

Books On Books

Bookmarking the Evolution of the Book /
Curated by Robert Bolick

Bookmarking Book Art – A “white book report” on “The White Heat” at MARC STRAUS

Posted on 2017/06/05



Cardboard Box (White) for Invisible Text, “Called Back,” Epitaph for Emily Dickinson
Jeanne Silverthorne, 2017
Platinum silicone rubber, acid free paper, archival invisible ink
9 x 17 x 13 inches / 23 x 43 x 33 cm
Edition 1/3 with 1 A.P.

*Dare you see a soul at the white heat?
Then crouch within the door.
Red is the fire’s common tint;
But when the vivid ore
Has sated flame’s conditions,
Its quivering substance plays
Without a color but the light
Of unanointed blaze.*

*Least village boasts its blacksmith,
Whose anvil's even din
Stands symbol for the finer forge
That soundless tugs within,
Refining these impatient ores
With hammer and with blaze,
Until the designated light
Repudiate the forge.* – Emily Dickinson, Part One, Life, XXXIII

[MARC STRAUS](#), the contemporary art gallery in the Lower East Side of New York, opened “an exhibition of white paintings and sculptures by an international selection of artists” on 3 June 2017. It runs through 3 July, and its title *The White Heat* comes from the first line of Dickinson’s poem above.

Books on Books offers this “white book report” on book art not included to put attendees in the mood for their experience of the works in white by artists such as

- Damien Hirst
- Nicole Eisenman
- Enrico Castellani
- Robert Barry
- Fernanda Gomes
- Antonio Santin
- Jeanne Silverthorne
- Joan Levison and others.



Book Faced Down – Embedded in Plaster, 1999

Found cook book and plaster block

Irwin Susskind, born 1935

34.6 x 20.9 x 6.5 cm (13 5/8 x 8 1/4 x 2 9/16 in.)

The Allan Chasanoff, B.A. 1961, Book Art Collection, curated with Doug Beube

[Irwin Susskind](#)’s “Book Faced Down” is an example of the technique of mixed media – a stark white plaster block facing down the objectified cookbook – to create book art. A piece of sheet cake, a cutting board?



Zurbarán's Color Plates, 2011
Jonathan Callan
Chiseled book in perspex
46.4 × 71.1 × 5.7 cm

[Jonathan Callan](#)'s piece denies viewers the colorful still lifes of Francisco de Zurbarán and leaves them with this drained-of-color, chiselled double-page spread of a book on the artist.



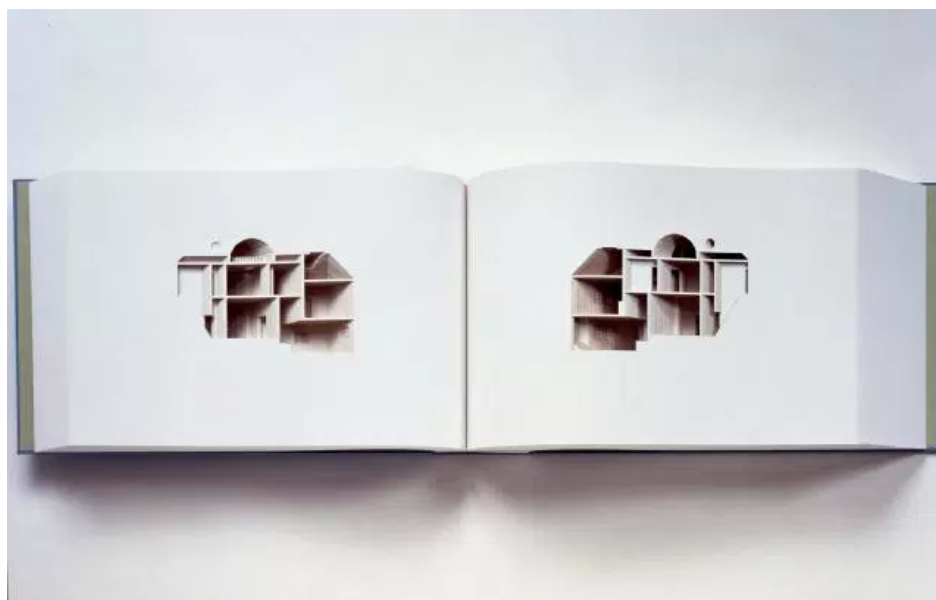
Work of Linear – Actions, 2000
Noriko Ambe

Where Callan chisels away from the edges inward, [Noriko Ambe](#) carves from the inside almost to the edges in her work above.



Absence, 2004
J. Meejin Yoon

As the Straus exhibition notes, “In Chinese cultures, White is associated with Death.” In J. Meejin Yoon’s book [*Absence*](#), the absence of color in a solid white block of thick stock cardboard pages and the “text” of one pinhole and two identical squares die-cut into each of its 120 pages – one for each story of New York’s Twin Towers including the antenna mast – lead the reader down through the missing buildings to the final page where the footprint of the absent structures ends in a die cut of the entire site of the World Trade Center.



Your House, 2006
Olafur Eliasson
Teixeira de Freitas, Lisboa, Portugal



Your House, 2006
Olafur Eliasson

[Olafur Eliasson](#) seems to have followed Yoon’s technical approach in *Your House*, 2006, although the effects are far more intricate.



Coral Colony, 2017 in progress
Julie K. Dodd



Untitled
Julie K. Dodd

Echoing Yoon’s somber note, [Julie K. Dodd](#)’s paper and book art often dwell on environmental issues, such as the death of a coral colony above and the contours of the natural landscape versus manmade as shown in *Untitled*.



The Great Gathering, VII The Time is Now, 2016

Chris Ruston

Photo credit: Chris Matthews

A more hopeful note is struck in the whiteness of Chris Ruston's final “ammonite” book in the series *The Great Gathering*, inspired by [Darwin's](#) *On the Origin of Species*. The mirror under the maker's tools and the made thing implicate the viewer here and now in an optimistic ongoing evolutionary process of making and remaking.



Michael Mandiberg, *Print Wikipedia*, 2015

Exhibition “From Aaaaa! to ZZZap!” by the Denny Gallery, 261 Broome Street in New York City, 18 June through 11 July, 2015.

Where the white of Yoon's and Dodd's works evokes absence and the white of Ruston's work evokes the blank invitation to singular creativity, [Michael Mandiberg's](#) installation of multiples, *Print Wikipedia*, evokes the plenitude of white noise that is our online lives.



Swiss Army Book, 1990

M. L. Van Nice

And just as technologically allusive, [M.L. Van Nice](#)’s *Swiss Army Book* poses (tongue in cheek?) the single volume as somehow able to capture, store and transmit knowledge in ways it need not, albeit the meaning of the whiteness here is a bit elusive.



Legal Process Narrative, 1996
Werner Pfeiffer
Law Library, University of Connecticut at Storrs

Werner Pfeiffer’s works constitute an extensive treatment in white. The installation at UConn Storrs represents a small proportion of the works shown in retrospectives in the last ten years at Bucknell, Cornell and the Toledo (Ohio) Museum of Art. Pfeiffer’s works touch on censorship, and from his Cornell exhibition, he explains:

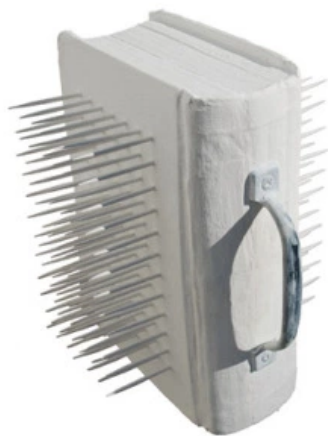
The objects I create are made with real books. They are not casts, nor are they sculpted imitations. At its core each piece has bound, printed pages. Glued together and painstakingly covered with gesso, they are silenced and sealed for good. I practice this destruction, this obvious censorship, simply as metaphor. It is to visualize, to demonstrate, to provoke. For these acts of violence are not about the damage done to stacks of paper, to books. The objects are about the harm inflicted on the human spirit. The ropes, the nails, the clamps, the hooks and knives are real as well. They are symbols of pain, of torture, of suppression which are inevitably brought on by the censor’s act.

With the advent of ebooks, Pfeiffer celebrates the tangibility of the book with his white gessoed book objects and their punning titles as well as origami-like works such as [Zig-Zag](#).

But back to the white works of art at the MARC STRAUSS gallery. Book art is not entirely neglected. Following in their tradition since 1984, [Tim Rollins and K.O.S.](#) (“Kids of Survival”) pondered, discussed and “jammed” on 1895 novella by H.G. Wells to produce *THE TIME MACHINE* (after H.G. Wells), which is included in the exhibition.



Knotty Story
Werner Pfeiffer



Difficult to Fit
Werner Pfeiffer



THE TIME MACHINE (after H.G. Wells)
Tim Rollins and K.O.S., 2013
Matte acrylic, pencil, book pages on canvas
4 parts, each: 12 x 12 inches / 30.5 x 30.5 cm
Overall: 24 x 24 inches / 61 x 61 cm
Courtesy Studio K.O.S. and Lehmann Maupin, New York and Hong Kong.

According to the artists, “We believe that every total work of art is a time machine – a synthesis of a living past and present located in an object that can only be completed by the social experience of a viewer in the future. The

total work of art exists in the invisible fourth dimension of space/time and it is this notion that unites the works in the exhibition. We paint on historic texts in the present so that they can haunt our futures.”

Suitably prepared? Jump in your time machine and head over to 299 Grand Street, on the Lower East Side in New York, and immerse yourself in “[The White Heat](#)”.

Advertisements



Rate this:

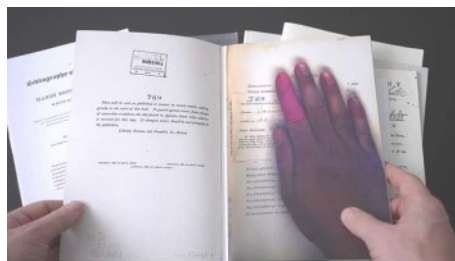
Rate This

Share this:



Be the first to like this.

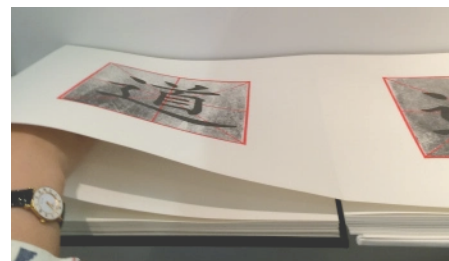
Related



Bookmarking Book Art - Michael Mandiberg
In "Book Art"



Bookmarking Book Art - Louisa Boyd
In "Book Art"



Bookmarking Book Art -- Leilei Guo
In "Book Art"



About BooksOnBooks

Bookmarking the evolution of the book

[View all posts by BooksOnBooks →](#)

This entry was posted in [Book Art](#) and tagged [Antonio Santin](#), [Chris Ruston](#), [Damien Hirst](#), [Enrico Castellani](#), [Fernanda Gomes](#), [Francisco de Zurbaran](#), [Irwin Susskind, J.](#), [Meejin Yoon](#), [Jeanne Silverthorne](#), [Joan Levison](#), [Jonathan Callan](#), [Julie K. Dodd](#), [M.L. Van Nice](#), [Marc Straus](#), [National Museum of Women Artists](#), [Nicole Eisenman](#), [Noriko Ambe](#), [Olafur Eliasson](#), [Robert Barry](#), [Teixeiras de Freitas](#), [Tim Rollins + K.O.S.](#), [Werner Pfeiffer](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#).

Books On Books