

Editorial

Books, Scrolls and Ripples: In Search of an Audience through the Printed Works of Helen Douglas

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Abstract: In this interview, artist and small press publisher Dr. Helen Douglas appraises the development of the artist's book from its emergence in the 1950s and 1960s to seeking public recognition as a bone fide art form in the mid-1970s, through to the current global attention that it now attracts. Notions of the mass-produced and the handmade are questioned and examined in light of the freedom, cheapness and accessibility of digital technologies versus the time and labour of the artist in search of the haptic, intimate and conceptually complex experience.

Keywords: Helen Douglas; Weproductions; Deuchar Mill; artists' books; book fairs; scrolls

1. Introduction

In August 2019, I visited the studio of internationally respected artists' bookmaker and publisher Helen Douglas. Located in the secluded Yarrow valley in the Scottish Borders, Deuchar Mill was the home of the Weproductions imprint for over thirty years until Douglas and partner Telfer Stokes separated in 2004. Alongside other notable British imprints from the 1960s onwards, such as Circle Press (Ron King), Coracle Press (Simon Cutts and Erica van Horn), Tetrad Press (Ian Tyson) and the self-titled Colin Sackett, Weproductions epitomised the significance of the self-publisher, collaborating on, designing and printing numerous seminal book works that placed it at the forefront of establishing the genre as a primary medium in art practice. Continually breaking new ground through her use of both paper and screen technologies, it seemed to me that Douglas was well placed to analyse whether the artist's book genre has experienced a shift in audience expectations and reception as the analogue and digital collide.

2. The Interview

Chris Taylor (CT)

The letter you sent me in response to this Special [Issue] call out was an exquisite piece of writing, poetic in structure to the extent that one could imagine you performing it.

Helen Douglas (HD)

When I was writing the letter, I'd obviously looked at your call out summary for *Arts* journal, but I'd found myself not wanting to respond in an academic way. There were so many different things that I could have written in quite a lot of depth about, and I just didn't know how far to go into any of it. For instance, the digital engagement—that could have been an essay in itself. So, I thought, I need to keep to the main firm things, which are important to me.

CT

Looking back over more than forty years situated at the forefront of artists' book production in the UK, have you been conscious of any significant shift in audience reception towards the genre during this period? Has the artist–audience relationship changed?

HD

Well, I was thinking particularly about book fairs. In the early days, the first book fair we [Weproductions] ever did was in '76 at the Hayward Gallery. There were about seven different publishers, Hansjör Mayor being one, Simon Cutts another and us. I can't remember the other four. We were in the gallery upstairs and hardly anyone came, and those who did didn't know what it was about. Early book fairs were a bit like that, the public came in, and it was something completely new to them. Whereas now, it's not like that at all. There was something really refreshing about the public coming along and opening up to what was being presented. Bookshops were also more open then to taking artists' books. I'm thinking of Compendium in London and Gotham Book Mart in New York, which had literature, art and beat poetry and that kind of thing. Gotham's was in East Village; they took our books. It is much harder now to place artists' books in these sort of shops—there was more interest in our books then in that wider sense. I think now—and I noticed this by about 2000—people were beginning to have a distinct idea of what an artist's book is, which didn't necessarily accord with my own ideas shaped in the 70s. I remember someone saying about my book *Unravelling the Ripple* [2001], "This isn't an artist's book". This book was published in the "pocketbook" series. I was really taken aback. It was a young student-artist who said this, and I realised they were coming with a concept of what they thought the artist's book was, and it was to do with the more hand-produced book, the "beautiful book", again, if you want for a better term. *Unravelling the Ripple* was the furthest I got to this idea of a book being published in a multiple democratic edition. 2800 books were printed—and that's a lot of books—and they were reasonably priced at £7.99 and were sold in regular bookshops. It was absolutely an artist's book. I had conceived, originated and worked on the whole production. Once I'd made the book, I worked with the editor as to how the text that Rebecca Solnit had written visually fed into the main body of the visual narrative. I also worked with the printers and binders. So, I was really taken aback when this person said, "this is not an artist's book". I began to realise that the audience who were coming to book fairs were wanting something different. I think it was the beginning of the digital thread of influence on the book. Suddenly the emphasis shifted, and people were wanting this very tactile, handcrafted sort of book.

CT

How would you describe your books up until then?

HD

Well our books in the 70s were paperback books. They were printed offset, crisply bound and economically priced. That with hindsight was part of their aesthetic. Conceptually these books were exploring book form, sequence and the turning the pages and the developing of visual narrative. Then, when we started printing our own books, paper became more of a real interest, how we interacted print with that. In the book *Mim* [1986], we used different papers and wallpapers; that was possible because we had our own press. Certainly, at that time, a physical tactile kind of quality came into our books. By the early 2000s, that was what people were really wanting from an artist's book. I think, in that way, the genre of artists' books split, because you still have that more conceptual approach to the book as a place to put concepts and ideas alongside the more crafted tactile "beautiful" book. The two are of course not mutually exclusive of the other. In Europe, if you go to the Berlin book fair, Friends with Books, it's predominantly texts—there is imagery—but there is certainly no sense of the more handcraft book scene. Conversely, if you look at the book fairs in Britain, they are much more

geared around small editions, artist's making and the haptic. So, yes, things have shifted; they have changed enormously.

CT

Going back to that first Hayward book fair in 1976, who was the organiser?

HD

It was someone called Richard Francis, who was working for the Arts Council of Great Britain. There was an exhibition of artists' books where the term "artists' books" was used for the first time in the UK as the title on the front of the catalogue [*Artists' books, booklets, pamphlets, catalogues, periodicals, anthologies, and magazines almost all published since 1970 . . . , 1976*]. Martin Attwood organised this exhibition with Richard Francis. Martin, whom I had known well at university, introduced me to Telfer, and by 1974/5, we were all living in the same house. The Arts Council show followed on from the British Council travelling exhibition *Artists' Bookworks* (1975), which Martin had also organised. Clive Phillpot wrote the essay *Book Art Digressions* for the Arts Council show and catalogue, and that's where you get the "pocket book", of a paperback in the pocket. So, to recap, Richard Francis organised the book fair, which was a spin-off from the exhibition he had also been involved in.

CT

So, from 1976 and the artists' book fairs that Marcus Campbell began organising in London, what was happening in between?

HD

Not a lot in terms of book fairs as far as I remember.

CT

Because we, John McDowall and myself, established the first one outside of London at Dean Clough [Halifax] in 1998, and Marcus [was] probably around 4–5 years prior to that.

HD

Yes, definitely Marcus, but also Simon Cutts. We did a fair in '92; I remember having *Yarrow Cooks* [1992] on the table. That was a Small Publishers' Fair, at a venue off Kings Road. These fairs were more poetry/art driven. Then, the fairs slightly dipped out, and then they came back again. Simon had definitely organised one or two fairs. I think there had been one or two before the 1992 event, the first one we did. It was definitely '92, because I remember the book we were launching. Then, Marcus' London Artists' Book Fair started at the Royal Festival Hall and then moved to the Barbican Centre. The Festival Hall was '93 and definitely '94, because we had *Water on the Border* [1994]. Then, it was at Chelsea Barracks next to Tate, where we did the talks beforehand. That was '95.

CT

The Royal Festival Hall was the first book fair I came to in London and where I bought a copy of *Mim*. I also bought a copy of *Black Bob* [Colin Sackett, 1989] from the Coracle Press stand—the first two books forming the beginnings of my own collection.

HD

There weren't that many exhibitors then even, and still, at the Royal Festival Hall, it was very much the browsing public. But, it's interesting that you knew about it to go to.

CT

It was Paris-based typographer and bookmaker Michael C. Caine who was participating in the fair who told me it was happening; otherwise, I'd have never known about it. But, the browsing public

is where you start, with people who are passing through, and if it was tucked away on an upper gallery of the South Bank, then that's when it becomes difficult; you're not really breaking new ground?

HD

Yes, the London Artists' Book Fair in the Curved Gallery at the Barbican was a much better place to do it in, because there was a natural flow of public.

CT

In establishing the first fair at Dean Clough, we simply asked why we needed to go to London to show our books? Let's try and do something outside of the capital. When we put the first one on, we took a chance—it was actually over two floors, probably too big for Dean Clough and the audience it could attract at the time, but we quickly learnt from that and the following year, reduced it down to a single level.

HD

You have to build, and some build and some go the other way. Glasgow never took off.

CT

It was overshadowed by the Glasgow International Arts Festival; they were never accepted as being part of the larger international event.

HD

Whereas the Fruitmarket Bookmarket in Edinburgh has really taken off.

CT

With Glasgow, it was very much to do with the venue at the Royal Concert Hall; people don't pass through it until there's a concert in the evening, by which time you'd be packing up, whereas the Fruitmarket has a constant flow.

HD

Plus, it has a connection with books, and it is an art gallery. Friends with Books in Berlin at the Hamburger Bahnhof has people visiting constantly. For me now, doing a book fair on my own, I don't get a chance to look at what other people are making. When there were two of us running Weproductions, there was a much better balance of organisation between making and distributing. And when we were at fairs, it meant one of us could be attending to the table and public whilst the other could go off and look around and chat. I can no longer do this, so there is something missing for me now.

CT

The thing about artists' book fairs, it's a double-edged sword: you're meeting your audience directly, and you're developing a conversation very quickly across the table—a form of exchange. But, it's very short—like an exhibition in a day—and then it's over. It's of its own time and moment.

HD

When people ask me if I would like them to take over my stand for a bit, on the whole I say "no". This is what I'm doing, and it is so important—it's not just about selling; it's the contact, lead or interesting conversation. So, I tend to just be there.

CT

I was recently looking at a film you made in the Borders where two people are walking around the perimeter of a domestic space, and I was reminded of an event I attended at Tate Britain the year the London Artists' Book Fair was held at the adjacent Millbank barracks [9 November, 1995] where, if I

remember correctly, Ron King gave an illustrated talk on Circle Press and its pre-eminent role in building the foundations for artists' books as a primary medium, and then, Bruce McLean, whilst apologetic for having not brought any books or slides to actually show, talked enthusiastically on the importance of image and text and his collaboration with writer Mel Gooding at Knife Edge Press. However, what has remained with me most from that day was your performance—a physical manifestation of concept, the page and the book. Does the body/book/object relationship still inform how you develop an idea and how this might influence the structure and construction of your book works?

HD

Definitely '95. Sarah Bodman published my piece and published all of the talks. They'll all be there in the *Artist's Book Year Book, '96/97* [Impact Press, Bristol, 1996]. The film I made was shot around the studio that Peter Womersley [1923–1993] designed for his friend Bernat Klein [1922–2014]. I and the two dancers, Claire Pencak and Jenna Agate, made it for a project called *Reflectivity*. We were at the Haining, this house where I photograph a lot, and it's got this amazing reflective lake, rather than loch, because it was manmade for this Georgian house. I then thought we could work with glass at the nearby Klein studio, which has always interested me in its structure, proportion and ratio. We didn't have a concept of how it would exactly work, but I had an idea in terms of position and framing. I just started up my Olympus camera, and it was amazing how, in the doing, what began to happen in terms of reflections and the way these figures came from the side and the column and went around the building to merge back to the corner column. I called it *Figuring Space*. When you asked this question linking this moving image back to the Tate, I thought, goodness, I said so much about movement and its importance to me back in '96. By that time, I'd made *Water on the Border* with Telfer, one of many books we produced together. *Water on the Border* is the first book where a sense of movement begins to come in and be informed through my involvement with dance. And partly also through doing Tai Chi in China. The experience of China also brought about a different way of working with the book, working *across* the page.

CT

Was this a completely new format in terms of composition and structure for Weproductions?

HD

I'm not saying we hadn't done that with film strips across the page, but this was a more conscious way of thinking of mark making on and across the page, in that calligraphic way they work in China. We went to China, and there was definitely some underlying intention to explore this in book form. The kind of phrasing and metering, this had a lot to do with dance. Recently, I was listening to the dancer Akram Khan on the radio. He talked about rhythm and pattern and what dance is and how it tells stories, narrative. Darcey Bussell likewise spoke of dance as a language: one word after another, one movement after another. I'm always struck by that, how narrative doesn't necessarily need to be put into words to be expressed. Putting one image next to another can be narrative. When I started dancing, I began to realise that what I had been doing with books, with visual sequencing, was exactly that: they were narratives—though "narrative" wasn't a word one used in the 70s. I realised that all these books had narrative in them, and this gave me real insight. So, with *Water on the Border*, there was much more of a consciousness of this: through dance, the idea of narrative and story really began to come through and, with that, a sense of mark, movement and rhythm. In dance, you work in "phrases", a bit like constructing music. I found more and more that I was constructing phrases, which then folded back into the book. At first it was the codex book, but eventually it became concertina books and then hand scrolls as a logical conclusion. The scroll is really allowing for that arm's breadth and to be experienced in that way, in the unscrolling and viewing by the reader.

CT

So, which was the first scroll book that you actually made?

HD

The first scroll I made was *Poempondscroll*, with Valerie Gillies [2010]. It was made for the exhibition Poetry Beyond Text that Dundee University curated with the Dundee Library [Poetry Beyond Text: Vision, Text + Cognition, 2011]. I knew it was to be an exhibition piece; that's where the books were to be made public. One of the frustrations of making codex books is if they're put in an exhibition, they are just opened at one double-page spread, so none of the narrative can be followed and therefore much of the meaning is lost. I began to think that if this commission was to be made for an exhibition, then a scroll would be a much better exhibiting form so that a public could see a larger stretch of my bookwork and perhaps the link between one phrase and another. When exhibited, it was the first time that I saw a lot of people looking simultaneously at one of my works; normally, it would be one person at a time.

CT

So, how does this sense of space and movement affect the way you plan out your ideas in the studio?

HD

The way I work is on the floor, placing and pacing the images I put together, exploring that sense of extension and then coming back in, which is what you have to do with dance. It's outwards, but it has to come back to the core of the body to then extend outwards again. So, in the book, you have the open spread and the spine, and concertina unfolds further; it always folds back to itself. I hope that explains something of it? It's a physical thing. I do find my dependent use of the computer quite complicated now. I used to work just with bromides or colour prints. I would lay them out and study them, let them speak to me. I would photocopy them, blow them up and explore size and scale. But now, everything is in the computer as files and digital libraries. I have to print out a lot of my images, and only then do I begin to move them around, cut them up and place them next to each other. Because I'm not printing out so many images, as the potential of what could be printed is so vast, it's quite hard to know whether I'm not missing something. I have to trust myself. So, I print out, perhaps, the choicest bits; then, I begin to find groups of images that work together. It's a very physical thing. It's not done on the computer by any means, that bit; it's done in my studio in a physical way, putting things on the floor, working it out across the floor.

CT

You embraced digital printing quite early on in its development with publications such as *Field Notes*, which was commissioned by PAGES in 2007 for the Special Collections exhibition [University of Leeds Gallery] and more recently a screen-based work, *The Pond at Deuchar*, published by Tate in 2013. What have these relatively new technologies allowed you to achieve in your practice conceptually and aesthetically that was hitherto not possible?

HD

I got my first digital camera in 2004, up to that point I had never used one. However, by '98 with *Wild Wood* [1999], working with my analogue colour photographs, I began to realise that to put that book together, I might be able to do it using a computer and Photoshop. That was around the time Telfer had just bought a computer. I saw him beginning to work with it, and I knew I wanted to do something really different, so I learnt how to use the software. That was the beginning of my digital engagement; I could never have done *Wild Wood* otherwise.

CT

Why was that? What was particular about *Wild Wood*?

HD

For a start, before that, everything was in black and white. I was putting images together using our Repromaster process camera, working with film here in the darkroom, and it suddenly felt like old technology. With *Wild Wood*, I knew I wanted to work in colour; technically, this was not possible in our own darkroom. The one full colour book we'd done was *Clinkscale* [1977]. For this book, we had a cyberchrome print made and graphically joined together in repeat by a studio. The costs involved would have been prohibitive for a larger book. Whereas suddenly with Photoshop, the tool was now there to work in colour with photographs and for me to be able to make the borders and frames for *Wild Wood*. I could digitally bring the narrative onto the page, into the illusionistic space of the page and through the book. All of that was totally possible. When we'd tried to do that with an earlier book, which didn't happen, we were cutting out and overlaying photographs, like making a collage of one photograph over another. It was time consuming; our plan would have been to half-tone the collaged art work. With *Wild Wood*, I could do it with Photoshop. I used quite a primitive version of the software, but it was fine; the tool was there. So, that enabled something that never would have been possible before and to work in colour, not to mention working with commercial printers again, as they were now using digital files and putting them directly onto plates for press. Moreover, because printers were coming under commercial pressure with the advent of the digital, the difference in price between printing black and white and colour in the late 90s was very little. Costs had really come down. In the 70s, colour was very expensive to print; there was a significant change at that point in the late 90s. So, those were the first new possibilities for making with the digital.

Unravelling the Ripple came next. Then, with *Illiers Combray*, a collaboration with Zöe Irvine [2004], I made a concertina. I had often thought of making a concertina; suddenly, on the computer, it seemed possible. By 2003 I was beginning to think of how one could print something with an ink jet printer on a roll; however, as I wanted an edition of 500 plus copies, the concertina was designed in strips to fit the B1 sheet size of the offset litho press. There was something about the way I was able to construct the book on the computer, joining one section with another until the whole was made, which was absolutely possible. After *Illiers Combray*, I thought, now I could really start to print myself and start using that roll/scroll continuum of inkjet printing. I was nervous about the durability of the inks. I'd noticed one or two people at book fairs using inkjet printing, but I was worried about the archival nature of all of this, not that offset litho is particularly fantastic. I was, however, concerned about it, because as soon as you're making smaller editions, then the pricing goes up, and I feel the piece has to be good for the person who's buying it. The first digital-printed book was *Swansongs* [2006]. I was going to make 30 copies, but to date, I have only made 12, because it was such a long narrative, and it was so time consuming to print and bind. *Swansongs* was printed on Chinese paper. I had wanted to use this really fine paper for some time, and I realised I could put it through the inkjet printer, just. It's very fine, about 24 grams, and I've actually managed to get it through the printer. With inkjet, I also realised I could use ink in a different way; in offset litho, ink tends to sit on the page as it does with digital laser printing, whereas with inkjet, it can dye into the paper, and I really love this fusion and more painterly quality. So, with digital inkjet, I could create a different print quality on this paper. *Swansongs* and recently *Meadow* [2017], which you bought this year [purchased as part of the New Voices touring collection, PAGES, 2019] were both printed on this Chinese Xuan paper, exploring ink, the paper and the see-throughness of the paper. You could not print a book like that on an offset press. With inkjet, I've been able to use different sorts of papers, and when it came to printing the scroll, I was acknowledging the nature of digital printing and the fact it could go on and on. If I was able to, I could print a sixteen-metre-long length, in theory, on a single roll. I did try and do it commercially, but the colour profiling was terrible; so, in the end, I printed it myself in sections. And that has been another wonderful thing about digitally printing myself; there is no difference between my mock ups and workings and the final product, because I know exactly what the colour is going to be. There's a true relationship between the colour from my original to the final produced book, whereas with offset, there's always change, and if you're using a commercial printer, it's really hard to get a perfect

match. I've always had to give and take a bit with that. The downside with digital printing, if I do it in my studio, is that I'm producing in small editions, and so, the work ends up being priced higher. The work goes into collections, sometimes to individual people but often to institutions. The model of output is at odds, however, with that belief in the multiple and the democratic art form of the artists' book. So, the 70s scene that I came out of has completely changed, but truthfully, the circumstances and what people are wanting out of artists' books has also changed. I've decided that I'm doing both, keeping open still to that possibility of a larger edition as well as making these other works in smaller editions, which gives me a kind of freedom. Making smaller editions means I can try out new ideas without having a commitment to a large edition, which means I don't have to be out selling all the time. If say, it's an edition of four, as the scrolls, it's more like producing a painting; yet, it's a book. I mean, the form and its handling relate intrinsically to book. I don't want to produce paintings for walls; however, there is a painterly quality that has come into my work, which is different, and I want to continue to explore.

CT

So, *The Pond at Deuchar*, which is onscreen . . .

HD

It's a sixteen-metre scroll.

CT

Just screen based or is it printed as well?

HD

Both. It started off as a hand scroll, and I made four copies. As I was originating this scroll, I visited the Apple store and measured an iPad, my thinking being that digital scrolling on a touch screen might be another way of putting my scrolls out into the world like the democratic multiple. I was excited about the idea. The printed hand scroll is, in fact, pretty much the same height as the original iPad screen and was made in late 2011. And then, this extraordinary, serendipitous circumstance occurred when University of the Arts, London and Tate were doing this digital research project, *Transforming Artist Books*, and invited me to be a part of it and speak on "transforming the medium". I said, "Well, if you want me to talk about transforming the medium, why don't you put my scroll, which I've just made, onto an iPad?" I mean, it couldn't have been a better link-up and opportunity; it was fantastic. The first prototype we made wasn't using *Turning the Pages* software, but another software, in which the scroll really did glide. I thought, this is the way: I could do small-printed editions and then publish digitally the work, to be viewed by fifty people or a thousand, millions, who knows? Then, to Tate's and my amazement, the App Store rejected the app submitted by Tate, saying it had "limited functionality"; in other words, it wasn't whizzy or gimmicky enough. That was the last thing I wanted. My work was a meditative piece, and I was really taken aback by the App Store's curatorial/editorial process, decision and power. How, even if a renowned institution like the Tate wanted to publish something, that they, the App Store, were really the publishers in the end. That gave me a huge jolt. I had originally thought I would be doing more digital screen-based works. However, after that, I thought, I'm not going to; it is so reliant on the whims of "big tech". Incredulously, after a number of months, the prototype scroll app itself was whipped off my iPad. It disappeared. When we tried to renew the license, we could not, because the code for it wasn't designed for the new iPad 3, so they wouldn't renew it. As a digital piece, it was shown once publicly at Yale on the iPad 2 [*Of Green Leaf Bird and Flower: Artists' Books and the Natural World*, Yale Center for British Art, New Haven, curated by Elisabeth Fairman, 2014], but now, I can't show it as an exhibition piece anymore. You can see it online, using *Turning the Pages* software hosted by the online Culture Platform, developed by Michael Stocking at the Armadillo, the company who helped do it. In making the e-scroll, Armadillo literally took my digital artwork files and put them onto the screen, creating the software to do it. There was no changing or manipulation of

my files. The whole experience taught me a lot and reaffirmed to me the importance of independent publishing and the value of printing on paper and producing physical books. I don't want my work to exist only in a virtual world. My other thought, which is personal and age related, is that I recognise there is another generation of creative people who have the code know-how as to how to develop digital work in a way that I do not. The gaming narrative/storytelling genre has become, obviously, such a vibrant industry. I think there are undoubtedly links with the artist's book, but I'm not party to this virtual world, and I don't think I want to be. I'm drawn to the physicality of the book. It is such a wonderful compact form.

CT

An academic as well as an artist, have you been aware of changes in the way emerging artists are approaching the book format, often eschewing the traditional craft and haptic concerns for a more basic and rigid aesthetic in which image takes precedent over materiality? Is the increasing presence and visibility at artists' book fairs globally of what, in the broadest terms, have collectively become known as "photobooks" simply a reflection on the technologies now widely available rather than the creation of a sub-genre? For example, Offprint held at Tate Modern?

HD

I tried to catch onto all of this when I was over in Berlin, as some of these photobooks were being shown there. Offprint at Tate takes place in the same week as London Photo. It is linked to Paris Photo; that's where it came from, but I'm not connected. It sort of by-passed me, and whilst recently, I thought, this is probably where I should be showing, I haven't, and I haven't attended the fair. This is partly because it's in May, and quite honestly, I don't like doing book fairs then. It's a wonderful month in Scotland, and I like to be outside in my surroundings at Deuchar Mill photographing for myself.

About the photobook: I do not have a firm grasp of its emergence and history. Whilst I do of the artist's book and the integral part of the photograph within that. By the early 70s, there was definitely that belief that artists' books was a new phenomenon, that emerging in the 60s was connected with land art, performance and conceptual art. Richard Long, Ed Ruscha and Dieter Roth, I was really aware of, as well as artists publishing in magazines such as *Studio International*. I'm going back to this, because I became aware of all of this around '71/'72, partly through Martin Atwood, who I was close with at University, who was inspirational and closely involved with Telfer's first book *Passage* [1972]. It shaped me, and with hindsight, I was also part of the shaping. Books and book thinking were right there from when I was about 18, and I became actively engaged. I was studying art history at the University of East Anglia [1970–1973], and I was looking at artists' books and began to think about the book as a primary place for art instead of a secondary place for looking at art, which I was doing the whole time in books. I was also aware of how artists were using art magazines, such as in *Studio International*, The Artist Pages [May 1971], in which *Studio* gave itself over to pages by artists. David Dye's action of turning the pages was inspirational. I became aware of how photography was an integral part of artists' practice in performance, land art and books—documenting, but also making photographic works to be published in book form, such as Richard Long's book *Along a River Bank* (*Art & Project* 1972), which I bought in that year. Reliant on photography, these works marry the photograph to the page, the sequence of pages and the book form. They were not called photobooks.

Tracing further back, I've always argued—and it's in *Speaking of Book Art* [Cathy Courtney, 1999], that aspects of artists' books go right back to the early 20th century and Russian Futurist and Constructivist books with artists and poets coming together. In that period, artists began to really use the page, and by the 20s, artists such as El Lissitzky [1890–1941] were using photography and coined the term "book space: [Merz 1923], in which he was talking not just about the double spread, but how visual images could activate the mobility of the eye and could be taken through the book as a whole. So, if you look at these type of books, the way the images and text were being developed through the pages, combined with the use of the camera, and the way the photograph was used and worked not

only with typography but also with page sequence, etc., this creates precedents for the artist's book of the 60s and 70s. In the 20s and 30s, artists were breaking down the distinctions between fine art and design and photography. So, art, photography, the book and commercial printing came together at that time, and then, it seems to pull apart again by the '50s.

It was only in 2012 that I saw the photographic show at Tate Modern of the photographers William Klein and Dado Moriyama—did you see that exhibition? It was a revelation in terms of photography and book; I thought, my God, there's been another tradition of people using the book, and this is photographers in the 50s and 60s. The exhibition was co-curated by Simon Baker. That's really when, for me, I became aware of the photobook tradition. I talked to Clive [Phillpot] about this, and he said, when he was librarian at MOMA, he collected artists' books for the library, and the photography department collected photobooks for its collection; there was not much crossover. So, the curating around these genres developed separately. But, with hindsight, you can trace this all back earlier to the 1920s and early 30s, when art, photography and book came together, and now, in a way, it's coming back together again. I don't know if that answers your question?

My books are certainly beginning to be reviewed in photographic journals . . . twice now, in the context of photobooks, in *Photographic Review* [Spring 2018], and an interview about my practice and book is to be published in the 2019 winter issue of the *Scottish Society for the History of Photography* (SSHOP) journal. Very rarely now are my books reviewed in art journals, whereas all through the 80s and 90s they were. They're not now, so something has shifted there.

CT

So, whilst the mediums of book and photography have come back together quite significantly in terms of the photobook and its presence in the market, there is a schism somewhere in the way people are looking at them and reviewing them separately?

HD

I think so. I don't know what you think, but there is very little reviewing of artists' books in journals now. There used to be because of Clive, then Cathy Courtney and Stephen Bury [in *Art Monthly*]. *Printed Matter* asked Stephen Bury to review my retrospective exhibition of *Weproductions 1972–2018* at *Printed Matter*, New York, May 2018, but although he was keen, it never happened with *Art Monthly* or anywhere. It was a comprehensive retrospective exhibition, and it wasn't reviewed. So, where does one go for these reviews now? It's not figuring with art journals so much, whereas with photo journalism, the photobook has got a place, and they are looking to artists' books as well. In the last review [*Photographic Review*, Issue 93, Spring 2018], it said my work doesn't fit neatly into the photobook genre; it writes about me being elusive, but I don't intend to be elusive—it's possibly because I'm slightly out of that mainstream.

However, one or two people who have collected my books are looking and collecting photobooks. The V&A is collecting both. Wonderful. I had a collector from Italy who was really interested in our work from the 70s. Great. So, some are looking back to see how artists were working with the camera and book, because, as I said earlier, many artists were. Of course, now, everyone's got a camera, so there is something else going on. It's great there's a democratisation, but I don't necessarily see students wanting to work with that. Film, yes. If students want to work with the photograph, its often back to analogue or something more screen-based with film. Otherwise, so many of the students—you were saying about the materiality—are wanting that materiality, so it is almost reverting back to older traditions of fine press, letterpress and paper and that kind of work rather than the conceptual.

It's tricky, and I don't have complete understanding of it. But, what I've tried to say is the photograph and book go back—I feel there was something before the 60s/70s artist's book, and then, it splits. I mean, where was Moriyama being shown all those years ago, the work—and where were those books? They weren't in modern art galleries or bookshops in Britain, were they? Did you see them?

CT

Stephen Bury curated an extremely informative show at the British Library in 2007 [Breaking the Rules. The Printed Face of the European Avant Garde 1900–1937] just before he left to go to the Frick in New York, which picked up on a number of early European photobook works and how they were such an important part of that Avant Garde period. It was that exhibition that underscored how important those earlier photobooks were, how they'd fed through to the later periods and had such an influence on contemporary artists' books in the late 50s and early 60s, more so than the current trend, which is possibly more technology/accessibility-led rather than influenced by any sense of history within the genre?

HD

Well, it's now such a vast field, the photobook, and I haven't followed the genre with a particular attention that it no doubt deserves. Books of photographs don't interest me. The photograph per se has never been the emphasis. For me, the camera is a tool, in looking, gathering and constructing the narrative and bringing the image to the page and book. The way that I'm now using the photograph with inkjet, painting has become more my reference. I enjoy enormously looking at painting. However, I work in the book and with book form, and this is how I wish my work to be viewed, sequentially and intimately in the handling. Painting is my reference rather than photography. Book is what I do.

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