

PRINTED SPACE AS A LEGACY OF CONCEPTUAL ART

The close relationship between book and exhibition space dates back to the 1960s. The emergence of conceptual art and the development of the artist's book as a genre are not only temporally connected, but also in terms of content. Around 1968, gallery owner Seth Siegelau began publishing catalogues in New York that functionally exceeded the accompanying materials published on the occasion of exhibitions until then. Siegelau, who worked with several world-renowned conceptual artists (e.g., Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, and Lawrence Weiner), defined the catalogue as a "metaphorical space" that seemed to be more appropriate for the works of these artists than exhibition in the real space of the gallery. Through this new positioning of a medium that had held a purely supportive role until then, the implicit hierarchy between book and walk-in (or visitable) exhibition shifted. In some cases, it turned around completely, the publication as the primary place of a work's existence replaced the accompanying and documenting catalogue.

The social tensions of the time that erupted in artists' protests and demonstrations against powerful art institutions also contributed to establishing the book as a different possibility to present art: "Sold at a price of four us dollars and a stated print run of 20,000—a number that is possibly estimated too high—Aspen 5×6 formulates the cry for a democratization and opening of art and its institutions that is made explicit in 1969 by the Art Worker's Coalition's protest against the criteria of choice used by the Museum of Modern Art. Until today, this democratic approach resonates in

—fig.
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fig. —
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the publications of the do-it-yourself movement, in the culture of fanzines and in self-published artist's books. The fact that some of these publications conceive themselves quite naturally as exhibition forms makes clear that curating publications has in the meantime become a part of the described exhibition conventions."¹⁾

From the artists' point of view, museums and galleries represented a flawed and unfair system that decided over their future using criteria the artists themselves deemed irrelevant and unacceptable, and kept broad spheres of society from accessing art through their elitist aura. The walls of the gallery thus became a metaphor for a conservative, dated, closed-off system within society, comparable to the ivory tower²⁾—frequently evoked since the mid-20th century in arts and sciences alike as a place where actors' production is isolated from the "real" world of society.

fig. —
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The tradition that was founded at that time continued over the next decades, even in the work of artists who were, themselves, critical of the early authors of artists' books; the artist's book as an alternative to the exhibition space started to disassociate from its beginnings in conceptual art and the first artists' books: "From the early 1970s and into the early 1980s, many artists were self-consciously producing or publishing artists' books that can be best described as democratic multiples. They were intentionally promoted and distributed in part as a reaction to the artists' books of the 1960s that were still seen as part of the gallery system. Artists who created democratic multiples were interested in getting art off the wall, out of the gallery, and into the hands of a wide, democratic, or populist audience."³⁾

Hereafter, the book that had been transformed into a "metaphorical space" was not only able to serve as replacement for the museum's White Cube by offering a different

type of repository—although this kind of catalogue is also often produced by artists until today—it adopted other characteristics that relate to the localization of artistic production. Similar to the way real spaces can be integrated into art's formation process, some artists' books function as self-imposed limits that leave the marks of their parameters in the development of the work: "On the other hand, one might speak about work 'in situ' for the page as soon as the artist regards the book as a given place to create an autonomous and unpublished work. Even if one tends, at first glance, to see the printed exhibition space of the white page like an untouched place without specific ambiguity, it is a type of fixed architecture, determined in advance, that evokes earlier interventions on the white walls of a gallery. Just as the artist is interested in the presentation of their work in a museum ... they integrate the problems inherent to printed space into their work."⁴⁾

— fig.
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— fig.
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Similarly, many artists' publication that adopt the form of magazines or other periodicals can be said to cause the presented works to merge with the immaterial space of the medium. As in the case of books, this function is historically and topically connected to conceptually oriented positions. A significant difference in comparison with books as an embodiment of printed space is the fact that magazines are usually not conceived as a White Cube, no least because this function of reproducing works is already fulfilled by conventional art journals. Artists, on the other hand, deliberately distance themselves from these journals: "While periodicals about art always recurred to contributions by artists and prompted diverse as well as rich cooperations, it is not about 'art journals' in the traditional sense of the term, but about magazines carried out by artists. ... The magazine thus becomes the place and the means of a practice, not

— fig.
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only the carrier of manifestos or reflections from the part of the artists—although the border between both tends to dissolve, especially with conceptual practices. However, it is a means that is not content with the role of a messenger anymore: it interferes, it participates completely in the project. The magazine as support combines with the work that is embodied in it and through it, a symbiosis that necessarily occurs for artists by consideration of its particularities and characteristics.”⁵⁾

Within this framework, the artist-produced magazine not only transforms the spatial, but also the temporal parameters of art’s reception. In contrast to institutions that are opposed to the printed space, but also in comparison with the book, which represents perpetuity and stability in our cultural tradition, the magazine is a demonstratively ephemeral medium. When artists integrate this transience into their work, they do more than criticize the features of the institutionalized art world that are related to space and location. By confronting these characteristics with a printed space that at the time of its publication will clearly become (sooner or later) obsolete, they also challenge its tendency towards stagnation and inflexibility: “The ephemerality that defined the magazine at the dawn of its invention has remained fundamental to the social possibilities inherent in this particular Form of printed matter. To publish a magazine is to enter into a heightened relationship with the present moment. Unlike books, which are intended to last for future generations, magazines are decidedly impermanent. Their transience is embodied by their unprecious formats, flimsy covers, and inexpensive paper stock, and it is suggested by their seriality which presumes that each issue will soon be rendered obsolete by the next.”⁶⁾

SELF-PUBLISHING AS AN ARTISTIC PRACTICE

AKV Berlin is a small publishing house founded in Berlin in 2006. Anna M. Szaflarski from Vancouver and Max Stocklosa, Vincent Grunwald, and Kevin Kemter from Berlin, all of whom were art students at the time, were searching for alternatives for exhibiting their works. The books published until now cover topics such as the differences between image and text, experimental journalism, urban semiotics, practices of appropriation of space and knowledge, investigative documentation, archives, and biographies. AKV publishes books by anonymous authors, groups of authors and collectives that publish under their real names. AKV Berlin’s editorial practice is informed by an interest in authors’ experimental concepts that question the author’s possible roles. The program goes beyond publishing; it also includes performative lectures and experimental exhibitions. AKV is an independent, non-profit organization, all profits flow directly into production.

On the occasion of an event within the framework of I Never Read in Basel, Bernhard Cella and Kevin Kemter of AKV Berlin talked about self-publishing as an artistic practice.

BERNHARD CELLA // Why do you choose the book as a space for exhibitions and presentations?

KEVIN KEMTER // Our aim is not only to replace the exhibition space with the book; it also has to do with the attitude of the audience towards the work. For me, it is disagreeable to present myself in front of an audience and to speak about my work. I prefer to deliver something, so the recipients can interact with it as they wish. Most of all, I think it’s

—fig.
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important that the work is not fixed at a location, but that the viewer can also quietly look at it at home. Exhibition openings are often loud, and there are many distractions, for example when all the girls are dressed up. Personally, I found out that I am not able to open up in this kind of situation.

BC // Does this mean that the book becomes a substitute for the exhibition space?

KK // Exactly. Because a book can be produced in peace and people can look at it when they have time and when they are in the mood to do so.

BC // When you started out, you published anonymous books ...

KK // Yes, that was a reaction to the fact that artists are always perceived through a biographical lens, which has an impact on the viewer. But if one publishes anonymously, one can invent a biography and thus place the person or the work in a particular light. This method allows for greater freedom and variety in the process. One can build a diverse artist's personality that way. That's also fun.

BC // Do you produce the publications yourself?

KK // Yes, it was always customary with us for the artists who make a book to also design it, because all of us are also interested in self-made graphic design. Additionally, I am a fan of graphics that are a little bit "amateurish" or "cheesy." Like with Time Life editions, that's my favorite publishing house. I particularly like the "ufo books" from the 1980s: there are cut-out things on a black background, landscapes

of stars, text bars are inserted in between, and some things are even lopsided. Also, I think that the design of flyers or simple posters like those found at, e.g., doner kebab shops is quite interesting.

BC // That means that one develops the aesthetic parameters by oneself?

KK // As editors, we consider it very important to present the work exactly in the light the artist would like it to be presented and take effect in. In this way, we withdraw from the traditional parameters of editorial work, and, as a result, the production process and the publication become much more subjective.

BC // How many of these "exhibitions" or "books" did you realize until now, and how did your own outlook change as a result?

KK // Due to the work on the 30 or 35 books we made until now, including my own publications, I realized for example that many problems arise when I work with somebody else. At the art academy, I won a prize, a catalogue should be published about it, and there were huge problems because the graphic designers and other people had different ideas on the design and content. So I am glad to be able to decide on all of that myself. At the time, I also tried to get involved and to present my own designs to the illustrator. As a result, he did not want to continue working. Then, there were conflicts regarding the texts. Parts of them should be removed, but I refused to change them. It was quite an unpleasant situation. For me, it was not really comprehensible. On the one hand because it was about an award at the art academy, and most of all because the text did not insult or attack anybody.

BC // So it was an award with rules ...

KK // Certainly. At the art academy, one generally has some liberties, but one must never go past a certain point, otherwise it gets nasty. I also noticed this phenomenon in different contexts, at group exhibitions for example.

BC // How do you proceed when you produce a book?

KK // I'm interested in both the text and the visual aspect and the images. I have something similar to collections. At most times, there are five parallel collections of images that I publish as books, one after the other. And I still keep collecting. Among these, there are collections of photographs and drawings. During the process, I combine this material with texts. I also try to integrate a certain dramaturgy into the design, like in a movie. I also publish my books under different names, they are not anonymous, but they are published under pseudonyms. For instance, I'm currently producing three books, every one of them under a different name. One carries my own name, the other two bear fictional names. For me, this process has much to do with responsibility, that is, if one wants to deal with possible consequences. This also applies to small things like the copyright.

THE BOOK AS PRINTED SPACE—

A SELECTION OF CURRENT POSITIONS

E Il Topo, Periodico D'Artista Anno xx

No. 12, 2012 (magazine)

E Il Topo is a magazine produced by artists created in 1992 based on an idea by Gabriele Di Matteo, Piero Gatto, Franco

ART BOOK FAIRS



Arts Santa Monica at ArtsLibris, Barcelona 2015.



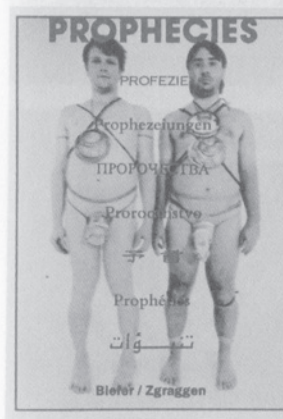
Publish and be Damned, "Nordic Models" at Index, Stockholm, 2012.



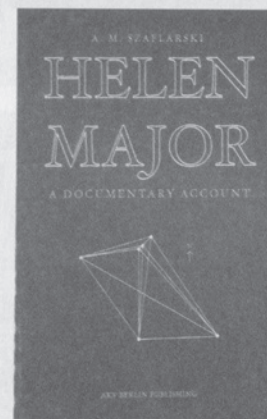
Publish and be Damned Fair, London 2007.



Stefanie Seibold, A Reader—A Visual Archive, Amsterdam, 2006.



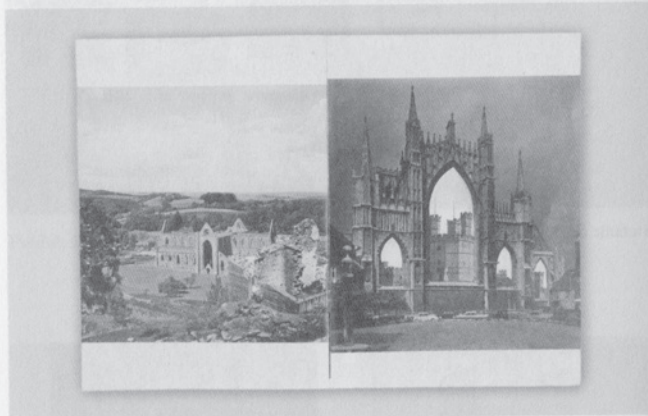
Biefer/Zraggen, Prophecies, Dübendorf, 1993.



Anna M. Szaflarski, Helen Major. A Documentary Account, AKV: Berlin 2009.

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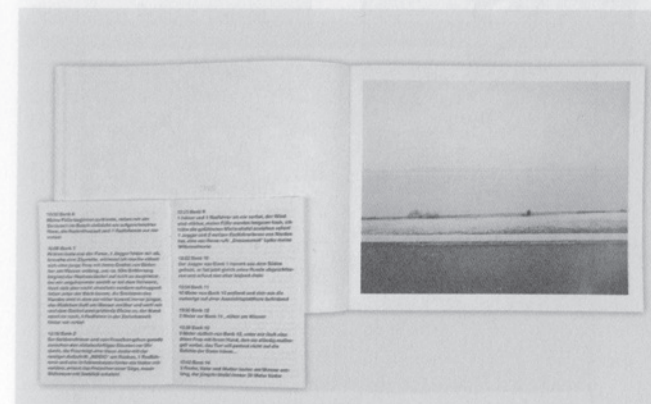
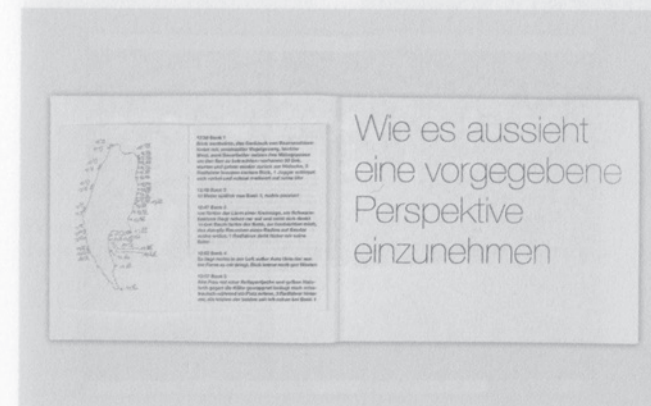
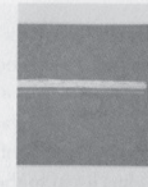
The photos show landscapes from Ireland and the UK. A view from a far distance on the left is combined with a close-up shot on the right page and evokes the impression to "zoom in" on the motif. By choosing different palettes, Wokurka also examines the effects of color on the perception of the landscapes.



Dario Wokurka, Großbritannien und Irland im Farbbild, n. p., 2011.

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The book contains 40 photos Daniel Poller took while walking around a lake. An enclosed booklet holds a sketch of the lake, with designations that mark the places where the pictures were taken, as well as a protocol of Poller's non-visual observations.



Daniel Poller, Wie es aussieht eine vorgegebene Perspektive einzunehmen, Leipzig, 2008.

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Defile is an artist's book on representation, politics and the public produced on the occasion of a series of performances in Utrecht. The photo was taken one week before Jacques Chirac's victory in the French elections of 1995. It shows the right-wing leaders listen to the speech of the future president.



Bernhard Cella, Defile. Utrecht, 1999.

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E IL TOPO

PERIODICO D'ARTISTA ANNO XX N°12 2012

IT WOKE UP AND THE DINOSAUR WAS NO LONGER THERE

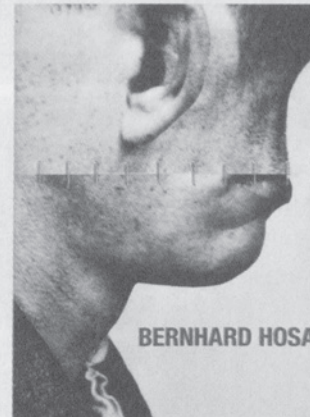
Piero Cavellini, E il Topo. Periodico d'artista, 12/2012, Brescia, 2012.



Franz the lonely astronaut #6, Hotel Franz, Vienna, 2012.

You can take the Slav out of
Bulgaria, Poland, Slovenia,
Slovakia, Russia, Serbia,
Montenegro, Belarus, Croatia,
Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Macedonia, Ukraine,
and the Czech Republic
but you can't take
Bulgaria, Poland, Slovenia,
Slovakia, Russia, Serbia,
Montenegro, Belarus, Croatia,
Bosnia and Herzegovina,
Macedonia, Ukraine,
and the Czech Republic
out of the Slav.

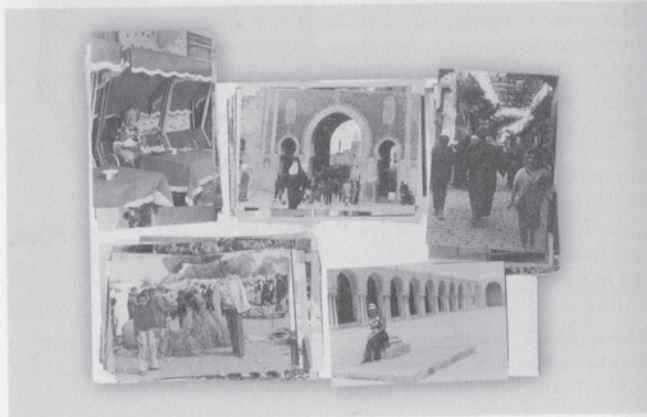
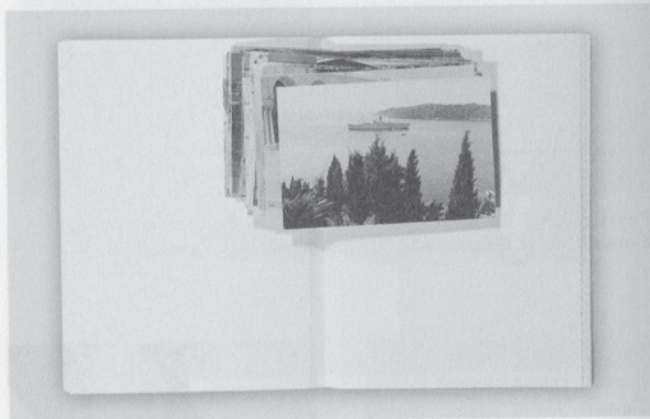
Slavs and Tatars, *Slavs*, Silk-screen print, 82 x 116 cm, 2006.



Bernhard Hosa, Auf der Suche nach dem richtigen Bild, n. p., n. d.

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Ferien is a playful artist's book that is intended as a do-it-yourself holiday album. The book consists of blank pages with a perforated edge for easy removal, and of a selection of photos. The images are meant to be put into the publication by the owners who become co-authors of their unique copy.



Hans-Peter Feldmann, Ferien, Düsseldorf, 1994.

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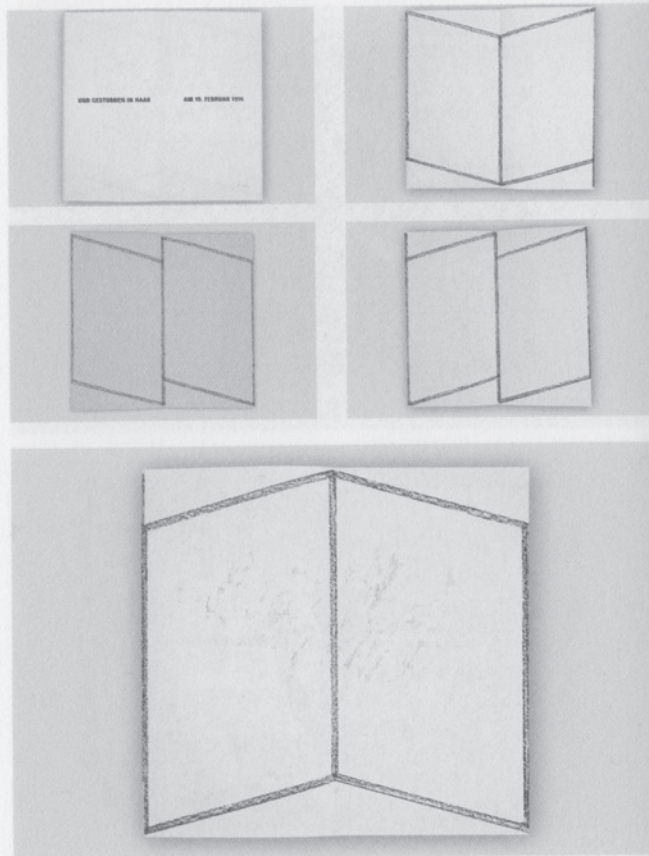
Katja Stuke produced a series of video stills with men wearing suits. The images are stacked, folded in half, and held together by a vertical rubber band. Due to this unique binding technique, only one half of every image is visible at a time, creating interesting connections between the opposite pages.



Katja Stuke, Suits vs. Facts & Fiction, London, Tokyo, Osaka, New York, 2007-2008.

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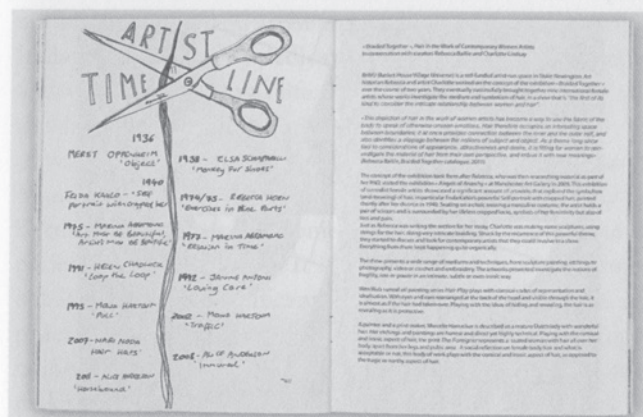
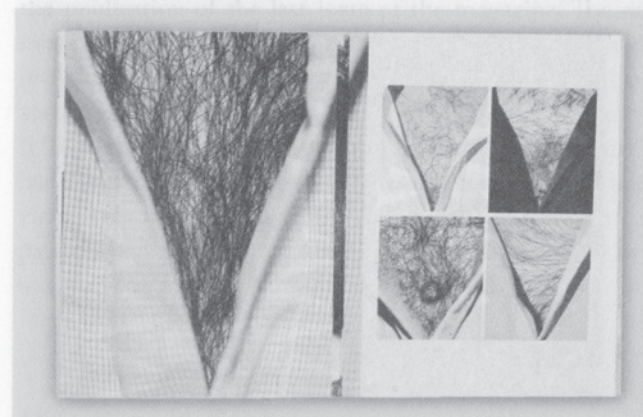
Un Livre Réversible pays homage to the reversible book by Austrian philosopher Ernst Mach who used a sketch of an opened book to demonstrate the ambiguity of geometrical shapes. Similar to Mach's design, the pages of Villers' book show the shapes that can be produced by moving the pages of a fanfold.



Bernard Villers, *Un Livre Réversible*, Galerie Stadtpark: Krems 1998.

PRINTED SPACE AS A LEGACY OF CONCEPTUAL ART

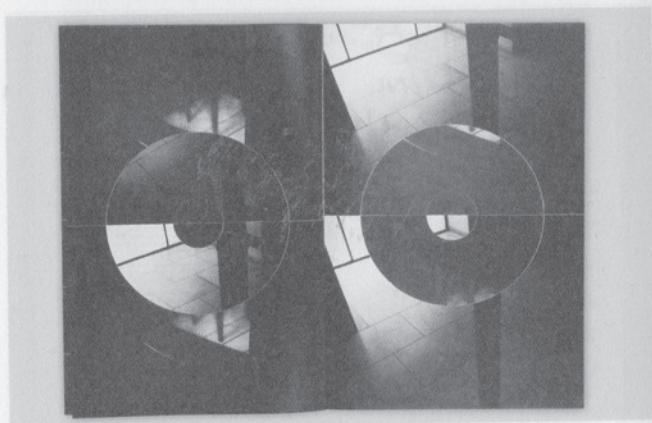
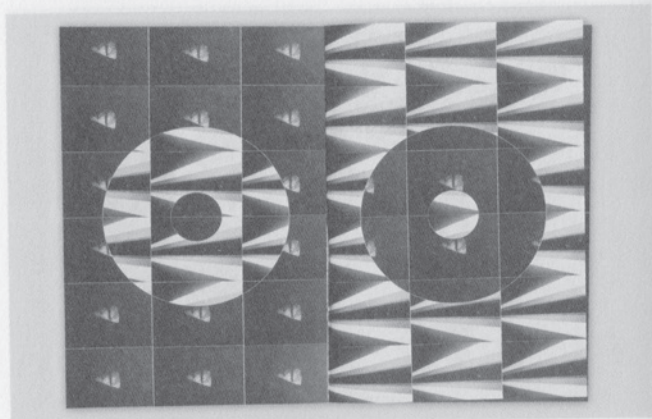
DUPE is a London based collective, its members produce a printed zine, a tv series, and a blog. The content of all media is conceived, written, filmed and illustrated by artists. The riso printed pages of this issue show images related to hair, e.g. wigs, hairy chests, and kiwi fruits.



DUPE (eds.), *Dupe. The Hairy Issue*, London, 2012.

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The pages of Franz Graf's exhibition catalogue show a juxtaposition of interrelated geometrical forms. The disc at the center responds to the motif on the opposite page. On closer inspection, the repeated ornaments are recognizable as photographic details of the exhibition space.



Franz Graf, Franz Graf 1990, Galerie Metropol: Vienna 1990.

Silvestro, and Vedova Mazzei. During the following four years, *E Il Topo* recorded, through the contribution of artists, such as Massimo Bartolini, Vanessa Beecroft, Maurizio Cattelan, Mark Dion, and Dominique Gonzales Foerster, among others, the spirit and attitude of a generation of artists which, at that time, was about to achieve definitive international recognition.

E Il Topo No. 12 was created in 2012, sixteen years after the publication of the last issue of the magazine. The new issue was the outcome of an open call that focused on the retrieval of photographic material related to art world personalities who passed away over the past 16 years while *E Il Topo* disappeared without a trace. The collected material has been successively selected and displayed in the magazine. This project, which faces rebirth and death, wants to pay tribute to all those people who have dedicated their lives to art and who disappeared between 1996 and 2012.

Alessia Bernardini,

Becoming Simone (artist's book)

Alessia Bernardini, who combines the roles of an independent photographer and artist engaged in social work, reacts to Italian paternalism by dedicating her work to the collection and validation of small life stories. *Becoming Simone* tells the story of a man who used to live in a woman's body for 51 years when he changed his name from Angelina to Simone and began the journey of his change of gender. For Bernardini, the book is something that can enrich the experience of the narrative. It is not the catalogue of a project, but it becomes a significant element, it constitutes the empirical part. Also, the question of self-publishing is important to her: "I come from Italy where it is quite difficult to make your work circulate because you always must ask for permission of, how you call it here, the 'fathers'; so choosing

to do it by yourself is to take on your own responsibility and see what, apart from the 'fathers,' all the rest of the world have to say about your work."

Franz (magazine)

Named after the one and only Austrian astronaut Franz Viehböck, Franz started in 2010 as a self-published zine made by a group of art-students from Vienna as a way to publish their artworks in a more self-determined way. The magazine focuses on the drawn picture and its narrative qualities. Every issue has a central topic that the artworks must relate to. It is also a goal to get more presence and interest for the comic as medium in the Austrian art world.

Bernhard Hosa

Auf der Suche nach dem richtigen Bild (artist's book)

The leporello fold shows parts of the cycle *Auf der Suche nach dem richtigen Bild* (Looking for the right picture), which deals with individuals' photographic records. So-called "mug shots" were developed in the late 19th century so that victims and investigators could identify arrested individuals. They were taken with a standardized pose and angle under standardized conditions (one front shot, one profile shot), following the parameters of an anthropometric identification system based on physical measurements. The series comments on these methods by visual means.

Slavs and Tatars, *Slavs* (Poster)

Slavs and Tatars is an artists' collective, which first formed as a reading group in 2006. Pursuing an associative and playful research-based practice, the group identifies the "area east of the former Berlin Wall and west of the Great Wall of China known as Eurasia" as their point of reference. Their projects address the transmission and hybridization of traditions,

politics, and language. The group has lived and traveled in the region, which has been realigning itself since the collapse of Soviet Communism and has experienced escalating tensions between Eastern and Western identities. In exploring the area's expansive historical narratives and transnational relationships, Slavs and Tatars forgoes a strictly analytical stance for something more associative, intimate, and playful. Their installations, performance lectures, publications, and artists' multiples reflect upon intercultural relations and the perceived differences between Western cultures and the Eastern world. The poster evokes the political tradition of pan-Slavism and reframes it as playing a central part in cultural affinity in eastern Europe.⁷⁾

Daniel Poller,

Wie es aussieht, eine vorgegebene Perspektive einzunehmen (artist's book)

The book, created in 2008 at the Academy for Visual Arts Leipzig, contains 40 photographs Daniel Poller took while walking around a lake. The images show those views of the landscape that are visible from the park benches placed around the lake. An enclosed booklet holds a sketch of the lake, with designations that mark the places where the pictures were taken, as well as a protocol of Poller's non-visual observations. The juxtaposition of the allegedly neutral perspective of the camera and the artist's subjective impressions expands the real space depicted in the images. All pictures were printed in color, each is placed individually on the right side of the double pages.

—fig.
p.189

1 Regine Ehleitner, "Curating Publications. Eine kurze Geschichte der Publikationsausstellung in der Gegenwartskunst", Eikon, 86, pp. 52 ff; p. 57.

The work Aspen 5×6 named in the text is an issue of a magazine published throughout the 1960s. Contributors included, among others, Andy Warhol,

John Cage and William S. Burroughs.

2 Cf., e.g., Randall Jarrell, "The End of the Line", *The Nation*, 21 February, 1942, pp. 222–227; Erwin Panofsky, "In defense of the ivory tower", *The Association of Princeton Alumni: Report of the Third Conference*, Princeton, 1953, 77–84; Stanley Fish, "Why we built the ivory tower", *New York Times*, 21 May 2004.

3 Tony White, "From Democratic Multiple to Artist Publishing: The (R)evolutionary Artist's Book", *Art Documentation: Journal of the Art Libraries Society of North America*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring 2012), pp. 45–56; p. 46.

4 Marie de Bouard, "Les espaces d'exposition imprimés", *So Multiples*, 1, 2008, pp. 1–12; p. 3.

5 Marie Boivent, "Introduction", in M. Boivent (ed.), *Revues d'Artistes*, une sélection. Arcade, Lendroit Galerie et Editions Provisoires, 2008, p. 9.

6 Gwen Allen, "Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art", MIT Press, 2011, p. 1.

7 <http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/projects/slavs-tatars/>

THE IRREGULAR LIFE AND UNCANNY DEATH OF PUBLISH AND BE DAMNED

Kit Hammonds

Publishing today is in an undead state, well beyond the much prophesized and dreaded "death of print." But it stumbles on regardless. There is no life support system in place, the blood of commerce leaching out onto the cold concrete beneath the irregular beat of once healthy presses. And yet it lurches on, its pallor already drained from print's sharp veins of black and white to the murky grey of pulp. Disembodied, the publishing industry is now a Styxian digital river. Dispossessed by mainstream economics, those vacant shells of presses, paper, and inks have, it seems, stirred up a new life, even if a seemingly somnambulistic one; one of independent, individual, and self-organized publishers.

The gothic personification of the fate of the print industry is inevitable. If Frankenstein was the modern Prometheus, then, in this post-industrial time the monster is an anachronistic zombie still present, but obsolete, its time out of joint. As with any undead plague—zombies, werewolves, or vampires alike—the danger is that it will run amok and render our contemporary way of life primitive, a threatening presence in which our very selves are hollowed out and possessed by the sublimated primeval urges of sex and violence that lie below the surface of our civilized lives.

This may seem like an apocalyptic and mythical landscape in which to situate a fairly humble project based around independent artist books and magazines. But then again, books have always been something a little alchemical, containing fact and fiction in equal measure. The very name "Publish and be Damned" contains a soupcon of this dark, demonic material. After all, the first fair under that name