

INVADING
THE BOOK

National Gallery of Canada Library and Archives

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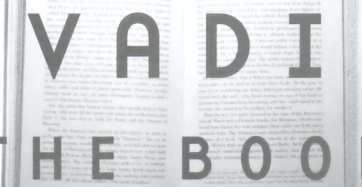
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Recent Acquisitions of Artists' Books and Multiples 16 September – 31 December 1998

I N V A D I N G T H E B O O K



General Idea and the Art Metropole Collection

In 1974 the three artists of the group General Idea (AA Bronson, Felix Partz and Jorge Zontal) established Art Metropole in Toronto, one of the first artist-run centres in Canada. From the beginning, Art Metropole took its tenor from the spirit of General Idea: playful, ironic, constantly mutating, invading and investigating culture. It very soon became a significant node on the international network of conceptual art.

Art Metropole immediately began to gather and catalogue the art and documents of the conceptual art movement: artists' books, multiples, video and audio works, mail art, posters, postcards, stamps, etc. Over a period of twenty-five years, the centre assembled a collection of international stature from sources in Canada and abroad, by exchange, donation and purchase, in every variety of non-traditional and multi-media format.

In 1996, Art Metropole shifted its focus away from collecting to exhibitions and publications; its holdings are now on loan to the National Gallery of Canada. Inspired by the importance of the material in the Art Metropole Collection, the Library launched a new initiative: the acquisition of Canadian and international artists' books and multiples. Many aspects of this initiative reflect the interests and strengths of the Art Metropole Collection.

Books on Books, Books on Art

Traditionally, the book signifies authority: an editor has decided its contents are worth publishing. Artists' books are books in that sense, but also art objects in themselves, subject to the creative authority of the artist. This double focus offers an ideal approach to concepts familiar to contemporary art, which often involve both text and image. In this survey of artists' books there are pop-up, flip, and coffee-table books, some produced by established publishers, others self-published. Some appropriate conventional book forms: *XXX Voto* (#24) borrows the reverence of the prayer book, *Up North* (#17) references the paperback novel, *pop art* (#5) mimics a children's picture book, *South Town* (#12) reshapes a tale of the Wild West into a cut-out gun.

Err (#13) by David Shrigley appears to be more of a sketchbook than an actual book. The title echoes the tentative sound a person might make while searching for the right word – or suggests an error – by the artist, the viewer? The book cover, with its “place words here” formatting, implies that any word would do. Even the contents describe a story-in-progress, inviting open-ended reader participation.

Lawrence Wiener offers another variation on word and image with his pin stating “Learn to Read Art” (#31). Indeed, all the artists in this collection invite the viewer to be a reader as well, to extend the pleasure of the work beyond sight to thought. The very title of Joseph Kosuth’s book *Say: I Do Not Know* (#27) asks the reader to think again.

Text and selection of works by Cathy Busby, 1997/1998 Research Fellow in Contemporary Canadian Art, Canadian Centre for the Visual Arts.

Inside, he documents and maps the books and shelves of the Bodleian Library of Oxford University. For Kosuth, the book form becomes another space to work in, with different constraints from the gallery space. Repeated images of empty shelves offer the viewer/reader thinking space, space, perhaps, for their own books or words – a device used by many of the artists in this exhibition in the form of blank or minimally occupied pages.

The artist’s book presents us with a language we have heard and seen, but in a form that plays with our expectations of the book, with concepts of authority and art. This installation of newly acquired artists’ books and multiples inaugurates the exhibition facility of the Library and Archives of the National Gallery of Canada.

List of Works

1. Lise Melhorn-Boe, *Good Girls Don't . . .*, [North Bay, Ont.: Transformer Press?], 1994.
2. Rosemarie Trockel, *Rosemarie Trockel: Anima*. Ostfildern, Germany: Cantz, 1994.
3. Guillermo Gomez-Pena and Roberto Sifuentes, *Temple of Confessions: Mexican Beasts and Living Santos*. New York, N.Y.: powerHouse Books, 1996.
4. Denise René, *What is OP?: Who is denise rené? Where is Paris? What is kinetic?* [Toronto, Ont.: The Pollack Gallery, 1969?]
5. Herb Hendler and Dick Hendler, *pop art to play around with*. Beverly Hills, Calif.: Valley Entertainment Enterprises, 1965.
6. Kate Bush, *Katie THINKPAD*. [Hamilton, Ont.: The Artist, 1997.]
7. Shinro Ohtake, *AT Ianta 1945+50*. Atlanta, Ga.: Nexus Press, 1996.
8. Enzo Cucchi, *Mostra Moderna*. Modena, Italy: Emilio Mazzoli, 1993.
9. Lynne Marsh, *Out of Character*. [Montreal, Que.: The Artist, 1995.]
10. Jeri Robinson, *ring hello*. [Lancaster, Pa.: The Artist, 1992.]
11. Nobuyoshi Araki, *Shakyojin Nikki*. Tokyo, Japan: Fusosha, 1993.
12. Robert The, *South Town*. [The Artist, 1996.]
13. David Shrigley, *Err*. London, England: Book Works, 1996.
14. *Monumental Works*. [London, England]: The Artists, 1988.
15. Beth Easton, *gesture of the book*. Toronto, Ont.: miss ruby red books, 1997.
16. Bruce LaBruce, *Bruce LaBruce: Ride, Queer, Ride!* Edited by Noam Gonick. Winnipeg, Man.: Plug In Editions, [1996?].

17. Andrew Hunter, *Up North: A Northern Ontario Tragedy*. Owen Sound, Ont.: Thomson Books, 1997.
18. Gallery 101, *(Is It) a Cultural Thing*. Ottawa, Ont.: Gallery 101, 1996.
19. Gallery 101, *Driving the Ceremonial Landscape*. Ottawa, Ont.: Gallery 101, 1996.
20. Shelagh Keeley, *desire and the importance of failure*. Atlanta, Ga.: Nexus Press, 1996.
21. Julie Voyce 4 R.E.D H.O.T: *The Solo Show with a Boutique*. [Mississauga, Ont.]: Art Gallery of Mississauga, 1996.
22. Stephen Clayton Ellwood, [Untitled]. Halifax, N.S.: The Artist, 1995.
23. General Idea, *AIDS 1993/96* [sterling silver ring]. [The Artists], 1996.
24. General Idea, *XXX Voto: For the Spirit of Miss General Idea*. Montreal, Que.: Galerie René Blouin; Toronto, Ont.: S.L. Simpson Gallery, 1995.
25. Marina Abramović. *Marina Abramović: Double Edge*. Sulgen, [Switzerland]: Niggli, 1996.
26. Critical Art Ensemble, *Action Is Addiction*.
27. Joseph Kosuth, *Two Oxford Reading Rooms*. London, England: Book Works, 1994.
28. Garry Neill Kennedy, *Seizures/Seized*. 2 vols. Toronto, Ont.: Art Metropole, 1997.
29. Bill Burns, *[Analgesia]* [pill box]. [Montreal, Que.: The Artist, 1997].
30. General Idea, *Placebo* [pin]. The Artists, [1991].
31. Lawrence Weiner, *Printed Matter / Books by Artists / Learn to Read Art* [pin]. [New York, N.Y.: Printed Matter Inc., 1990.]
32. Steve Reinke, *The Year in Dreams*. [Montreal, Que.]: The Artist, 1997.
33. Robert Fones, *Head Paintings*. Toronto, Ont.: Coach House Books, 1997.
34. Jenny Holzer, [Untitled] [rubber stamps]. [Minneapolis, Minn.]: Walker Art Center, 1991.
35. Jenny Holzer, *Survival Series* [pencils]. [Buffalo, N.Y.: Albright-Knox Art Gallery, 1991].
36. Graham Harwood, *Rehearsal of Memory* [CD-ROM]. [London, England]: Artec and Book Works, 1996.
37. Martin Kippenberger, *Hotel Hotel Hotel*. Cologne, Germany: Walther König, 1995.
38. Witte de With, *Cahier 1*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art; Düsseldorf, Germany: Richter, 1993.
39. Witte de With, *Cahier 3*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art; Düsseldorf, Germany: Richter, 1995.
40. Witte de With, *Cahier 5*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art; Düsseldorf, Germany: Richter, 1996.
41. Joseph Beuys, *filzpostkarte* [felt pad]. Heidelberg, Germany: Edition Staeck, 1974.
42. Joseph Beuys, *holzpostkarte* [wood block]. Heidelberg, Germany: Edition Staeck, 1974.
43. Witte de With, *Cahier 4*. Rotterdam, Netherlands: Witte de With, Center for Contemporary Art; Düsseldorf, Germany: Richter, 1996.
44. Mel Bochner, *Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art: New York, 1966* [reproduction]. Geneva, Switzerland: Cabinet des estampes du Musée d'art et d'histoire; Cologne, Germany: Walther König; Paris, France: Picaron Éditions, 1997.
45. Fiona Banner, *The Nam*. London, England: Frith Street Books, 1997.
46. Arlene Stamp and Luis Jacob, *Galerie Largeness World of Art, Lrg-n^{SS}03*. Toronto, Ont.: Galerie Largeness, 1996.
47. Robert Adrian, *Robert Adrian: 24 Jobs*. Innsbruck, Austria: Allerheiligenpresse, [1980?].
48. Group Material, *Tomorrow*. La Jolla, Calif.: Museum of Contemporary Art, San Diego, 1994.
49. Lawrence Weiner, *À fripon fripon et demi*. [Les Reliures du Centre], 1997.
50. Jozo Palkovits, *Lost Pictures*. Édition Dino Simonett.

**For your permitting an architecture
of appropriation
For your permitting an architecture
of words, ideas and fantasies
For your permitting an architecture
of the concrete . . . of real space**

GENERAL IDEA, XXX VOTO (1995)


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ISSN 1481-2061

© National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, 1998

PRINTED IN CANADA

 National Gallery of Canada Musée des beaux-arts du Canada

380 Sussex Drive, P.O. Box 427, Station A
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 9N4

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