PNCA’s Museum of Contemporary Craft explores diversity of Artists’ Books through the Artists’ Book Collection of Reed College

Exhibition | Object Focus: The Book
November 18, 2010 – February 26, 2011

September 2, 2010—Portland, OR—Object Focus: The Book is the first in a series of Museum exhibitions which will deny the lines often drawn between art, craft and design. The exhibition focuses on selections of work from Reed College’s Artists’ Book Collection, and gives viewers the opportunity to explore how the book functions as a form, a site and an interactive object.

Curated by Geraldine Ondrizek, Professor of Art, Reed College and Namita Gupta Wiggers, Curator, Museum of Contemporary Craft with assistance by Barbara Tetenbaum, Head of Book Arts, Oregon College of Art and Craft, the exhibition focuses on works collected by Ondrizek for Reed College’s Collection between 1996 to 2010. The majority of the works will be publicly exhibited for the first time in Portland. On view in conjunction with Collateral Matters: Selections by Kate Bingaman-Burt and Clifton Burt (August 26, 2010 – January 8, 2011), together these exhibitions offer visitors the opportunity to see local archives and collections.

To both preserve the texts and to activate the exhibition for visitors, new pages will be revealed weekly throughout the duration of the exhibition, offering glimpses of multiple pages on return visits. Selected works will be accompanied by videos showing pages being turned, providing greater access to the works on view. The Reed College Artists’ Book Web Site and an interactive study table, in addition to texts created by Ondrizek, Tetenbaum and Reed College students Anna Defilipa, Ella Gold and Claire Siepser, will physically engage audiences with artists’ books and provide historical context. Students through the Pacific Northwest College of Art’s Center 4 Design (C4D) program will design graphics and a downloadable zine in conjunction with the exhibition.

The exhibition features a sampling of the range of modern and contemporary Artists’ Books in the Reed College Artists’ Book Collection. Selections include traditional and contemporary...
letterpress-printed books of poetry, conceptual book works, sculptural and visual books, concrete poetry and zines. The collection focuses on the artist book as an extension of artistic practice and the book as an alternative space from the early avant-garde to the present. For Object Focus: The Book, the curators identified works which reveal technical and conceptual depth, providing an introduction to the range of ways in which the book is employed by artists, craftspeople and designers.

The exhibition presents artists’ books by well-known modern and contemporary artists Carl Andre, Marcel Duchamp, William Kentridge, Ed Ruscha, Kara Walker and Ai Weiwei. Connecting names of prominent artists in broader contemporary art circles with less commonly known handmade artist books, the exhibition includes work by such artists as Inge Bruggeman, Walter Hamidy, Jim Lee and Angela Lorenz. Revealing the geographic diversity of the collection, works by such regional artists as Ian Boyden, Vanessa Renwick and recent PNCA graduate Anthony Roberto ’10 will be on view alongside works by international artists from China, Germany and Russia.

By placing more recognizable artists’ book forms in juxtaposition with rare holdings such as SMS, a collaborative portfolio project that includes works by Robert Rauschenberg, Marcel Duchamp and Yoko Ono, the exhibition offers an opportunity to consider the book as a form that crosses the disciplinary boundaries of the visual arts. The exhibition features a full 6-volume set of SMS portfolios. Shown in combination with deluxe books and monographs, these publications, along with zines, design magazines and creative anthologies challenge viewers to consider a broad range of materials, process and intent.

“This unique collection, of significant 20th century and contemporary artists’ books, gives students and the broader population insight into the significant role artists’ books have played among the avant-garde of Eastern and Western Europe, Asia and the United States, from the turn of the last century to the present,” explains curator Geraldine Ondrizek.

“Collection building is a way for institutions, such as colleges, universities and museums to help preserve works for the future. These are spaces where our cultural heritage is housed, cared for, studied and examined by generations. To that end, Geraldine Ondrizek and Reed College faculty continue to build an outstanding collection of artists’ books, a resource that this exhibition can put into public view, providing a conduit between academia and the community,” says Museum of Contemporary Craft curator Namita Gupta Wiggers.

CRAFT CONVERSATION
Exhibition walkthrough with curators Gerri Ondrizek (Reed College) and Barbara Tetenbaum (Oregon College of Art & Craft)
Saturday, December 4, 2 pm
The Lab at Museum of Contemporary Craft
Free with Museum admission

RELATED CONTINUING EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES AT PNCA
Art of the Book
September 29 - November 17, 2010
Taught by Tyler Matta, “Art of the Book” is arranged in a sequence of 8 hands-on workshops exposing students to various procedures of eastern and western book forms, adhesive and non-adhesive bindings and box construction. With all assignments experimentation with materials, structure, and form is stressed. However, in all cases content, form, structure, and materials must work together towards creating a complete work. In addition suitability of materials for a structure, neatness, and precision of craft will be expected for all works. Though not required, students are encouraged to make use of text and/or imagery in all projects.

ABOUT REED SPECIAL COLLECTIONS
Professor Lloyd Reynolds, who taught calligraphy, letterpress printing, graphic design, and art history during his tenure at Reed College from 1929 through 1969, was the first to foster interest in the fine press book. He collected some of the college’s most significant fine press books. This effort has been furthered by subsequent art department faculty, who now teach courses in illuminated manuscripts, iconoclasm, 20th century German art and Chinese art history, and have purchased book works to support their courses. The exhibition Bibliocosmos, curated in 2004 by Stephanie Snyder, Director and Curator of Reed College’s Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, featured several of these works, as well as items from Reed’s modern and contemporary Artists’ Books collection.

Geraldine Ondrizek began actively building the modern and contemporary Artists’ Books collection by as a resource for the course “Image Text, The Book as a Sculptural Object,” which covers the history and fabrication of the book as an alternative space for art documentation and exhibition. This website supports and highlights the major historical categories taught in the course, which include the livre d’artiste, the avant-garde, the conceptualist and the contemporary. These categories, although generally used by most historians, are not clear divisions, and many books are not limited to a single category. The website subsequently lists the majority of books in the collection; a selection of the most significant bookworks have individual web pages where one can navigate the entire work.

Reed College’s Artists’ Book Collection has been made possible by a generous grant from John and Betty Gray and Sue and Ed Cooley to support the Art Department, Reed College.

ABOUT MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFT
Committed to the advancement of craft since 1937, Museum of Contemporary Craft in partnership with Pacific Northwest College of Art is one of Oregon’s oldest cultural institutions. Centrally located in Portland’s Pearl District, the Museum is nationally acclaimed for its curatorial program and is a vibrant center for investigation and dialogue, expanding the definition of craft and the way audiences experience it.

ABOUT PACIFIC NORTHWEST COLLEGE OF ART
Since its founding in 1909, Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) has become a leader in innovative educational programs that connect students to a global perspective in the visual arts and design. In addition to its nine Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees, PNCA offers graduate
education with an MFA in Visual Studies, as well as an MFA in Applied Craft and Design developed in collaboration with Oregon College of Art and Craft.

PNCA is actively involved in Portland’s cultural life through exhibitions and a vibrant public program of lectures and internationally recognized visiting artists, designers and creative thinkers. With the support of PNCA+FIVE (Ford Institute for Visual Education), the College has a partnership with the nationally acclaimed Museum of Contemporary Craft. For more information, visit www.pnca.edu.

EXHIBITIONS AND PUBLIC PROGRAMMING ARE SUPPORTED BY:

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Museum of Contemporary Craft

in partnership with Pacific Northwest College of Art
724 Northwest Davis Street
Portland, OR 97209
503.223.2654
www.MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org

Hours
Tuesday through Saturday 11 am to 6 pm
First Thursday of every month 11 am to 8 pm
Closed Sunday and Monday

Takako Saito, Book Chess No. 1 [Buchschachspiel No. 1], 1984 Edition; Buchgalie Mergemeier 1999; Reed College’s Artists’ Book Collection; Photo: Orin Zyvan

John Irving and Gilbert Neri, Trying to Save Piggy Sneed; Las Vegas, Nevada: Rainmaker Editions, 2005; John Irving (author), Gilbert Neri (artist), Inge Bruggeman at Textura Letterpress (design, printing); Reed College’s Artists’ Book Collection; Photo: Orin Zyvan