Earth and the Moon



Sweet Home



Jungle Book







