



# Booknesses:

Artists' Books from the Jack Ginsberg Collection



# Chapter 1

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## **Simultaneous Journeys: Thematics in the Curating of Booknesses: Artists' Books from the Jack Ginsberg Collection**

The year 2017 marks the 21st anniversary of the first exhibition of artists' books from the Jack Ginsberg Collection ever held in South Africa.<sup>1</sup> At the time, it was purportedly the second largest exhibition of artists' books to have been held in the world. In 2015, Ginsberg was one of the featured collectors on New York's Center for Book Arts's *Behind the Personal Library: Collectors Creating the Canon*. This exhibition and symposium considered the influence of private collectors on critical dialogue in the field of the book arts.<sup>2</sup> Of the 13 invited collectors, Ginsberg was one of only three non-Americans. Given the extraordinary scope and depth of the collection not only in African but also, now, in global terms, it seemed timeous and fitting to hold another exhibition.

As a place to start the curatorial process for this exhibition, I consulted Jack's rare copy of Blaise Cendrars<sup>3</sup> and Sonia Delaunay-Terk's *Prose du Transsibérien et de la Petite Jehanne de France* [*Prose of the Trans-Siberian and of Little Jehanne of France*] (1913). Considered by many to be the first true example of *simultaneisme*, or 'simultaneity' in book form (Kelley 2013), *Prose du Transsibérien*, like most of the books in the Ginsberg Collection,<sup>4</sup> is unique on the African continent and is shown to the public on this exhibition for the first time.

*Prose du Transsibérien* has acquired not only the status of a French cultural icon, but also a certain cult status exemplified by its appearance on the cover of Riva Castleman's controversially titled exhibition catalogue *A Century of Artists Books* in 1994 at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in Manhattan<sup>5</sup> and, more recently, on the cover of The National Art Library's *Word & Image Art, Books and Design* (2015). *Prose du Transsibérien* seemed a provocative and challenging place from which to begin the curatorial project and suggest a process of selecting the books with which it might conduct a set of fascinating dialogues.

Thus *Prose du Transsibérien* itself prompted a decision to make it the first book on this current exhibition [Fig. 1/Catalogue image 001] in turn, proposing two important elements of the curatorial process which might follow. The first was to unpack the work's visual and thematic elements in order to establish a set of curatorial themes in which the selected contemporary artists' books in the collection would be exhibited. This is discussed in greater depth later.

The second was to go back to Castleman's catalogue in which, mostly, *livres d'artistes*,<sup>6</sup> fine press

books and artist-illustrated publications were featured, to see how many of her chosen books<sup>7</sup> can be found in Johannesburg. Given the depth, scope and importance of the Ginsberg Collection, Jack and I found 15 items from Castleman's Modernist selection<sup>8</sup> for the MoMA exhibition. To these we added another four items from the Ginsberg Collections which, in our opinion, Castleman could well have included. Remarkably, we found 26 items from Castleman's postmodern selection,<sup>9</sup> to which we added a further three items which, in our opinion, filled appropriate gaps in the MoMA exhibition. The inclusion of these 48 historically important books is especially significant given that both the Ginsberg Collection's and this exhibition's major focus is on contemporary artists' books.

What began as a somewhat inquisitive and tongue-in-cheek exercise in matching the MoMA exhibition's more historically loaded selection with what exists in Johannesburg, soon exposed the potential to surround and contextualise *Prose du Transsibérien* with a body of internationally renowned examples of early Modernist book arts. A fine example is Cendrars's later collaboration with early 20th century French artist Fernand Léger in *La Fin du Monde, Filmée par l'Ange N.-D* [*The End of the World, Filmed by the Angel N.-D.*] published in 1919 [Fig. 2/020] which provides a potent point of comparison with *Prose du Transsibérien*. In *La Fin du Monde*, Léger includes fragments of Cendrars's text as boldly coloured and stencilled block letters, inspired by his interest in street signs and silent movie titles. His dynamic, fractured compositions create a simulation of the moving images of film as the pages of the book are turned (MoMA the Collection 2016).

*La Fin du Monde*, reflecting a darker sensibility born out of Cendrars's experiences as a soldier in the French Foreign Legion during the First World War, begins with God seated at his desk, smoking a cigar and signing documents. He visits every conceivable plague upon humankind, all in the name of maximising profits (i.e. souls). Cendrars intended that after God had destroyed the world, the film would be rewound, so that the story ended at the beginning (Princeton University Art Museum 2013).

This pair of books highlights the relationship between image and text; typography and the visual tropes of early Modernism and are accompanied by Vladimir Mayakovsky's and El Lissitzky's *Dlya Golosa* [*For the Voice*] (1923) [Fig. 3/008]; Iliazd's *Lidantiu Faram* [*Lidantiu as a Beacon*] (1923) [Fig. 4/035]; George Grosz's *Ecce Homo* (1923) [Fig. 5/012], Alexander Calder's *Fables of Aesop* (1931) [Fig. 6/006]; Max Ernst's famed *Un Semaine de Bonte* [*A Week of Kindness*] (1934) [Fig. 7/013] and Gilbert Seldes's *Lysistrata by Aristophanes* (1934) [Fig. 8/0138] which is illustrated by Pablo Picasso. To this selection we have added two

[Fig. 1/Catalogue image 001]

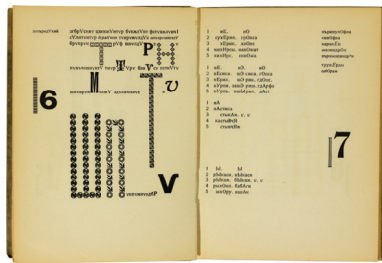


[Fig. 2/ 020]

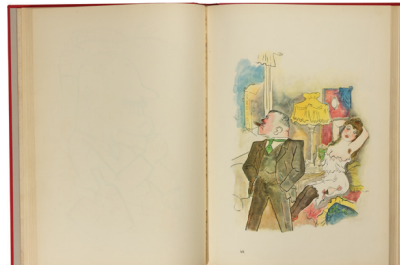


[Fig. 3/ 008]

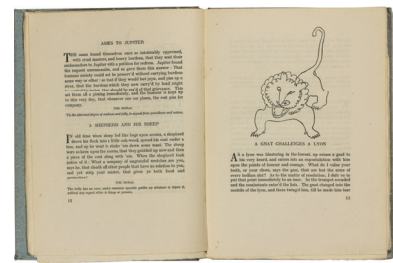




[Fig. 4/ 035]



[Fig. 5/ 012]



[Fig. 6/ 006]

remarkable publications: Firstly *Die Nibelungen Dem Deutschen Volke Wiedelerzählt von Franz Keim* (a 1920 reissue of the original 1909 edition) [Fig. 9/0205] in which Carl Otto Czeschka's designs and illustrations for Franz Keim's texts are described as "an elegant, jewel-like survival of the Vienna Secession, Wiener Werkstätte and Jugendstil styles ... The eight double-page spreads, coloured in clay block technique and rare gold prints, in particular, contribute to the volume's fame ... it is quite simply one of the highest achievements of book illustration ever" (Worthpoint 2016).

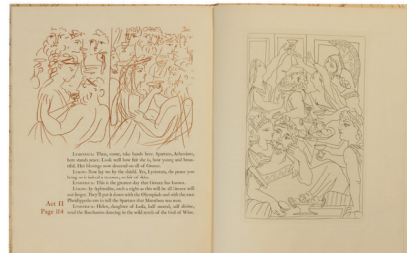
The second is Fortunato Depero's *Depero Futurista 1913-1927 [Depero the Futurist 1913-1927]* (1927) [Fig. 10/034]. Known popularly as the *bolt* or *bolted book*, this book features a colophon page that states: "This book should be considered a manifesto of the Machine Age ... not confined to the cover; the inside text features a wealth of typographic inventions including the use of different typefaces, the text formed into various shapes [and] the use of different papers and colours" (Scudiero n.d.). The importance of this work lies in its publication five years before Filippo Tommaso Marinetti's iconic book *Parole in Libertà [Words in Freedom]* in 1932. All these books, in their focus on typographic and colour inventiveness and their dialogues between myth, fable and the industrial world, help to contextualise the diverse field of the book arts which followed the 1913 publication of *Prose du Transsibérien*.

When Jack and I curated the first exhibition of artists' books in South Africa from his collection in 1996, [Fig. 11] we considered the exhibition design and its layout in terms of 'chapters', some of which were suggested by the chapter headings of Johanna Drucker's 1995 book *The Century of Artists' Books*.<sup>10</sup> The 1996 exhibition did not feature 'historical' work at all, focusing only on current international and South African

[Fig. 7/ 013]



[Fig. 8/ 0138]



[Fig. 9/ 0205]





trends in the book arts: The vast majority of the books were produced in the 1980s and 1990s with Ronald King's *Bluebeard's Castle* (1972), Walter Battiss's *Fook Book 1 (Male Fook Book)* (1973) and Phil du Plessis's *Hulde Uit 1970* (an addendum to *Wurm 12*) (1970) being the oldest books chosen.

On this exhibition however, Castleman's postmodern selection encouraged us to 'match' her choices with examples from the Ginsberg Collection. Our choices forge connective tissue between what might be considered MoMA's contemporary or postmodernist canon as it exists in Johannesburg and, what is the true focus of this exhibition, contemporary artists' books, a theme to which I will return.

It seemed crucial to curate an exhibition which did not simply continue from the end of the 1996 show<sup>11</sup> and thus, major, internationally recognised examples which moved Castleman to include them on the 1994-5 MoMA exhibition – and which form part of the Ginsberg Collection – also warrant an opportunity to be seen more widely for the first time in Johannesburg. Such examples include Walasse Ting's *1¢ Life* (1964) [Fig.12/025] in which 28 artists associated with the Pop Art movement and its historical relatives produced 62 lithographs

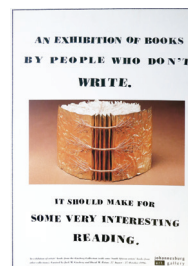
unlike anything published before. .... It was a compact visual manifesto of the sixties – bright, psychedelic and pulsating, a collaboration of artists who came together under Walasse Ting's poetic street magic. ... Ting's poems are jarring, mystical street-life incantations, sometimes epic and soaring, screamed out in all-capitalized letters or whispered in lower-case (The Book Beat 2014).

Works which take very different paths in folding imagery into and out of the texts which they accompany are, firstly, Jasper Johns and Samuel Beckett's *Foirades/Fizzles* (1976) [Fig.13/027]. Beckett provided an English and French version of the text which allowed Johns an opportunity to contribute 33 etchings and one lithographic illustration of the five prose fragments. Perhaps the most exhaustive analysis of this work is Colin Richards's *Drawing on Words: Jasper Johns' Illustrations of Samuel Beckett's Foirades/Fizzles* (2004) in which he carefully pieces together evidence for Johns's "robust and radical" (2004:ii) illustrations of Beckett's textual fragments which "fizzle out shortly after they have begun" (Knowlson & Pilling in Richards 2004:3).

[Fig. 10/ 034]



[Fig. 11]



[Fig. 12/ 025]



Secondly, Barbara Kruger's and Stephen King's *My Pretty Pony* (1988) [Fig. 14/028], like Johns's illustrations, opens up the semiotic relationship between images and texts as enigmatic perceptions of the passage of time. Movement and stasis are conjoined with words taken from King's text and stopwatches in the pages' images, whilst the covers are sheets of stainless steel upon the front of which is affixed a small digital clock.

Thirdly is Francesco Clemente's illuminations of the 48 text folios of Alberto Savinio's autobiographical saga *The Departure of the Argonaut* (1986) [Fig. 15/029]. The images parallel as well as directly illustrate the narrative, changing in every chapter, by reflecting the mood and geography of the text. By covering the words with brilliant colour or opposing them with ominous compositions in deep blacks from which his portrait often emerges, the imagery responds to Savinio's 1917-18 published diary of his journey from northern to southern Italy aboard a troop-filled passenger train during the First World War. The pattern of his tale was inspired by the third century BCE *Argonautica*, which chronicles the heroic voyage of Jason and the Argonauts in quest of the Golden Fleece. For Savinio, heroism is related to the battle against the boredom, tedium and futility of military life (MoMA 1986).

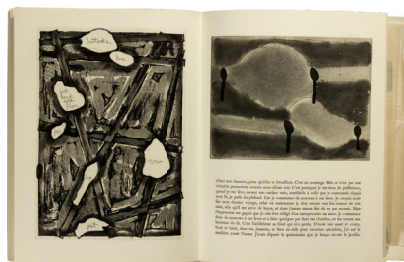
What is clear from these examples is the complex relationship between imagery and text in dialogical relationship between prose-poet and artist. Starting with *Prose du Transsibérien*, as will become clear in outlining the curatorial strategy below, these relationships form a critical thread which links the exhibition together and from which emerge the discursive and thematic threads evident in the exhibition.

Drucker (1995:51) states:

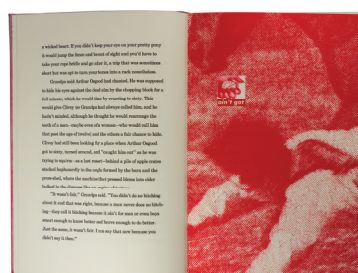
That Delaunay and Cendrars could conceive of such a work in 1913 is remarkable ... No private reading experience had ever assumed such dimensions, and the explosion of the book into pieces of this size is a dramatic conceptual as well as formal achievement.

Typically, the work consists of four sheets glued together in a grid, and this large sheet of paper (2m long) is folded in half lengthwise. It is then accordion-folded 10 times to reach a conventional book size and replicate "a railway map, fitting its subject" (Watson, James & Bryant 2015:157).<sup>12</sup> The entire print run of 150 copies<sup>13</sup> was carefully planned to reach a height of 300 feet (over 91 meters), the height of the Eiffel Tower.

[Fig. 13/ 027]



[Fig. 14/ 028]



[Fig. 15/ 029]





Delaunay's watercolour painting, created with the *pochoir* method<sup>14</sup> on the left hand side of the work, guides the reader towards and through the text on the right hand side as well as dramatically sweeping up and down the length of the folded pages, allowing one to take in the work as a whole.

On the right hand side, Cendrars's letterpress text consists of vividly coloured type with Delaunay's colour "more lightly painted outlining, floating and supporting" (Drucker 1995:50) the passages of prose poetry. Cendrars's poem ostensibly describes his experience as a young boy on the Trans-Siberian express, which runs from St. Petersburg to the Sea of Japan. His companion on the trip is Jeanne, a French prostitute, and while the landscape rushes by him on the train, he thinks back in fragmented recollection to his childhood in Paris and imagines trips to tropical paradises (Kelley 2013).

Before unpacking the curatorial themes which *Prose du Transsibérien* establishes for us and our choices of contemporary artists' books which help tease out these themes, it is necessary to spend some time with a theoretical consideration of the first simultaneous book – *le premier livre simultané* (Shingler 2-12:3)<sup>15</sup> – as it was inaugurated in Paris in 1913 under Cendrars's *Éditions des Hommes Nouveaux*.<sup>16</sup>

Katherine Shingler (2012:3) speculates on the key question of what precisely a *livre simultané* might be, and how visual-verbal relationships in *Prose du Transsibérien* may be articulated. Given the diverse and often conflicting ideas which represented the term *simultané* in the arts at the time of its publication,<sup>17</sup> Shingler explains (2012:4):

... it is hardly surprising that critics were baffled by the term *livre simultané*, and accused Cendrars and Delaunay of wilful obscurity. The 'prospectus' announcing *Prose du Transsibérien as le premier livre simultané* was circulated before the work itself was published in late 1913, and without having seen the work, critics had no way of telling which of [the] potential meanings of *simultané* – if any – was applicable. Cendrars's letters to the press did little to resolve the confusion, often skirting the issue completely (as in his lyrical article for *Der Sturm* of November 1913), or deliberately accentuating the multiple possible interpretations of the term.<sup>18</sup>

Frederick Worth (2013:11) describes *simultanéisme* in *Prose du Transsibérien* as something that:

equally denotes the compression of word, image and movement into a parade of singularly creative gestures. In much the same way that *simultanéisme* in painting creates an 'exalted vibration' in the eye of the viewer, so new 'vibrations' may arise from within the poem via the contrasting interplay of painted image and text. Additional charges of energy result from rapidly merging intersections between and among no less than twelve different typographical features and an explosive array of painted images.

Guillaume Apollinaire's regard for and support<sup>19</sup> of *Prose du Transsibérien* – in which the whole of a

poem could be read at a single glance – was expressed in terms of a desire, not to describe a flow of events linearly and temporally, but rather as a number of elements occurring at the same time in the space of the poem.<sup>20</sup> Apollinaire argues that reading and viewing are not distinct processes partitioned off from one another describing how one reads a musical score or a poster, as examples of moments when “we are able to attend to and interpret both text and image at the same time” (Shingler 2012:6). Given the long, vertical, parallel columnar structure of *Prose du Transsibérien*, however, Apollinaire probably did not wish to suggest that we could literally read the whole of a poem at a single glance.

Thus, argues Shingler (2012:6-7):

Cendrars and Delaunay’s setting of poem and painting ... contains an implicit challenge to the reader to direct his attention to both simultaneously, or at the very least to look for connections between the two. *Prose du Transsibérien* also shares with the calligrammes a mobilization of the expressive resources of typography, or an attempt to make the visual forms of the printed word intervene at the level of verbal meanings. ... Despite these affinities, however, the theory of simultaneity underlying Cendrars and Delaunay’s collaboration is ultimately quite different from the one proposed by Apollinaire.

Shingler (2012:7) argues that, for Cendrars, simultaneity was neither a psychological phenomenon nor a profound collapsing of semiotic differences between reading and viewing. Rather it was pictorial as in the paintings of Sonia Delaunay and her husband Robert, where the colour theories of French chemist Michel Eugène Chevreul attempted to find a way of producing colours as vivid and as pure as possible by juxtapositioning complementary colours and maximising contrasting colours. Gordon Hughes (2007:311) quotes Cendrars’s (1914:257) description of the effect of simultaneous contrast in Delaunay’s paintings: “A color isn’t a color unto itself. It is only a color in contrast with one or more colors. A blue is only blue in contrast with a red, a green, an orange, a grey and all the other colors”.

For Robert Delaunay “the meaning of *simultané* is unconnected to its etymological meaning; it has nothing to do with ‘all-at-onceness’ or opposition to temporal succession” (Shingler 2012:8), conceiving of literary simultaneity, as practised by Cendrars, as characterised by the use of the word ‘contrast’.<sup>21</sup> Eric Robertson (1995:891) states that “a degree of abstraction [as evident in the paintings of the Delaunays] is made especially difficult for the poet by the verbal nature of the genre” and that “Cendrars’s search for simultaneity never departs from referentiality”.

If, for Robert Delaunay, *simultanéisme* is purely verbal and has nothing to do with its visual presentation, then Shingler’s (2012:9) argument is that if we apply this reading to *Prose du Transsibérien* as a whole

the label *livre simultané* may be taken to mean that both the poem and the painting that make up the *livre* are themselves *simultané* (in that they are both characterized by contrast), but it does not seem



to indicate any kind of attempt to bring writing into closer contact with visual representation. Indeed, given that simultaneity implies contrast, Cendrars and Delaunay's intention may not have been to merge poetry and painting but instead to place them in opposition to one another, to highlight their essential difference.

Shingler (2012:10) concludes that "even if text and image are contrasting elements in the *livre simultané*, this is not to say that they are completely distinct, opposed, and to be treated separately by the reader". She (2012:10) continues:

For Cendrars, elements in contrast are also attracted to one another, like magnetic opposites, or indeed like the two sexes; hence, poem and painting contrast but are also intimately linked, even interdependent. The two modes of expression interact and modify each other, just as according to Chevreul's theory complementary colours modify each other. In fact, it is only when they stand in such relationships of contrast that the full vividness of colours is revealed.

Shingler (2012:12) reminds the reader/viewer that, here, "simultaneity means a dialogue between two modes of expression, and a fundamental premise for that dialogue is difference". And thus the reader/viewer "should not expect to see a complete collapse of the boundaries between visual and verbal modes of expression".

Worth (2013:12) describes such dialogical contrasts as "a poetry" made up of both images and texts in which "juxtapositions of themes, ideas, colors, feelings, startling vocabulary, incantatory motifs, and unorthodox versification ... result in a dazzling flow of images moving seamlessly down the length of the page". Despite such "seamlessness", however, Perloff (2008) reminds us that

what is not always remarked upon in discussions of the Cendrars-Delaunay simultaneous book is that poem and painting exhibit a very different tonality. The *pochoir* is predominantly abstract, with rainbow-colored balloons, discs, spirals, and fuzzy triangles cascading downward to the little red tower and wheel. The colors, both on the left and on the right, where they frame the text, express the *joie de vivre* of fluid motion. But even as both Delaunay's images and Cendrars's poem celebrate energy, the poem's tone and mood are strikingly different from its visual representation.

## Colour

And thus simultaneous dialogues, contrasts and differences of various kinds begin to occupy the curatorial space of the exhibition. They travel out from *Prose du Transsibérien* along trajectories occupied by contemporary artists' books which, in interesting and sometimes profound ways, talk back to the ideas which Cendrars's poem and Delaunay's painting provoke. In a letter<sup>22</sup> written to the Delaunays (cited in Shingler

2012:11) Cendrars “relates the concept of contrast, which informs the visual-verbal encounter in *Prose du Transsibérien*, to travel and to the relationship of self and other” in which “the young poet-narrator sets out on a journey of discovery, in search not just of new, unknown people and spaces, but of himself, and his identity as poet”.

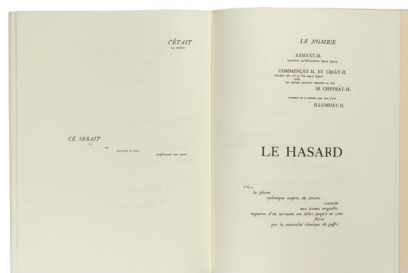
Worth (2013:12) continues: “For today’s reader, the work is an exuberant celebration of invention that incorporates the sounds, emotions, dreams, and frustrations of the nascent avant-garde. Associated with these are pulsating currents of electricity and the speed and movement characteristic of novel modes of communication and transportation (telephone, train, airship, ocean liner)”.

Equally, for today’s reader, it is important to note that Cendrars and Delaunay’s major innovation in *Prose du Transsibérien* is their use of coloured print in a manner which is fundamentally different to the monochromatic typographic layout of Apollinaire’s *Calligrammes* and Stéphane Mallarmé’s visual poem *Un Coup de Dés [A Throw of the Dice]* [Fig. 16/016] (originally printed in *Cosmopolis* in May 1897 and, after his death, in 1914)<sup>23</sup> and most Futurist and Constructivist typography which more often than not appeared in black and white.<sup>24</sup> *Prose du Transsibérien* was to predate Mayakovsky and Lissitzky’s more colour-critical *Dlya Golosa [For the Voice]* by a decade.

Cinematic influences are found in Cendrars’s collaboration with Léger [Fig.2] and in his imagery in *Prose du Transsibérien*, described by Worth (2013:18) as “an easy kinship between ... poetry and the motion picture film – a succession of stills/frames, each one the visual equivalent of a word, phrase, or line of poetry”. Worth (2013:18) states that the poem’s “utterances – rapid flashes of sound/word and meaning, light and shadow – are as if fleeting glimpses through the windows of a speeding train, they can also be compared to the play and interplay of light and shadow in the moving frames of film” and thus as a “complementary flow of coloristic imagery” – which he attributes to the influence of the Delaunays – in free verse with a wealth of verbal imagery.

Cendrars’s poem is printed in four different coloured inks and in a number of different typefaces which Shingler (2012:13) sees in formal terms: wishing the text to be seen as part of the larger-scale coloured composition of the work, interacting with Delaunay’s stencilled colours as well as in metaphoric terms: to give a visual corollary to the verbal evocations of colour that are prominent throughout *Prose du Transsibérien*. Cendrars evokes a dialogical relationship with Delaunay’s exuberant use of colour by sometimes making

[Fig. 16/ 016]



[Fig. 17/ 0146]



[Fig. 18/ 0147]





colour terms appear in bold type; his imaginary journey to Mexico with Jeanne, framed as a means of escape from the horrors of the 'real' journey on the Trans-Siberian, is also highly coloured in its references to Henri Rousseau's paintings. Cendrars imagines himself as Delaunay, as a painter:<sup>25</sup> *If I were a painter, I'd pour on a lot of red, a lot of yellow on the end of the trip* (l.361).<sup>a</sup> Red appears in relation to *Red Square* (l.7) [*la Place Rouge de Moscou*], *the Red Christ of the Russian Revolution* (l.36) [*du grand Christ rouge de la révolution russe*] and *The clock of the Great Red Gate* (l.307) [*l'horloge de la Porte-Rouge*]. Colour as an image continues in: *And the posters, red, green, multicoloured like my brief little yellow life – Yellow, the proud colour of novels about France* (l.416&417).<sup>b</sup> More generalised colour references are found in: *as wildly coloured as my life* (l.102&103) [*Bariolé - Comme ma vie*] and: *Colours that numb you like a gong* (l.260) [*Des couleurs étourdissantes comme des gongs*]. Cendrars's poem seems to have become part of a dialogue with painters (the Delaunays, Rousseau and others of his time) as well as with tensions associated with colouristic imagery in language. Shingler argues that Cendrars's tendency towards the visual, and his desire to capture visual experience and the colours of that experience in particular (2012:14), expresses

his wish that he could render the subjective, qualitative properties of colour vision in all their immediacy, and his regret that colour words are not sufficient to do this: the mere mention of *rouge* [red] and *jaune* [yellow] is not equivalent to the use of those colours in a visual representation, and reading a colour name is a poor substitute for perceiving the colour itself. Cendrars clearly envies the painter's resources. ... His response to the arbitrariness of colour names in *Prose du Transsibérien* is to adapt these resources to his own poetic practice, literally colouring the text and making our sensory experience, rather than simply our imaginative response to the poem, coloured.

Specific artists' books have been selected for the exhibition in response to the provocative theme of colour as found in their subject matter or content. The sensory, optical and even alchemical experience of colour is one thematic strand which we have explored in Barbara Hodgson's and Claudia Cohen's remarkable devotion to unravelling the mysteries of colour. *The Temperamental Rose* (2007) and *Around the World in Colour* (2014) [Figs. 17-18/0146 & 0147] are part of a series of four books in which Hodgson and Cohen follow colour from Isaac Newton's 18th-Century investigations into its nature, to the present-day and the attempts of colour forecasters to control and predict our colour choices: they "play with colour and work with it" (Milroy 2013).

*The Temperamental Rose* was born during the collaborators' first meeting, in the summer of 2006, when they discovered mutual passions for colour wheels and other systems for charting and codifying colours. Inspired by centuries of colour studies, including those of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe and Chevreul, the artists reproduce existing colour wheels as well as create new and fanciful ways of seeing colour (Heavenly

a Si j'étais peintre je déverserais beaucoup de rouge, beaucoup de jaune sur la fin de ce voyage (l.361).

b Et voici des affiches, du rouge du vert multicolores comme mon passé bref du jaune - Jaune la fièvre couleur des romans de la France (l.416&417).

Monkey 2016a).

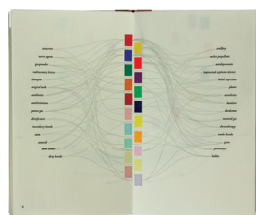
In the fourth and last book by these book artists, *Around the World in Colour* circumnavigates the globe, focusing on colour sources, including annatto from Brazil, lac from India and indigo from southeast Asia and Nigeria. The book is divided into six sections: Asia, the South Pacific and Australia, the Near and Middle East, Europe, Africa and the Americas. Interleaved throughout the book's 23 short essays on the raw materials of traditional colours are 19 sheets of paper using some of the materials discussed. The pages of text are embellished with swatches of European ochres and authentic vermilion, cinnabar, *lapis lazuli* and Alexandrian blue accompanied by two hand-coloured maps and a bibliography (Heavenly Monkey 2016b).

The theme of colour as sensory, optical and alchemical experience is continued in Sarah Bryant's *Biography* (2010) [Fig. 19/038]. This prize-winning book<sup>26</sup> is an exploration of the chemical elements in the human body and the roles they play elsewhere in the world. Each spread is a diagram describing the elements as they exist on the periodic table, the earth's crust, a variety of man-made weapons, medicines, tools, sea water, etcetera. Each element is identified as a specific coloured rectangle and these rectangles continue through the diagrams which are often difficult to decode and are interrupted by blind stamped organic shapes and pressure printing (Bryant 2013).

In collaboration with biology professor David Allen, Bryant's *Figure Study* (2015) [Fig. 20/055] is a compelling comparison of population data for every region on earth. Using data from the United States Census Bureau's International database, Bryant creates population pyramids for every region on earth. By pairing them, human-like forms are created. This imagery, printed in different colours on drafting film from linoleum, can be layered by the viewer and interpreted using a grid and accompanying booklet. The vast and critical differences between the basic equations of life in different parts of the world are starkly revealed by comparing one shape with another (Bryant 2013) and where colour is an index of these fundamental differences.

Cendrars's notion that a colour isn't a colour by itself but only in contrast with one or more colours, specifically in that a blue is only blue in contrast with a red, a green, an orange, etcetera, encourages us to read around the colour images in his poem such as *The man with blue glasses who paced nervously in the passageway* (l.94) [*L'homme aux lunettes bleues qui se promenait nerveusement*] and *A bell of folly rings like a final wish in the blue air* (l.172) [*Et le grelot de la folie qui grelotte comme un dernier désir dans l'air bleui*] in order to extract possible meanings in these blues from amongst the surrounding lines of the poem against

[Fig. 19/ 038]



[Fig. 20/ 055]



[Fig. 21/ 090 top & Fig. 22/ 030 bottom]





which they are uttered. F Morales-Zamorano's *The Story of Blue* (1994) [Fig. 21/090] explores this thematic in which blues of various shapes and sizes are contrasted against other hues in order to form a child-like narrative of a blue planet which invites colour dialogues and significations of the purest sort evoking Henri Matisse's famous commentary on their relationships (Flam 1995:41).<sup>27</sup>

Louise Bourgeois's *Ode à la Bièvre* (2007) [Fig. 22/030] was originally an embroidered book which Bourgeois made in 2002 from mostly blue fragments of cloth. In it she reminisces about the river Bièvre in a suburb of Paris where she lived as a child in 1920. Many years later, in 1951, Bourgeois went back to her childhood home only to find the river no longer existed, "only the trees that my father had planted along its edge remained as a witness" (Factum 2016). The book on exhibition is a special printed edition and is accompanied by two signed photographs of the River Bièvre, one taken in 1920 and the other taken in 1951, when Bourgeois returned to find the garden in its melancholic state of decline. The book's content resonates with the melancholic ending of *Prose du Transsibérien: I am sad I am sad – I will go to the Lapin agile to remember my lost youth - And drink a few glasses - Then I will return home alone – Paris City of the singular Tower of the great Gallows and the Wheel* (l.441-446).<sup>c</sup>

Whilst we are still in Paris, Franticham's<sup>28</sup> *Paris Metro Affiches* (2012) [Fig. 23/0221] is a remarkable and, given its materials, unique book of torn posters from the Paris Metro. Large in size, (45 x 50cm) it comprises 20 screen prints, two original collages and one original poster, printed on recycled cattle feed paper sacks and a recycled tarpaulin cover. Along with four other books by this pair of artists, *Paris Metro Affiches* expresses itself in joyous bursts of colour in which fragmentary texts and images evoke not only the Metro and the fleeting imagery glimpsed from a train window at speed, but also Cendrars's image: *And all of Europe glimpsed in gusts of wind from a full steam express* (l.106) [*Et l'Europe tout entière aperçue au coupe-vent d'un express à toute vapeur*]. The importance of the poster to the idea of modernity and *simultanéisme* and Cendrars's direct reference to it in the image: *The posters, red, green, multicoloured like my brief little yellow life* (l.416) [*Et voici des affiches, du rouge du vert multicolores comme mon passé bref du jaune*], is noted in Robertson's (1995:892) description of Cendrars's evocation of the immediacy of fleeting glimpses: "[t]he fragmented syntax of the ... lines jettisons all extraneous verbs and conjunctions in order to minimize the conceptual gap between experience and its narration".

South African artist Ilka van Schalkwyk's *Reading Colour* (2009) [Fig. 24/0241] is a powerful example of 'minimising the gap' in which she translates each letter of each word of Salman Rushdie's text *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (Penguin Edition, 1990) into blocks of colour. Van Schalkwyk is drawn to Rushdie's explorations of the dichotomous nature of life and its (lack of) freedoms: silence vs expression, dark vs light and the continuous vs the layered. *Reading Colour*, however, is not an illustrative rendition of Rushdie's text in colour equivalents, it is Van Schalkwyk's haptic exploration of her personal experiences of grapheme synaesthesia, a neuroanatomical condition in which a person experiences words and letters of the alphabet,

c Je suis triste je suis triste – J'irai au 'Lapin agile' Me ressouvenir de ma eunesse perdue – Et boire des petits verres – Puis je rentrerai seul – Paris Ville de la Tour unique Du grand Gibet Et de la Roue (l.441-446).

numbers or days of the week as very particular colours. Van Schalkwyk's work translates Rushdie's text not only into her own colour language, but remarkably, a language which is accessible to other synaesthetes. Having scanned each page of her copy of *Haroun*, Van Schalkwyk painstakingly transposes every letter, word and sentence into her colour alphabet leaving blocks of colour of various sizes and heights as an index of Rushdie's original typographic structure.

Van Schalkwyk's translation is "about difference", dichotomy and contrast, with different tonalities registering as intertwined yet separate modes of viewing and reading – a simultaneous contrast indeed. But, as Perloff (2008) asks by drawing us back to the *Prose du Transsibérien*: "What does all this have to do with Delaunay's imagery?" In answer, Perloff continues:

Toward the bottom of the panel, we see black and brownish cloud shapes that look somewhat ominous: a storm, perhaps, is heading for the tower. But the little red phallic tower, inside the orange-green wheel remains childlike and witty: one wonders why Delaunay's lovely rendering of the poem is so serene, so pretty. In the end, this artist's book is thus a study in contrasts. Just as the pochoir juxtaposes primary colors, so image and word present a contrast between the joie de vivre of the poem's opening and its odd mix of buffoonery, high spirits, and a deep-seated anxiety.

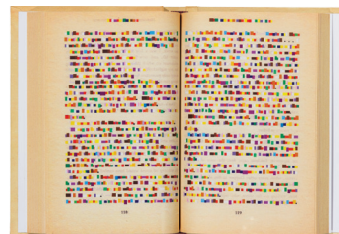
Delaunay<sup>29</sup> herself described the painting, as a "representation of the journey in a style of pure forms between the original vision of Moscow and the final of Paris (recall the 'Wheel' and 'Tower'). Not pictures, or objects in the traditional sense, but in colours, lines, sensations, feelings. Pure inspiration".<sup>d</sup> And thus the painting is not truly illustrational, providing only schematic visual forms such as the domes of Moscow from the start of the poem and the iconic red tower at the poem's ends. "In between", states Shingler (2012:20),

poem and painting seem to go their separate ways, with Delaunay refusing figuration in favour of abstract forms intended to evoke the poet's journey in a looser, more suggestive way. Once again, any expectation of a close correspondence between visual and verbal meanings is frustrated. The painting is not there simply to 'illustrate' the poem – or to fix its sense in visual form – but rather to contrast with the poem, and thereby serve as a kind of sounding-board for the poet's reflection on the relationship between visual and verbal modes of expression.

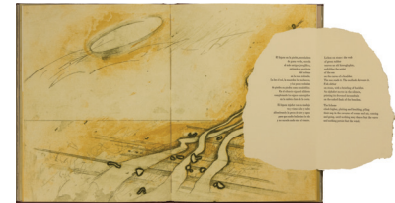
[Fig. 23/ 0221]



[Fig. 24/ 0241]



[Fig. 25/ 091]



Shingler (2012:20) goes on to remind us of “Cendrars’s yearning for the raw pigments that are the currency of the painter – the upshot of which is that his own words are seen as regrettably lacking when it comes to the representation of visual experience in all its colourful intensity”.

The poet’s feelings of inadequacy are repeatedly and reflexively expressed in the poem, for example: *So many images I cannot describe in my verses* (l.338) [*Autant d’images associations que je ne peux pas développer dans mes vers*]. And thus, in terms of this self-reflexivity, where the structure of the work indexes the concerns of its makers, Shingler (2012:21) concludes that, “by setting poem and painting on opposite sides of the page, the authors invite us to contemplate them in their difference – this contemplation itself becoming a kind of ‘illustration’ of the thematic concerns of the poem”.

Delaunay’s refusal of figuration in favour of looser, more abstract forms which evoke and suggest the poet’s journey is to be poetically found on the exhibition in Debra Weier’s reworking of Pablo Neruda’s *Las Piedras Del Cielo: Skystones* (1981) [Fig. 25/091] in which intaglio imagery in earth tones, purples and mauve-blues evoke land, horizon and sky in a spatial dialogue with the printed texts which the reader has to find through folding out and revealing the poems from their hiding places. This relationship between image, poem and colour is the subject of Hayden Carruth’s poem *Aura* (1977) [Fig. 26/0226]. Carruth, a poet, novelist, editor and critic spent much of his later life in Vermont and his poem “describes the light and space created by the evening sun on a Vermont mountain landscape at dusk” (Vanderbilt n.d.).

The poem is visualised by artist and book maker Claire Van Vliet, herself a resident of Vermont. In collaboration with hand-papermakers Kathryn and Howard Clark, Van Vliet worked with 12 variously coloured paper pulps across a range from reds and oranges to blues and violets to create this brilliant unfolding and majestic landscape. Because of the handmade nature of the paper, each book in the edition is unique.

### **Journey, travel and movement**

The object which constitutes the artist’s book *Prose du Transsibérien* is extremely unusual in that its format opens out like a map<sup>30</sup> of 2m x 36cm, “casting a further question mark over its genre” (Robertson 1995:891). The map-likeness of the work’s structure also includes the symbolic referent, at its top-right, of a section from a Michelin map indicating the train journey – to be found in the poem as well as in the abstract imagery of painted domes and tower – from Moscow to the Sea of Japan (Harbin is where the journey of the poet and his travel partner Jeanne would end). In this set of iconic, indexical and symbolic signifiers, however, “[d]istinctions between documentary and fiction, fine art and experimental typography, free verse and prose all dissolve into a blur” (Robertson 1995:891) and *Prose du Transsibérien*

d

“... représentation du voyage dans un style de pures formes, entre la vision initiale de Moscou et celle finale de Paris (rappel de la ‘Roue’ et de la ‘Tour’). Non pas des images, des objets au sens traditionnel, mais des couleurs, des lignes, des sensations, des sentiments. De l’inspiration pure”.



defines its modernity by virtue of the tension between its opposing poles: the unifying thread of the poem is the train journey ... and yet this journey is interrupted by other real and imaginary excurses. As it shifts with cinematic regularity between different temporal and spatial levels, the poem fuses the everyday with the esoteric, alternating images of childhood innocence and exuberance with those of corruption, violence and despair. The train's last stop is Kharbine, but the poem terminates in Paris: the abrupt, quasi-cinematic change of location prompts us to question whether the journey has taken place at all. At this point the entire journey is revealed as an exercise in memory recall on the part of the narrator/poet, the purpose of which is to help him understand his own past and in turn point him towards a new poetic goal (Robertson 1995:891).

Thus, for Robertson (1995:892) the train journey in *Prose du Transsibérien* is also a metaphor of the poet's difficult search for a new creative medium. Towards the end of the train journey, states Robertson (1995:892) "the narrator again strays from his account of the train's progress to betray Cendrars's doubts and uncertainty regarding his function as a poet in an era which has rendered traditional poetic values obsolete".

Shingler (2012:11) refers to the metaphoric journey in which a "travelling self" may absorb and learn from its encounters but also "emerges from the encounter with the foreign other with a firmer sense of its own identity, reinforced through knowledge of what it is not". As a compelling theme for the exhibition, the idea of travel – physical, metaphorical and in memory – might also prompt a viewer's consideration of the journey that the artist as well as his or her book might have taken from the genesis of its initial idea to its final fabrication and binding. Such a journey would also prompt the question of a viewer's emergence from viewing the exhibition – as a possible foreign other, given artists' books' relative obscurity in South Africa – as a journey along thematic paths of discovery.

Sol Lewitt's *Fotografia (Autobiography)* (1980) [Fig. 27/056] is a biographical journey through the objects – often quotidian and commonplace – with which the artist surrounded himself. Over a thousand photographs document the artist's studio on Hester Street in Manhattan, where he lived and worked for 20 years. The book takes both the artist – and us as voyeurs – on a journey of discovery through a process of mundane archiving and documentation not dissimilar to the way in which holiday photographs quote the day-to-day events of the experience.<sup>31</sup> The book's ability to visually order and organise makes for a remarkable rethinking of the objects with which one might surround oneself, as Dyment (2015) describes it:

[Fig. 26/ 0226]



[Fig. 27/ 056]



[Fig. 28/ 065]



The notion of possessions-as-self-portrait feels entirely contemporary. ... Alongside his books, records, artworks, clocks and keepsakes, are kitchen utensils, balls of twine, tools, empty jam jars, plumbing fixtures, electrical outlets and light switches. Presented uniformly, and without textual exposition, this detailed personal inventory reveals very little about the artist. The mystery and aura of the artist's studio is removed, usurped by mundane images of towels and houseplants. With the photographs all a uniform size, "no object in his space more important than another ..."

The banality of contemporary life is contrasted on the exhibition by James Trissel's *Daedalus* (1993) [Fig. 28/065] which explores Ovid's account<sup>32</sup> of the eponymous artist and craftsman, who created the Cretan Labyrinth and who was shut up in a tower to prevent knowledge of his labyrinth from spreading. In order to escape, Daedalus made wings of wax for his young son Icarus and was granted a set of wings for himself by the goddess Athena. Their journey of escape resulted in the death of Icarus, as the sun melted his wings, but not of Daedalus.

Another example of expansive travel is provided by Shirley Sharoff who takes the viewer on a literally unfolding journey in *The Great Wall* (1991) [Fig. 29/067]. As the spiral-bound book is unfolded to a length of 7m, so the Great Wall is constructed. In order to read Lu Xun's (1881 to 1936) texts on unbending, traditional thought patterns amongst his peers as well as on the actual Great Wall of China as a symbol of the ancient Chinese traditions, the book first must be rolled out. According to Sharoff, and seemingly in dialogue with the content of *Daedalus*, when stood up straight and viewed from above, her work forms a wall of paper that resembles the labyrinth inside the Ancient Summer Palace (Yuan Ming Yuan) outside Beijing (Koninklijke Bibliotheek n.d.).

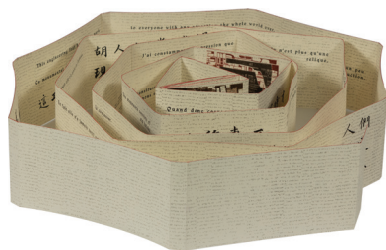
Travel to the east brings Kazuko Watanabe's *The Diary of a Sparrow* (1999) [Fig. 30/0211] into direct conversation with *Prose du Transsibérien's* darker, more sombre content. Chapter four of *The Diary* is devoted to the Russo-Japanese War of 1905 into which Cendrars's train hurtles as: *A cannon sounded in Siberia, it was war* (l.43) [*En Sibérie tonnait le canon, c'était la guerre*]. The book is hinged and folded so that it can be read as both a conventional book and a fold-out book-sculpture. Watanabe has painstakingly translated her grandfather's journals in which a people, "living within a small stretch of land, have their gentle lives tossed by the upheavals of war and the encroachment of the modern world" (Seager 2015:55).

The concept of being "tossed" by both war – a theme to which we will return – and modernity recalls Cendrars's words: *The train somersaults and falls back on its wheels – It falls back on its wheels – The train always falls back on its wheels* (l.160-162).<sup>e</sup>

Other books in the Ginsberg Collection which feature Japan in their content and which are on the exhibition include a fine example of a Japanese *Shunga* print in book form. Most *Shunga* are a type of

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e Le train fait un saut périlleux et retombe sur toutes ses roues – Le train retombe sur ses roues – Le train retombe toujours sur toutes ses roues (l.160-162).



[Fig. 29/ 067]



[Fig. 30/ 0211]



[Fig. 31/ 077]

*Ukiyo-e*,<sup>33</sup> usually in woodblock print format. Translated, literally, the Japanese word *shunga* means “picture of spring”, where “spring” is understood to be a euphemism for sex.

Lois Morrison’s *Japanese Babies* (1992) [Fig. 31/077] is a fabric book with onlays and various needlework techniques to resemble complex Japanese fabric patterns. The book is also Japanese bound and thus, somewhat with tongue-in-cheek humour, evokes the “mysteries of the Orient” for western culture. As a handmade fabric book it is also a unique, one-of-a-kind object.

Veronika Schäpers first went to Japan on a scholarship after her graduation, and she joined a paper shop in the Bunkyo ward of Tokyo for an internship. Attracted to both the refined materials and tools she could find there and the fast changing and glittering aspects of modern Japan, Schäpers uses specific texts as the starting point of each of her bookworks, collecting materials which could be used to illuminate these texts. One such example is the award-winning<sup>34</sup> *26°57,3’N, 142°16,8’E* (2007) [Fig. 32/0217] the content of which is explained by Schäpers (in Booklyn 2007) as follows:

At this location in the northwestern pacific [sic] the Japanese marine biologist Tsunemi Kubodera took the first pictures of a living giant squid in its natural environment. ... Inspired by a note in the Newspaper about this discovery, Durs Grünbein wrote a poem entitled *Architeuthis*. Fascinated by his seven-verse text ... this project about deep-sea fish emerged. We chose two further poems to be printed: one – which was already published – about the bizarre shapes and behaviors of these creatures living in such deepness entitled *Sous les Mers*, recalling Jules Verne’s Capitain [sic] Nemo; and a third about the legendary fish *Remora* which Grünbein wrote specially for this book.

When we met, Kubodera also showed me pictures and short films of squids he recorded at depths between 600 and 1 000 meters. The unpracticed spectator sees only dim silhouettes of the squids in these images, but at the same time begins to sense the diversity of life in such darkness. This gave me the idea to work with the interaction of transparent and opaque pages.

Judith Klau (n.d.) likens negotiating the reading of *26°57,3’N, 142°16,8’E* to undertaking an uncertain journey:



Folding back the parchment, what looked like a horizon is now revealed as a page divided in three. Layers of tissue-like paper have been engineered to create pages that move from transparency to opacity. The bottoms of the pages have a deep inky blackness. The tops of the pages begin to tell a story in silhouette – a shoreline? Nautical map? The colors are aqueous, greens and greys, there are images suggesting soundings, depth indicators, and at last some language – I can tell by the way the language is presented in lines that I'm looking at [a] poem, in German, which I do not read, and in Japanese, ditto. But at last a clue in French, a language I know: *Sous Les Mers*, Under the Seas. I was traveling blind, but the artist led me in the right direction, down, down, into the sea.

In contrast to Schäpers's exquisitely printed dark brooding transitions of blue-greys and blacks and letterpress texts in German and Japanese on fine 50-year-old Toashaban-Genshi Gampi paper, but fully in keeping with her love for the "very ordinary or non-valuable materials and techniques taken from daily life which evoke a new visual and haptic experience" (Booklyn 2007) in Japan is Franticham's *Tokyo Umbrella* (2008) [Fig. 33/052]. This book describes the experience of collecting the materials that inspired its own making: "five days walking the street of Tokyo, taking photographs of posters, advertisements, street signs, manhole covers, stickers, wall graffiti, shop windows, neon signs, packaging graphics ... with our umbrella, expecting rain which never came".<sup>35</sup> Such a journey of discovery and misplaced expectation is found in Erica van Horn and Simon Cutts's *Nearing Arcueil* (2002) [Fig. 34/0203]. The book's 17 nearly identical photographs of a house in Arcueil (a section of Paris), document what the authors believed was the house of the composer Erik Satie (an acquaintance of Cendrars). At the end of the books is a section of prose in which the authors, upon their return to the United Kingdom, reveal that they have documented the wrong house.

Echoing Cendrars's *Prose du Transsibérien* route which he and Jeanne take to Harbin,<sup>36</sup> the exhibition also includes books which reference China and Russia.

In *The Eclipse of the Moon* (1998) [Fig. 35/0159] second-generation Chinese-American Paul Wong embodies his investigative cultural research as a synthesis of both his eastern and western experiences. The work includes Chinese text from an early 20th-Century woodblock edition of a T'ang Dynasty (810CE) poem by Lu T'ung. Wong's illustrations include pulp painting, burning and Xerox transfer prints rendering a political allegory through melding linguistic conventions, print technologies and paper processes — in collaboration

[Fig. 32/ 0217]



[Fig. 33/ 052]

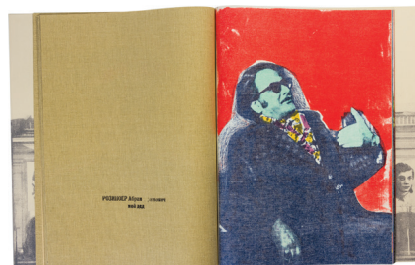


[Fig. 34/ 0203]

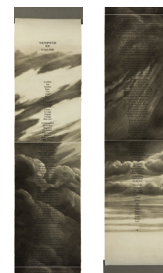




[Fig. 35/ 0159]



[Fig. 36/ 0129]



[Fig. 37/ 0104]

with the Dieu Donn   Papermill in New York — into a rich cross-cultural iconography (Brink 2001).

Mikhail Karasik is part of a vibrant contemporary artist's book community in Russia<sup>37</sup> and he describes vividly his experiences of official portraiture whilst growing up in the USSR. In the introduction to his work *Doska Pocheta* [*Board of Honour*] (2004) [Fig. 36/0129], Karasik states:

I was born on 27 March 1953 – twenty-five days after the death of Stalin. I had the good fortune to avoid his reign of terror, arriving three weeks too late. By the end of the 1950s, his portrait had disappeared from children's publications. The bewhiskered grandfather no longer adorned the opening pages of kindergarten and primary school books. I do recall a relief of Maxim Gorky, however, standing in our bookcase for many years ... But Stalin vanished into thin air. Whenever he did materialise, in some corner or cupboard, as a plaster bust or as a picture in a book or old magazine, he was hastily removed or hidden sealed over with the help of rectangular pieces of white paper – rather like he himself did to enemies of his regime. Other portraits soon began to appear and disappear in books and on the streets.

*Doska Pocheta* refers to the traditional board of honour, which was a "form of visual agitation intended to encourage increased productivity and participation in public activities" (Zemtsov 1991:32). Melanie Emerson (2008:62) states that, during the Soviet era, "artists could only produce work within established unions; thus much of their output was in the form of official portraits such as those decorating boards of honour". Here, Karasik presents his own personal version of these boards divided into three sections: the first features the government officials Leonid Brezhnev, Joseph Stalin and Andrei Zhdanov; the second includes his mother, father, grandfather and a self-portrait as a child; and the third section is a dedication to Karasik's favourite artists and writers, including Nathan Altman, Marc Chagall, Daniil Kharms, Vladimir Lebedev, El Lissitzky, Kazimir Malevich and Boris Pasternak.

Karasik, like Cendrars, seems caught up in a project of identity construction. If, as Shingler (2012:11) reminds us, in *Prose du Transsib  rien* the young poet-narrator sets out on a journey of discovering himself and affirming this identity through knowledge of what it is and is not, then the dialogue between these two poles must reveal their affinities and their irreducible difference. If this is so, Emerson (2008:62) argues, "Karasik's

creations retell his own story one that seems to question, and even mock, official history even though it [his own story] can never completely escape from its shadow". Given such affinities, it seems unsurprising that *Doska Pocheta* was published by M K Publishers in St Petersburg in collaboration with Serge Plantureux in Paris.

If the train journey in *Prose du Transsibérien* is, as already stated by Robertson (1995:892), a metaphor of the poet's difficult search for a new creative medium, it is also a metaphor for self-reflexive escape – the tedium of the journey itself; the horrors of war experienced on the 'real' journey; Jeanne's incessant question: *Tell me, Blaise, are we far from Montmartre?* (l.163, 175, 194, 202, 222 & 242) [*Dis, Blaise, sommes-nous bien loin de Montmartre?*].<sup>38</sup>

The poem might well be an account of events unfolding in time, but the linear continuity of the narrative is undermined at the visual and verbal levels. Temporal frameworks in which the events of the poem take place are constantly blurred with few specific markers which allow us to distinguish between timeframes. Shingler (2012:22-23) points to the disparity between the present tense of *I go* [*Je vais*] and the past historic *I landed* [*Je débarquai*] (l.410 & 412). Both are used in a single stanza to mark events in the poet's past, as something that the reader can only resolve by considering the events to be related in an atemporal way, rejecting any attempt to order them in a specific sequence, citing Perloff's description "all of it is happening now, in an ongoing, continuous present" (Perloff 2003:23).

Taking a cue from this notion of a "continuous present" is *Tempête et Calme* (2004) [Fig.37/0104] which includes mezzotints by Judith Rothchild in response to Jules Verne's poem.<sup>39</sup> For one who seeks contrasts and difference in the simultaneity of the reading/looking process in operation in the exhibition and its thematic and curatorial hooks, *Tempête et Calme* speaks directly to *Prose du Transsibérien* in its format, its image/text relationships and its simultaneous pointing to an object to be read and viewed at the same time. But here, the decorativeness, the colour and the parallel reading are drained out and the reader is confronted with a dark, monochromatic mezzotint landscape upon which Verne's poem is directly superimposed.

Importantly, the leporello (accordion-fold) style of the book's binding and its vertical orientation demand attentive comparison with *Prose du Transsibérien* as a contemporary example of *le premier livre simultané*. This meticulously crafted work uses Verne's poem, written in 1848, when the author was just 20 years old, evoking Cendrars's references to his own youthfulness at the start of *Prose du Transsibérien*: *Back then, I was still so young – I was only 16, yet I remembered nothing of my childhood* (l.1&2).<sup>f</sup> If Cendrars's poem passes through a 'storm' of metaphorical self-discovery, memory, doubt, war and loss, then Verne's poem literally passes through a visual storm before reaching safe haven on the other side. The text is superimposed on a series of four of Rothchild's ominous mezzotints which start with a threatening sky, move on to the complete blackness of the storm, then to clouds and finally to sunlight (Abe Books 2004).

There are a number of South African artists' books on the exhibition which explore journeys as varied

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f En ce temps-là j'étais en mon adolescence – J'avais à peine seize ans et je ne me souvenais Déjà plus de mon enfance (l.1&2).

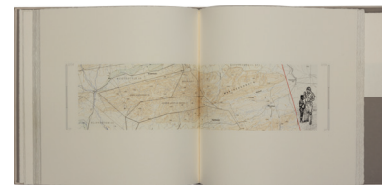




[Fig. 38/ 0250]



[Fig. 39/ 0234]



[Fig. 40/ 0249]

emotional and physical tribulations. One of these is William Kentridge's *Portage*, (2000) [Fig. 38/0250]. Like *Prose du Transsibérien* and *Tempête et Calme*, *Portage* is a 4m-long accordion-fold (leprello) book. It contains chine collé figures cut from black Canson paper glued to pages from a [circa] 1906 edition of *Le Petit Larousse Illustré*<sup>40</sup> – which was, itself, printed and published in Paris at the immediate end of the Russo-Japanese War. These images are mounted onto sheets of Vélin Arches Crème. The factual dictionary definitions literally and figuratively support the procession of shadowy figures presenting a narrative which is particularly undefined and open to interpretation and speculation. Familiarity with South Africa's history of migrant labour, forced removals and dispossession of peoples from ancestral lands in the colonial and pre-democratic eras might help situate this motley collection of anonymous exiles. Resolute (Southern) Africans move inexorably towards a future which can only be imagined and hoped for but also paradoxically, there exists a possible reading of an exuberant atmosphere of carnival.

Just as we might find in Kentridge's earlier film *Shadow Procession* (1999), procession is one of his great themes, a symbol of humanity's journey through life (Quod Gallery 2013) "even as it avoids pinning the work to any specific time or place" (Lenfield 2012).

A second South African book focusing specifically on journeys is *The Ultimate Safari* (2001) [Fig. 39/0234]. It is based upon a short story by Nobel laureate Nadine Gordimer, which is about a young girl who flees Mozambique with her family and walks through the Kruger National Park to a supposedly better life in South Africa. The writing is complemented by hand-printed lithographs drawn by Dorah Ngomane, Aletah Masuku and Alsetah Manthosi, who have all made the dangerous trek on foot to South Africa, and who have recalled their journeys in print form (The Artists' Press 2001).

Gordimer explains that the story was germinated during one of her visits to a refugee camp in the late 1980s with a BBC team interviewing refugees from Mozambique. Soon after, she read an advertisement in the *London Observer*, selling African adventure as the "ultimate safari". Gordimer thought "what I've just seen is the ultimate safari" (Misra 2008).

Keith Dietrich's books often explore complex journeys across space, place and time. Three such books appear on the exhibition, one of which is his multi-faceted *Horizons of Babel* (2004) [Fig. 40/0249]. Dietrich (2004) states that the concept underpinning this project is

framed against the background of a fascination with the topography of South Africa that dominated

the interests of cartographers, illustrators and artists from before the colonial period up to the present. The site of the project was randomly located on a semicircle between Cape Columbine, the most north-westerly point on the West Coast of the Cape, and Cape Agulhas, being the southern tip of Africa, with the centre falling on the hill Babelonstoring (Tower of Babel) in the vicinity of Paarl/Simondium/Franschhoek. Seven co-ordinates were identified on this semicircle at 30-degree intervals, and each co-ordinate was systematically documented (Cape Columbine, Verlorenvlei, Hottentotsberg, Roosterberg, Anysberg, Napkei and Agulhas).

Dietrich (2004) continues by discussing how images construct knowledge and investigates the relationship between the centre and the periphery:

The concept of the panorama lies at the centre of this project, and its particular relationship with the panopticon, where the privileged position of the perceiving consciousness has been disrupted by not giving the viewer access to the centre. In this respect the association between the centre (Babelonstoring) and the place names along the periphery (such as Hoedklip, Matroozefontein, Nieuwe Gift, Bakovens Kloof, Touwsfontein, Middel Drift and Paapekuils Fontein) acquires metaphorical significance. The project has been informed by a Western construct of Africa and the complex processes of converting what was seen as an empty space through surveying, charting, recording, and filling the land with names and places.

Such a reading recalls Cendrars's listing of stops along the Trans-Siberian route: *Tomsk Chelyabinsk Kansk Ob'Tayshet Verkne-Udinsk Kurgan Samara Penza-Tulun* (l.206) – a list of points along the arc from Moscow to Harbin [Fig. 41/0001 detail] which acquires “metaphysical significance” in relation to their being both real places as well as points which “fill the land” in this fictitious and imagined journey. As the reader/viewer of *Prose du Transsibérien* has, also, not been given access to the centre of either the prose poem or the temporal spatial flow of Delaunay's painting, the reader thus becomes an unlikely panoptician, having to observe both Cendrars's narrative events as they unfold atemporarily in the vast sweep of his geo-psychological

[Fig. 41/ 0001 detail]



[Fig. 42/ 0001 detail]



[Fig. 43/ 0001 detail]



"landscape": *Come to the lost isles of the Pacific! – With names like Phoenix, – The Marquesas – Borneo and Java – And Celebes shaped like a cat – We can't go to Japan – Come, then, to Mexico!* (l.251-256)<sup>9</sup> as well as Delaunay's abstract flow between the domes of Moscow [Fig. 42/0001 detail] and the tower and wheel of Paris [Fig. 43/0001 detail].

Thus the exhibition offers different viewpoints on various forms of travel and journey both real and imagined – some by sea, others by road or train.

Edward Ruscha's famous *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations* (1962) [Fig. 44/033] is considered to be one of "landmarks in the development of artists' books as a form" (Drucker 1995:71). It is often cited as "the founding instance of artist's bookmaking ... [making] books visible within the art world in a way which would not have been possible for literary based endeavors or even cross-over trade published photo books" (Drucker 1995:76) and sets in place the concept of the democratic multiple in the broader practices of artist's bookmaking. *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations* de-aestheticises the photograph at the very time in which it was trying to establish its status as legitimate fine art, taking the reader on a haphazard journey with

a flat-footed photographic aesthetic informed by minimalist notions of repetitive sequence and seriality. The title describes the contents of the book which is both absolutely banal and very precise (Drucker 1995:76).

In *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1962) [Fig. 45/0181] Ruscha's minimalist, sequential aesthetic uses the leporello structure of the book in order to achieve its task: to take a journey down that (in)famous Hollywood boulevard and document the totality of buildings there. The top of the foldout page documents the journey in one direction and, in turning the book upside down, the return journey is documented. By folding out the book's structure to its total length, the viewer is able to undertake Ruscha's journey in both directions.

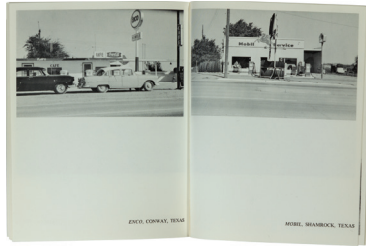
*On the Road Too. Book 1: New York – Las Vegas – New York* (2007) [Fig. 46/0143] is another road trip in which Dutch artist Peter Spaans drove the return journey of 11 000km with his American friend Dan Schmidt, who contributed the texts. Inspired in part by Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* (1957), they travelled as much as possible on older national highways and on state roads as this would afford them views of cities and towns, as well as of rural America, that one would not see from the interstate highways. Of Spaans's original 11 000 photographs, always taken from the car, 1 080 were selected, one image per page of the book. *On the Road Too* is

an extended, raw, uncensored, and uncommon visual report and study of America seen 19 days in a row. ... Day in, day out [Spaans] focused on fixed points such as the grandness of the natural countryside, or electric and telephone wires, petrol stations, motels, churches, restaurants; he pointed his camera at houses and factories either empty, boarded up and abandoned, or inhabited (Deumens n.d.).

g

Viens dans les îles perdues du Pacifique [!] – Elles ont nom du Phénix, des Marquises – Bornéo et Java – Et Célèbes à la forme d'un chat – Nous ne pouvons pas aller au Japon – Viens au Mexique! (l.251-256).





[Fig. 44/ 033]



[Fig. 45/ 0181]



[Fig. 46/ 0143]

Despite the documentary nature of the project as “a visual report” and its image of a gasoline station on its cover, *On the Road Too* does not attempt to achieve Ruscha’s deadpan objectivity, instead, it attempts to document the transformation of the landscape by successive generations of Americans in which “creative destruction is heralded as the vital energy of American capitalism; the old and inefficient are constantly being replaced by the new” (Deumens n.d.).

A train journey is documented in Peter Kingston’s *An Indian Train Journey* (2007) [Fig. 47/0102], in which 28 linocuts dramatise, as the opening print reveals, “... the story of a pilgrimage to South India to ride on the legendary Nilgiri Mountain Steam Railway to witness how it survived for over a century in a progress mad world”.

At one point, a herd of elephants on the train tracks next to the small blue train awaits both the travellers and the reader (Juvelis 2016a) evoking Cendrars’s image: *And in Khailar a caravan of white camels* (l.395) [*Et à Khaïlar une caravane de chameaux blancs*].

If these last four journeys document real places, a very different journey is exhibited in Helmut Schulze’s illuminations of Xavier de Maistre’s 1825 *Die Nächtliche Reise um mein Zimmer* [*A Nocturnal Journey Around my Room*] (2010) [Fig. 48/0153] which offers a set of 15 diverse gouaches and 15 pen and ink drawings on handmade paper or tracing paper. These illustrations as well as the text, which is completely written by hand, are a visual response to de Maistre’s 1794 thoughts about the deeper meanings associated with travelling down a philosophical path of sociopolitical and personal change.

In their mix of irony, worldly wisdom, melancholy, naiveté and a pinch of Rococo frivolity, de Maistre’s 1799 notes for his second journey – to be taken at night, with all the secrecy this implies – explores a journey of abolition of the Supreme Being in heaven and on earth in a frank and perceptive set of judgments. It is full of the ironic doubting attitude of the Late Enlightenment and overshadowed by the poetic melancholy of the dawning Romantic period (Offizin Parvus 2010).

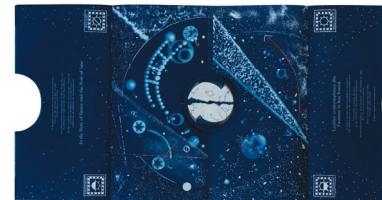
*Die Nächtliche Reise* is a conceptual or imagined journey towards change and the overthrowing of extant regimes of power just as *Prose du Transsibérien* seems, in a similar vein, to be an imagined search for new identities and insights, replete with metaphors for transcendence and mingled with melancholic realisations such as the final thought of the poem: *I will go to the Lapin agile to remember my lost youth – And drink a few glasses – Then I will return home alone* (l.442-445).<sup>h</sup>



[Fig. 47/ 0102]



[Fig.48/ 0153]



[Fig. 49/ 0156]

A book which takes the reader/viewer on a journey which is celestial rather than terrestrial, and which also bridges into the next sub-theme of the exhibition is Nora Lee McGillivray's *Mapping the Great Book: 7 x 7 Celestial Scenes* (2001) [Fig. 49/0156]. McGillivray's interest lies in the physical universe, the moon, planetary systems and in pondering and celebrating the relationship between the "universe and the self, inspired by the artistry and science of ancient celestial maps" (Biblio n.d.). The book is presented using Cyanotype on Masa and Arches papers, with a French doors format, opening vertically. At the centre of the book is a separate semi-circular star map book sewn onto the main structure. Her Cyanotypes are printed without artificial light. The book's colophon states that it "... was printed by the Sun at 45'03' North Latitude, 93'08' West Longitude".

In an interview with Joshua Heller Rare Books, McGillivray states that "[t]he old astronomers, including Galileo, referred to the universe as a book" and thus for her, the book becomes a symbol for universe and its pages help connect and map the celestial elements (WorldCat 2001).

Gilles Deleuze (1989:206-7) draws together beautifully the synergy between a territory, its map and the phenomenological experience of this relationship in the body when he states: "Landscapes are mental states, just as mental states are cartographies, both crystallized in each other, geometrized, mineralized". Such experiences are indeed crystallised in the books which follow.

### Maps, mapping and paper engineering

Journeys and travel require some access to maps and as the *Prose du Transsibérien* includes a map of the route at the head of the work, the exhibition includes artists' books which seek to map distinct territories and spaces through actual maps and map-like symbols or by means of exploiting the structure of the book as a virtual map. An example of the latter is Olafur Eliasson's *Your House* (2006) [Fig. 50/0177] which was commissioned by the Library Council of The Museum of Modern Art in New York and consists of a laser-cut negative impression of Eliasson's house in Copenhagen on a scale of 85:1.

According to Eliasson (2006), "the book is based on a computer-generated model of the house, sliced vertically into 454 even parts. Each of the corresponding 454 hand-bound leaves (or 908 pages) is

individually cut and corresponds to 2.2cm of the actual house" (Eliasson 2006). The effect on the reader as they work their way through the book is the illusion of negotiating one's way through the various rooms of the house thereby constructing a mental and physical narrative. "The result is an intensified sense of space, dimensions, materiality, and time ... [and] exploits the narrative and sequential possibilities of the book form and examines the perceptual and spatial experience of domestic architecture" (Eliasson 2006).

*Your House* 'maps' the physical world in such a way as to create a disorienting illusion of a portable home which is also inhabitable as a particular territory: a book-form and Eliasson's 'real life' home.

Maps are peculiarly semiotic creatures: they index a very particular territory – as a photograph indexes the read subject – but they are also highly symbolic, reducing the real world to a manageable scale and set of icons which a user would have to learn or with which they would need to be culturally familiar. They also do not discriminate, providing equal amounts of information whether required or not. It is in our use of maps which determines their particular character as useful or not. Their scale might provide too much or too little usable information and it is in this space of negotiation: useful information vs unhelpful or unnecessary information that the map becomes a provocative subject for the book artist, appearing as they do as books or book-like objects, to be unfolded, paged through, negotiated and 'read' as a set of visual/verbal symbols.

Robbin Ami Silverberg's *Subterranean Geography #1* (2011) [Fig. 51/0201] is an artist's book which literally maps a territory in ways which ordinary maps cannot do. As part of what the artist calls "psycho-geography", *Subterranean Geography* uses a cut-away subway map to explore particular feelings and emotions associated with and defined by specific spaces negotiated and travelled through in New York City. Silverberg unpacks the relationship between symbolic map and emotive connotation explaining that:

the book is divided into two parts, each with a text about movement: the first is an ambulatory mapping of my walk to the "L" subway station; the second is a subway trip loaded with emotions and memory. The layered filigree paper of subway lines/bus routes/roadways creates the seemingly fragile pages which contrast with the directness of the text and remind the viewer of the complexity of both described space and of feelings (Silverberg 2011).

Both Eliasson's and Silverberg's books employ cutting into and through the page substrate thus forming a visual dialogue between the information on the recto and verso pages. If there is a logical cutting associated with specific symbolic data on one side, this logic is made implicit on the other side compounding and confusing the reading of its symbolic data.

In Eliasson's *Your House*, the blank page simply facilitates a visual and haptic forward and backward movement through the house, but in Silverberg's *Subterranean Geography*, the existence of both printed matter and cut shapes on both recto and verso complicates the way in which the reader might read and negotiate the information which is viewable, imparting an emotional layer upon the denotative data. Thus the reader's pragmatic relationship with maps is shot through with the artist's experience of those spaces.

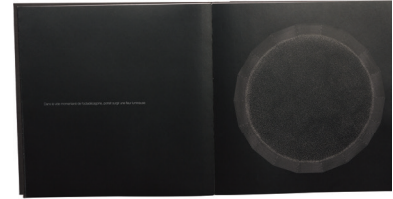




[Fig. 50/ 0177]



[Fig.51/ 0201]



[Fig. 52/ 0212]

The exhibition explores the cut page in various book forms, each of which offers a different relationship with its resulting recto/verso dialogues and, in particular instances, with the activation of light. An example of a light-activated book is Mauro Bellei's *Cent Mille Petits Points [Hundred Thousand Small Points]* (2013) [Fig. 52/0212] which maps a seeming constellation of stars on the black paper of the heavens.

The book, which originally accompanied a sculptural installation at the Library Gallery, *Les Trois Ourses*, Paris, in 2013, in which the floor of the gallery was 'mapped out' with black dots, red string and white pebbles, seems to have become a celestial equivalent of the terrestrial installation, activated and made visible only when each page is lifted and turned, allowing light to illuminate the thousands of laser-cut holes.

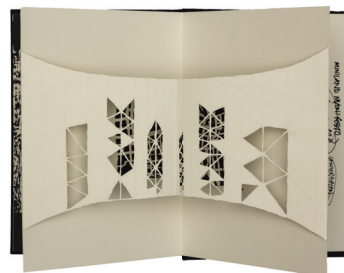
Other books which deploy cutting of the page or paper engineering as strategies for meaning making include Stephan Erasmus's *Diepe Water 2 [Deep Water 2]* (2007) [Fig. 53/0254] in which texts, sampled from various love song lyrics, are carefully handwritten onto the paper in wave-like elements cut in circles on each page. The delicacy of the paper and the intimate texts which seem buffeted on waves and lost far out to sea, recall Cendrars's image: *There was only Patagonia left, Patagonia suited my immense sadness, PATAGONIA and a voyage in the South Seas* (l.156).<sup>i</sup>

Stephen Hobbs's *Be Careful* (2014) [Fig. 54/0252] uses 11 double spreads, six pop-up spreads with variable moving mechanics, five silkscreened pages (one with reflective tape) and one pull-down page with seven moving pieces. Encompassing Hobbs's established conceptual practice of engaging the field of architecture as a site for visionary thinking, the work is a form of paper engineering or architecture, concealing within its two dimensions surprising three-dimensional structures and mechanisms. The spreads include found text and handwritten mind-maps, stylised networks and city grids, scaffolding and empty billboard structures, blocked patterns and optical illusions symbolic of the "imagined space in which we live" (Nurse 2013).

[Fig. 53/ 0254]



[Fig. 54/ 0252]



[Fig. 55/ 044]

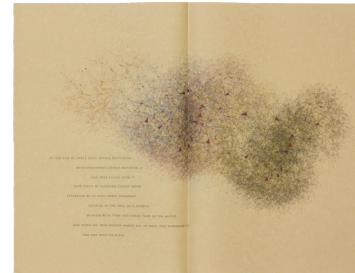




[Fig. 56/ 0215]



[Fig.57/ 058]



[Fig. 58/ 0220]

Sjoerd Hofstra and Karen O'Hearn's *Raising Water* (2013) [Fig. 55/044] is a movable book, which photographically documents the throwing of a stone into water, its splash and the resultant ripples each as a set of six images which open out across the page openings. By lifting the interleaving card pages between each set of images, the three visual elements (throw, splash and ripple) can be experienced as complex paper-engineered and constructed mechanisms. In contrast to the cool black and white images on clean white paper presented horizontally without any other distracting visual or textual elements, the paper engineering seems to be rough and without finesse, held together with card tabs, tape and string: seemingly revealing a crude and makeshift analogical world operating below the slick and sanitised digital presentation of the world above.

Max Marek's *Fluesterbuch [Whisper Book]* (2011) [Fig. 56/0215] seems to combine the strategies seen in the works of Eliasson, Silverberg and Erasmus in that the work's geophysical, sculptural form grows and recedes as the blank white leather pages are turned whilst at the same time, anchored by a lace-like set of cut bridges which hold the integrity of each sculptural page in place. The work makes three dimensional the flat symbolic contour lines of a topographical map.

Books which make central the idea and semiotic load of the map include Barry Lopez and Charles Hobson's *The Mappist* (2005) [Fig. 57/058]. Lopez's story is about its narrator, Phillip Trevino's eventual finding of the writer of a travel book which, in Trevino's opinion, had conveyed the soul of the capital of Columbia, Bogotá. Trevino had never given up his search for the genius behind the books which had become a touchstone for his own work and world view. In a bookstore in Tokyo, Trevino finds a set of elegant hand drawn maps in a map cabinet, all unmistakably by the author of the books and all signed Corlis Benefideo. And the master mapmaker indeed turns out to be the reclusive writer. The book design and images have been created by Hobson and each book in the edition has been assembled using original United States Geographical Survey maps for the concertina binding which, when opened, creates its own vista of mountains and valleys representing the maps that figure so prominently in Lopez's story. Covers are made of boards over which have been pasted paper reproductions of a 1911 map of Bogotá from the collection of the Library of Congress. Images of hands emulating gestures of a mapmaker at work have been reproduced as digital pigment prints on transparent film. The slipcase has been covered with wood-grained paper to suggest the

map cabinet which plays a pivotal role in the story.

Priscilla Juvelis (2016b) describes the complex interplay between Lopez's multi-layered story embodied in Hobson's constructed and illustrated book:

Themes of hidden identities searched out and deciphered, hidden intentions coded in seemingly disparate actions, and the tantalizing possibilities of bringing order to a chaotic history are beautifully served by the combination of maps that are the subject of the story and, literally, hold the story together ... The reader is challenged with images thrown up by the author and artist: bits of map interspersing text, bits of map as fore-edge and gutter outside edge on any turn of the page, a phrase full of possibilities ... are preceded and followed by a page of transparent film with the image of a map being passed from one hand to another. Turning the film page, the reader is confronted with the act being completed and the hand-off accomplished. ... We are left wondering, where will we find our maps – and will we be able to read them – or remember what we've read?

But there are now digital manipulations, pieces of code, specifically written in order to plot and map virtually any phenomenon. Jean-Pierre Hébert's rendering of Italo Calvino's almost eponymous novel *In Visible Cities* (2013)<sup>41</sup> [Fig. 58/0220] is an example of this. By creating poetic lines from the prose of Italo Calvino's reflections on socialised urban spaces, the typography follows the all-caps style of Ilia Zdanevich (aka Iliazd), with the title of each poem set vertically in the horizontal lines of text.<sup>42</sup> Hébert's images are generated algorithmically with the aid of a computer and are ink-jet printed onto Niyodo Natural paper from Japan.

Hébert describes the resulting work as "generative poetry composed by ideas translated into code, deliberate rule breaking through chance or bugs, and digital humor" (MCBA 2013). Martin Antonetti (2013) describes the resultant computational drawings as "astonishing",

for being generated not by Hébert's hand but [also] by his brain. That is, Hébert has written original computer code – as if composing a score or choreographing a dance – based on his redacted Calvino texts. The code was then run, or "played" on an inkjet printer, resulting in dynamic data landscapes that chart both the semantic and the social relationships found in the text. In effect, Hébert is proposing nothing less than a new approach to drawing, one grounded in "the conviction that to gain power and beauty, drawing should become a pure mental activity, rather than a mere gestural skill". In other words, he rejects physical manipulation in favor of intellectual abstraction and a radically different semiotic system. "Drawing is just a thought", Hébert says, and to enact it he brings into play the language of code. He has written of this process that he is "pursuing an ideal of beauty and ideal Platonic forms, inspired by [his] interests in patterns of geometry, mathematics, physics, nature".

An equally ambitious mapping, but this time a mapping of the whole world as a geospatial phenomenon is Annesas Appel's *View on the World Map: Vols. 1-4* (2013) [Fig. 59/0125]. In this series of works Appel unpacks her passion for human projections of knowledge into maps by means of representations and classifications. Appel "extracts, separates, eliminates, measures, adds and re-interprets projections of the world map" (Deumens 2013) – in four accordion fold books – composed of central point co-ordinates of all countries of the world to a scale of 1:6 550 000 and each represented by green lines on paper, an index of all countries and their individual green colour and executed in reversed alphabetical order.

Hanne Hagenaaers (n.d.) states "Appel shows the known world in a new formula, like the long line of provinces, page after page, in which measurement and direction are essential". She adds:

A map is interpretation; each map is a snapshot ... Humans divide the world up, draw boundary lines, assign capital cities, classify and rule. Science seems to show something about the world but, equally, it creates a truth. At the time of the voyages of discovery, the user realised that the map was a suggestion, a possible picture of what the world looked like. Today, knowledge is presented with so much certainty, as if it is a truth. Appel concurs with the truth of science, she uses its facts, but then she goes further with the data, she entices people into her system. Appel interferes with the contemporary cartographer's map. His certainty is given an abstract look. What follows is a piece of music, a dance, a new high-water mark. Doubt.

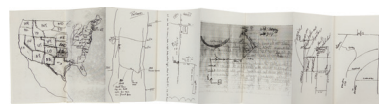
A book which demonstrates the polar opposite of Appel's fastidious and exacting taxonomy is Scott McCarney's homemade maps, number #4 from the *Autobiographies* series (2009)<sup>43</sup> [Fig. 60/082]. This snake-fold book is generated from material gleaned from the artist's filing cabinet and, together with other similar books in the series, reflects the artist as collector and his acts of collecting as much as the objects collected (McCarney 2009).

*Autobiography #4* consists of reproductions of maps people have drawn for the artist to help get him from one place to another. At some point, the artist might have found these maps helpful in achieving their desired aim, but in collecting them and reprising their sometimes perfunctory rough and ready quality, he has transformed them into an index of the artist's movements and habits – rather than their function and purpose

[Fig. 59/ 0125]



[Fig. 60/ 082]



[Fig. 61/ 0148]





as maps.

Doug Spowart (2013) describes this as the artist's inability to "throw anything away and [adds] that he makes collections from things like name badges, rejection letters from galleries and grant applications, to-do lists and mud maps. This body of work provides an insight into the trivia and ephemera of life that escapes disposal through its transformation into his art" and thus the books maps these moments of escape.

A book which seems to want to insert itself in a territory somewhere between Hobson's use of USGS's topographic maps, Appel's exacting and particular taxonomies and McCarney's highly personal collections of material is *43, According to Robin Price, with Annotated Bibliography* (2009) [Fig. 61/0148]. Robin Price (2009) states that the text excerpts for her book were derived from 86 books significant to her, most of which were other artists' books. Being 43 years old at the genesis of the project, Price gathered her texts using formulas based on the number 43. Simple formulas, using modular arithmetic with the number 43, were applied to categories such as page number, paragraph, sentence and line of poetry (Vamp & Tramp 2007).

In the prospectus for the book Price states:

The text is grouped by subject matter into sixteen page spreads. Titles of spreads include "Water", "Counting" and "Flora". Each is considered as something equivalent to an encyclopedia slice, in a manner directly inspired by the fifty-volume *Zweite Enzyklöpadie von Tlön*, by Ines v. Ketelhodt and Peter Malutzki. Visually flowing through the accordion-bound text sheets is a river image, borrowed from the Ninja Press book *The Real World of Manuel Córdova*. Paper maps, gathered from locations around the world that run along the 43rd parallels, form the background accordion that structurally supports the main text accordion, made of semi-translucent graph paper. Excerpts are identified by book title, printed in the margins, with a symbol that indicates the counting method used to retrieve it. A key for the symbols is printed on the Legend Card, found in a library-style pocket on the front cover of the book. A supplemental 32-page Annotated Bibliography, housed in a facing pocket within the case, provides personalized information on all titles. The pockets and the booklet cover are made of paper maps, mostly USGS topographic maps, and vary throughout the edition.

The map which introduces *Prose du Transsibérien* purports to index the route taken in the narrative. And although there are references in the prose poem to the route that the actual train would have taken, in viewing and reading the work, the reader experiences the atemporal, the abstract and metaphoric, along with huge jumps in time and space. In understanding this, the works in this exhibition remind one that a map is no more than a suggestion, a highly symbolic set of potential routes; a reminder of journeys once taken or not taken.

Cendrars abruptly translocates his reader to New York: *Paris to New York – Now I make the trains run the length of my life* (l.152-153) and *The giant bell of Notre Dame – The sharp bell of the Louvre that marks the*

*Saint Bartholomew Day massacre – The rusting carillons of Bruge-la-Morte – The electric chimes of the New York Public Library* (l.303-306).<sup>i</sup> Thus, many books on the exhibition have New York as their locus.

This includes David Andrew's *Sketchbook* (2008) [Fig. 62/0239], which charts his time spent on an Ampersand Foundation Fellowship in New York in 2008 – a theme picked up on by Silverberg in her essay on the relationship between South Africa and New York in Chapter 4. The translocation of a South African artist to the artistic and cultural flow of New York is the aim of the Ampersand Foundation Fellowship and in his journal, using maps of Manhattan, Andrew marks a number of shifts: from South Africa to New York, grappling with his own artmaking (his exhibition *Misc. (Recovery Room)* at the Standard Bank Gallery was to follow upon his return to South Africa) and also the abstract shifts in physical and mental processing, recovery and creative gestation which such an experience facilitates.

Andrew would have travelled along the Brooklyn Bridge in order to make his way from JF Kennedy Airport to the Foundation's apartment in Tribeca, and his ubiquitous gold pen which blocks out sections of the Manhattan grid on his map<sup>44</sup> sets up a dialogue with Donald Glaister's metallic *Brooklyn Bridge: A Love Story* (2002) [Fig. 63/068].

According to Glaister, *Brooklyn Bridge* includes five abstract "portraits" of the bridge, painted on sanded aluminium pages. Jean Feigenbaum (n.d.) describes the work as a "hybrid" object; in which Glaister writes the poem, paints the bridge's "portraits" and constructs the book's assemblages<sup>45</sup> which resonate with the turning of each thin aluminium page, like "the wind makes flashing through the bridge's vast suspension cables".

Feigenbaum (n.d.) continues: "In materials that are not what one would expect for a book – but completely in keeping with the subject matter – the limited edition is definitely about a torrid affair between the artist and his subject" (and thus also a most appropriate foil for Cendrars's torrid affair with both his physical as well as his artistic lovers) and in which the abrasions on the aluminium's surfaces carry the imagistic load of the book's atmospheric content.

### **War, death, fear and apocalyptic imagery**

Cendrars's lines: *A cannon sounded in Siberia, it was war – Hunger, cold, plague, cholera – And the muddy waters of the Amur River carried away a million corpses* (l.43-45)<sup>k</sup> appear early on in the prose poem. Having barely established a coherent sense of place and time for his readers and having his own depreciating place in the world and in the narrative move between ambiguous time periods in a torrent of emotion and passionate vehemence, Cendrars pushes towards his readers both the immediacy and the horrors of the Russo-Japanese War of 1904/5 as if a train is hurtling towards the reader.

Cendrars's train journey becomes a mode of experiencing, reportage-like, the terrors of war, on the move, deeper and deeper into its abyss as, towards the end of the prose poem, he most chillingly relates what

k

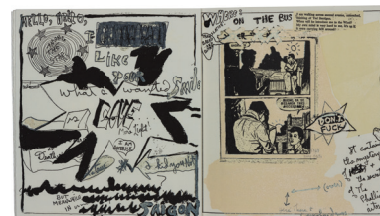
En Sibérie tonnait le canon, c'était la guerre – La faim le froid la peste le cholera – Et les eaux limoneuses de l'Amour charriaient des millions de charognes (l.43-45).



[Fig. 62/ 0239]



[Fig. 63/ 068]



[Fig. 64/ 0161]

he has seen and experienced:

*I saw – I saw the silent trains, the black trains return from the Far East passing like phantoms – And my eye, like a lantern, still follows those trains – In Talga, 100 000 wounded in agony, left to die – I visited the hospital in Krasnoyarsk – And in Khilok we met a long convoy of mad soldiers – I saw in the infirmary gaping wounds and injuries bleeding furiously – Amputated limbs dancing about or flying up into the raucous air – Fire was in every face and in every heart – Idiot fingers drummed on all the windowpanes – And under the weight of fear, every glance burst like an abscess – In every station, the train wagons burned – And I saw – I saw trains, 60 cars long dashing away at full throttle hounded by rutting horizons and clouds of crows chasing desperately after – Disappear – In the direction of Port Arthur (l.370-385).<sup>1</sup>*

Such emphasis upon seeing and experiencing, even if Cendrars did not undertake this specific journey of which he wrote in *Prose du Transsibérien*, seems prescient, as two years later, in September 1915, Cendrars lost his right arm during the attacks in Champagne and was discharged from the French Foreign Legion. It seems inevitable then that the exhibition, showcasing as it does, contemporary artists' books, continues the theme of war and conflict from a perspective of a century after *Prose du Transsibérien* was published.

Given that in Glaister's *Brooklyn Bridge*, "the bridge still inspires, perhaps more so as the country's vision of one of their national monuments changed on September 11, 2001" (Abe Books 2002), themes of war, death, fear and apocalyptic imagery seems ever-present in contemporary art, not least of all in international artists' books. If Glaister's *Brooklyn Bridge* evinces a "torrid affair" on personal and national levels, the difficult and stuttering collaboration between poet Ted Berrigan and artist George Schneeman in producing the graphic novel-like *In the Nam What Can Happen* (1997) [Fig. 64/0161] is an example of the torrid affair between creative partners. Publishers, Granary Books (1997) state:

<sup>1</sup> J'ai vu – J'ai vu les trains silencieux les trains noirs qui revenaient de l'Extrême-Orient et qui passaient en fantômes – Et mon œil, comme le fanal d'arrière, court encore derrière ces trains – À Talga 100 000 blessés agonisaient faute de soins – J'ai visité les hôpitaux de Kranoïarsk – Et à Khilok nous avons croisé un long convoi – De soldats fous – J'ai vu dans les lazarets – Des plaies béantes des blessures – Qui saignaient à pleines orgues – Et les membres amputés dansaient autour – Ou s'envolaient dans l'air rauque – L'incendie était sur toutes les faces dans tous les cœurs – Des doigts idiots – ambourinaient sur toutes les vitres – Et sous la pression de la peur – Les regards crevaient comme des abcès – Dans toutes les gares on brûlait tous les wagons – Et j'ai vu – J'ai vu des trains de soixante locomotives – Qui s'enfuyaient à toute vapeur – Pourchassés par les horizons en rut – Et des bandes de corbeaux qui s'envolaient – Désespérément après – Disparaître – Dans la direction de Port-Arthur (l.370-385).

*In The Nam* was first made as a one-of-a-kind collaborative book in 1967-68. The original was passed back and forth between Ted Berrigan and George Schneeman for about a year, remaining in the hands of one or the other for weeks or even months at a time – poet and artist each adding, subtracting, working over words and images ... Produced when the Vietnam War was rapidly escalating, this work is by turns surreal, incisive, hip, outrageous, cartoon-like, flip, sinister, humorous, dreamy, sarcastic, witty – always right on target – a vivid evocation of the times and the broad range of emotional responses to the war.

The 'finished' project languished in a drawer in Schneeman's studio on St Mark's Place for some 30 years, possibly because of the fact that, according to Schneeman (in Diggory 2013), Berrigan "bullied his way into art" and in this collaboration, "texts and images messily contend for the same space, suggesting a more personal struggle than that of the Vietnam War to which the title refers".

Unlike Delaunay and Cendrars's collaboration which stresses the separateness of the visual/verbal forms, Berrigan and Schneeman seem to engage in an exquisite corpse-type exercise,<sup>46</sup> blurring the limits of each discrete contribution and producing a visual text which illuminates the confused madness and blurred moral lines which the almost 20-year-long Vietnam War wrought upon the American psyche.

For the duration of the war, the United States saw the presidencies of Dwight D Eisenhower, John F Kennedy (who was assassinated in 1963), Lyndon B Johnson, Richard Nixon and the Watergate scandal, as well as that of Gerald Ford who presided over the failing economy of the mid-1970s. And thus contemporary American artists, in particular, are heirs of this triangulated battleground between the people, their administration and the 'theatre of war'.

Joan Iversen Goswell devotes enormous amounts of time and energy to critiquing, in the harshest possible terms, the political foibles and errors of both the Bush administrations in the United States. Christopher Calderhead (2011:16 -31) states:

Most strikingly, the subject of her work is often no holds-barred political commentary. Crusading, righteously angry, the work leaves none of us neutral. ... Goswell's approach is one of biting satire; her collaged compositions recall the images of John Heartfield, the German artist of the early twentieth century who lampooned the rise of National Socialism with charged fury.

In her one-of-a-kind books Goswell employs her idiosyncratic collage, digital print and hand-cut rubber-stamp lettering, demonstrating her position as a strong political commentator with many of her books having politicised titles: *Go to War for my Lies*, *The George Book*, *Another George Book*, *A Third George Book: A User's Guide*, *The Tongue of War*, *A Manual of Compassionate Conservatism* and *Saving Daddy's War* (2003) [Fig. 65/040]. This latter book concerns the abuses of the George W Bush administration and the war in Iraq, "a war based on lies and deceit and the thousands of deaths that that war caused" (Goswell in Kenedi 2011).





[Fig. 65/ 040]



[Fig. 66/ 094]



[Fig. 67/ 0141]

America's obsession with the War on Terror and its moral legitimisation is found in Caren Heft's *Female Shahida Martyr* (2004) [Fig. 66/094]. This is a seemingly decorative book until the reader becomes aware of the content of the letterpress type's references to the first Palestinian female suicide bomber Wafa Idris and the inclusion of small electronic elements which, together, create an ominous sense of being in the presence of objects with which one might constitute explosive materials.

In the colophon of this contemporary *Ars Moriendi*, the following appears: "An attempt to understand why a young woman would strap a belt bomb over her womb and set it off in a public place where victims could be children, elderly or pregnant women". This sense of dis-ease is brought into equally sharp relief in Emily Martin's *Not a Straight Line* (2011) [Fig. 67/0141] which commemorates the bombing of al-Mutanabbi Street, the centre of bookselling in Baghdad, on 5 March 2007.

The international al-Mutanabbi Street Artists' Book Project aims to re-assemble some of the inventory of the reading material that was lost. The work comprises 10 linked Coptic-bound books with one line of the text in each. To read the book, viewers must engage in a haptic process of finding their way through the linked books that turn this way and that, much as one would negotiate a meandering street (Vamp & Tramp 2015). The text is letterpress printed and stained with acrylic paint.

Martin concludes: "The text I wrote is one of defiance; the written word can be damaged but will always prevail" (UWE 2011).

Brian Borchardt's, Caren Heft's and Jeff Morin's *Crossing the Tigris I, II, III* (2011) [Fig. 68/0155] is an equally defiant, emotionally charged document. Morin describes the work as: "A narrative in three books recounting soldiers' stories from the Iraq War ... The collaborators each found stories in the media that recount horrific situations that are inconceivable to those who work regularly with current or former soldiers who happen to be students or artists" (Vamp & Tramp 2011).

During production of this work the artists and their press discussed the work's meaning, asking of the viewer to consider whether,

[w]hen confronted with the grittiness of war, do these ill-prepared young men simply break with reality? Are they taught that they are above the law? Or do they learn to devalue what is not obviously American? ... This collaboration is intended to catalyze a conversation about the nature of change that allows potentially decent people to commit indecent acts (Vamp & Tramp 2011).

In *Patmos and the War at Sea* (2011) [Fig. 69/0251], South African artist Alastair Whitton explores battles which are fought on a variety of fronts in the world today; some actual, others internal but no less real. In conversation with Daniel Hewson (2009) Whitton contextualises the physical and spiritual significance of Patmos as his place of departure, being both the site of conquest and occupation at various points throughout its history and most significantly where the exiled Apostle John wrote the Book of Revelation, and in which war is one of its central themes. Reference to the sea is equally layered, alluding to a territory and a domain, both physical and spiritual, as well as the war that ensues in the conquest thereof.

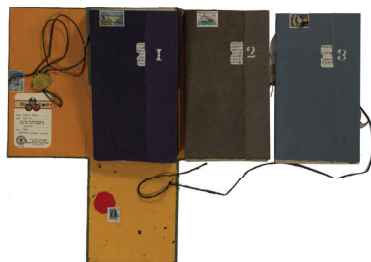
Whitton considers the way in which we, as human beings, see or rather fail to see by using archival images of the two world wars as a personal act of remembrance; homage to the courage and sacrifice of those who fought and died for the freedom that subsequent generations enjoy and take for granted. He concludes “the images that I have constructed are intended to allude to ‘another world’ war ... Furthermore, the laser cut Braille ‘texts’ function as a form of code and recall the World War II Enigma Machine” (Hewson 2009).

### Image / Text / Reading / Viewing

Whitton’s code conflates text and image, provoking a dialogical tussle between writing and image-making. This tussle can be found in operation in selected examples of artists’ books on the exhibition. As Dietrich argues in his essay in Chapter 2, the breaking down of semiotic difference between images and texts, which artists’ books seem so willing to attempt, is elucidated by Vilém Flusser who differentiates between the circular time of magical consciousness (the image) and the linear time of historical consciousness (the text). Dietrich also argues that WJT Mitchell’s notion of *imagetext* is able to shed light on the contested overlapping terrain of texts and images and argues that artists’ books are highly complex in their reading in that they occupy a liminal position between image and text. Mitchell (in Nelson & Shiff 1996:53) argues:

the word/image difference is not likely to be definitively stabilized by any single pair of defining terms or any static binary opposition. “Word and image” seems to be better understood as a dialectical trope. It is a trope, or figurative condensation of a whole set of relations and distinctions, that crops up in aesthetics, semiotics, accounts of perception, cognition, and communication, and

[Fig. 68/ 0155]



[Fig. 69/ 0251]



analyses of media (which are characteristically “mixed” forms, “imagetexts” that combine words and images). It is a dialectical trope because it resists stabilization as a binary opposition, shifting and transforming itself from one conceptual level to another, and shuttles between relations of contrariety and identity, difference and sameness.

This resistance in the contested terrain of image and text brings us back to the original argument around simultaneous contrast in *Prose du Transsibérien*. Shingler (2012:21-22) asserts that the work’s format

... invites a certain kind of viewing, the eye tending to travel downwards, from top to bottom, in a movement that approximates the way in which readers take in the column of text. The painter’s comment, *Je m’inspirai du texte pour une harmonie de couleurs qui se déroulait parallèlement au poème* [I am inspired by the text of harmonious colors that unfolded parallel to the poem]<sup>47</sup> makes it clear that the painting is deliberately temporal, allowing the viewer’s experience to unfold over time. It works as a kind of pictorial narrative ... [and] in doing so, it flouts [Gotthold Ephraim] Lessing’s association of painting with the representation of space, and not time.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, this incorporation of a temporal element into painting appears to have been an integral part of Sonia and Robert Delaunay’s “simultanist” enterprise.

Wendy Steiner (1982), however, explores this relationship as one of perception. She writes (1982:36):

The much-vaunted simultaneity of the painting exists in the material artefact but not in its perception ... Modern science supports this criticism; the eye can in fact focus on only a relatively small portion of visible objects and must scan them in order to build a unified image. Pictorial perception is thus a matter of temporal processing.

What we can begin to accept in the dichotomous reading of images and viewing of texts is that, as it is the graphic symbols which construct both text and image, both viewing and reading become acts of temporal processing because they spring from the same source. Steiner continues (1982:36):

The usual temporal flow of verbal art is not perceived as such ... because of violent disruptions in narrative and logical sequence ... the reader is asked to suspend the process of individual reference temporarily until the entire pattern of internal references can be apprehended as a unity. The text does not make sense as a sequence, but as a finished whole, and thus its perception is analogous to that of painting.

At the close of *Prose du Transsibérien*, Cendrars’s now familiar melancholic visit to *au Lapin agile* after

which he *will return home alone* (l.444) [*Puis je rentrerai seul*] is situated alongside the most semiotically iconic yet visually naïve section of Delaunay's painting: The little red tower encircled by the orange wheel is depicted, as a child might, on experiencing a funfair. By extrapolation, if Steiner's assertion that Cendrars's text makes sense only as "a finished whole", and thus its perception is analogous to that of Delaunay's painting, the exhibition explores moments of analogy between images and texts as a major thematic thread.

As stated earlier, the four coloured inks in a number of different typefaces employed by Cendrars is argued for by Shingler (2012:13) in both formal and metaphoric terms, also demonstrating "the extent of Cendrars's tendency towards the visual, and his desire to capture visual experience, and the colours of that experience in particular".

Shingler's (2012:13) nuanced reading of Cendrars's "rough correspondences between colours evoked by the text, and the colours in which they are printed", threads its way through a number of instances, for example:

The extra emphasis on *Bariolé* [l.102] and *Ce châle* [l.109] ... created through the sudden, and brief appearance of indigo ink as well as through the larger, bold type in which these lines are set, brings the idea of a mix of bright colours to the forefront of the reader's mind. The swift movement between different coloured inks in this passage evokes not just the vividly contrasting colours of the shawl, but also the rapid succession of different views suggested by the line *Et l'Europe toute entière aperçue au coupe-vent d'un express à toute vapeur* [And all of Europe glimpsed in gusts of wind from a full steam express l.106], the shifts in colour corresponding to the fleeting views of different landscapes experienced by the poet as he looks through the window of the Trans-Siberian train.

Shingler (2012:14-15) cautions that "rough correspondences" between verbal imagery and the colour of the print is not a general practice: Cendrars often "flouts the reader's expectation for these correspondences by refusing to take up cues in the poem". The evocation of *Colours that numb you like a gong* (l.260) [*Des couleurs étourdissantes comme des gongs*] is not itself brightly coloured, and the colours we would expect to see accompanying the line *If I were a painter, I'd pour on a lot of red, a lot of yellow on the end of this trip* (l.361) [*Si j'étais peintre je déverserais beaucoup de rouge, beaucoup de jaune sur la fin de ce voyage*] is printed in green with no red or yellow visible in Delaunay's surrounding blocks of colour. The reason for this, argues Shingler (2012:15-16), is Cendrars is "keen to avoid making the colour-correspondences facile or over-regular, so that the colour variations hold no surprises for the reader" and that "in accordance with the theory of simultaneity, the aim is to create a dialogue between visual and verbal meanings, rather than to create consistent effects of correspondence or mirroring".

Such dialogue between visual and verbal meaning is humorously demonstrated in John Crombie's pair of small books which constitute *Fall & Rise and Fall* (1984) [Fig. 70/0191a&b], echoing the changes of colour Cendrars and Delaunay deploy to mark moments of change in the text. In Crombie's books, imagery



is implied by shaped changes of colour in the text block marking, in one, the fall of leaves suggested by the titular “fall” (autumn) and the resultant rise in the pile of fallen leaves on the ground. As the reader pages through the seeming bucolic narrative, the initial bright red ink gives way to a tawny-maroon, implying the changes of leaf colour characteristic of the advance of autumn.

In the other book, the font colour tracks a textual penis which becomes erect and flaccid in response to the narrative which is lifted from a cheap erotically-charged novel. Such typographic dexterity, given the intimate size of both the font and the text block on the page, is a “surprise for the reader”. *Fall & Rise and Fall* provides an example of an *imagetext* – in this case “word as image” – which Mitchell (in Nelson & Shiff 1996:53) argues, “designates their tendency to unite, dissolve, or change places. Both these relations, difference and likeness, must be thought of simultaneously as a vs/as in order to grasp the peculiar character of this relationship”.

Books which focus upon typography, although not specifically exhibited for their purest, instructional or didactic sensibilities, feature some particularly provocative visual elements, where typographies and their typologies generate specific visual meanings. A book which exhibits a rich dialogical relationship with Fortunato Depero’s *Depero Futurista 1913-1927* [Fig. 10], is Arne Wolf’s *Genesis 5: The Generations of Adam* (1996) [Fig. 71/074]. Although utterly different in their form and intent, both express their meaning through typographic/imagistic exchange in, as Mitchell would argue, their tendency to unite, dissolve, or change places.

For Wolf, fascination with the book form facilitates what he calls “an unfolding mystery, or a visual journey. What you have seen, you don’t see anymore; what you will see is yet concealed” (Center for Book Arts 1998). His visual journey is purely typographical, but through its complex (con)fusion of spatio-temporality, the visual “mystery” finally unfolds into a coherent form which Michel Foucault (1970:9) might describe as passing “... surreptitiously from the space where one speaks to the space where one looks; in other words, to fold one over the other as if they were equivalents”.

Mitchell (in Nelson & Shiff 1996:55) describes such a process of unfolding into coherence in more dramatic terms: “When mute images begin to speak, when words seem to become visible, bodily presences, when media boundaries dissolve ... the ‘natural’ semiotic and aesthetic order undergoes stress and fracture”.

Drucker’s *The Word Made Flesh* (1996) [Fig. 72/0163] seems to exemplify and embody Mitchell’s and Foucault’s theoretical positions. For Perloff (1994), Drucker’s artist’s book “doesn’t boast a single illustration, a single pictorial equivalent to the text. Rather, it is the alphabet itself that is made flesh, the letter being seen

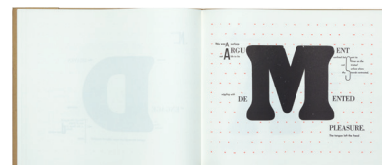
[Fig. 70/ 0191a&amp;b]



[Fig. 71/ 074]



[Fig. 72/ 0163]



in all of its visual potential”.

In similar vein to the way in which Wolf unfolds scripto-visual elements in *Genesis 5*, publishers Granary Books (1996) describe Drucker's seminal project thus: “Calling attention to the visual materiality of the text, this book attempts to halt linear reading, trapping the eye in a field of letters which make a complex object on the page. The work both embodies and discusses language as a physical form”.

Drucker, who is a designer, typographer, artist and academic, made *The Word Made Flesh* in response to theoretical issues in writing and *écriture* addressing the status of materiality in the visual presentation of poetic work. Responding to the writings of Jacques Derrida, devotional visual poetry, particularly *carmina figurata*, the book's typographic format “was meant to trip the eye, return one constantly to the plane of discourse, of material production ... out of complete love of letters ... celebrations of the beauty and expressive capability of type” (Drucker n.d.).

Perloff's book *Radical Artifice: Writing Poetry in the Age of Media* (1994) in which she discusses Drucker's *The Word Made Flesh*, however, seems suffused with the presence of composer John Cage who seems to have understood, almost half a century ago, that “no word, musical note, painted surface, or theoretical statement could ever again escape ‘contamination’ from the media landscape in which we live” (Perloff 1994a).

Cage's 1967 Great Bear Pamphlet edition shown on the exhibition, is part three of the eight-part set of publications which, together, comprise *Diary: How to Improve the World (You Will Only Make Matters Worse)* (1967) [Fig. 73/0208]. Joe Biel and Richard Kraft (Siglio Press 2015) who in 2015 co-edited and published a full version of *Diary*, describe Cage's panoptical view of his world:

Composed over the course of sixteen years, *Diary* is one of his most prescient and personal works. A repository of observations, anecdotes, proclivities, obsessions, jokes and koan-like stories, *Diary* registers Cage's assessment of the times in which he lived as well as his often uncanny portents about the world we live in now. With a great sense of play as well as purpose, Cage traverses vast territory, from the domestic minutiae of everyday life to ideas about how to feed the world.

Biel and Kraft (Siglio Press 2015) note critical elements of the 1967 Great Bear Pamphlet production of *Diary* from which parallels can be drawn with Cendrars's poem:

[Fig. 73/ 0208]



Originally typed on an IBM Selectric, Cage used chance operations to determine not only the word count and the application of various typefaces but also the number of letters per line, the patterns of indentation, and — in the case of Part Three published as a Great Bear Pamphlet by Something Else Press — color. The unusual visual variances on the page become almost musical as language takes on a physical and aural presence ... [using] chance operations to render the entire text in various combinations of the red and blue ... as well as to apply a single set of eighteen fonts to the entire work ... [and] giving readers a rare opportunity to see how the text is transformed.

Transformation as a concept is rich, provocative and complex. It implies dialogues with and between past and future states, undermines orthodoxies and the expectations by which conventions are characterised. If Delaunay's painting takes us on a temporal/spatial journey from the domes of Moscow to the tower of Paris, how we get from one place to another is through the movement of the eye, essentially downward, through a series of perceptual transformations. Delaunay's *pochoir*, as Perloff (2008) has already reminded us "is predominantly abstract, with rainbow-colored balloons, discs, spirals, and fuzzy triangles cascading downward to the little red tower and wheel. The colors, both on the left and on the right, where they frame the text, express the *joie de vivre* of fluid motion".

In order for one to make sense of such abstract *joie de vivre* which situates itself in the majority of the space between the domes of Moscow and the tower of Paris, a viewer cannot merely accept the marks as colourful filling, a way of getting from top to bottom as the poem must. Instead, one must read these marks as the material matter which facilitates a visual poetic equivalent of the wild shifts in place and time that Cendrars's poem expects the reader to negotiate. I suggest that this coloured matter is also the visual equivalent of the atemporality and spatial shifts upon which the poem depends. Transformation seems dependent upon motion, movement, shift or rupture, and, as a rhizomic concept<sup>49</sup> – which lies at the heart of both *La Prose du Transsibérien*'s heterogeneity, assemblage and simultaneity and the exhibition's curatorial and thematic design – operates, and is indeed crystallised, as highly symbolic cartographies of the multitudinous elements which make up the diverse elements of the artists' books on the exhibition.

With the exception of a fleeting reference to *Tombouctou* (l.150) *La Prose du Transsibérien* reduces Africa to a peripheral territory in its dramatic panoptical sweep of the globe. Bringing Cendrars and Delaunay's work to Johannesburg might begin to remedy such a peripheral view and perhaps place South Africa at the centre of the book arts world, at least for the duration of this project.

## End Notes:

<sup>1</sup> *Artists' Books in the Ginsberg Collection: with some South African Books from Other Collections* was hosted by the Johannesburg Art Gallery in Joubert Park, Johannesburg, 25 August to 27 October 1996. It was curated by Jack Ginsberg and myself. [http://www.theartistsbook.org.za/view.asp?pg=exhibitions&ex=ex1\\_001](http://www.theartistsbook.org.za/view.asp?pg=exhibitions&ex=ex1_001) accessed on 11 January 2016.

<sup>2</sup> *Behind the Personal Library: Collectors Creating the Canon* (Center for Book Arts, New York) ran from 11 October to 20 December 2014. It was organised by Alexander Campos, Executive Director and Curator for the Center for Book Arts, with Johanna Drucker (UCLA), Jae Jennifer Rossman (Yale) and Tony White (MICA). The exhibition and its associated symposium considered the influence of private collectors on the critical dialogue in the field of book arts. Rather than curating the works around a central theme, the goal of the exhibition was to examine works in the selected private collections that have become seminal artworks in the field at large, thus becoming influential to establishing a canon.

The exhibition also analysed the collectors themselves: how they came to collect books, what drove them to continue collecting, whether they consciously built and curated their collections, and how these factors influenced and informed artists' bookmaking practices. The featured collections included those of Philip E Aarons and Shelley Fox Aarons (New York), Mary Austin (California), Duke Collier (Massachusetts), Jack Ginsberg (Johannesburg, South Africa), Arthur Jaffe (Florida), Monica Oppen (Sydney, Australia), Barbara Pascal (California), Robert Ruben (New York), Marvin and Ruth Sackner (Florida), Julia Vermes (Basel, Switzerland), Francis H William (Massachusetts/New York), Martha Wilson (New York) and the estate of Tony Zwicker (Connecticut).

<sup>3</sup> The pen name for Swiss-born novelist and poet Frédéric Louis Sauser (1887-1961), which literally implies burning ashes and is meant to invoke the rebirth of a phoenix.

<sup>4</sup> The Ginsberg Collection includes South African visual art, books on South African visual art, books on world art, international artists' books, South African artists' books and books on artists' books and the book arts. (See Chapter 5 for details of when Ginsberg started collecting this material as well as the subsections and size of the collection).

<sup>5</sup> The controversy firstly revolved around the lack of an apostrophe in the title and secondly by the lack of artists' books in the exhibition. Johanna Drucker (1995:fn4) states: "The misnamed exhibition, *A Century of Artists Books*, curated by Riva Castleman, at the Museum of Modern Art in New York in the winter of 1994-95, is a representative selection of 20th century livres d'artiste. There are a few anomalies in her exhibition, works which are artists' books, which probably found their way down the elevator from the MoMA Library collection of several thousand artists' books". Drucker (1995:fn26) continues: "Castleman, ... seemed unable to distinguish (sic) artist's (sic) books from livres d'artistes or just plain old illustrated books".

<sup>6</sup> *A livre d'artiste* denotes a hand-bound, limited edition fine-press book in which both images and texts have equal potency. An established publisher would invite a recognised artist to illustrate existing texts by a renowned poet or writer resulting in often highly prized and expensive objects, which were predominantly found during the first decades of the 20th Century. Examples of such books include Pierre Bonnard's lithographs for Paul Verlaine's text *Parallèlement* (Ambroise Vollard Editions, 1900) and Picasso's illustrations of Ovid in *Les Métamorphoses* (Albert Skira Editions, 1931). The term is often considered synonymous with 'artist-illustrated book' and, unlike its literal translation into English (as 'artist's book') is unlike the diverse, self-conscious, reflexive and artist-driven objects which have become known as artists' books.

<sup>7</sup> Or similar works by the same artist if the exact title is not in the Ginsberg Collection.

<sup>8</sup> Early Modernist works consist of very late 19th Century books and 20th Century books created before the start of the Second World War.

<sup>9</sup> Postmodernist books are understood to include work from the end the Second World War until about 1980, whereafter the term 'contemporary artists' books' is used.

<sup>10</sup> Johanna Drucker's seminal book was first published by Granary Books, New York in 1995. Given its importance to the book arts community at the time, Ginsberg and I curated the 1996 exhibition as a set of three prefaces, 14 chapters and an end note, loosely based on Drucker's chapter outlines and headings. Three of her chapter headings were appropriated more closely: Chapter 4 (*The Artist's Book as a Democratic Multiple*), Chapter 5 (*The Artist's Book as a Rare and/or Auratic Object*) and Chapter 13 (*The Book as Document*).

<sup>11</sup> Given the scope, depth and size of the Ginsberg Collection, it was decided that the current exhibition could comfortably exclude any book which appeared on the 1996 JAG exhibition.

<sup>12</sup> Ginsberg's copy is rare in that it consists of four flat, unbound and unfolded sheets with pochoir illumination by Delaunay. The parchment binding, hand-painted in oil by Sonia Delaunay, also remains unfolded. Accompanying these is the original and exceedingly rare prospectus announcement, coloured in pochoir, three original watercolours on vellum by Delaunay and the corrected proofs of the text on two sheets.

<sup>13</sup> Shingler (2012:12 and note 20) states that in her 1971 interview with Antoine Sidoti, Sonia Delaunay claimed that only around 60 copies were completed (see *Sidoti, Genèse et dossier d'une polémique*, p. 22). As far fewer than the intended 150 copies were actually produced "these are now closely guarded in the rare book departments of libraries and museums". Book specialist Meg Ford in conversation with Anna Povejsilova regarding a unique collection of 114 artists' books offered as a single lot during the Impressionist and Modern Art sale which formed part of the new 20th Century at Christie's, London on 19 January, 2016, stated that the edition, printed on Simili Japon, was only printed in "an edition of 119 on this particular paper, so sadly they never made it to such heights". See <http://www.christies.com/features/The-artists-book-A-true-collaboration-between-art-and-text-6985-1.aspx> accessed on 26 January 2016.



- <sup>14</sup> Painting, usually with water-based paints, through a stencil using a stiff, flat-head brush.
- <sup>15</sup> “By publicizing it as le premier livre simultané, the authors indicated that they conceived of it as inaugurating a new, entirely original genre”, writes Katherine Shingler in *Visual-verbal encounters in Cendrars and Delaunay’s La Prose du Transsibérien*. e-France: an on-line Journal of French Studies, Vol. 3, 2012. p3.
- <sup>16</sup> A radical journal and small press founded by Cendrars and his friend Emile Szytta. See Marjorie Perloff, *The Futurist Moment: Avant-Garde, Avant-Guerre, and the Language of Rupture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), chapter 1 passim.
- <sup>17</sup> Shingler (2012:3-4) cites the following elements of the terms complex reception:
- Different literary, poetic and artistic movements – including the Futurists – put forward aesthetic theories which employed the term in divergent ways;
  - For the poet Henri-Martin Barzun, simultaneity in poetry meant polyphony, or the use of multiple voices speaking at once;
  - Barzun’s theory thus contrasts strongly with that of Guillaume Apollinaire for whom simultaneity was created on the page, through the pictorial arrangement of text; and
  - Umberto Boccioni’s 1913 article *Simultanéité Futuriste* reveals a host of associations for the Futurist movement: in poetry it denoted ‘words in liberty’ while in the visual arts it referred to the interpenetration of objects and surrounding space, or to the representation of movement and temporal flow, or more generally as a byword for ‘newness’.
- <sup>18</sup> Marjorie Perloff (*The Avant-Garde Artist’s Book* see [http://marjorieperloff.com/essays/artist-book/#\\_ednref6](http://marjorieperloff.com/essays/artist-book/#_ednref6) accessed 18 January 2016) states that during the northern hemisphere’s Fall of 1913, the Cendrars-Delaunay *Transsibérien* was exhibited in Paris, Berlin, London, New York, Moscow and St Petersburg. She goes on to describe its impact: “It became not only a poem but an event, a happening. At the Montjoie! Exposition in Paris on February 24, 1914, Mme Lucy Wilhelm stood on a chair so as to recite the gigantic poem, which was hung on the wall. Beginning at ceiling level, she gradually bent her knees and finally sat down on the chair to read the conclusion. Performance art, we would call it”.
- <sup>19</sup> Apollinaire’s article *Simultanisme-librettisme* was published in mid-1914 after the publication of *La Prose du Transsibérien*.
- <sup>20</sup> Such simultaneity could be found in Apollinaire’s *Calligrammes*, a 1918 work subtitled *Poems of Peace and War 1913-1916*.
- <sup>21</sup> Shingler (2012:8-9) states: “For Delaunay, the principal feature of Cendrars’s poem, as a truly simultaneist work, is contrast, and he cites as an example of this the opposition of *Transsibérien* and *Jehanne de France* in the title of Cendrars’s poem, where the modernity of the former clashes with the archaic spelling of *Jehanne*, and its traditional, even nationalistic association with Joan of Arc”.
- <sup>22</sup> This letter was written by Cendrars to Sonia and Robert Delaunay, January 1914 and is published in *Inédits Secrets* p. 373. Parts of this letter were reproduced in a 1919 article on Delaunay: see ‘Modernités’, in Blaise Cendrars, *Tout autour d’aujourd’hui*, ed. by Claude Leroy, 15 vols (Paris: Denoël, 2001-06), XI, 68-70.
- <sup>23</sup> According to Anna Sigríður Arnar (2011:343), this poem by Mallarmé was first published in the journal *Cosmopolis* in May 1897. From extant proofs corrected by him, this version represents only a partial fulfillment of his ideas for the poem. After his death, however, the 1914 edition of this poem published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française* disregards several particular specifications that Mallarmé made before his death, amongst these, the specific Didot font to be used. The 1980 edition Paris: Change errant/ d’atelier responds carefully to Mallarmé’s notes and corrected extant proofs in which a few textual changes and adjustments in capitalisation are made. Gallimard’s 2003 version is based on the 1914 publication. Françoise Morel’s 2007 edition, published by *La Table Rond* includes facsimile reproductions of Mallarmé’s corrected proofs and the *Cosmopolis* version. Finally, the 2007 Ypsilon published edition uses Didot type face and includes reproductions of Odilon Redon’s lithographs (c1900) which were intended for the poem by Ambrose Vollard, which were never published at the time.
- <sup>24</sup> Marinetti’s manifesto, which recommended the use of varied colours and typefaces, was published in French in June 1913 (reproduced in *Futurisme: Manifestes, Proclamations, Documents*, edited by Giovanni Lista (Lausanne: L’Âge d’Homme, 1973), pp. 142-47). However, in apparent contradiction to Marinetti’s own manifesto, his *Les Mots en Liberté Futurists* (1919) promotes typographical over colour innovation.
- <sup>25</sup> Shingler (2012:14 note 25) states that Cendrars did in fact try his hand at painting: see Miriam Cendrars, J’ai même voulu devenir peintre, in *Cendrars et les arts*, ed. by Maria Teresa de Freitas, Claude Leroy and Edmond Nogacki (Valenciennes: Presses universitaires de Valenciennes, 2002), pp. 11-19.
- <sup>26</sup> *Biography* won the prestigious Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA) Prize in 2011 and received an Award for Artistic Excellence at the Pyramid Atlantic Book Arts Fair in November 2010.
- <sup>27</sup> Matisse said: “If upon a white canvas I jot down some sensations of blue, of green, of red – every new brush stroke diminishes the importance of the preceding ones. Suppose I set out to paint an interior. .... If I paint a green near the red, if I paint in a yellow floor, there must still be between this green, this yellow, and the white of the canvas a relation that will be satisfactory to me. But these several tones mutually weaken one another. It is necessary, therefore, that the various elements that I use be so balanced that they do not destroy one another” *Notes d’un Peintre* in *La Grande Revue*, (Paris, 25 December 1908); as translated by Jack Flam in *Matisse on Art* (1995).p. 41.
- <sup>28</sup> *Franticham* is an Portmanteau-like name derived from the artists Francis Van Maele from Ireland and Antic-Ham from Seoul.

- <sup>29</sup> She said this in an interview with Sidoti, *Genèse et dossier d'une polémique*, p. 27, cited in Shingler 2012:20.
- <sup>30</sup> Jack Ginsberg's edition is number 9 of the copies on japon. Antoine Coron, Keeper of Rare Books at the *Bibliothèque Nationale*, Paris, who has compiled a census of copies of *La Prose du Transsibérien*, knows of no other unfolded and uncut copies on japon.
- <sup>31</sup> *Autobiography* employs a grid of nine square black and white images per page – not dissimilar to a photo album.
- <sup>32</sup> In *Metamorphoses*, VIII:183-235 Penguin Classics edition of 1983, translated by Mary Innes.
- <sup>33</sup> "Pictures of the floating world", is a genre of art that flourished in Japan from the 17th Century through to the 19th Century. Its artists produced woodblock prints and paintings of such subjects as female beauties; kabuki actors and sumo wrestlers; scenes from history and folk tales; travel scenes and landscapes; flora and fauna and erotica.
- <sup>34</sup> This book won the Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA) Prize in 2009.
- <sup>35</sup> This description appears in the book's colophon.
- <sup>36</sup> Harbin is China's northernmost major city. Historically, the city has been influenced a lot by neighbouring Russia. The city was founded in 1897 as a camp for Russian engineers surveying the Trans-Siberian Railway. Labour demands brought in a collection of outcasts from across Russia, Poland and even from within Manchuria. The city eventually was captured by the Japanese during the Second World War and later was returned to China in 1946. During the Russo-Japanese War (1904–5), Russia used Harbin as its base for military operations in northeastern China. Following Russia's defeat, its influence declined.
- <sup>37</sup> By 2010, 102 contemporary Russian Artists were included in the British Library's *Russian Avant-Garde Artists' Books 1969-2010* collection. Of these, Mikhail Karasik (b. 1953), Sergei Sigei (b. 1947) and Leonid Tishkov (b. 1953) are the most prolific, joining the early 20th Century book artist Daniil Ivanovich Kharms (1905-1942) in international collections. See also [www.bl.uk/reshelp/pdfs/Russian%20Avant-garde%20Modern.pdf](http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/pdfs/Russian%20Avant-garde%20Modern.pdf) accessed on 22 January 2016.
- <sup>38</sup> This repeated line and its 'echo' *Blaise, dis, sommes-nous bien loin de Montmartre?* appears in the largest font sizes, in bold, sometimes also in italics but always in a different visual register to any surrounding texts in the poem.
- <sup>39</sup> A reference to Jules Verne appears in l.78 of *Prose du Transsibérien: Je devais le défendre contre les voleurs de l'Oural qui avaient attaqué les saltimbanques de Jules Verne* [I would protect it from robbers from the Urals who had attacked the saltimbanques in a Jules Verne story].
- <sup>40</sup> *Le Petit Larousse Illustré*, commonly known simply as *Le Petit Larousse*, is a French-language encyclopaedic dictionary published by Éditions Larousse. It first appeared in 1905 and was edited by Claude Augé. The one-volume work has two main sections: a dictionary featuring common words and an encyclopaedia of proper nouns.
- <sup>41</sup> Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities* was published in 1972.
- <sup>42</sup> The city names are arranged as a "mesostic", a term used by John Cage to refer to a vertical phrase that intersects lines of horizontal text.
- <sup>43</sup> *Collected Autobiographies* was initially produced in 1999 as *Autobiographies*, a small edition of 10 using a variety of print media. This new collection was annotated and reformatted in 2009 as a digitally printed edition of 25, and part of a series of translations which re-imagines small limited editions as digitally printed bookworks. The four individual autobiographies were conceived between 1997 and 1999 after McCarney came across a series of file folders while cleaning up the studio. See <http://scottmccarneyvisualbooks.com/Pages/LuluAutobio.html> accessed on 1 February 2016.
- <sup>44</sup> In personal correspondence with Jack Ginsberg (March 2009), Andrew notes: "All the drawings, collages, combinations and nonsensities in the notebook (except for the first few pages) were completed in and around the Tribeca apartment in response to the New York grid and the way histories, energies and delights surge through this strange and wonderful place".
- <sup>45</sup> Each book is made from wire, aluminium tape, laminated polyester film and sand. The materials, while delicately assembled, echo the powerful industrial qualities of the subject matter.
- <sup>46</sup> *Exquisite corpse* was a parlour game invented by surrealist artists such as Yves Tanguy, Man Ray and Joan Miró. It's a collaborative, chance-based game in which each participant would consecutively draw an aspect of a figure.
- <sup>47</sup> Delaunay, S. 1978. *Nous irons jusqu'au soleil*. Paris: Éditions Robert Laffont. p. 54.
- <sup>48</sup> See GE Lessing, *Laokoon*, trans. by R. Philimore (London: Macmillan and Co., 1874), p. 171. Here, Lessing states "Succession of time is the domain of the poet, as space is the domain of the painter".
- <sup>49</sup> As Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari might use the term in their book *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. 1987. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.