Curious Arts - No. 4
Text work / Artists’ pages
2011

A text work designed in collaboration with Jim Harold to be translated into a form appropriate for production as a set of artists’ pages: firstly, reproduced in 2HB, Volume 10, published by CCA, Glasgow (2011) and subsequently included in an exhibition of printed matter at MoMA, New York (2012).

Submitted by Susan Brind
Output No. 2
Focussing on the artists' use of text and their interest in how the gaps between different knowledge structures generate the emergence of other ideas, 'Curious Arts - No. 4' posed the question: How does a viewer/reader understand and reflect upon the contemporary world through subjects as apparently diverse as time, nature, history, mathematics, politics, theology, astronomy, mysticism and specifically through a journey of thought as reflected in the writings of Richard Parrot (1740-1762); found in the library of Patrick Allan Fraser of Hospitalfield House, Arbroath?
Method: 'Curious Arts - No. 4' is a text work that comprises an index of subject headings drawn from the journal of Richard Parrot, transcribed as one continuous list in an attempt to encapsulate his whole body of knowledge. Parrott compiled his journal between 1740 and 1762. It is indexed alphabetically; encyclopaedic topics appearing in an apparently random order under subject headings.

Strange, poetic and potent connections are made as subjects flow from one to another: Old age, Bastards, Baptism, Bawm, Bankrupt, Banks, ..., Diamonds, Discount, Diseases, Mountains, Money, Motto, Morality, ... .
The journals of Richard Parrott written, 1740-1762

Hospitalfield Library, 2007

Evidence. We cannot send any Answers to such a Challenge, as the Person who has sent a Challenge, cannot lawfully be Answered, unless he is legally challenged. We cannot answer the Challenge of Mr. Parrott, unless he is legally challenged.
When facts are recorded that cannot easily be categorised they appear under the heading ‘Curious Arts’, the title adopted for this text work and the extended series of works that have emerged from this body of research.

‘Curious Arts - No. 4’ makes manifest the impossibility of ever completely archiving and ordering knowledge, at the same time as acknowledging the significance of history as manifested in libraries and archives.
The text work was published in the '2HB: Volume 10'. 2HB is a quarterly publication of creative writing / text works, edited by Louise Shelly and Francis McKee, published by CCA, Glasgow. Volume 10 was published in 2011.
In this form, the work itself could be critically considered in the context of a range of artists working with text and installation, and with the book as a context for work. Other contributors to the volume include: Laura Gonzales, Paul Tarrago, Patrick Staff and Hannah Ellul, although the critical framework might be extended by reviewing the contributors to the 2HB series as a whole.
2HB vol.10

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Curious Arts – No. 4
Susan Brind and Jim Harold
CALL AND RESPONSE

When two women play kantujak, they face each other, sometimes holding onto one another, and make sounds. The sounds are voiced and unvoiced, gutteral, rasping or breathless. It is not exactly singing. It is sometimes called throat singing. They mimic each other and build hearty rhythms, synchronaneously with the slight lag of the second voice. They compete to see who has the longest before laughing, or grapping for breath. Traditionally, the women sing into the mouth of their partner, using it as a resonating chamber. Sometimes, kitchen utensils are used instead, or hands are cupped consecutively between the two mouths.

I am looking at a picture of two women playing kantujak.
One thought in particular nag at me: to see someone’s mouth as an resonating chamber for your own voice like she is doing. Is it to use another as the instrument of your own amplification, to rebound against another in order to verify your own existence. Is it parasitic? Or is it an act of generosity on the part of the open mouth to confirm that they themselves do indeed exist and moreover are the landmark by which you orientate yourself?

Sometimes, when I am walking, I take a very minor sense of comfort when people step aside to let me pass or walk around me, as it confirms that I am indeed visible and solid, mass and volume displacing air. They may not know me but they are obliged to recognise the fact that I am there, intruding upon their material existence.

Which is not to say that I suffer from a debilitating inability to believe in my own, but just to acknowledge that at some very fundamental level it induces wonder to see your own perceptions mimicked and bolstered in another person.

Comforting in the same way is the thought, when sat in a group, that if you stood up and started singing, how this would disturb proceedings, irrevocable proof that you do indeed impinge upon other people.

Which brings me back to the picture of the two women, clapping the arms of their partner at the elbow although it is hard to clasp tight in mutton.

And perhaps we are missing the point here because really it is not instrumentalisation imposed on one by the other but entered into voluntarily by two. Because the mouth is not a resonating chamber but rather two mouths become an echo chamber. It is a question of call and response. It is offering, an act of vertiginous concentration and so they lock arms, or at least that's what it looks like there where it is dark and the trees behind them are bare. I imagine that the air is cold and clear and the sound resonates and their breath clouds around them and perhaps their heads are sometimes lost in it, like moons, and there where they are singing against a purple sky she looks overwhelmed with emotion, about to collapse.

Cheryl Cole!

Cantujak - No. 4

The Ordered Thoughts of Richard Parrott - begun in 1740, then again in November 1752 and resumed in November 1762 - retraced through his journal in the Library of Hospitalfield House, Arbroath over the period September 2007 to November 2010.

Susan Brind & Jim Harold
The work subsequently became incorporated into an exhibition, 'Millenium Magazines', curated by Rachael Morrison and David Senior, drawn from the holdings of the Museum of Modern Art Library, New York. The exhibition, which ran from 20 February to 14 May 2012, was "intended to provide a firsthand view of the latest practices in art and design in print", since 2000, and "to represent MoMA Library’s sustained effort to document and collect work originated in this medium."

The curators selected the whole series of 2HB publications to be included in the exhibition and, post-exhibition, they remain in the MoMA archive as a research resource.

"The range of publications included in the MoMA exhibition and archive provide the most immediate context. A sample of which include such publications as: '0-100; 2-UP; A3 Series; A Prior; An Architektur; aTree zine; ALBUM; Apartamento, Bad Day, Bidoun;...; Zug".

Quotes from 'Millennium Magazines' webpage – accessed 9/7/12.)
This survey of experimental art and design magazines published since 2000 explores the various ways in which contemporary artists and designers utilize the magazine format as an experimental space for the presentation of artworks and text. Throughout the 20th century, international avant-garde activities in the visual arts and design were often codified first in the informal context of a magazine or journal. This exhibition, drawn from the holdings of the MoMA Library, follows the practice into the 21st century. The works on view represent a broad array of international titles within this genre, from community-building newspapers to image-only photography magazines to conceptual design projects. The contents illustrate a diverse range of image-making, editing, design, printing, and distribution practices. There are obvious connections to the past lineage of artists’ magazines and little architecture and design magazines of the 20th century, as well as a clear sense of the application of new techniques of image-editing and printing methods. Assembled together, these contemporary magazines provide a first-hand view into these practices and represents the MoMA Library’s sustained effort to document and collect this medium.

Organized by Rachael Morrison and David Senior, MoMA Library

Veneer. No. 05. (Portland, OR: MPH, 2008). Photograph by Flint Jamison
Millennium Magazines

Throughout the twentieth century, innovations in international avant-garde visual arts and design were often first expressed in the informal context of a magazine or journal. This exhibition, drawn from the holdings of The Museum of Modern Art Library, follows this practice into the twenty-first century, exploring the various ways in which contemporary artists and designers use the magazine as an experimental space.

The works on view, all published since 2000, represent a broad array of international titles—from community newspapers to image-only photography magazines to conceptual design projects. These publications illustrate a diverse range of image-making, editing, design, printing, and distribution practices. There are connections to the past lineage of artists' magazines and the little architecture and design magazines of the twentieth century, as well as unique applications of new image-editing and printing methods. Assembled here, these contemporary magazines provide a firsthand view of the latest practices in art and design in print and represent MoMA Library's sustained effort to document and collect this medium.

Organized by Rachael Morrison and David Senior

The documentation below is a compilation of editorial statements by the artists, designers and publishers of titles in our Library exhibition. We intend for this space to record the authors' strategies and motives in creating these publications, and to exist as a research resource for those interested in this genre after the show has ended.
0_100 focus on contemporary photograph
0_100 is a strictly limited edition of 100 copies, each numbered
0_100 is an independent project
0_100 is out every season
0_100 is published in Milan, Italy

http://www.moma.org/interactives/exhibitions/2012/millenniummagazines/
Now in its fourth year, 2HB is a quarterly publication dedicated to creative and experimental writing in contemporary art, edited by Jamie Kenyon and Francis McKee, with Louise Shelley as Editor-at-large.

A journal for experimental art writing, 2HB facilitates a discursive space for writing in contemporary art practice and creates a platform for artists, writers and theorists to realise work that might not otherwise be published.
Preliminary written and photographic research for the work was undertaken in the Library of Hospitalfield House in during a research residency in 2007 (funded by the RSA, Edinburgh and Hospitalfield House Trust), and extended with further research visits in 2008 and 2009.

The textual material was brought forth from the journals of Richard Parrot (1740-1762), an ancestor of Patrick Allan Fraser, the last owner of Hospitalfield House.

Images from this wider body of research are included in the ‘What we make with words’ catalogue for 'Curious Arts – No. 5' (2011); and extracts from the list of subject headings are included in the site-specific installation 'Curious Arts - No. 3' (2010 to date). See REF Outputs 1 and 3 respectively.
OUTPUT

Title
Hospitalfield House
Arbroath

Submission No.

Authors/Creators