

Artists' Publications – A Genre and its Investigation

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As Volume 2 of the series of books on artists' publications, we hereby present the documentation of the conference by the same name – *Künstlerpublikationen. Ein Genre und seine Erschließung* (Artists' Publications: A Genre and its Investigation) – taking place on the occasion of the exhibition *out of print*. The latter, curated by Guy Schraenen, took place from 4 February to 6 May 2001 at the Weserburg – Museum für moderne Kunst (formerly Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen) and was subsequently shown at the CNEAI in Chatou near Paris, the MACBA in Barcelona, the Museu Serralves in Porto, the MGLC in Ljubljana, the Städtische Galerie Erlangen and the Museum für Gestaltung Zurich.

The documentation encompasses, inter alia, the lectures given at the conference on research in the field of the artists' publications genre held at the Weserburg – Museum für moderne Kunst, Studienzentrum für Künstlerpublikationen, from 20 to 22 April 2001. These lectures have been thoroughly revised and updated for the present publication.

The full title of the conference, "Ein Genre und seine Erschließung in Bibliotheken, Museen und Sammlungen: Perspektiven zur Vernetzung von Archiven" (A Genre and its Investigation in Libraries, Museums and Collections: Prospects for the Networking of Archives) already alluded to central problems of the kind which also accompanied the installation of the *Archive for Small Press & Communication* (ASPC) that was in the process of becoming established in the Weserburg at the time. For in view of the books, magazines, records, multiples, posters and ephemera, the wide diversity of forms taken and media used by artists' publications since the 1960s presents special challenges to archival and museological praxis and art/cultural-historical analysis. The specialized conference brought together experts for the purpose of discussing this theme. In addition to an attempt to define the genre and the problems of archiving such heterogeneous holdings and making them accessible for users, a further issue was the focus on certain characteristics of the published artworks, such as internationality, trans-disciplinarity, the employment of communicative strategies, etc. Deliberations on the digital networking of such collections provided the impulse for broad international cooperation.

In conjunction with the conference, an art market took place at which bookshops (for new as well as for second-hand books) and publishing companies from all over Europe offered artists' books, artists' magazines, multi-

ples and records for sale. The bookseller and publisher represented here were the Archives Libraire with Jean Dominique Carré, Paris, Librairie & Editions with Florence Loewy, Paris, Galerie A with Harry Ruhé, Amsterdam, Edition Hundertmark with Armin Hundertmark, Cologne (now Las Palmas de Gran Canaria), Wiens Laden und Verlag with Barbara Wien, Berlin, Antiquariat Beim Steinernen Kreuz with Udo Seinsoth, Bremen, Drei Möven Verlag – Feldmann Verlag, Düsseldorf, Louisa Riley-Smith, Oxford, Editions du Remorqueur with Bernard Villers, Brussels, Edition Lebeer-Hossmann with Irmelin Lebeer, Brussels. Likewise in connection with the conference, the exhibition *Christophe Cuzin. Lieu commun 7/7*, curated Guy Schraenen, was opened at the Institut Français and a performance by Phil Corner was presented at the Galerie Beim Steinernen Kreuz from Brigitte Seinsoth.

All of these varied activities were related to the founding of the Studienzentrum für Künstlerpublikationen (Research Centre for Artists' Publications, director Dr. Anne Thurmann-Jajes) at the Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen (now Weserburg | Museum of Modern Art) in 1999. As a consequence of the acquisition of one of the last major European archives for artists' publications, the *Archive for Small Press & Communication* (ASPC) amassed by the collectors Anne and Guy Schraenen, the Research Centre was now to be further established. At the same time, a research cooperation of the University of Bremen, the Research Centre for East European Studies (which has its own extensive collection of Eastern European artists' publications) and the Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen (now Weserburg | Museum of Modern Art) with its Research Centre for Artists' Publications was contractually sealed in 2000 and officially entitled "Studienzentrum". In cooperation with the Jacobs University Bremen and the University of the Arts Bremen, this research undertaking has meanwhile been converted into an association bearing the name *Forschungsverbund Künstlerpublikationen* (Research Association Artists' Publications).

The 2001 conference was the first major event to take place within the framework of these cooperations and was conceived by Prof. Dr. Sigrid Schade, the centre's spokesperson until 2001, and Dr. Anne Thurmann-Jajes. It formed a prelude to the later Research Centre events and was intended above all to raise an awareness of the potentials of the materials themselves as well as of their scholarly study. The corpus of artists' publications since the 1960s challenges traditional art-historical description patterns, artist myths, genre hierarchies and 'art' distribution forms in such a way as to evoke responses by critical concepts of art and media theory and studies of visual culture as well as the formulation of new questions.

The current publication moreover contains the lectures given as an accompanying programme to the exhibition *out of print* during its presentation at the Museum für Gestaltung in Zurich from 1 March to 18 May 2003 (cf.:

<http://ics.zhdk.ch/d/veranstaltungen/outofprint03.html>). The lectures were organized by the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts / ICS (formerly Departement) at the Zurich Hochschule der Künste (formerly Hochschule für Gestaltung und Kunst Zürich) under the direction of Prof. Dr. Sigrid Schade. The ICS has also helped to fund the publication of this volume.

The Forschungsverbund Künstlerpublikationen oversees the publication of the series on artists' publications. This research partnership is meanwhile an association of more than twenty scholars of the University of Bremen, the Jacobs University (formerly International University Bremen), the University of the Arts Bremen, the Research Centre for East European Studies and the Research Centre for Artists' Publications at the Weserburg | Museum für moderne Kunst (formerly Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen), the partnership's sponsoring institutions. In the form of a registered association, the Forschungsverbund represents a continuation of the research cooperation of 1999/2000.

The aim of this cooperation is to determine the various formats and appearances of artists' publications on the basis of the archival holdings of the Weserburg Research Centre as well as the Research Centre for East European Studies, and to analyze them in their cultural-historical and political contexts, their aesthetic strategies, and with regard to their special medial characteristics.

The archive itself, along with the research carried out in it or through it, is moreover to be made accessible to a broad interested public as well as students and experts in the field for the acquisition of information, study and research projects. Above and beyond its narrower context, the Forschungsverbund also works with a range of international partners. In this case and in connection with the conference *Buch/Medium/Fotografie*, cooperation was carried out with the Institute for Cultural Studies in the Arts at the Zurich Hochschule der Künste, which has been under the direction of Prof. Dr. Sigrid Schade since 2002.

The scholars involved in the Forschungsverbund unanimously agree that for the analysis of the materials contained in the archives, an inter- or transdisciplinary approach is the most appropriate to do justice to the sheer diversity of strategies for combining text and image, the variety of media and formats encompassed by artists' publications, their means of circulation and their functions within internationally operating networks of artists and collectors, and to be able to situate these phenomena historically as well as politically.

The opening event at the 2001 conference, "Je Dickens destojewski!" by Thomas Kapielski was a lecture and performance at once. May the text, reprinted here in the authentic version, serve as a special memory for all who had the opportunity to be part of that enthusiastic audience.

The first section of contributions revolves around general thematic issues and endeavours to integrate the artists' publications into a larger context or, in other cases, to depict the contexts in which artists' publications were produced. Whereas Kornelia Röder investigates artists' publications in the network of mail art above all in Eastern Europe as a condition for alternative communication forms, Anne Moeglin-Delcroix devotes herself to the difficult matter of documentation as art in artists' publications as a conceptual strategy. Piotr Rypson presents artworks published in Poland in the 1990s in their larger context, and the contribution by Günter Hirt and Sascha Wonders enhances Rypson's work by addressing the specific situation of the publications of the so-called Samizdat in Russia.

Part 2 contains two lectures concerned with the opportunities and problems of the digital archiving of artists' publications and other forms of avant-garde art. Lynda Bunting presents the virtual archive of the Getty Research Institute's Jean Brown Collection and Harald Kraemer investigates the limitations to the documentation of kinetic art.

In the last part, each of the contributions is devoted to specific artworks and/or artists as a means of forming a point of departure for the development of further questions. Michael Glasmeier takes a closer look at the artist's book *Book* by George Brecht, Paul Tanner undertakes a comparative analysis of the similarities and differences between the artists' books *Zugerstrasse /Barerstrasse 1999–2000* by the Swiss artist Jean-Frédéric Schnyder and *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* of 1966 by Ed Ruscha. Anne Thurmann-Jajes examines Daniel Spoerri's *Documente Documents Documenti. Zur Krims-Krams Magie*, which she takes as a basis for proposing the thesis of an artistic-communicative 'meanspace'. Philipp Ursprung addresses himself to Allan Kaprow, and Sigrid Omlin focuses on printed products by Dieter Roth and Hanne Darboven as display and archive form.

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