

AN INTRODUCTION TO

The Space of Books

THIS IS AN OUTLINE FOR A CONVERSATION ASSEMBLED BY
ROBERT BAXTER FOR "TV TIME," ORGANIZED BY TRISTAN
WALKER AND VLANKA CATALAN--6/25/21.

THIS IS VERY MUCH AN INCOMPLETE AND SPORADIC
ASSORTMENT OF FRAGMENTS OF BOOK THEORY--NOT A
COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY BY ANY MEANS. EMPHASIS HAS BEEN
PLACED ON INSTANCES WHERE THE IDEA OF 'SPACE'
INTERSECTS THE IDEA OF 'BOOK.'

LECTURE

What Is a Book?

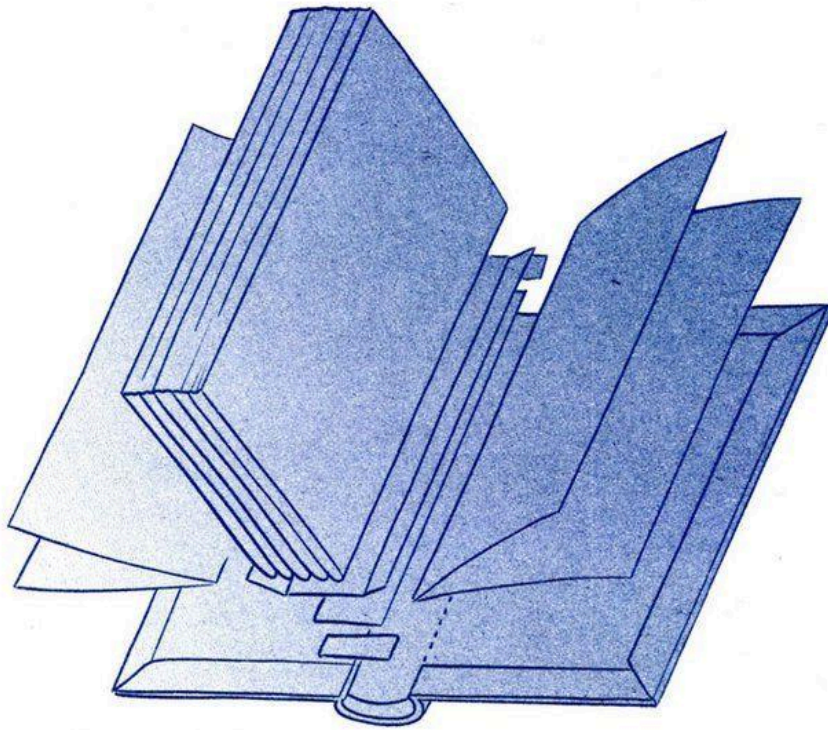
[ZOOM MEETING ON FRIDAY 6/25] [RECORDING] [CHAT]

A book is a sequence of spaces.

**Each of these spaces is perceived at a different moment
- a book is also a sequence of moments.**

Ulises Carrión in "The New Art of Making Books"
(1975). Included in [Second Thoughts](#).

For starters we're going to abstract what we think of when we think of books — under the guidance of Ulises Carrión. To begin with we'll start with the basics: our standard book, formally, is *usually* a collection of pages bound together into an object — each page contains a fragment of the "text" or the narrative that the book holds within it.



An exploded view of the anatomy of a book, from the cover of [How to Book](#) from Small Editions.

Books are also self-contained spaces (we'll challenge this definition a little later on too) — unlike other forms of media, books contain all the information, instruction, and tools needed to read or consume them. They contain both information and the entire experience of accessing that information. All of this is embedded within a dense, portable, durable, and cheap-to-produce artifact.

Even without getting into the more experimental book forms, there is incredible variety in books, both in terms of shape, material, and size, but also in terms of the kinds of information present in books — it's a whole vast subset of visual and textual literature.

Important limitations of this medium though:

- A. **Fragmentation** — You cannot see all of what a book contains at once, its contents are broken across multiple surfaces, which can only be viewed a few at a time. Unlike a painting the *gestalt* of a book as an elusive property because ...
- B. **Duration** — ... Books are read over a period of time, they are not instantaneous experiences. What's more, the duration of a book is individual, it's bound up in the individual act of reading by the individual reader.

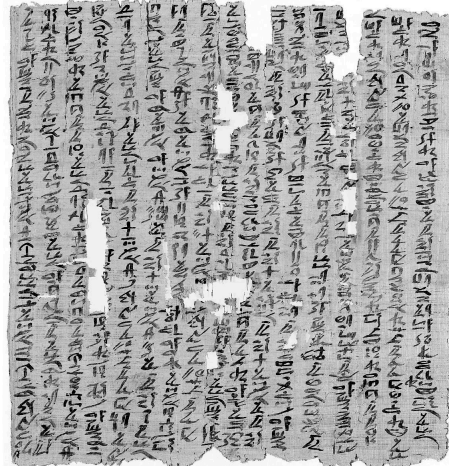
A Brief History of the Book

A little tidbit on how we got to what we think of as a book in the here and now — at least technologically. Obviously a missing part of this story is the long history of the development of *writing*, which is inherently tied to the history of the book.



A

2040 BCE, Mesopotamia, Sumerian cuneiform tablet (receipt for oxen + sheep).



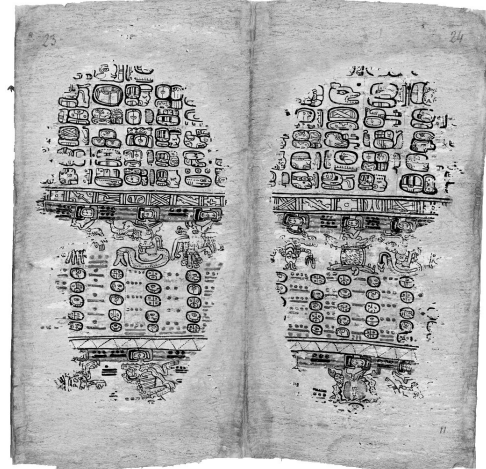
B

1961–1917 BCE, Egypt, hieratic script on papyrus fragment (business letter).



C

1041–1048 CE, China, Bi Sheng's ceramic movable type (replica).



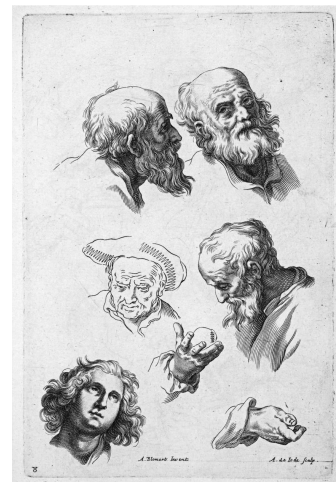
D

C. 1450 CE, Yucatán, Mayan, Paris Codex (ritual documentation).



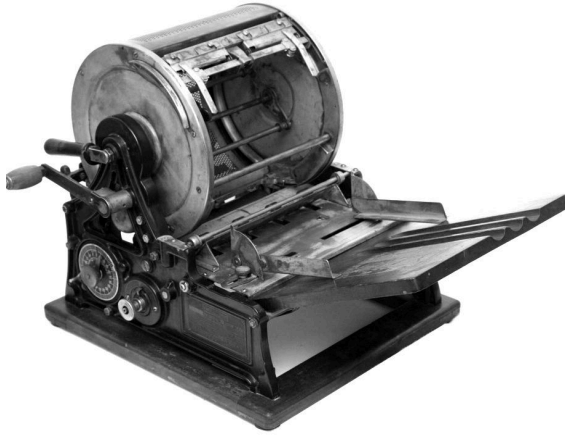
E

1450 CE, Germany, Gutenberg's metal movable type (42 line bible).



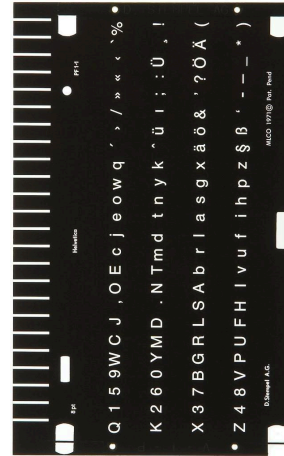
F

C. 1650 CE, Holland, Mezzotint + image reproduction (Ars Pictoria).



G

1916 CE, Mimeograph (early stencil duplicator).



H

C. 1950–1960 CE, Phototypesetting (font matrix for Helvetica).



H

C. 2006 CE, Espresso Book Machine (print-on-demand).

The Space inside Text

Space is also a critical part of the text itself too. Not only is whitespace essential for readability (consider word spacing, margins, paragraph breaks, etc.) but it actually alters the meaning and interpretation of the text for the reader too. In terms of typography, the unprinted area is a necessary counterpoint to the printed letterforms: text is made of the relationship between these positive and negative spaces (this relationship is referred to as the “color” of the type).

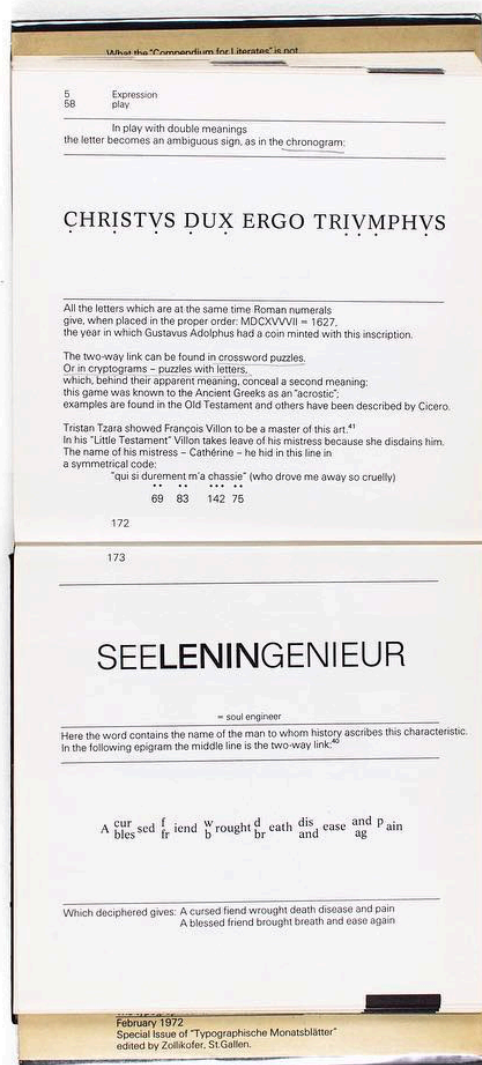
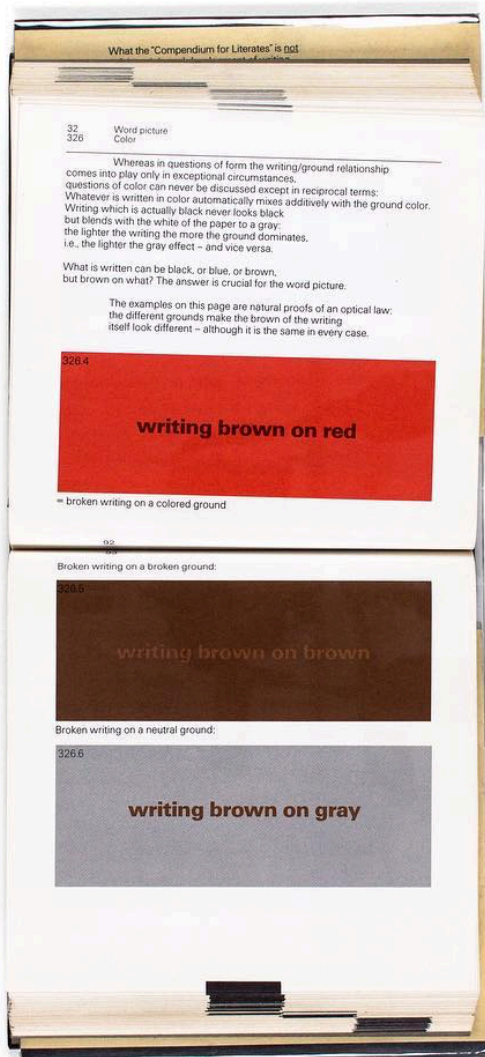
The physical
 s p a c e
of the writing begins on the page
with the s p a c e on each side of one or more letters
to denote a

word.

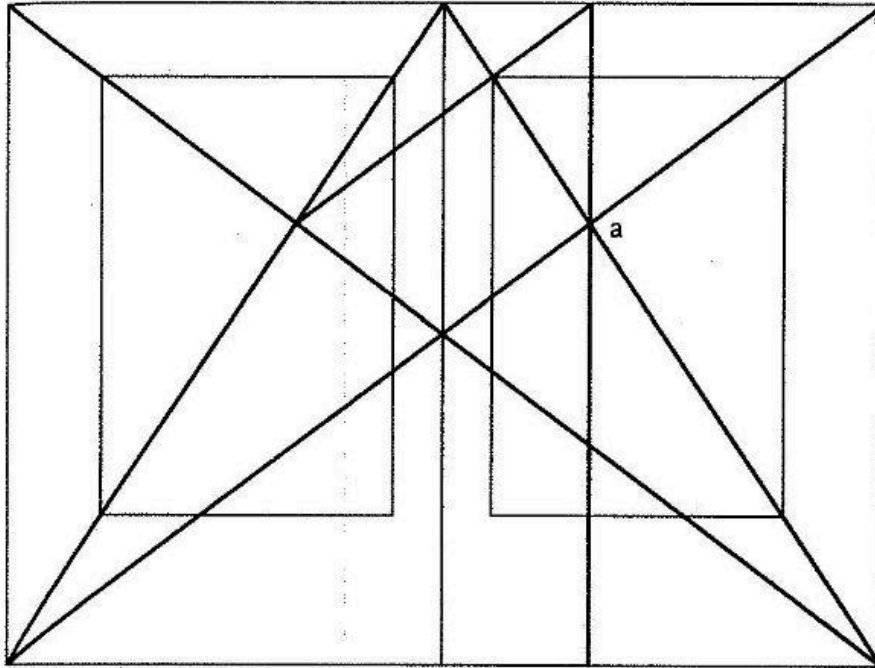
The progression of structure continues with the space of several words as a unit delineated by a comma, or a semi-colon; it may be marked by a period. What about a question mark? The space might end with an exclamation mark!

Text is defined by
s p a c e .

A passage from Keith A. Smith's *Text in the Book Format*. Explorations of this kind frequently show up in poetry, particularly in concrete poetry.



Karl Gerstner's *Compendium for Literates: A System of Writing* establishes a typology of printing variations for typesetting, and theorizes what effects each may lend to the meaning.



*Shaping
the
Page*

Within the page itself, numerous decisions about space must be made, most prominent among them the relationship between the text block and the edge of the paper. This is an illustration of the Van de Graaf canon, a common page proportion that was used in early English books.

This particular example comes from Robert Bringhurst's *The Elements of Typographic Style*, an essential text for typographers.

Not ^{li}king to think of him so, and wondering if they had guessed at ^{n-e-r}
why he suddenly became ^{ir}ritable when they talked about ^{fa}me and books last^{ing},
wondering if the ^{child}ren were laughing at ^{that}, she twitched the stocking out,
and ^{all} the fine grav^{ings} came drawn with steel ⁱⁿstruments about her ^{lips} and
forehead, and she g-r-e-w still like a tree which has been ^{t-o-s-s} and quiver^{ing}
and n-o-w, when the breeze falls, ^{set}tles, leaf by leaf, into ^{qui}et.

Space doesn't just exist within the form of the type
but also within the language and ideas of it.
Different sentences and modes of writing lend
different kinds of lyrical space (and time) to the
meaning. This is a passage from Virginia Woolf's *To
the Lighthouse*, which has been typeset according to
how it might be read aloud.

On Form + Content, or the Book as a Machine

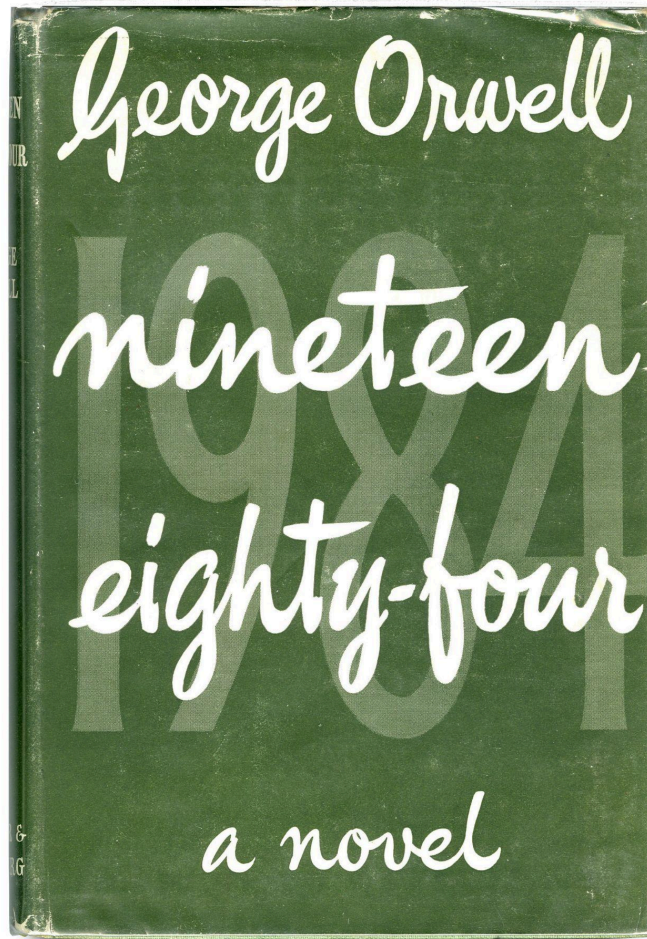
Books have both form (the physical and visual reality of the object) and content (the textual or narrative embedded within) — how do these two components relate (and are they so different)?

A writer, contrary to the popular opinion, does not write books.

A writer writes texts.

The fact, that a text is contained in a book, comes only from the dimensions of such a text; or, in the case of a series of short texts (poems, for instance), from their number.

Carrión, again—I'll note that in this treatise he's particularly critical of the book as an "accidental container of text," which most books are.



Two versions of *1984*—the text as a continuous line and the first published edition.

Other versions, if we want to expand this, would include the text as read, the ideas behind the text, the manuscript, any abridgements or possible abridgement, all translations, and every printed, written, or otherwise published edition.

Significantly the book assumes its particular physical format through its design to accommodate printed linguistic information in a linear form. Taking the line as a practically impossible continuum, it breaks it up into discrete units of equal length, placing them one above the other in sequence until a page unit is filled. Similarly the page units are ordered sequentially and the whole sewn or glued together to form the complete book.

Steve McCafferey + bpNichol in "[The Book as Machine](#)"
in *Radical Geomancy* (1992).



A simple diagram from *Text in the Book Format* (slightly modified) to show the basic flow of the line through a book.

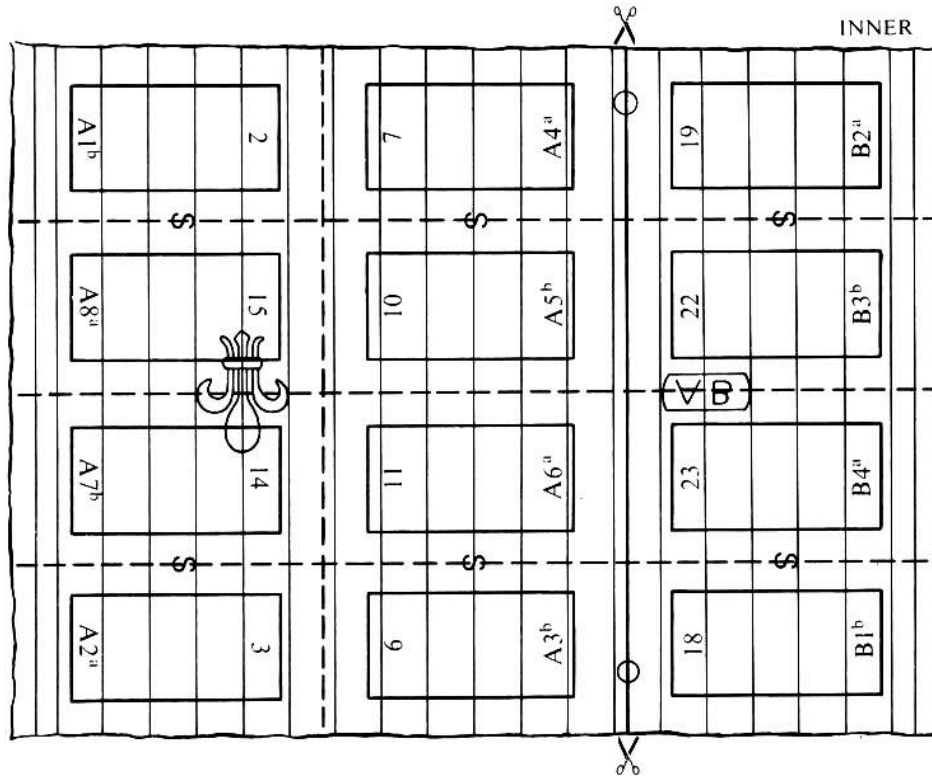


FIG. 57. Sheet of duodecimo, or twelves, with two signatures, 16 pages and 8 pages (12° in 8s and 4s, 2 sigs.); see note E, p. 107.

The imposition of pages on a sheet, from *A New Introduction to Bibliography*—when the pages are folded and bound together, the two dimensional space of the paper becomes a three dimensional volume.

By breaking the line of the narrative into pieces we convert it from one dimension into two and three dimensions. But each of these breaks introduces some kind of meaning, however small. Often the work of a typesetter comes down to managing the breaks and trying to most clearly and coherently fit the text into form — our goal is (usually) not to make the reader halt, or hesitate at awkward places in the narrative — it's the feeling of waiting to turn a page to find out the subject of a dramatic sentence.

**"A BOOK IS TO MAKE USE OF BOTH SIDES OF A
PIECE OF PAPER, OR INBETWEEN"**

Underlining the above points with a quote from the Roseprint Detective Club in *Art-Rite*—a book is not just what is written on the paper but also *the paper itself* and the effect it has materially and structurally on the reading.

We should take a quick detour into the concept of *closure* to take a look at what the mind is doing as it steps across each of these gaps.

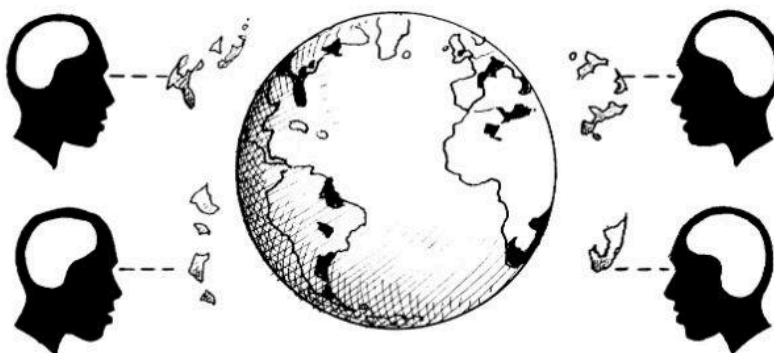
ALL OF US PERCEIVE THE
WORLD AS A *WHOLE* THROUGH
THE EXPERIENCE OF OUR
SENSES.

YET OUR SENSES CAN
ONLY REVEAL A WORLD
THAT IS *FRAGMENTED*
AND *INCOMPLETE*.



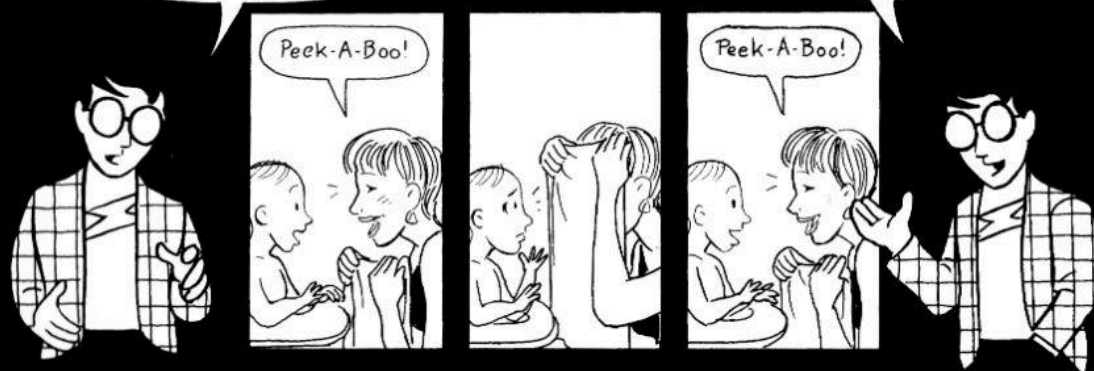
EVEN THE MOST *WIDELY*
TRAVELLED MIND CAN ONLY
SEE SO MUCH OF THE WORLD
IN THE COURSE OF A LIFE.

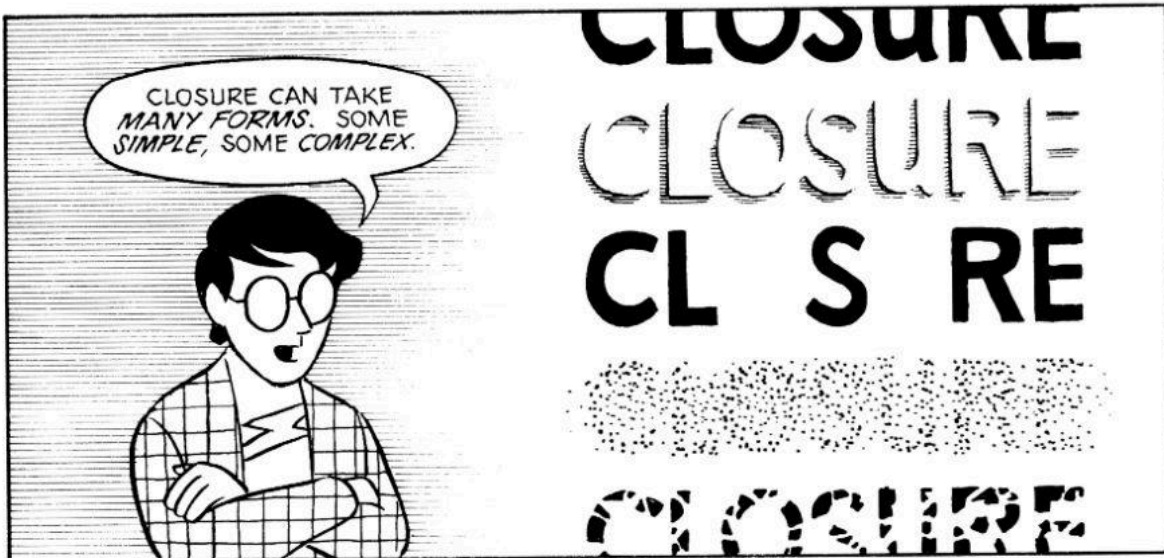
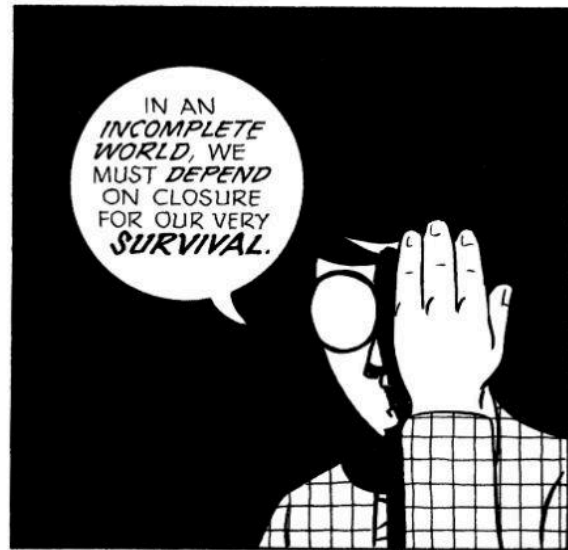
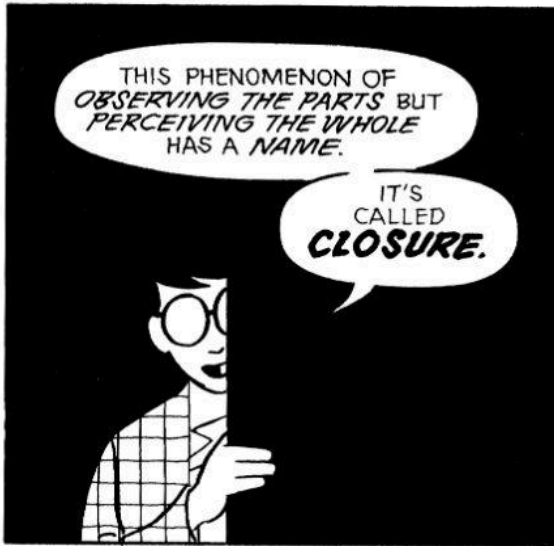
OUR PERCEPTION OF
"REALITY" IS AN ACT OF
FAITH, BASED ON MERE
FRAGMENTS.

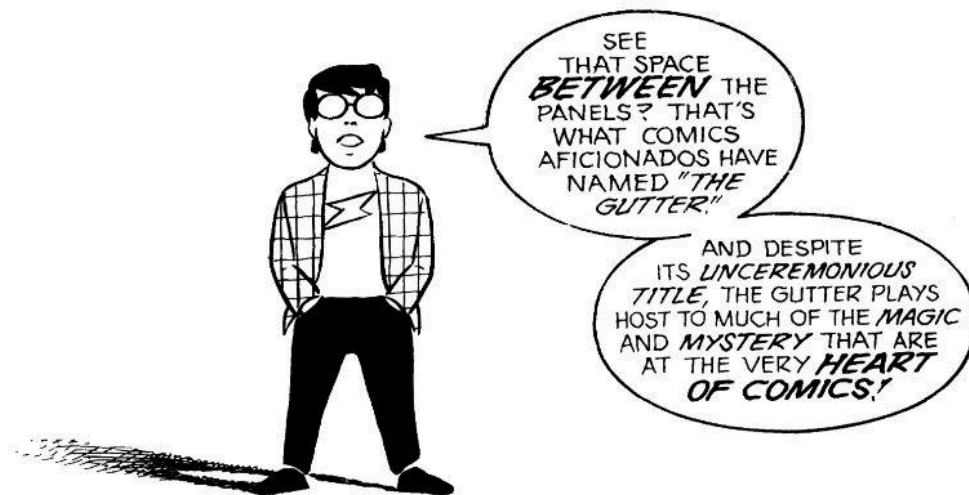


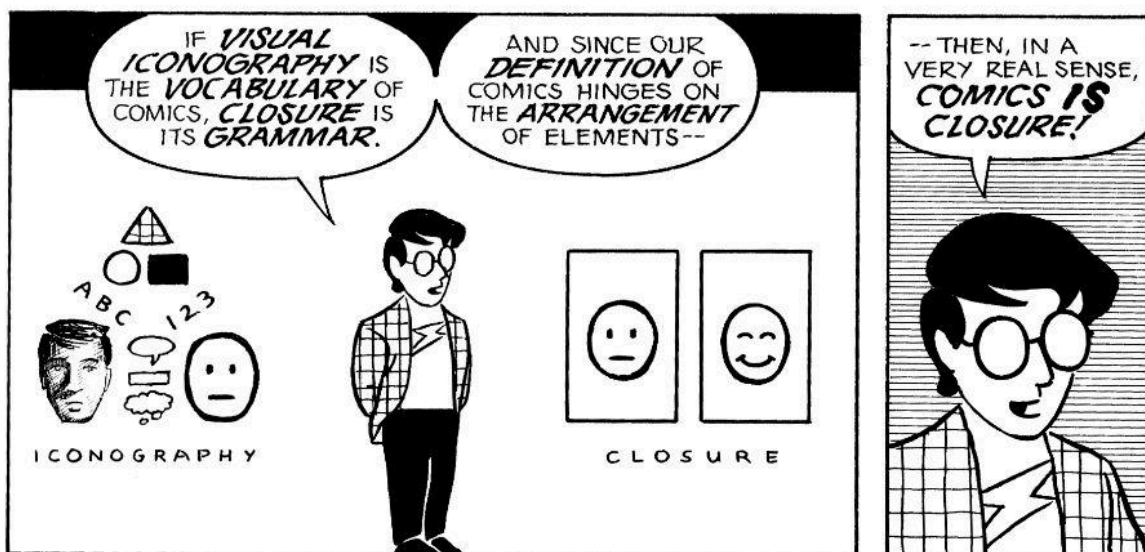
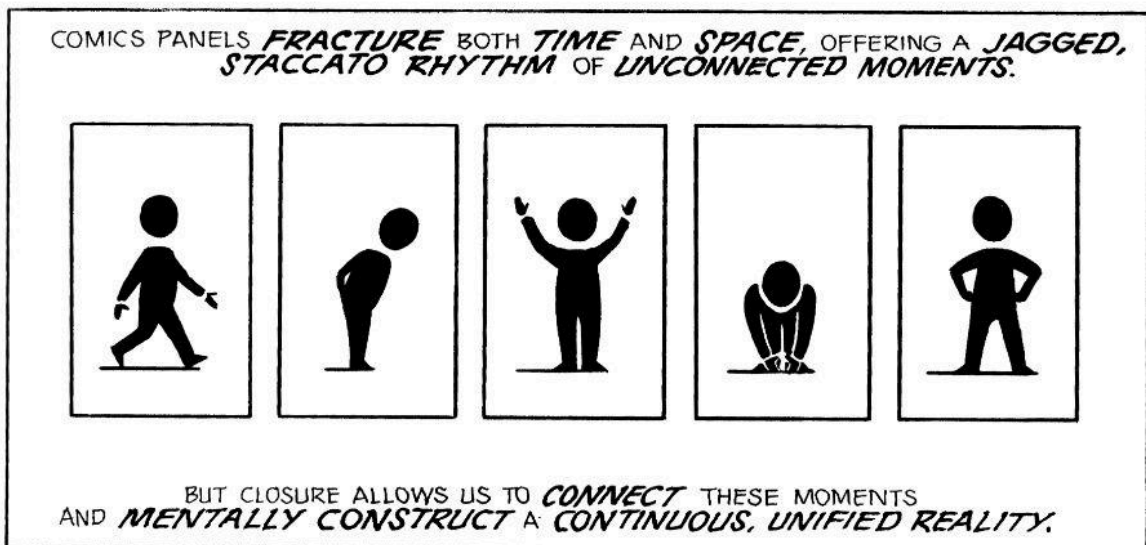
AS *INFANTS*, WE'RE *UNABLE*
TO COMMIT THAT ACT OF FAITH.
IF WE CAN'T *SEE* IT, *HEAR* IT,
SMELL IT, *TASTE* IT OR *TOUCH* IT,
IT ISN'T *THERE*!

THE GAME "*PEEK-A-BOO*" PLAYS
ON THIS IDEA. GRADUALLY, WE ALL
LEARN THAT EVEN THOUGH THE *SIGHT*
OF MOMMY COMES AND GOES,
MOMMY *REMAINS*.









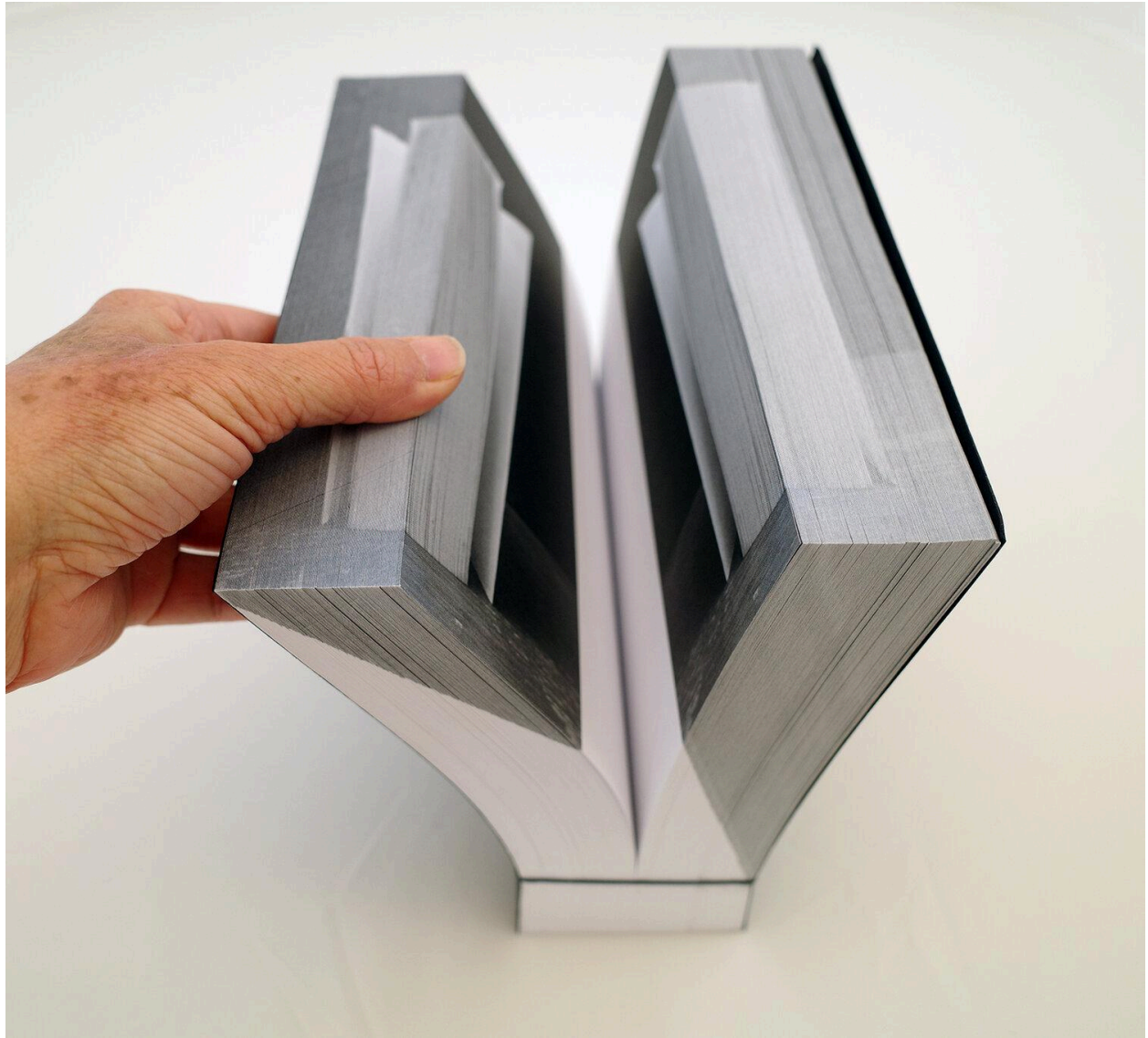
From Scott McCloud's *Understanding Comics* an incredible introduction to semiotics, perception, and narrative.

What's more, there's something that changes when we have information in a physical space — it's something that we can navigate in the same way that we navigate environmental spaces. When we read we learn and predict where things are within the object itself.

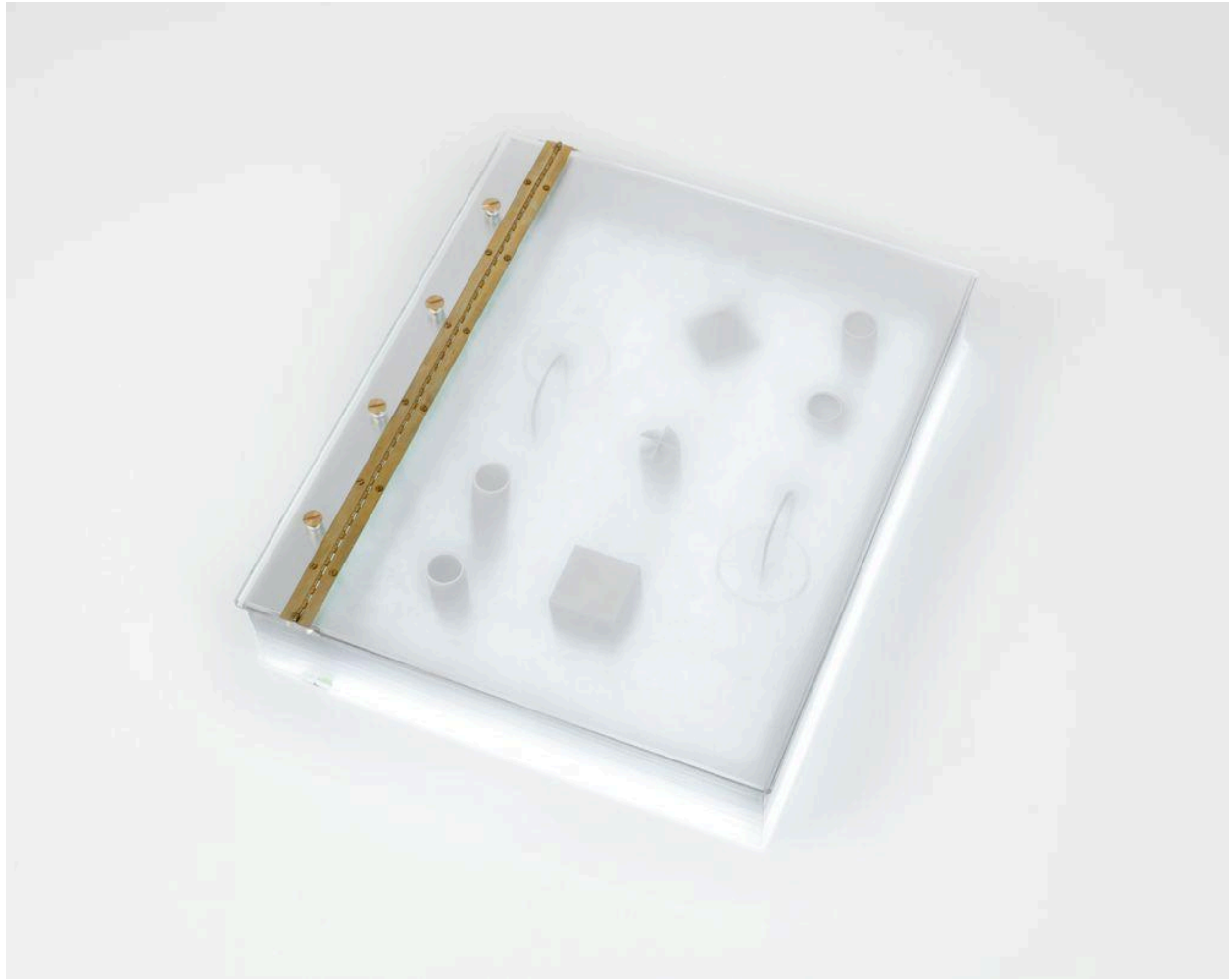


Tristan Walker's heavily augmented copy of ZUS's *City of Permanent Temporality*. The edge printing is also used as a navigational tool within the text.



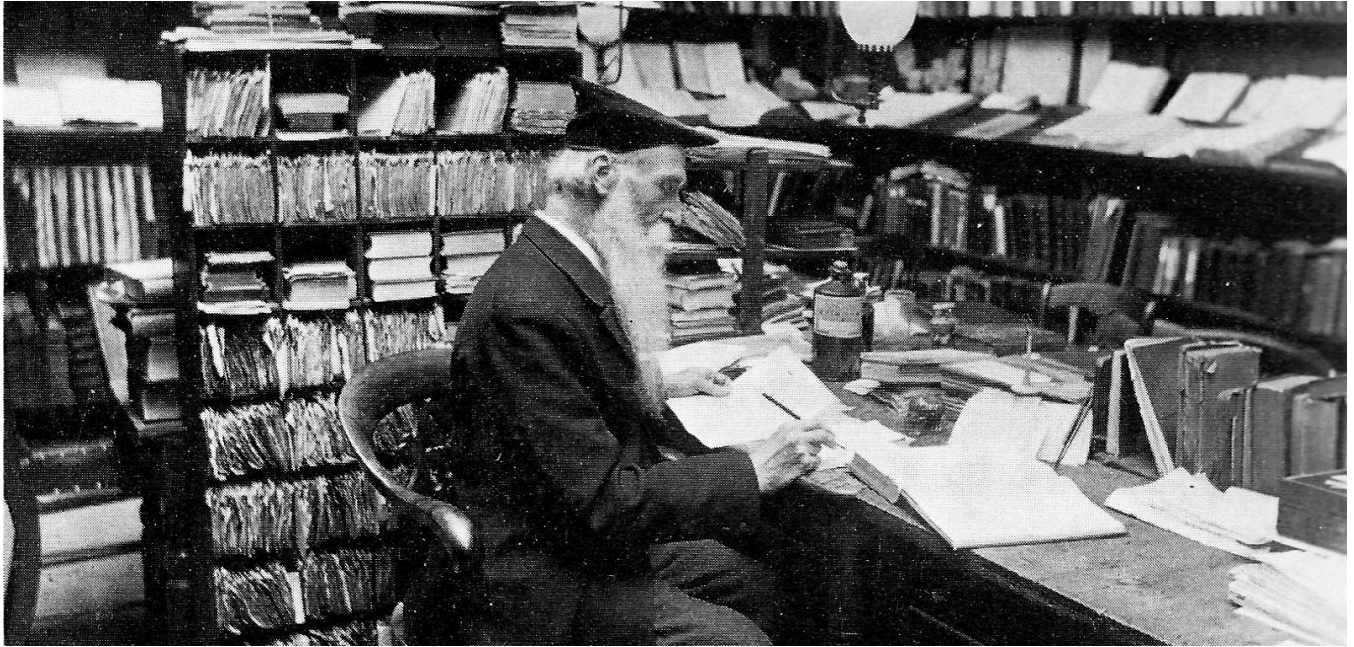


An amazing artists' book which illustrates this idea with a bit of its own humor, Ximena Perez Grobet's *Around the Corner*. Printed on the fore edge of the book is a photograph of the fore edge of a book.



Another project which exposes the dimensionality of the structure: Tauba Auerbach's *Float*.

This extends to the library too — for the library is in fact a huge space which collects all these other spaces of books.



The "Scriptorium" of the OED:
before it was a book, it was a room.

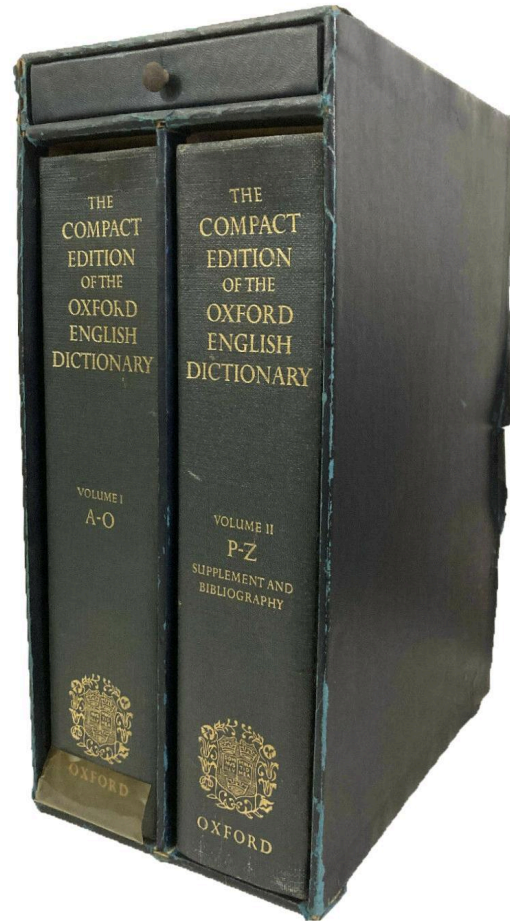
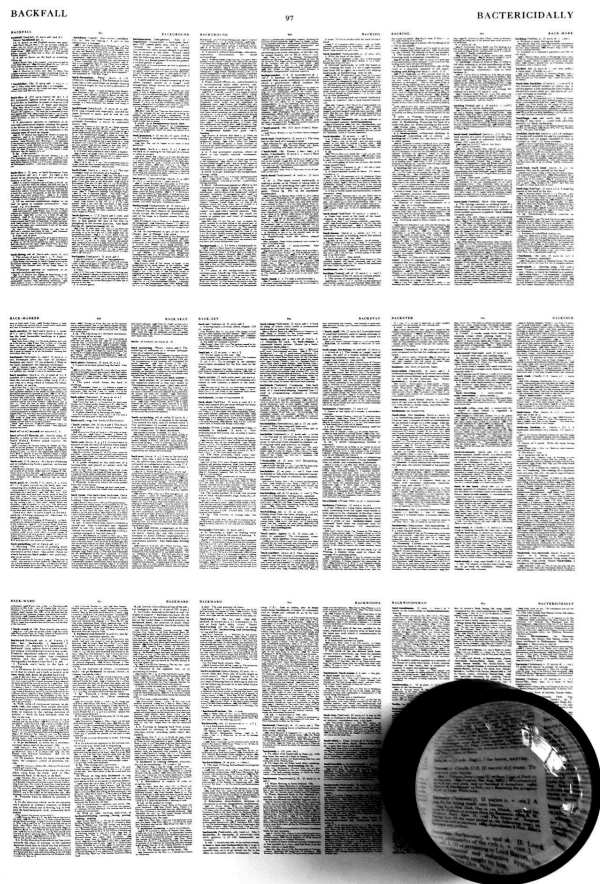
Simon Winchester (2003)

describes the system created by an earlier editor, Herbert Coleridge, who invented a standardised means of organising words through a system of quotation slips. This was the dictionary's basis. He also built a series of pigeon holes for holding the inchoate dictionary:

The arrangement which he [Coleridge] designed was six square holes high, nine across – giving him a total of 54 pigeon-holes, with some 260 inches of linear space that were thought sufficient to hold comfortably between 60,000 and 100,000 of the slips. No greater number could Coleridge ever imagine having to deal with. (Winchester 2003, 57)

A rebuilt set was 40 times larger and was still inadequate for the sprawling work in progress. James Murray called the room (initially in Mill Hill, London, from 1879 in Oxford) housing this vast assemblage of pigeon holes, slips and lexicographic effort 'the Scriptorium'. In a sense the Scriptorium embodied the *OED*, known as the New English Dictionary until 1895. If we can say a book is as much an 'information architecture' (Cope and Phillips 2006) as an object, then the sequence of stapled slips, scrawled definitions, folders and pigeon holes is such an information architecture, literally, for the dictionary.

Michael Bhaskar describes the Scriptorium in his book *The Content Machine: Towards a Theory of Publishing from the Printing Press to the Digital Network*.



The OED was also released as “compact” editions, each of which print multiple pages in miniature and include a magnifying lens.

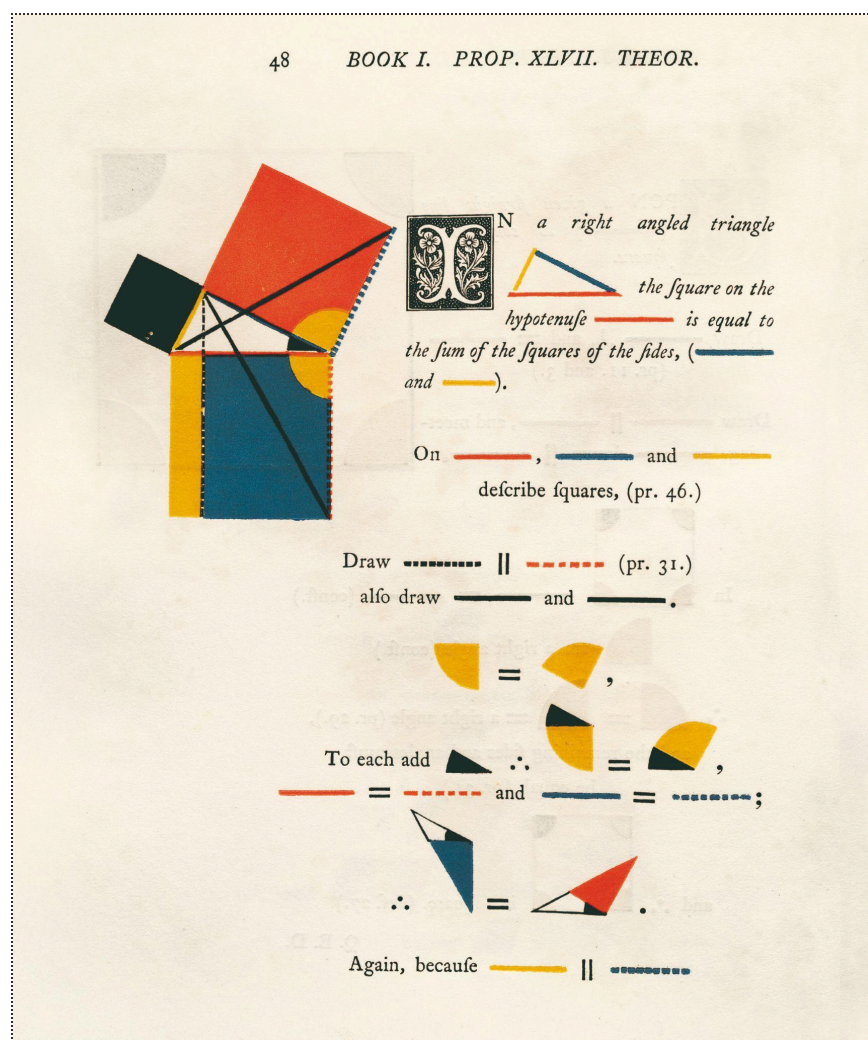
Expanding on a Book Shape

Linguistic text is the most common language housed in books, but it is by no means the only one. Visual, material, tactile, non-symbolic, asemic — these are just a fraction of the different kinds of languages which live in books. Combinations of these also show up readily, such as in comics, which make use of both text and image in collaboration.

1. Is language the only medium of literature? Or could an actual piece of paper be such a medium as well, a piece of paper that the writer is going to cover with black writing? Or perhaps, for some important reason, the page should be black and the writing white? This is only a convention that writers automatically follow.

A bit from "Literature: Appendix to a Dictionary of Literary Terms" (1999), in which Zenon Faijer creates an addendum to a pre-existing dictionary, highlighting the artistic possibilities of language.

Other Languages

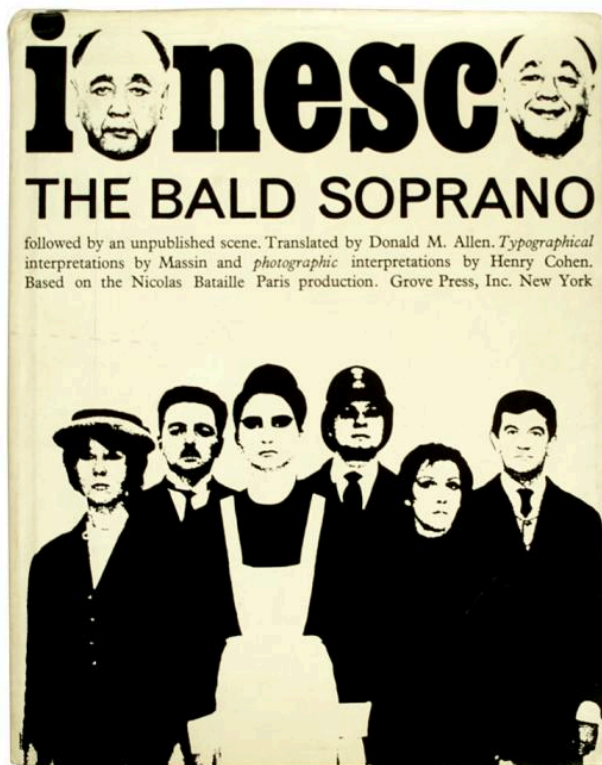


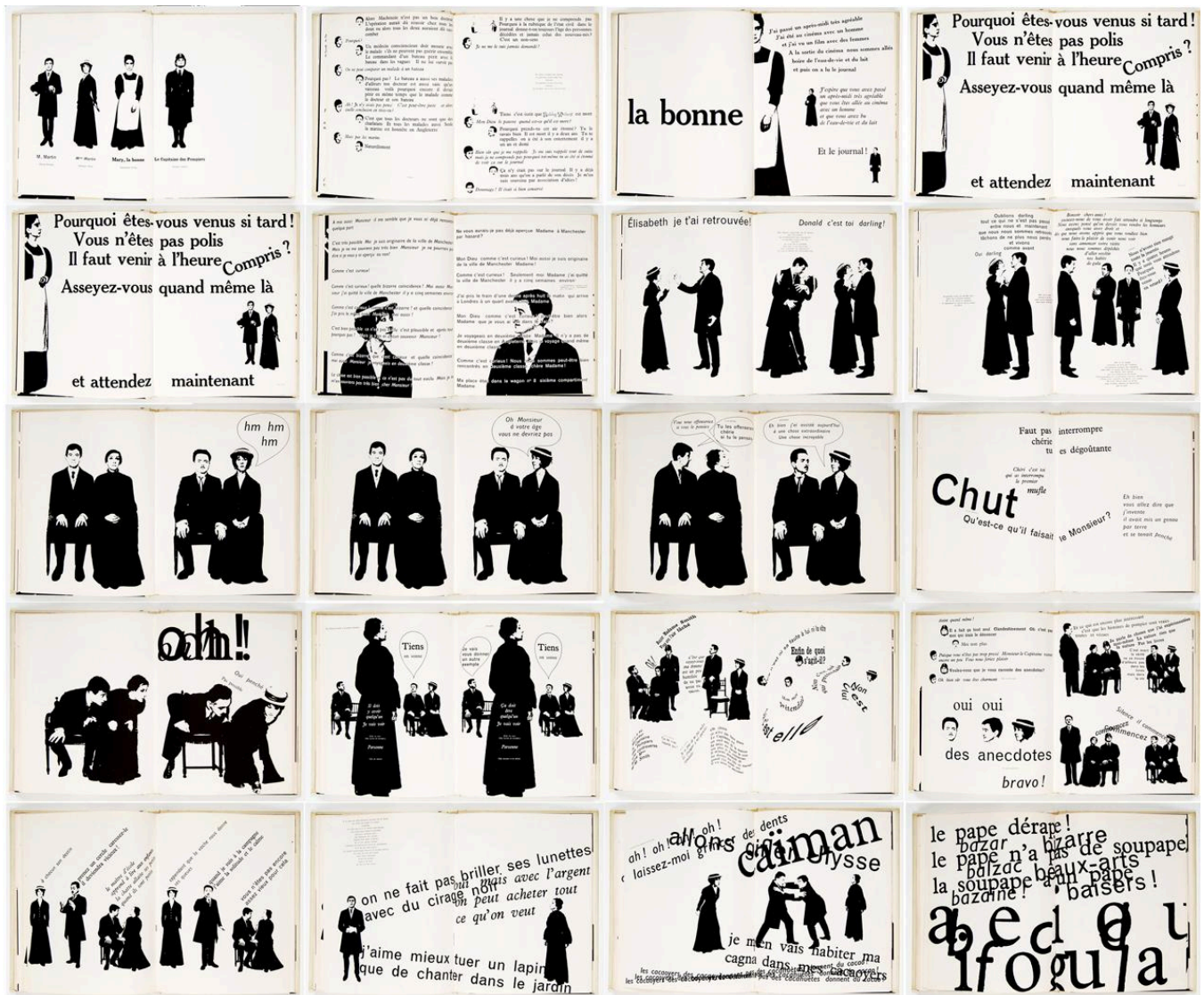
One of my favorite books, and far ahead of its time, is Oliver Byrne's version of Euclid's [The Elements](#).

It creates a language of shape and color, which allow the illustrations of each geometric proof to be deconstructed and used directly within the text.



A classic from graphic design history is El Lissitzky's *Для Голоса* (*For the Voice*), which emphasizes the graphic quality of the text (constructions like these are referred to as concrete poetry) and also uses the fore edge of the book as a table of contents.





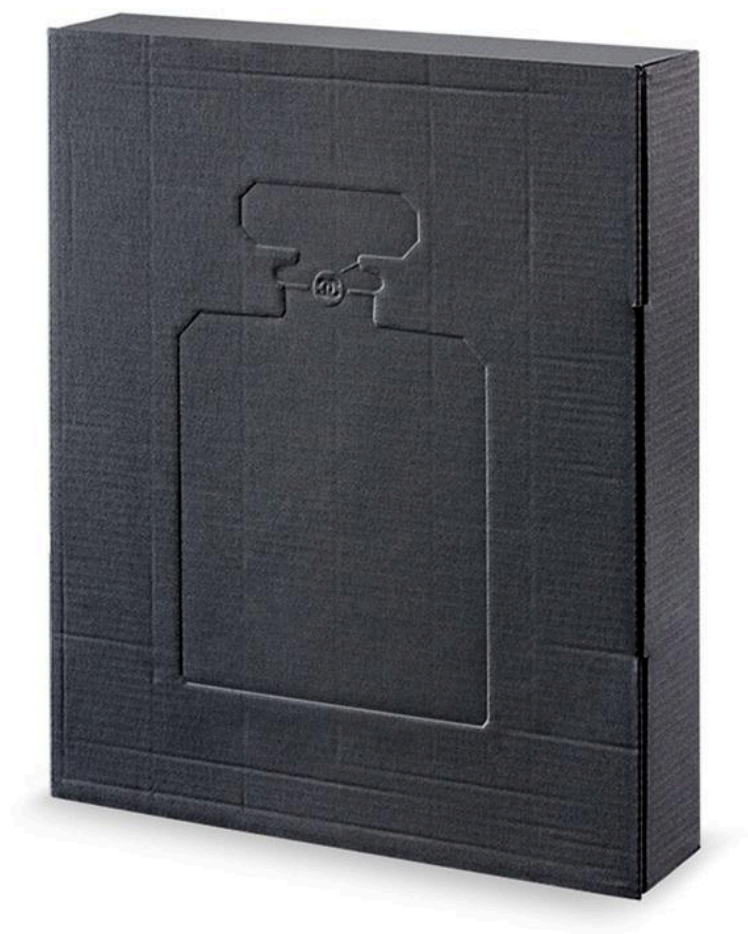
Robert Massin's version of *The Bald Soprano* was a revolutionary, avant-garde documentation of a play, which interspersed the script (typeset differently for different voices) amongst cut out photographs from the performance, creating stagings within the pages.

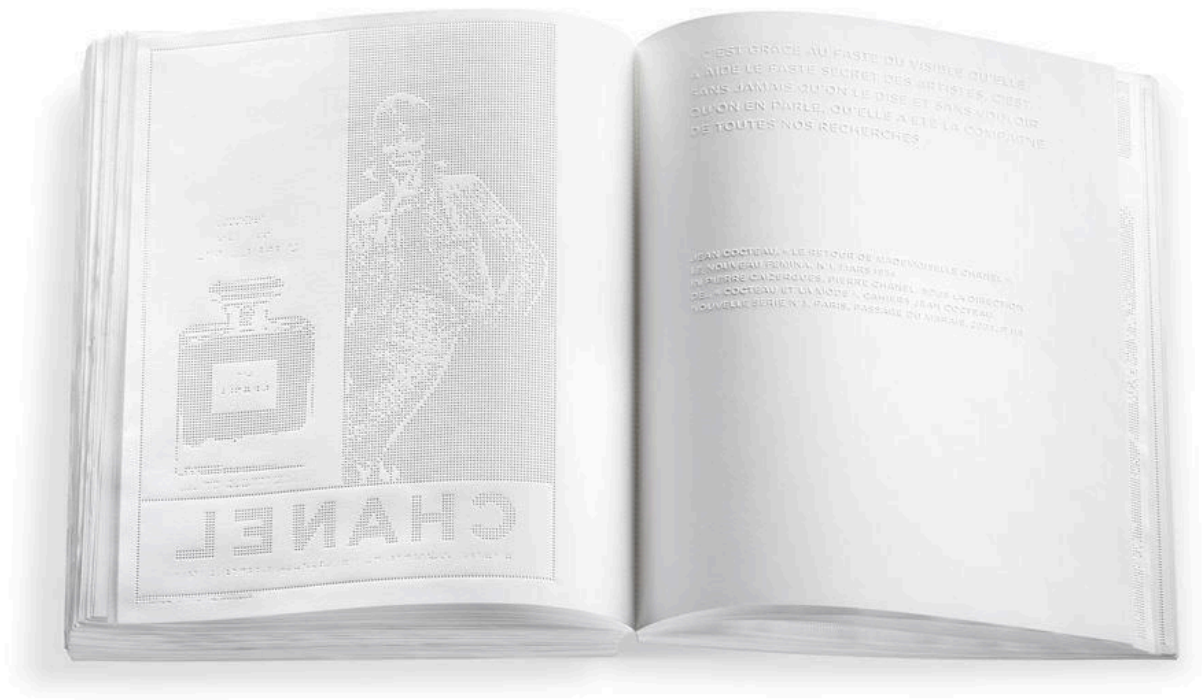


Bruno Munari did a series of book experiments which are not printed at all--the paper itself forms the narrative. This is *Libro Illeggibile MN 1*.



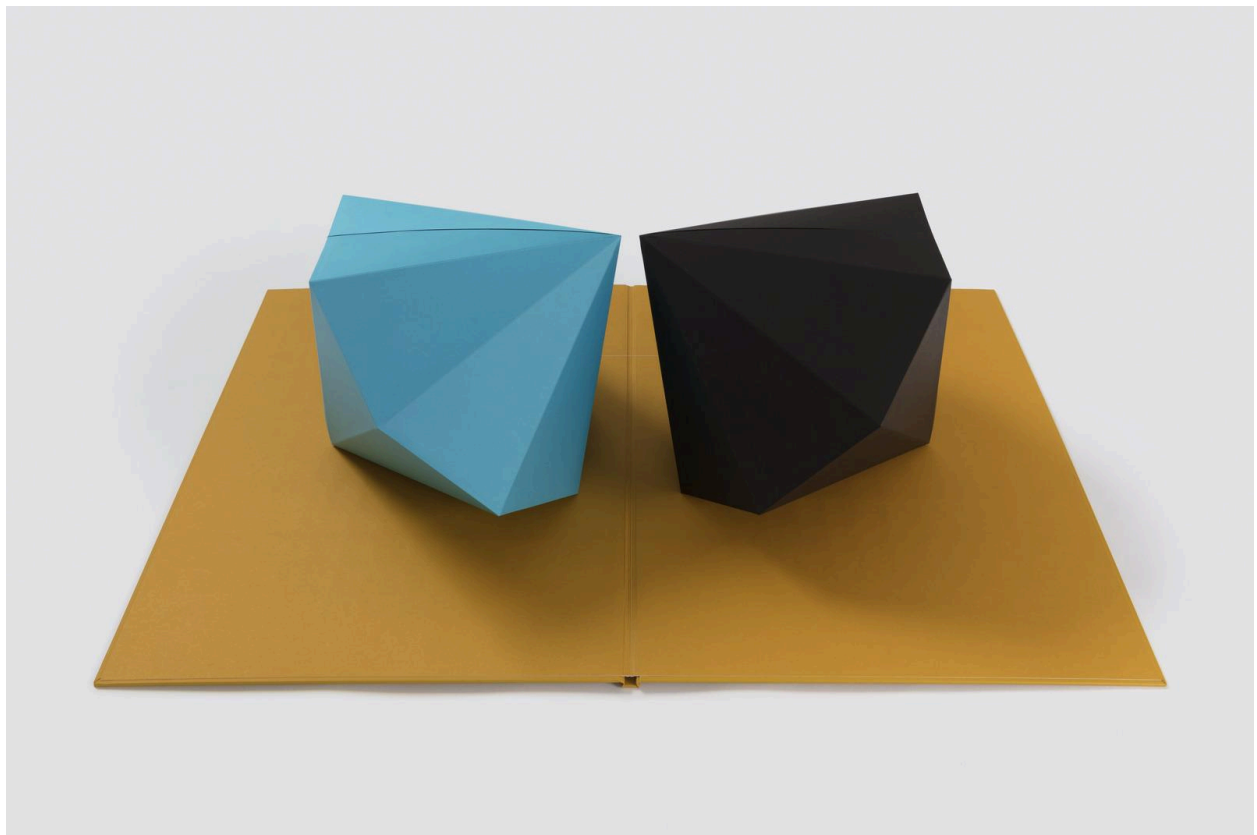
In another of Munari's illegible books (*Libro Illeggibile. Codice Ovvio*) the narrative is a line which threads through a series of translucent pages.





Irma Boom's design for a tribute to the perfume Chanel No. 5 is blind embossed, all the images and

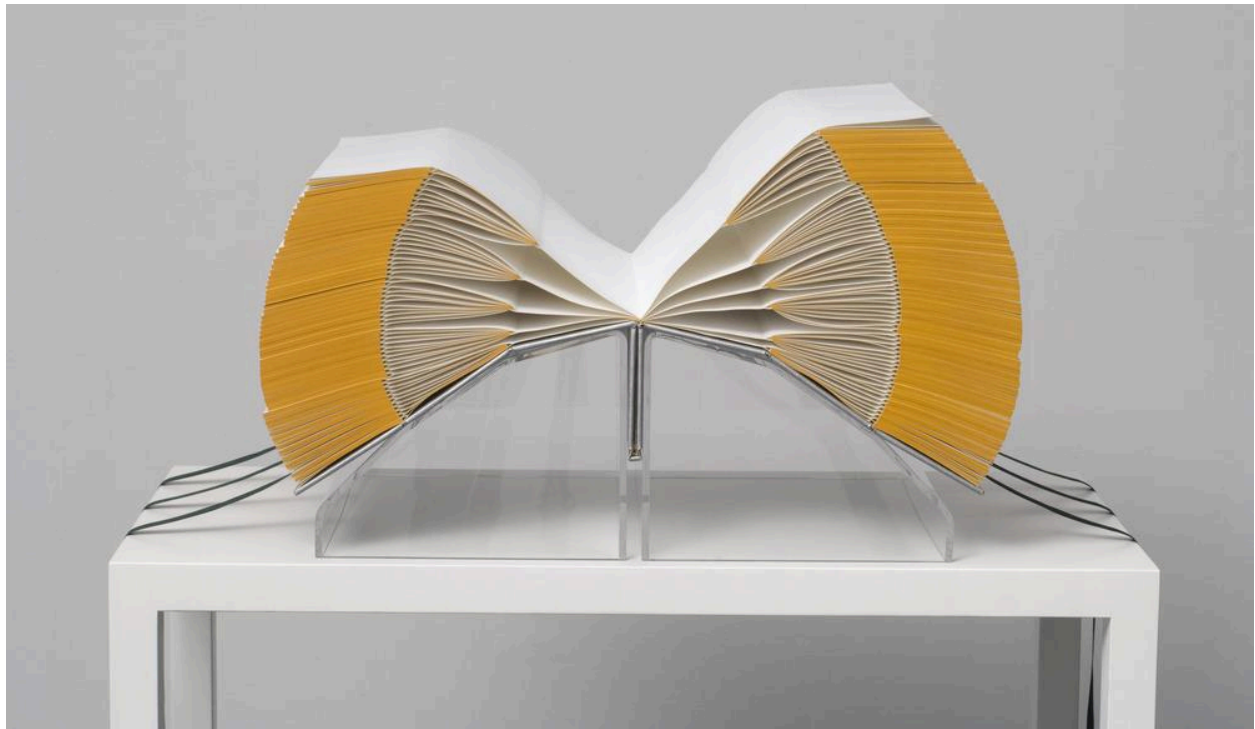
text are raised slightly from the fabric-soft pages.
Boom's goal was to create a book which engages more
senses than just the visual.



Tauba Auerbach's [2,3] is a series of single page books which pop-up into paper constructions--it is a book using the language of sculpture.

Formal Structures

This gets us into questions of how the structure of a book might itself be changed—books don't need to be a stack of paper bound along one edge, there are infinitely many ways to organize this sequence of spaces and moments. The craft of bookbinding is itself an art (referred to as “book arts”), but there are also many forms of book which are totally unbound.

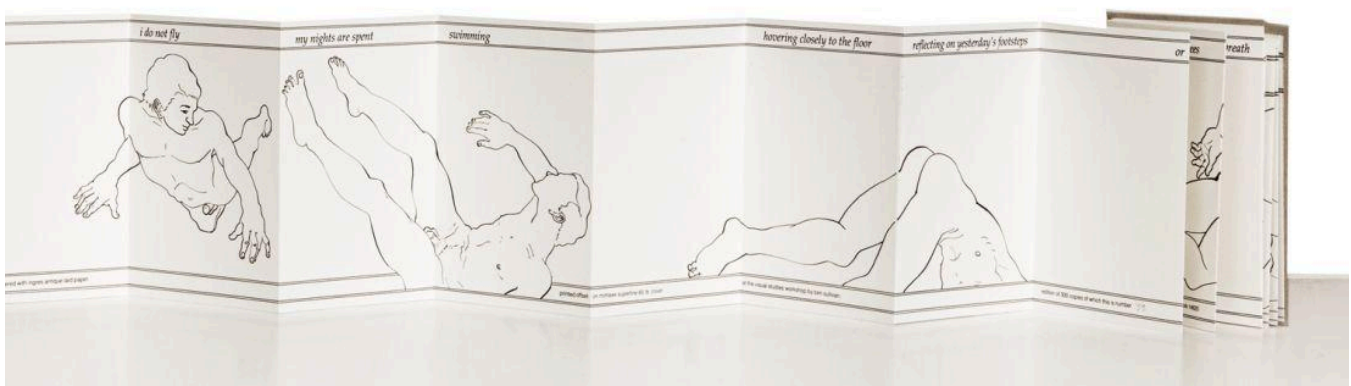


Another from Auerbach—*1, 11, 121, 1331* is a book with an ambiguous number of pages, because it grows as a tree, from a few pages gathered in a single spine to many pages and many spines.

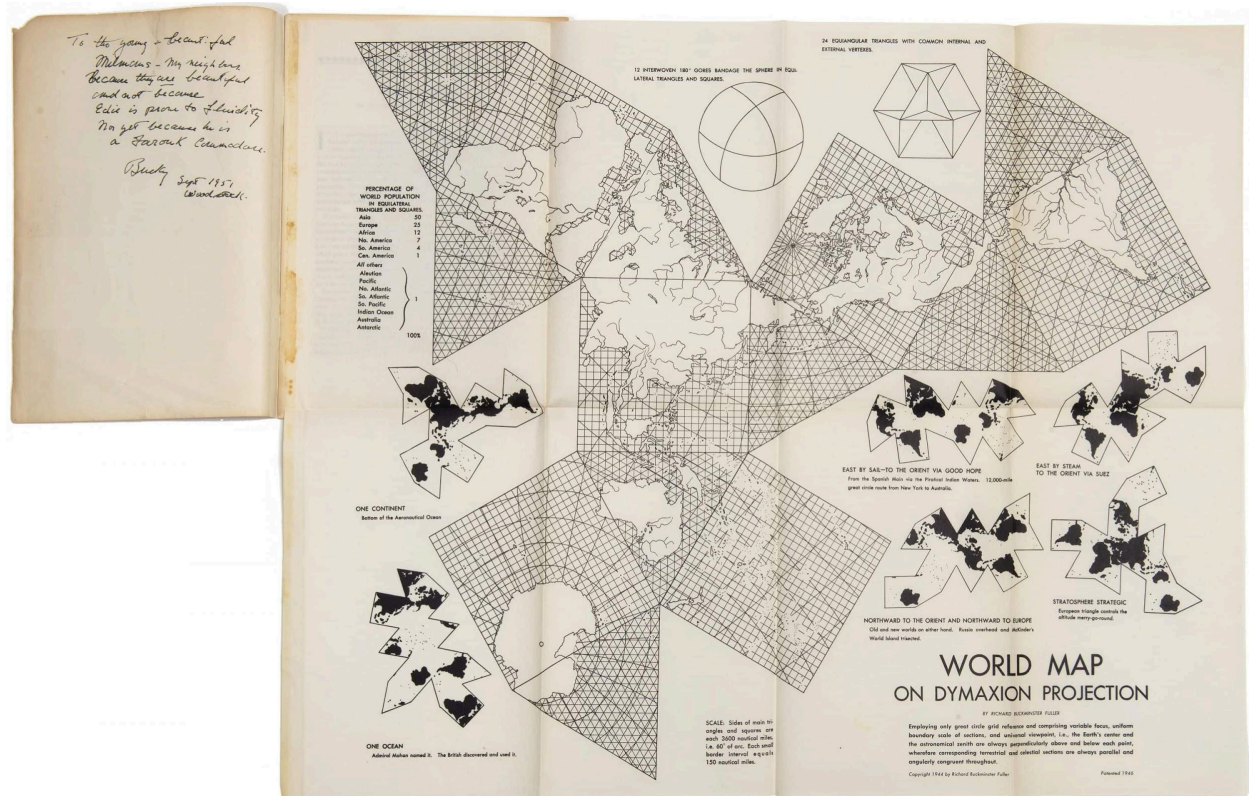




There is a long history of collection books, or books which are a set of collected objects. Pictured above are Aspen 5 + 6 and one of George Maciunas's Fluxkit boxes (both from the mid 1960s).



A common alternative binding format is the accordion book, as shown here in Keith A. Smith's *Swimmer* (1986).



Another common structure is the fold out, as seen in the "World Map on Dymaxion Projection" from Buckminster Fuller, 1944--during WWII.





Susan Share's [*Unfoldings*](#) (1985) is a book as a performance—the book is opened and displayed through a choreographed sequence of steps.

Questioning the Line

If we go back to some of our definitions of the basic book, essentially every aspect of that definition can be expanded, questioned, and deconstructed. Even our simple line can have a different character, or be made to fill a shape in a different way.

1

An active line on a walk, moving freely, without goal. A walk for a walk's sake. The mobility agent, is a point, shifting its position forward (Fig. 1):

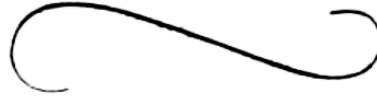


Fig. 1

The same line, accompanied by complementary forms (Figs. 2 and 3):



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

The same line, circumscribing itself (Fig. 4):

Fig. 4

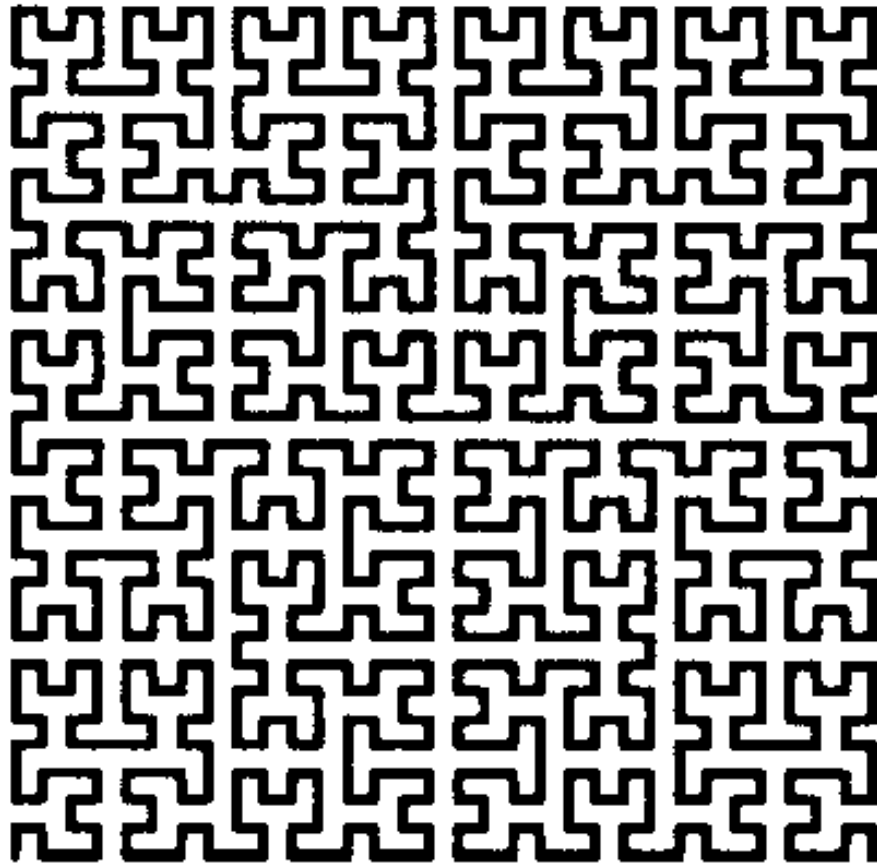


Two secondary lines, moving around an imaginary main line (Fig. 5):

Fig. 5



Excerpts from Paul Klee's
[*Pedagogical Sketchbook*](#) (1960).



A Hilbert curve, a fractal method of filling space with a single continuous line.

The big question in *The New Art of Making Books*, is how can the form and the content of a book synthesize to find new structures and meanings, ways of reading or even ways of knowing? What happens if we radically re-imagine what books are and use all of their properties to form intentional experiences?

To make a book is to actualize its ideal space-time sequence by means of the creation of a parallel sequence of signs, be it verbal or other.

Another bit from *The New Art of Making Books*.

Book as Construct

And if we open up the book, so to speak, what is to stop us from using the construct of the “book” as a pattern to frame and understand collections of

surface/information/experience? Can environmental, or auditory, or conceptual spaces be books too?

For an example of these, we'll look at Ann Hamilton's *The Common S E N S E*, when it was exhibited at the Henry in 2014–2015. The exhibition is a curation of artifacts and texts from the collections of the University of Washington (the institution that ran the gallery where the show took place). Throughout the gallery takeable printouts collected excerpts from books from the libraries, scans of taxidermied animals from the biology specimens, and viewing booths of garments and objects from the indigenous art collection of the Burke.



The animal rooms of the exhibit--the first images are from the opening day, the last is towards the end of the showing, many of the creatures in the collection have been totally removed.

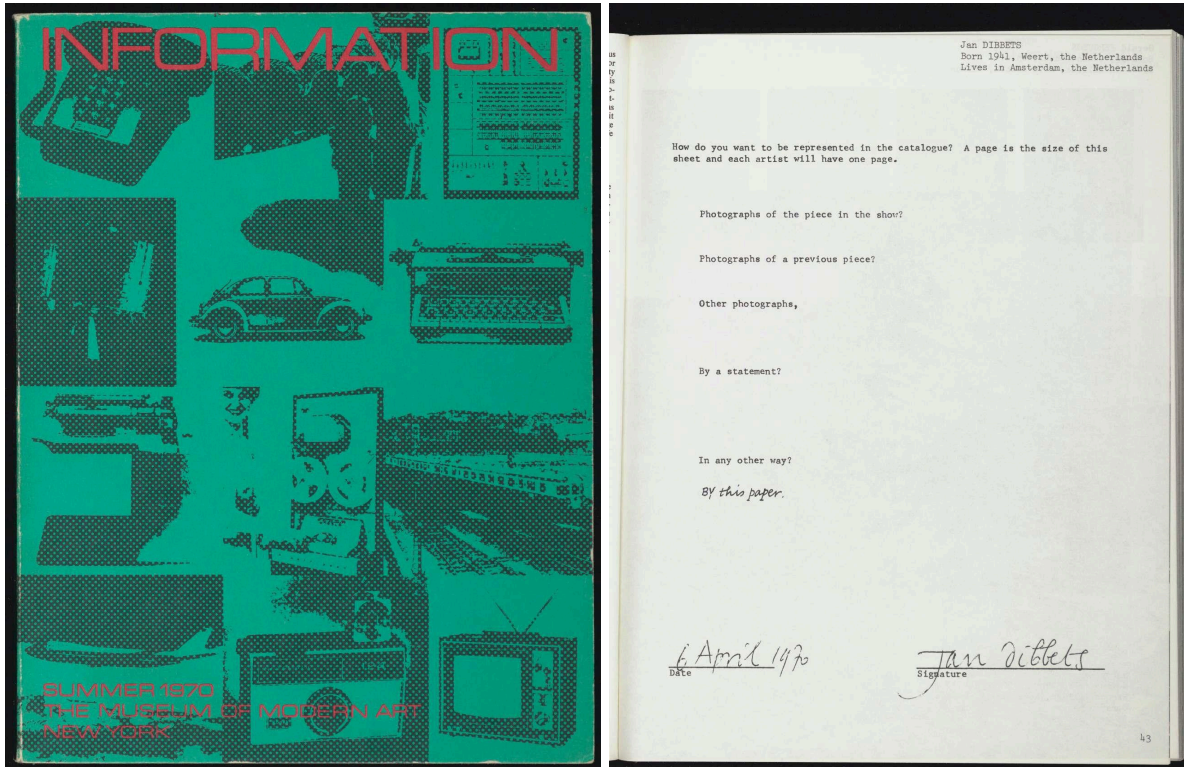


Some of the selection of texts. Some are purely
images from books. Each includes a citation at the
bottom of the page.



At the end of the exhibit was a photobooth with a diffusion sheet hanging in front of the subjects. This allowed visitors to “add themselves” to the collection. These would periodically be printed on newsprint and displayed in another portion of the gallery.

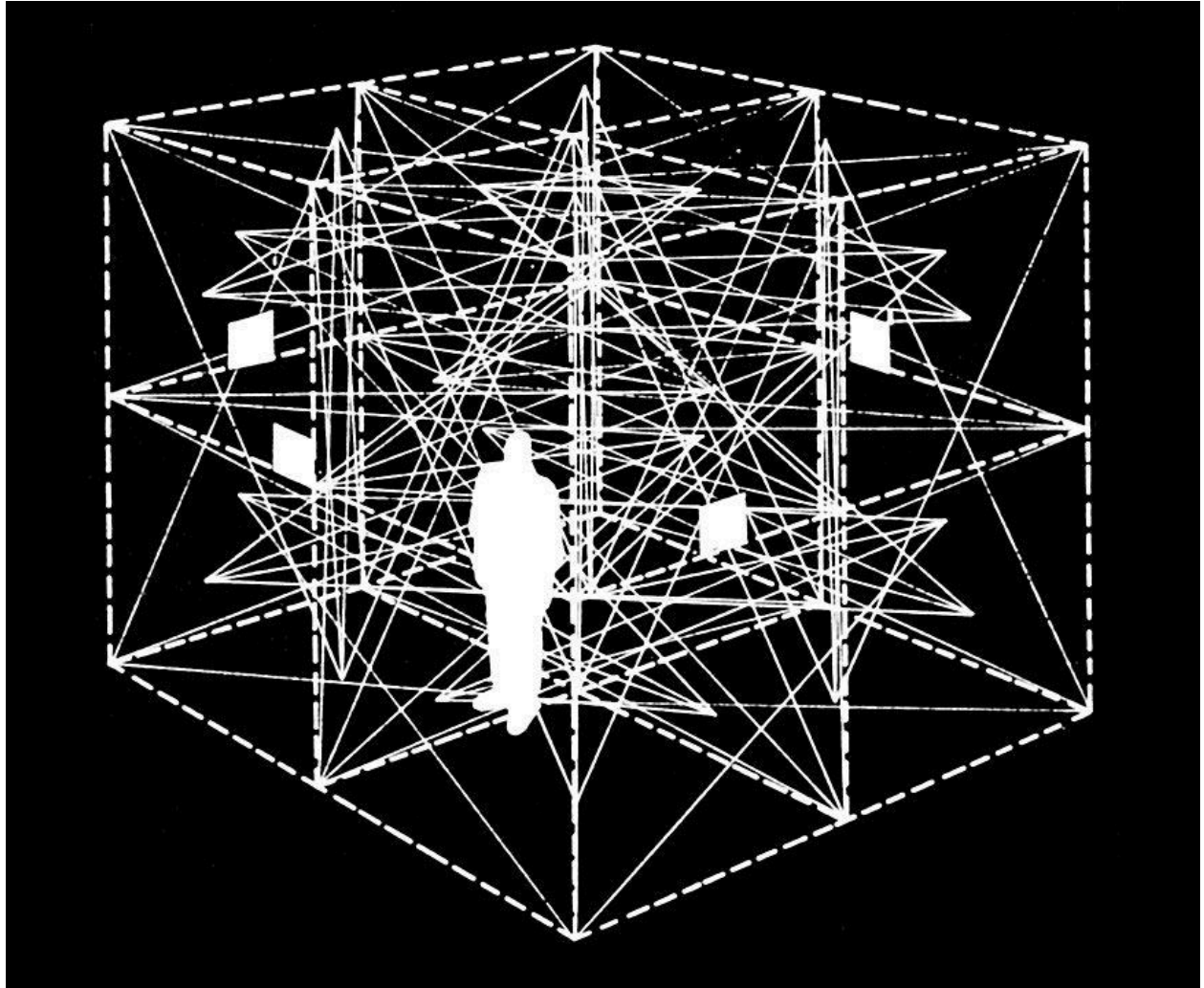
There is much crossover between the ideas of the exhibition and the book — often tied together by the notion of the “catalogue.” Conceptual artists have been asking for a while if catalogues could constitute their own exhibition spaces.



A favorite example of this is MOMA’s exhibition catalogue for the 1970 INFORMATION show. Each participating artists was asked to submit a page to go into the catalogue—some used this to provide an artist’s statement, contact information, or as an artwork itself. This humorous submission from Jan Dibbets specifies that the application form itself would be his contribution.

Another favorite book-as-space — the *Knowledge Box* was an experience design space created in 1962 by architect Ken Isaacs. It was a structure designed to impress upon the viewer the vastness of human experience — to make the plurality of realities and futures unmistakable.







Knowledge Box, Ken Isaacs, 1962. The project used 24 slide projectors on remote timers.

The exhibit was recreated in 2009 in a collaboration between Isaacs and design writer and critic Susan Snodgrass.



The *Knowledge Box*, recreated for the exhibition
"Learning Modern."

However, he did revisit the Knowledge Box in 2009 under the auspices of the "Learning Modern" exhibition at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), where it was reconstructed and shown for the first time since 1962.^{Figs 23-25} I curated and directed its recreation in close collaboration with Isaacs, his wife Sara, a team of gallery staff, and faculty and students from both SAIC and IIT. This version remained true to the original but was realized at a slightly smaller scale (9' x 9' x 9') to accommodate the lower ceilings of SAIC's Sullivan Galleries. Neither the original slides nor audio program existed thus we created new "magazine" from vintage black-and-white



Fig. 23 Exterior view of the Knowledge Box, in the exhibition "Learning Modern," Sullivan Galleries, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2009. Photo: Danny Hsu, courtesy School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

photographs originally appearing in *Life* and now owned by Getty Images archive. As with the original Knowledge Box, viewers are immersed in projected images that build in a short, random sequence (2:32 minutes) across all six surfaces of the box's interior. The images are synched with an audio track received through wireless headphones fashioned from a DIY model that appeared in a 1957 *Popular Science* article. The slide images, dating from 1950 to 1960, collectively mark the passage of an agrarian postwar

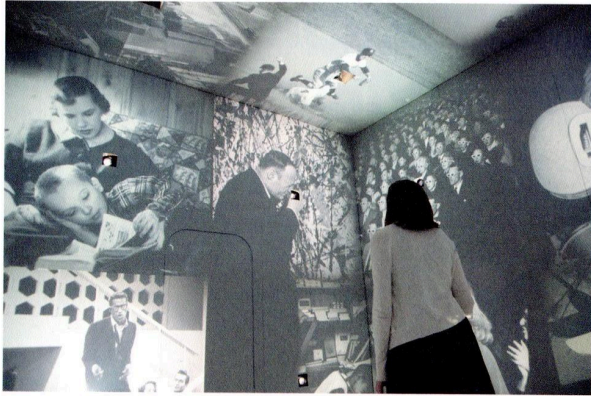


Fig. 24 (Top) Interior view of the Knowledge Box, in the exhibition "Learning Modern," Sullivan Galleries, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, 2009. Photo: James Prinz, courtesy School of the Art Institute of Chicago.



Fig. 25 (Bottom) Interior view of the Knowledge Box, in the exhibition "Hippie Modernism: The Struggle for Utopia," 2015, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis. Photo: Greg Beckel, courtesy Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

world and the rise of global modernity, while the audio program—a montage of excerpts from political speeches, radio and television shows, a crooning Frank Sinatra—fill the box with a fragmented aural history of the decade. The program culminates with a pantheon of portrait faces, from Che Guevara to Rosa Parks to Ernest Hemingway, iconic individuals who defined the modern age.

Snodgrass describes the project of recreating the Knowledge Box in her book *Inside the Matrix*. She also references the project in an excellent article ["Towards An Architectural Journalism."](#)



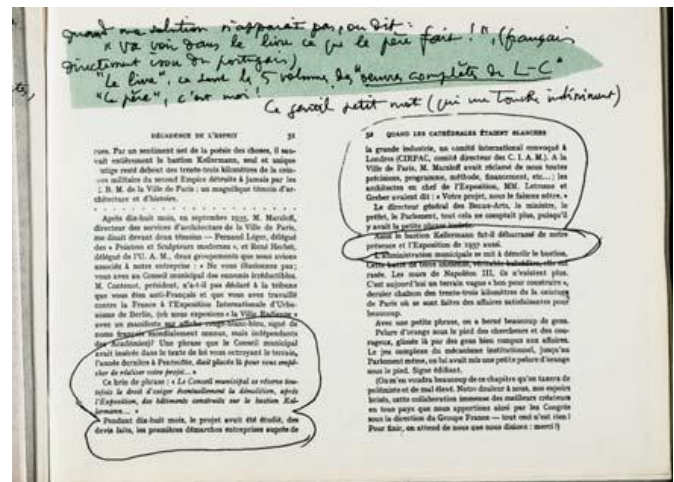
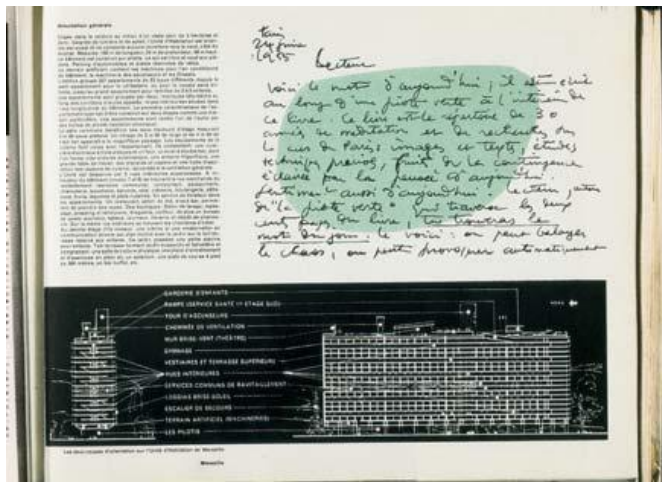
Knowledge Box, recreated in 2009 at Cranbrook.

How We Read

In theory, reading — at least in the literary sense — is usually a linear activity which begins at one point and ends at another (again, our metaphor of the line comes up). However nonlinear structures of writing and reading are also quite common. Consider, the front page of a newspaper begins many lines, each of which are continued in different places of the document, and the common reading pattern is to pick and choose and skip through. The multitude of reading paths are presented many at a time, facilitating this jumping. A common tactic for artists' books or other complex narratives is to try and change the nature of reading itself.

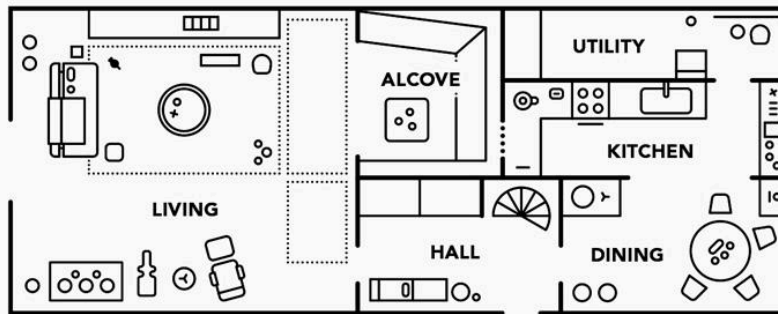


lecture, très à aborder et jusqu'à bout, la piste verte: 8-186 M^{re} le Préfet..... 9 Prise de Paris..... 10 Le 14 octobre 1952..... 14 "L'ESPRIT NOUVEAU"..... 35 "UNE VILLE CONTEMPORAINE"..... 36 Paris active de l'époque..... 40 Aménager ou équilibrer..... 41 Vivre! (reprendre)..... 48 Mort de la Rue..... 57 Descentes est-il Américain? 65	EXPOSITION INTERNATIONALE DE L'HABITATION: 74 Barron Kellenmann 82 Pan ou commencer? 102 PLAN DE PARIS 37-106 EXAMEN: Médiation rue Fond. 114 Le Grand Sautillage... 116 Un Homme chez lui... 118 La Cité française... 121 Ménage sur Paris... 122
---	--



Corbusier produced a number of books--among them the *Plans de Paris* which is printed in two colors, black and a pale green. At the beginning of the book is the instruction "read the green parts first."

In a book design project of my own, Natalia Ilyin explains the nonlinear process of constructing narratives which may at some point become linear readings. The metaphor she uses for this is architectural.

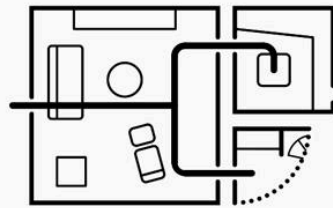


DEPLOYING THE SEMILATTICE: ROOMS MAKE THE HOUSE

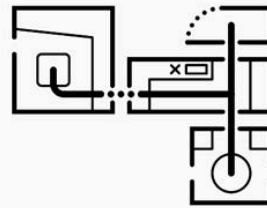
Imagine a house. Each room has its own function, but all rooms work together to create a living space that can accommodate many functions. The living room is a living room, but it also relates to the front hall, and it has functions that include welcoming people to the house. It also has a relationship with the dining room, and has functions that relate to the entertaining of friends and the doing of homework or the planning of projects. And although the function of a kitchen is different from the function of a dining room, what goes on in a kitchen affects what goes on in a dining room.

fig 7.10

*The floorplan
of a functional
house.*



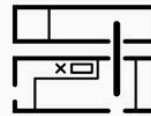
The living room is an open area — the adjacent alcove is more private.



The kitchen can supply the dining room and alcove.



The entry hall provides access to both of the main social areas.

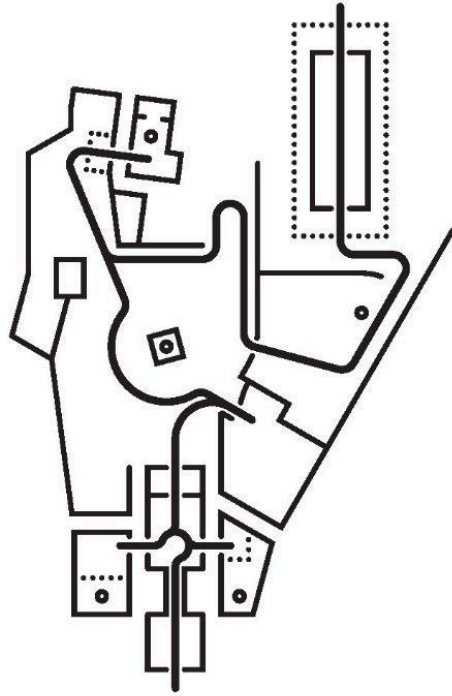


The utility room is hidden behind the kitchen, like a footnote.

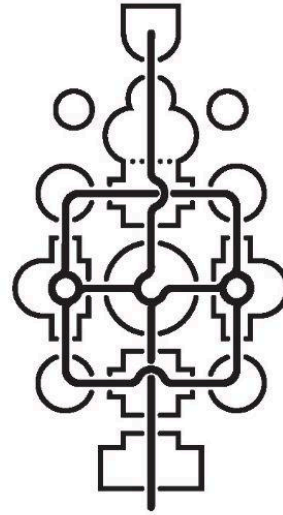
The systems in a house are interrelated systems, and these systems are malleable. Design your semilattice essay like a house. Create small, yet interdependent arguments. The arguments all can combine in different ways; they can relate to

fig 7.11
Relationships of rooms in a house.

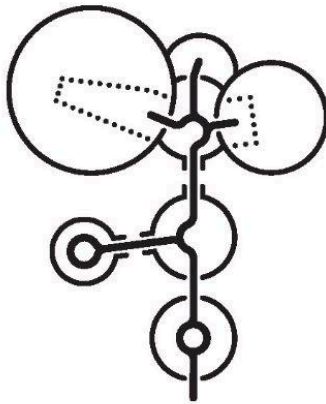
Introducing the house metaphor for functional structure in writing, from Natalia Ilyin's *Writing for the Design Mind* (for our example house we used the living portion of the Eames house—Case Study House No. 8).



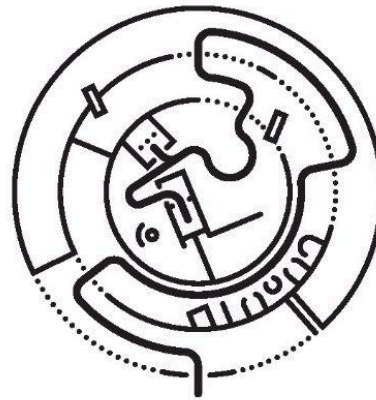
A piece of writing may begin in a very orderly fashion before exploring related concepts.



This heavily structured argument approaches a central idea from many different directions before continuing to an elaborate conclusion.



A series of independent ideas can be interwoven in a structured sequence to build a compelling, composite narrative.



A concentric house may spiral around a topic, exploring it one layer at a time towards an internal discovery or conclusion.

fig 7.13

To demonstrate the variety of semi-lattice structures, we turned to various construction patterns from different cultures. Alternative treatments of thought/writing/space are reflected in these buildings.

¼ A section of the Acropolis complex in Athens, Greece (seventh through fifth century BCE) with the statue of *Athena Promachos* central. Le Corbusier references this section in *Towards a Modern Architecture* after a discussion of the *plan*: “the plan bears within

itself a primary and pre-determined rhythm: the work is developed in extent and in height following the prescriptions of the plan, with results which can range from the simplest to the most complex, all coming within the same law. Unity of law is the law of a good plan: a simple law capable of infinite modulation.”¹⁰²

¾ The church of St Louis des Invalides in Paris (17th century CE), by Jules Hardouin-Mansart. “The interior, except for the oval chancel, is more academically balanced, that is, less dynamic in its spatial relations than the works of Hardouin-Mansart’s predecessors. But the dome is constructed so that in looking up one sees through a wide opening in the inner cupola on to the painted surface of a second cupola, lit by concealed windows—a wholly Baroque spatial effect.”¹⁰³

¾ A cluster of Iglulik structures on the Melville Peninsula, documented by Danish archaeologist and anthropologist Therkel Mathiassen in 1922. This group contains “two living units plus rooms for clothing, dog harnesses, a meat locker, and a dog kennel.”¹⁰⁴

¾ The Nendrum Monastery¹⁰⁵ in Northern Ireland (sixth–eighth centuries CE) has been heavily stylized for this illustration, with the irregular concentric cashels fashioned into perfect circles.

The architectural metaphor is extended by looking at
a number of different spaces from architecture
history and interpreting them as narratives.

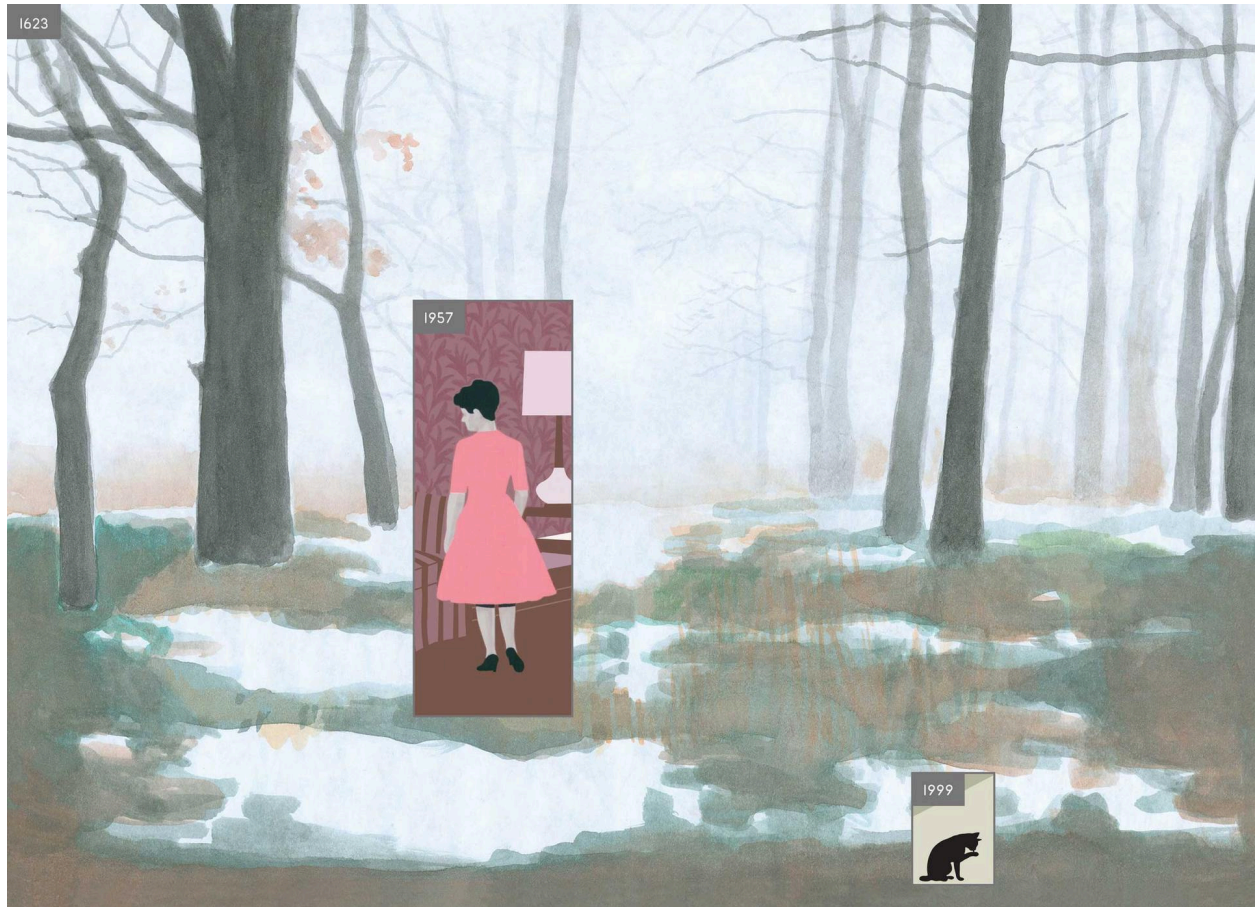
Richard McGuire’s *Here* blends together multiple time frames that center around a common location: a plot of land that for many years was the living room of a house — but we also see a time before the house was built, and after it was destroyed.

1957



1999





The first few pages which introduce multiple frames.

Each frame (or classically “panel”) is attached to a particular time, which is indicated in the top left of the frame. All pages have a sort of base frame, but usually they are broken up by a number of frames from different times.

1964



1915

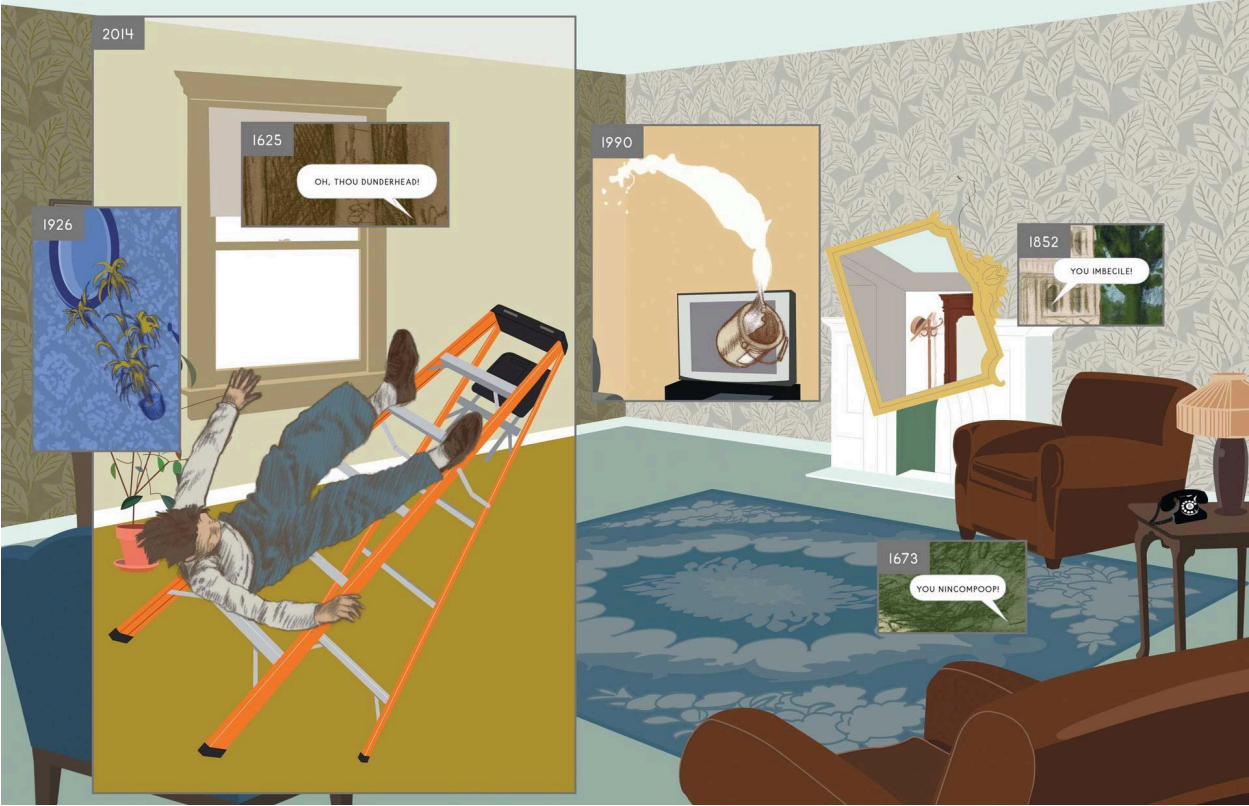


There are many different kinds of storytelling that happen in *Here*, from the same event or action happening at multiple times, to a dialogue between times that must be pieced together by the reader. It makes you aware of both similarity and uniqueness of experience, both human and animal.

1983



1949





One of my favorite sequences shows a collection of small catastrophes and is also a commentary on how language changes over time.

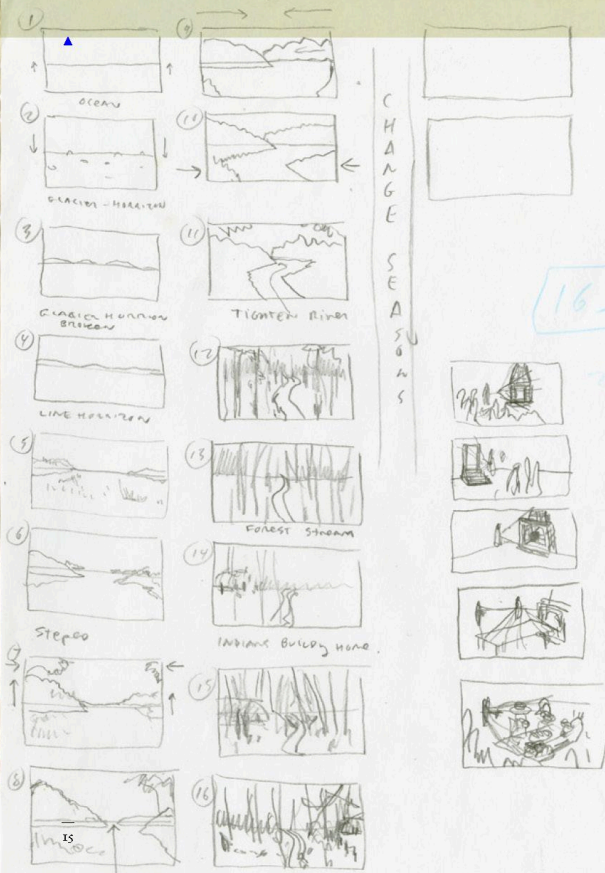


In another snippet, multiple panels from the same year are shown to illustrate events that happened very near to each other.

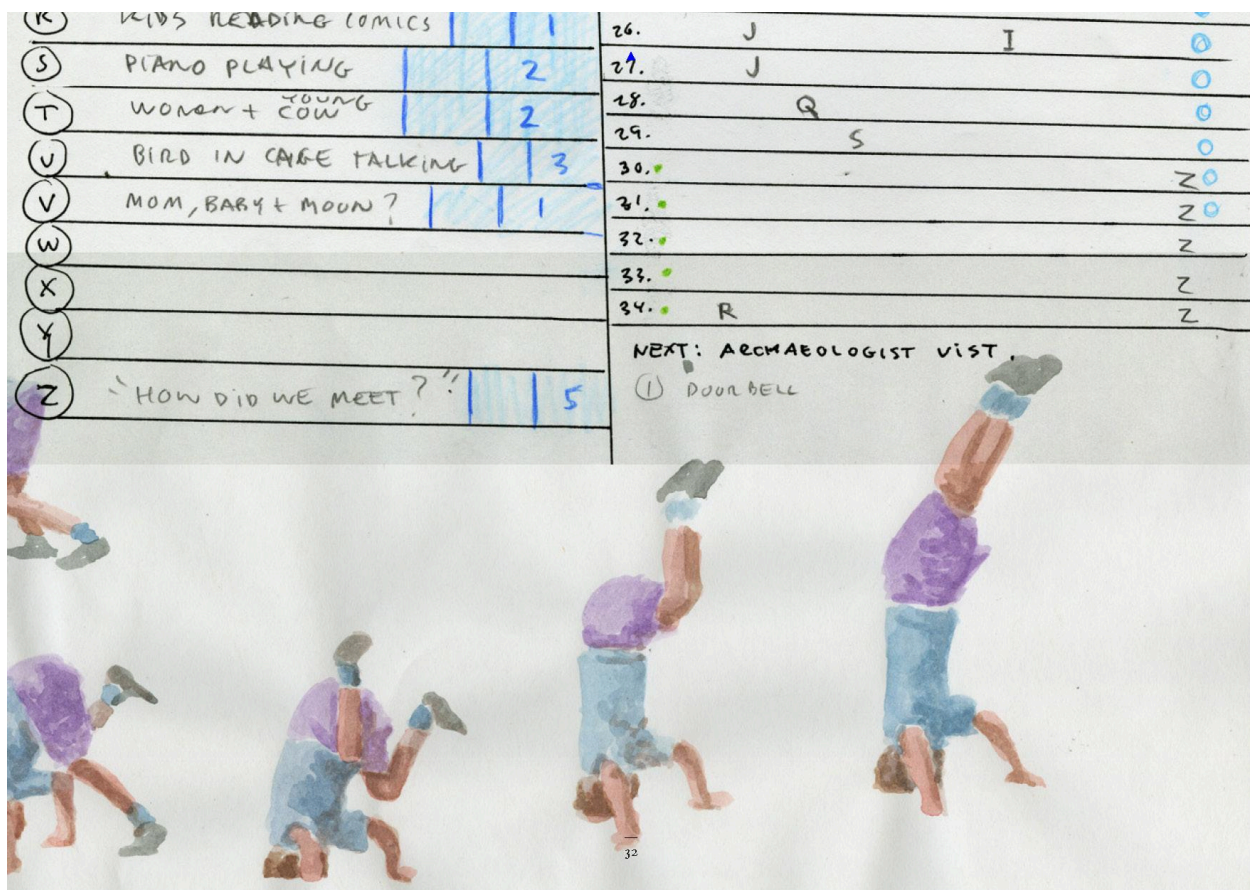
An exhibition of process matter from the project was exhibited, "From Here to Here."

[illegible]

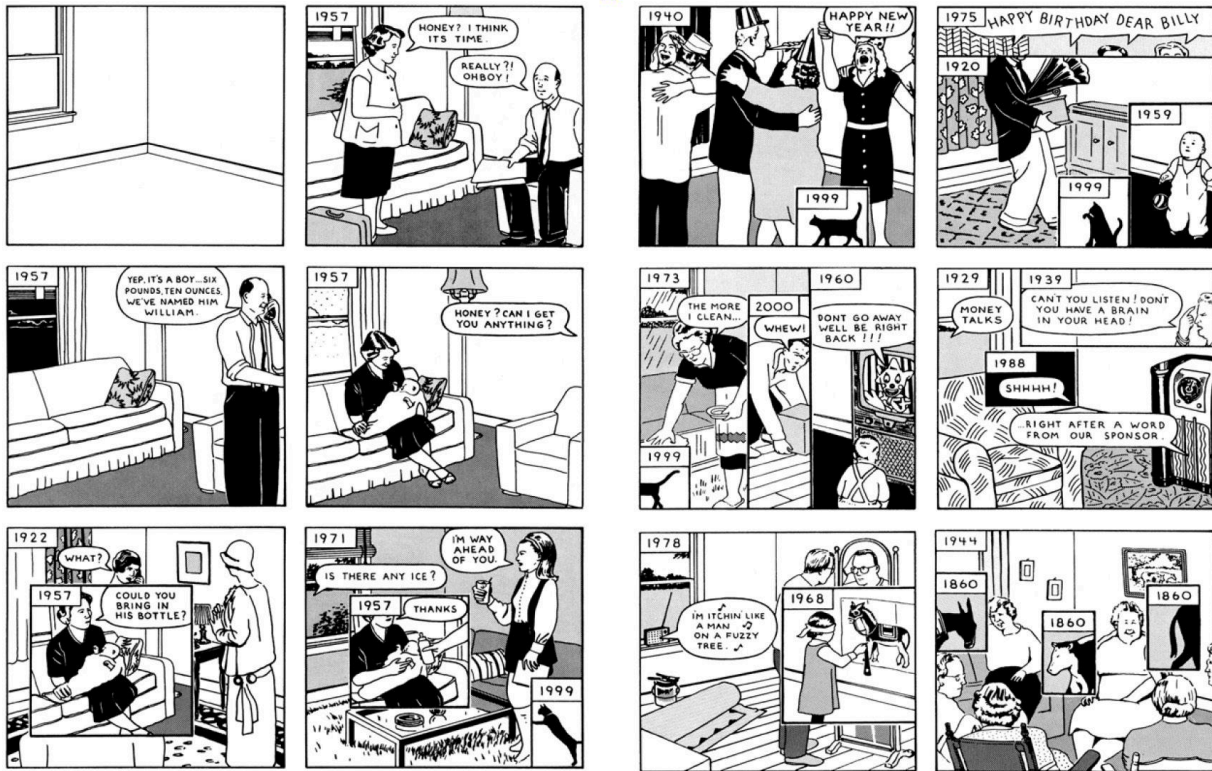
One of the most interesting things in the study of animals is the length of life of which they are capable. A May fly, for example, born at 1 o'clock, is approaching old age by 4, and by 5 is passed away; while a whale who saw Columbus discover America might still have been spouting near the end of the 20th Century. Insects, fortunately, are short lived; otherwise, life would be pretty hard for all the rest of us. But other small creatures, you notice, are quite long lived. A little sparrow, for instance—if nothing happens to him—could keep chattering at you off and on the time you learned your first baby words until you reached middle age.



SPREADS PANELS			STARTS AFTER 'JOKE' SECTION	
ITEM				
(A) FAMILY PHOTO SET UP AND SERIES	2	5?	1. A	
(B) DOG BARKS DOOR BELL RINGS	3	combo?	2. A	
(C) KID DOING HANDSTAND	5		3. A B C	
(D) DAD HOLDING/KISSING SISTER		3	4. A C	
(E) XMAS TREES		3? (4?)	5. A C	
(F) WOMEN + BABIES	1	1?	6. A C	
(G) KIDS FIGHT		3	7. A C	
(H) "THE MORE I CLEAN"		3?	8. D E	
(I) "WATCH WALLET KEYS"		3?	9. D E	
(J) MAN COMMENTING ON DOG		3	10. D E	
(K) HALLOWEEN		5? 6? 7?	11. E F	V
(L) KIDS AS INDIANS		4?	12. F	
(M) BIRTHDAY PARTY	1		13. G H T V	
(N) NEW YEARS PARTY/DANCING	2	3	14. G H T	
(O) WATCHING HOME-MOVIE (BILLY XMAS)		7	15. B G H T	
(P) PUTTING UP WALLPAPER		3	16. I K	
(Q) WATCHING TV (SUN)		2	17. K	
			18. K	
			19. K L M	
			20. K L	
			21. K L	
			22. K L M N	
			23. N	
			24. N	
			25. J	



A collection of process matter from the book.



The original version of the comic was a black and white series published in the magazine Raw in 1989.

Simplicity is a powerful tool in book design: the unmoving point of view in *Here* provides a constant point of reference, allowing the scene to change slightly or radically without disorienting readers. McGuire recalls finding Tadanori Yokoo's book of thousands of waterfall postcards and realizing that one strong idea—the persistence of a single pictorial moment, without start or end—could provide the basis for an entire book. Years earlier, McGuire's mother, a librarian, had shown him *Thirteen*, in which (as the book's Library of Congress cataloguing data states) 'thirteen picture stories of a magic show, a sea disaster, and other dramas develop separately but simultaneously,' each on a fixed unit of 'real estate' on the pages. In *Evidence*, an influential book of photographs pulled from public and corporate archives, the absence of words compels each viewer to formulate links and connect the images from start to end of the book.

An excerpt from an essay on the process of the book.
The rest of the text and more images can be found in
an issue of the digital magazine [Five Dials](#).

"Reading" as a concept is just as open as "book" as a concept — we can use the idea of reading as a way of understanding how we interact with all the forms of information around us.

Reading is a specific practice. We know it best as reading books, but it's a practice that we can apply generally. Reading is open-ended, provisional, conversational. It's not solitary, but deeply collective. We might be alone with a book, but the book fills our heads with other voices and puts our thoughts into conversation, not only with the writer but with countless other readers, real and imagined. Immersed in reading, the self dissolves and mixes with others. We take comfort in the flickering, light-dappled margin, where we stand both inside and outside of the text. It is a liminal space.

Matthew Stadler on a generalized process of reading in "The Ends of the Book: Reading, Economies, and Publics."

Interlude—Learning to Read Creatively

Making the World Unknown

What constantly invigorates the human mind is the unknown; we aren't animated by what we already know, but we're eager to make the world known. In today's context, in which media continues to evolve, every event and phenomenon processed into information circulates with high density at high speed. By constantly keeping in touch with those pieces of information, people continue to replace the unknown world with identified events and phenomena. To know something is to impregnate the senses with an inspirational, vital, exciting experience. Yet, because the information supply has exceeded critical mass, at some point unbeknownst to us, knowledge ceased functioning as a medium to activate thought and piles of information, like seeds not germinated, were reduced to an ambiguous condition; we can't tell whether they're dead or alive.

So then, shouldn't we make the world unknown?

Kenya Hara introduces us to the idea of "exformation." Essentially, rather than learning a static, or closed, story we're looking at kinds/methods of learning that can open things up for us instead.

Acquiring Knowledge Is not the Goal

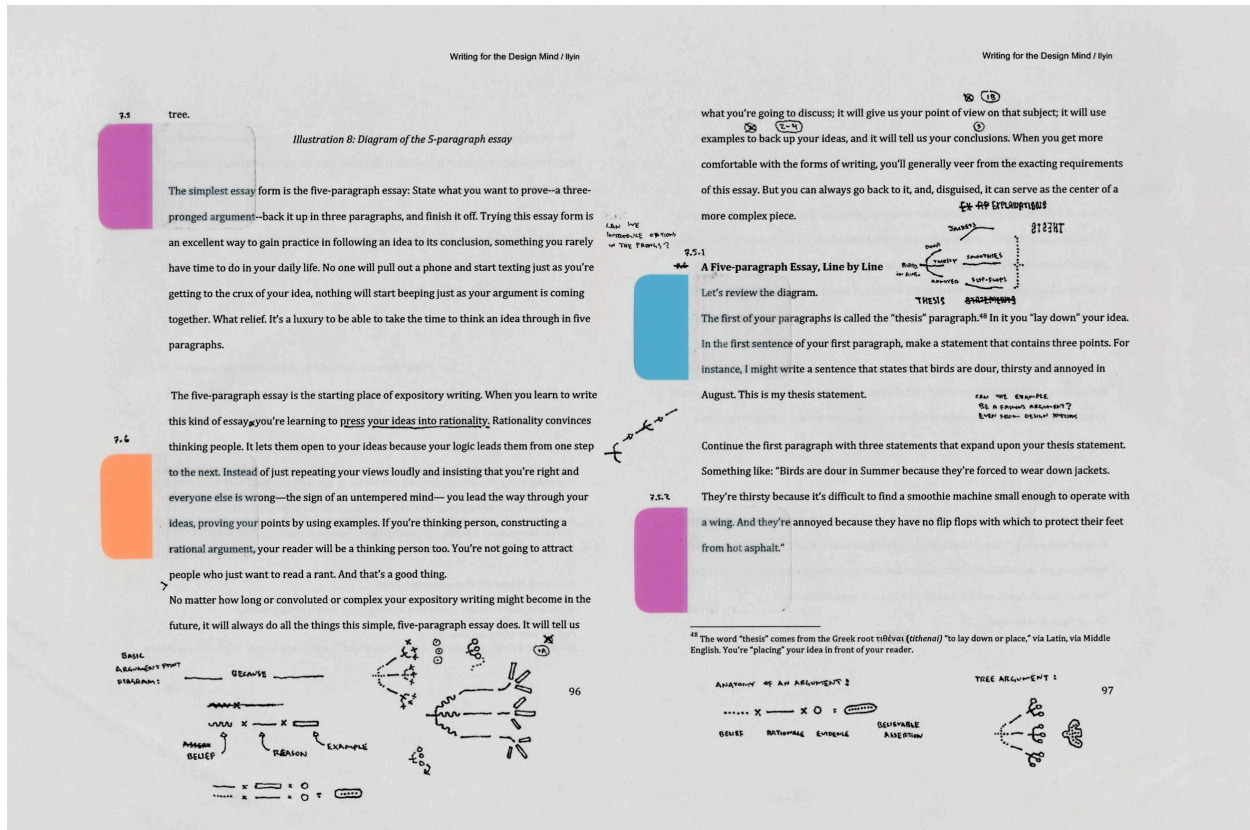
Basically, knowledge is no more than an entrance to thought. To converse is to exercise one another's thoughts by beginning with a trifling piece of knowledge and speaking about it together. By ingeniously mingling fragments of knowledge with dialogue and speculation, we are able to come up with heretofore-unknown images and ideas. To know something is not a goal, but a starting point for our imagination.

The above quotes come from Hara's book: *Designing Design*. There's also a good [interview](#) with the author that was conducted as part of Civilizations Design Lecture Series in Seattle.

Knowledge and information are the starting point for ideas—once they are questioned, opened, activated. So part of growing creatively is establishing a methodology for collecting and spending time with these raw materials, and developing techniques for transforming them. I find actively reading on a regular basis to be an extremely effective form of this.

My recommendations for active reading are:

1. Collect a library of things to be read. This can be a physical library, but it's more likely that this will be a virtual library, a library of links.
 - a. These should only be things you are interested in! Who needs a library of things they don't care about? Reserve judgement about the things you think you "should" be reading.
 - b. Your library needs to be *browsable* — if it's physical, this is easy, you can browse titles on a shelf or folders in a file cabinet; if it's virtual this is a bit trickier — you may need to augment your links with some titles or keywords.
 - c. The most important things in your library are *other libraries* — finding someone else who is collecting the kinds of things you are interested in reading is like finding a gold deposit.
 - d. You always want to have more on hand to read than you have time to read. It takes some practice not to be overwhelmed by this collection, but when you are comfortable with it it gives you room for play — room to jump from idea to idea.
2. Write (or draw) (or make) while you read. Reading is not about the act of consumption, it's about the act of transformation, allowing the thoughts that come from the text to grow in your mind as you read. These thoughts are things worth saving, document them in some way.



I think my annotation style developed in part by annotating manuscripts for illustration and editing. Above are annotated versions of *Proactive Practice* and *Writing for the Design Mind* (Natalia's book).

The screenshot shows a macOS Notes application window. On the left is a sidebar with a list of notes. The note titled "Scratching the Surface" is highlighted in yellow. The main area on the right displays the content of this note, which includes a list of timestamps and text excerpts from a podcast.

Notes List (Left Sidebar):

- iCloud
- All iCloud 665
- Notes 664
- Dreams 1
- New Folder

Note Content (Right Panel):

10/31/20 of this story.

Independent Artist Pu...
10/30/20 Artist publishin...

09
10/30/20 ^ Right On: Doc...

Notes from Shannon (...)
10/29/20 _____

Hello Jarrett,
10/29/20 I wanted to rea...

What does it mean to...
10/28/20 .

Had a dream where I...
10/26/20 along with a gr...

Independently create...
10/21/20 the institution.

Scratching the Surface
10/18/20 "The world act..."

(Book Wishlist) Desig...
10/18/20 Graphic Design...

Vendarea Portland
10/17/20 Secret Room Pr...

08
10/16/20 Sustainability

Send UX alumni to Lia.
10/16/20 No additional t...

Following Up on Cher...
10/16/20 in Action":

Instead of telling the I...
10/15/20 a series of shor...

07
10/13/20 Follow-up with...

Responding to studen...
10/12/20 Point students t...

36:30 Two kinds of design critic:

1. Diagnoser of sickness in society—and pointer to design's complicity.
2. Sifter of the trash, "gatekeeper between the production of design and its ultimate demise in the landfill—deciding what's treasure and what's trash—the shifting and negotiating of value."

0:50 "Getting rid of this notion of the 'closed' design product—this finished completed solution."

48:27 "One of the things that I feel helps us with the history is the practice of research. It can be framed in many ways, but as a designer if you do practice-oriented research—that is research that is conducted through the tools, method, media, materials, and sensibilities of design, specifically—that's a pretty interesting realm. I do think it allows something different from the binary that you're setting up, between criticism and commerce or practice."

^ "Design in the deep future." [Twemlow's current research, to get around "the speed issue" of design—through geological time, cosmic time, etc.]

140

7:08 Book space—the space of a text, book as space.

7:39 "Not that many people write books, most people write texts and then somebody else designs them and they go into a book."

9:49 "I really worry about the academicization of creative practice and the extent to which critical theory colonizes studio work. I have really mixed feelings about it."

27:39 "When I say I wanted to keep them [creative work and academic] separate—and I do still keep them separate—the notion was that academic work has a particular set of protocols and requirements and creative work has many permissions to it and I felt like I could live comfortably with that distinction."

28:21 "Right now I'm doing a series of very short pieces that I call 'critical fictions.' Critical fiction is to criticism what science fiction is to science. It's informed by criticism but it takes the permission of imaginative writing."

33:05 "The weight of citation is so heavy that I can barely lift a sentence." [The responsibility in academic writing to the discourse.]

33:45 "'Why did I love reading theory?' It's because it gave me ideas that were meta-reflections and critical insights I had never had. It gave me a whole new language."

37:47 [On seeing the rare thing in art.] "That is really interesting. That really is thought in form that manifests itself in a way that makes me see the way I see differently."

38:30 "Design is ideologies made artifact." — JF

39:05 "Graphic artifacts always serve a purpose or contain an agenda, no matter how neutral they appear to be."

43:40 "These are two methodological points. One is that works should not...

Notes from Jarrett Fuller's *Scratching the Surface* podcast (these ones are from [140. Johanna Drucker](#)).

The Detroit Printing Co-op

FOUNDED IN 1969 BY A GROUP OF FRIENDS /
RADICALS (THIS PLACES IT IN OBVIOUS CONTEXT
OF 1968) AROUND A SINGLE PRESS.
PEOPLE WITH THINGS TO SAY AND A MEANS
TO PRINT THEM.

"THEY FOUNDED THE DETROIT PRINTING"
CO-OP AND DECLARED THE EQUIPMENT
SOCIAL PROPERTY, AVAILABLE FOR USE BY
ANYONE WHO WISHED TO LEARN HOW TO
OPERATE IT AND CONTRIBUTE TO ITS
MAINTENANCE. 12

FOUNDERS STARTED PRINTING ON OTHER ESTABLISHED
COMMUNITY PRESSES, AND QUICKLY CONNECTED
WITH MANY OTHER LEFTISTS.

EXISTING COMMERCIAL PRESSES ACTED AS
GATEKEEPERS, REFUSING TO PRINT THESE
MESSAGES/IDEAS.

TRYING FOR PROFIT WOULD LIMIT
FLEXIBILITY AND INCREASE DEPENDENCE
ON CAPITALISM

USERS DISCOURAGED FROM USING
EQUIPMENT TO TRY TO TURN A PROFIT

↑ REBEL VOICES JOYCE KORNBLUH
HARRISON (1964)
GRAPHIC HISTORY OF THE IWW

IT FEELS/SEEMS AS THOUGH MUCH OF THE IMPETUS
FOR ANARCHIST SMALL PRESS AT THE TIME WAS
A SYSTEM OF CENSORSHIP IN ESTABLISHED MEDIA
SYSTEMS, IN DIRECT CONFLICT WITH EVENTS,
HAPPENINGS, AND MOVEMENTS WHICH OTHERWISE
WENT UNREPORTED — SIMPLY, PEOPLE WITH
THINGS TO SAY HAD NO WAY TO SAY THEM, AND
SO MADE THEIR OWN.

THERE ARE OBVIOUS COROLLARIES WITH THE PRESENT
PRESENT ERA. MEDIA IS INCREASINGLY
CONTROLLED, EVEN AS IT GIVES THE PUBLIC
IMAGE OF DEMOCRATIZATION. AS DIGITAL
PLATFORMS FILTER FROM A CAPITALIST LENS,
IS THE NEW ROLE OF PRINT REAL-WORLD
INTERVENTION? INTERVENTIONS WHICH WOULD
NEVER BE ALLOWED IN THE ALGORITHM?

ORGANIZED STUDENTS WHILE A TEACHER,
LATER (IMMEDIATELY) PUBLISHES A
CRITIQUE OF WHERE THEIR EFFORTS FAILED
(TOO LITTLE WILLINGNESS TO BREAK FROM
AUTHORITY SYSTEMS). THIS FORMS OUTLINE
OF A DIALOGUE, AND ALSO A DOCUMENTATION.

↑ "THE MAN IN THE MIDDLE: THE DESIGNER"
C. WRIGHT MILLS

"THE FREEDOM OF THE CRAFTS-"
PERSON LIES IN THEIR ABILITY
TO WORK ACCORDING TO THEIR
OWN PLAN — TO SET UP THE
CONDITIONS WITHIN WHICH THEY
WILL WORK, TO DETERMINE
WHAT IT IS THEY WILL DO, AND
TO DO IT.

— AUBERT 90

[PARAPHRASING MILLS]

↑ THE INCOHERENCE OF THE INTELLECTUAL

↑ STUDENTS FOR A DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY:
A GRAPHIC HISTORY

A RETURN TO THE LOCAL, SMALL-SCALE
RADICAL NEW INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER.
A PLACE TO TELL STORIES
AND A MEANS OF COLLECTING THEM.

DÉRIVE + DÉTOURNEMENT

"IN SEARCH OF"
SIGNS OF
ATTRACTION
OR REVOLUTION.

"THEFT OF AESTHETIC"
ARTIFACTS FROM
THEIR CONTEXTS AND
THEIR DIVERSION INTO
CONTEXTS OF ONE'S
OWN DEVISE.

— GREG MARCUS
IN LIPSTICK TRACES
[CIVILIZATIONISTS]

IS STAFF ITSELF,
OFTEN SEEN AS A
DETACHMENT, ACTUALLY
OF GREATER VALUE
IN THE CONTEXT OF
SHIFTING SEAS?

LENDING OF
PERMANENCE?

"TO MAKE A BOOK WHOSE OUTWARD
SHAPE WAS CONSISTENT WITH ITS CONTENT..."

— FREDY PERLMAN 29 ☆

[ON THE USE OF INEXPENSIVE MATERIALS
FOR HIS FIRST ANTI-CAPITALIST BOOK]

ANOTHER
JUSTIFICATION
FOR PRESS
DOCUMENT.
"TO HIS EXPLICIT NARRATION OF THE
TOOLS AND MATERIALS OF PRODUCTION
ASKS THE READER TO RECOGNIZE THE
INVISIBLE LABOR THAT WENT INTO
ITS PRODUCTION.

— DANIELLE AUBERT

"CHALLENGE THE READER TO WIDEN THE"
NETWORK OF NON-BUSINESS COMMUNICATION.

— LORRAINE PERLMAN

IN FLUNDER, THE INDUSTRIAL, MANUFACTURER
BOURGEOISIE ARE SEATED IN THE AUDIENCE, TO
SHOW THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THOSE PASSIVELY
OBSERVING, THOSE COMPLICIT. PRINTED IN THREE
COLORS FOR THE THREE DIFFERENT VOICES
(NARRATOR, CHARACTERS, AND AUDIENCE). ☆

HELP!

WORKING CLASS, TRANSMISSION,
TRENDS, WORKING INTERESTED
PEOPLE

IF YOU LIKE BLACK AND RED,

HELP MAKE IT;

IF YOU DON'T, MAKE YOUR OWN.

[FROM BLACK + RED NO. 1]

② "UNLIKE GOOGLE IMAGE SEARCH, WHERE"
A SPECIFIC IMAGE ~~IDENTIFICATION~~ ...
MIGHT BE TAGGED IN MULTIPLE WAYS
... IMAGES IN THE LIBRARY COLLECTION
CAN ONLY BE SORTED INTO ONE FOLDER.
IT PUTS A HIGHER EMPHASIS ON THE TAG
THAT WAS SELECTED BY THE LIBRARY
WORKER WHO CUT OUT THE IMAGE
AND CHOSE WHICH FOLDER TO PLACE
IT IN.

— AUBERT 136

THIS IS FASCINATING, IN BOTH APPROACH
AND IMPACT.

THE SELECTION OF DETROIT IMAGES
IN SOCIETY OF THE SPECTACLE, TO
PAIR WITH DEBORD'S TEXT — "TO
EMPHASIZE THE FACT THAT [IT] COULD
APPLY TO ONE'S LOCAL CONTEXT"
(LORRAINE PERLMAN 140).

"WE PUBLISHED THINGS THAT ~~TOOK~~ TWICE"
AS LONG AS IT WOULD TAKE A REAL PRINTER,
BUT THAT WAS OKAY BECAUSE IT WAS THE
PROCESS, IT WAS LEARNING, IT WAS THOSE
CONVERSATIONS. PEOPLE GROW IN MULTIPLE WAYS.
GROW

— RALPH FRANKLIN 179

⊗ ⊗ HEY TEACH!! ⊗ ⊗

A COLUMN [N] FOR TEACHERS WHO
CONFIS[C]ATE THIS PAPER.

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FROM REBELS' VOICE, AN ALT.
STUDENT NEWSPAPER IN 1972

THE MIXING OF PUBLISHERS AND ACTIVISTS OF
DIFFERENT AGES AND WITH DIFFERENT AFFILIATIONS

A sampling of my annotations for a book I read last summer, *The Detroit Printing Co-op* by Danielle Aubert. An explanation of the notation system:

- Quotes are fairly straightforward, I like to include a page number for easy reference.
- An upwards arrow indicates another source or question I need to follow up on.
- Italics usually indicate a personal opinion or observation on the text (I like being able to separate my own thoughts out from the general notes.
- A double circle means the thought was of particular interest.
- A star indicates one of the most critical concepts from the text.
- Lastly, a boxed plus sign is a project idea.

System of the Book

THIS SECTION ISN'T FULLY FLESHED OUT YET, BUT I INCLUDED MY NOTES FOR IT IN GREY.

The Public and the Publication

In the old art the writer judges himself as being not responsible for the real book. He writes the text. The rest is done by the servants, the artisans, the workers, the others.

In the new art writing a text is only the first link in the chain going from the writer to the reader. In the new art the writer assumes the responsibility for the whole process.

Carrión on how books play a part in larger systems of publics and reading.

. Books travel through the world collecting strangers. They are public spaces.

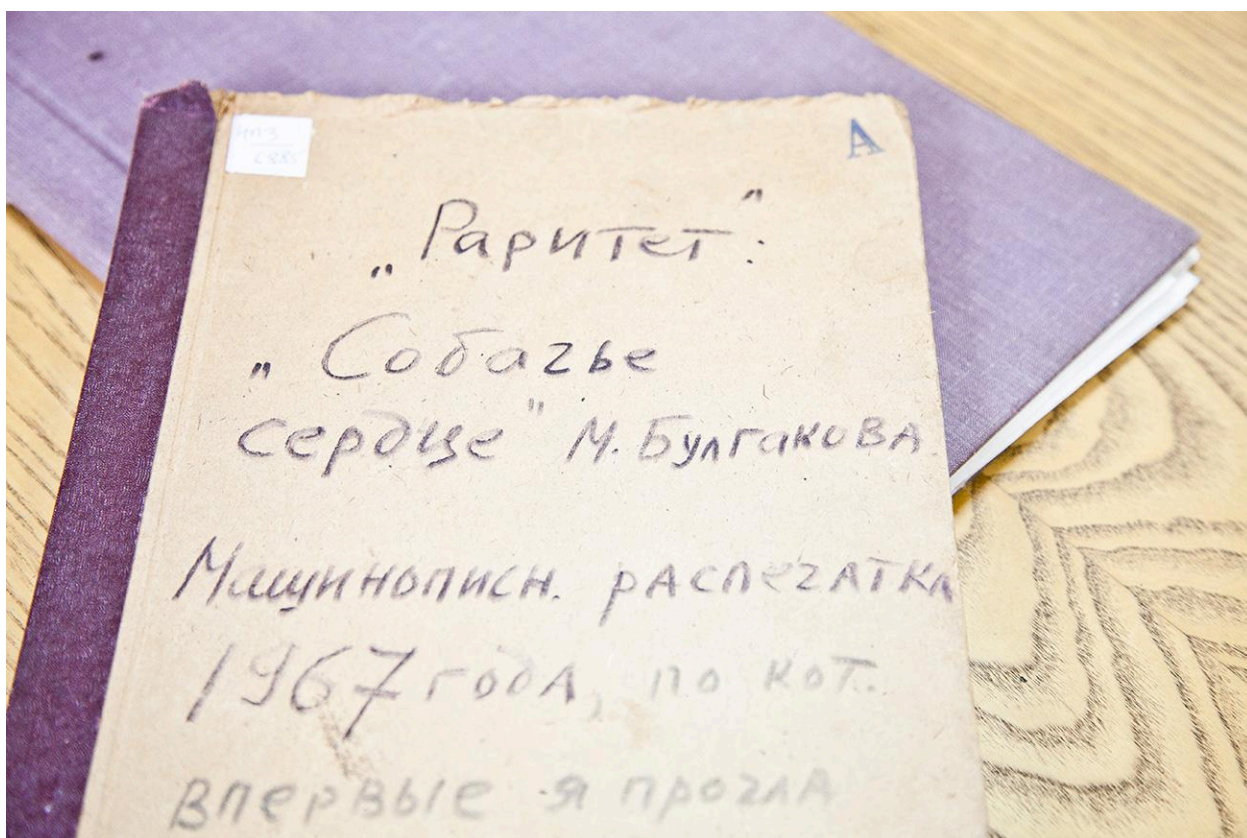
Matthew Stadler on how books invoke their own publics.

1. Books as things which exist within a larger context, itself a space. Side story on the history of bookshelves and books as class-signifying objects. A bit on multiples, the making of multiples, and the individual instances.
2. Specific example of Samizdat, and the social space of text and information.
3. On digital texts and the idea of the *post-digital* or the hybrid text. Particularly in questioning books as static entities.

Case Study: Самиздат (Self Publishing in the Eastern Bloc)

1. Design in an oppressive context—this is an example of structural/system design more so than it is about visual design.
2. Audience/reader as not only collaborator, but also as co-conspirator.
 - a. The responsibility of the work after it leaves your hands.
 - b. Work that is formally independent (translatable design decisions + multi-modal forms).
3. The design of the work is purely functional and cheap by necessity, everything except content has been stripped away.
 - a. Use of indentation and white space to create a variety of type styles (included constructed letter titles).
 - b. The method of smuggling affected overall form.
4. The design patterns that emerged from самиздат became adopted as an aesthetic that spoke to authenticity and integrity of information (an inversion of their objective value).
 - a. This style was duplicated by later publications, to replicate the connotations that kind of text had come to carry.





Assorted Самиздат artifacts (books + films).

ДВИЖЕНИЕ В ЗАЩИТУ ПРАВ ЧЕЛОВЕКА В СОВЕТСКОМ СОЮЗЕ
ПРОДОЛЖАЕТСЯ

ХРОНИКА ТЕКУЩИХ СОБЫТИЙ

Каждый человек имеет право на свободу
убеждений и на свободное выражение их;
это право включает свободу беспрепятствен-
но придерживаться своих убеждений и свободу
искать, получать распространять информацию
и идеи любыми средствами независимо от
государственных границ.

Всеобщая Декларация Прав Человека
ст. 19

ВЫПУСК № 22

10 ноября 1971 г.

СОДЕРЖАНИЕ: О вручении Нобелевской премии А.И.Солженицыну. - Дело
Владимира Буковского. - К Международному съезду психи-
атров. - Вести из Мордовских лагерей и Владимирской
тюрьмы. - По материалам областных газет. - Движение за
выезд в Израиль. - Обращение в защиту прав Человека. -
Краткие сообщения. - Новости Самиздата. - Письма и
заявления.

ГОД ИЗДАНИЯ ЧЕТВЕРТЫЙ

Pages from the Chronicle of Current Events Natalya
Gorbanevskaya et al. circa 1969.



Erika typewriter (Cyrillic)—the sort of which might
be smuggled in from the West.

Existenzmaximum—Extension through Text

1. Books as part and parcel of a system of experience. What comes before a book and what comes after it? How permeable are the borders of a book or the text within it? The social extensions, a community of readers and writers past and present.
2. The second scripture concept—the universe as book.

The world, according to Mallarmé, exists for a book; according to Bloy, we are the versicles or words or letters of a magic book, and that incessant book is the only thing in the world: more exactly, it is the world.

2 Galileo's works abound with the concept of the universe as a book. The second section of Favaro's anthology (Galileo Galilei: Pensieri, motti e sentenze; Florence, 1949) is entitled "Il libro della Natura." I quote the following paragraph: "Philosophy is written in that very large book that is continually opened before our eyes (I mean the universe), but which is not understood unless first one studies the language and knows the characters in which it is written. The language of that book is mathematical and the characters are triangles, circles, and other geometric figures."

Borges's conclusion to
"On the Cult of Books" (1946).

The space is the music of the unsung poetry.

To close, one more thought from Carrión on space in
books and writing.

QUESTIONS

How can we map the space of the book to that of physical spaces — what patterns from book theory can be applied to architecture, or vice versa?

Are there any significant books in your library or from your past which inform or question the way you read or perceive the world and your surroundings?

RESOURCES

A note on terminology—most of the books we've talked about above are referred to as **Artists' Books** (your punctuation may vary), that is, books which are themselves total works/objects of art. The other similar terms you are likely to run into in

this space actually mean very different things: **Art Books** are books *about* art (including your run-of-the-mill coffee table books), and **Book Arts** is a practice usually focused on the structural *form* of the book more so than its content (so things like intricate sewn bindings, etc.). So if you are seeking out books like the above, be sure to use the term “Artists’ Books.”

Collections + Archives

- **Monoskop** — <https://monoskop.org/Monoskop>

“Monoskop is a wiki for the arts, media and humanities.”

In addition to incredibly comprehensive bibliographies for artists and movements and subjects, Monoskop often has full scans of significant texts and book works.

Selected Bibliography

- ***NO-ISBN: On Self-Publishing***. Ed. Bernhard Cella (Vienna: Salon für Kunstbuch, 2017).
- ***Publishing Manifestos: An International Anthology from Artists and Writers***. Ed. Michalis Pichler (Berlin: Miss Read, 2018).
- ***Post-Digital Print: The Mutation of Publishing Since 1984***. Alessandro Ludovico (Eindhoven: Onomatopée, 2012).

Bookstores

- **Printed Matter** (New York, USA) — <https://www.printedmatter.org/>

“Founded in 1976, Printed Matter, Inc. is the world’s leading non-profit organization dedicated to the dissemination, understanding and appreciation of artists’ books and related publications.”

In addition to a beautiful physical space, they also have a very comprehensive online catalogue (going through their list of publishers and artists is incredible). “Printed Matter’s online catalog is one of the largest and most comprehensive databases of artists’ books and related publications. The catalog contains records for approximately 45,000 titles, which includes inventory currently in stock and available for sale, as well as an archive of titles previously stocked.” People can also create small collections, “or tables,” of books, which are excellent to browse.

Printed Matter also maintains an international list of bookstores (<https://www.printedmatter.org/services/the-bulletin/all-bookstores>).

- **Art Metropole** (Toronto, Canada) — <https://artmetropole.com/>

“Art Metropole is a not-for-profit organization with a focus on the production, dissemination and contextualization of artist-initiated publication in any media, especially those formats and practices predisposed to sharing and circulation.

“Art Metropole was founded in 1974 by the artist collective General Idea, as a division of Art-Official Inc. (1972). Art-Official Inc. had served earlier as the non-profit business entity for General Idea’s *File Magazine* (1972–1989). Art Metropole was conceived as a related artist-run centre and collection agency devoted to the *documentation, archiving and distribution of all the images*.

“Today, Art Metropole operates as a retailer and distributor of artists’ books, multiples, and editions; a producer of new works of contemporary art in published and multiple form; a producer of exhibitions, talks, screenings, performances and other programming that feature or intersect with distributed art practices; and a public art collection and archive pertaining to these practices.”

- **PrintRoom** (Rotterdam, Netherlands) — <http://www.printroom.org/>

“PrintRoom is a presentation space and shop dedicated to artists’ publications based in Rotterdam. Since 2012 PrintRoom runs a risography stencil workspace where artists, designers and other interested individuals can take part in workshops or print their own projects.”

- *Defunct bookstores/spaces of note:*
 - **Other Books and So** (Amsterdam, Netherlands) 1975–1979
 - **Zona Archives** (Florence, Italy) 1974–1985

STILL NEED TO ADD MISSING THINGS IN HERE--LETTERFORM
ARCHIVE, ~~PUBLISHING MANIFESTOS~~, ~~NO ISBN~~,
~~POST-DIGITAL PRINT~~ + SIGNIFICANT EXHIBITIONS +
RESOURCES FOR INDIE PUBLISHING

BACKGROUND



AUTHOR: I'm Robert—I make books and teach design history, and hopefully, someday, I will have a chance to teach about making books too! This is my first time putting together a lecture on a topic so close to my own interests and practice, so I hope you enjoy it.

If you'd like you can contact me at robert@baxter.design or on Instagram [@poiesthesis](https://www.instagram.com/poiesthesis).

And if you're interested in more weirdo history/theory lectures like this, my syllabi and materials are publicly available:

- [DE 223 Artifacts x Ideologies](#)
- [DE 334 Praxis](#)
- [On Research](#)

- [Independent / Alternative / Radical: Small Press in the Mid-Twentieth Century](#)