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# The Art of the Book and the Book as Art

Robert Tauber

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Antonio Castro

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Carl  
Hertzog

Lecture Series



**The Art of the Book  
and the Book as Art**

by Robert Tauber



Carl  
Hertzog  
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## The Carl Hertzog Lecture Series

The Hertzog Lectures, inaugurated on February 5, 1989, is presented biennially to honor the memory and life work of the "Printer at the Pass," J. Carl Hertzog (1902-1984).

A premier typographer and book designer long before his association with the University of Texas at El Paso, Mr. Hertzog brought his international renown to the then-Texas Western College in 1948. He launched Texas Western Press in 1952, serving as its director until his retirement in 1972.

Books bearing the distinctive Carl Hertzog colophon reached a standard of excellence that is unexcelled to this day.

The University Library's Special Collections Department is the repository of the extensive collection of Carl Hertzog books and papers.

The Carl Hertzog Lectures and the biennial Carl Hertzog Award for Excellence in Book Design are sponsored by the Friends of the University Library at the University of Texas at El Paso.



**Texas  
Western  
Press**





*(Drawing by Tom Lea 1946)*

J. Carl Hertzog  
1902-1984



The title of my talk is “The Art of the Book and the Book as Art.” I think that you will see that these two ideas are, in every sense, really two sides of the same coin, a *discordia concors*.

This talk is going to be both a critique of fine printing and the art of the book, as well as a challenge because, when I am done, I hope you will have more questions than answers. Everybody knows that we are facing major changes in the world of print technology, but it is not the first time in the history of civilization that these sorts of changes have happened. We have gone from oral culture to writing culture, from writing culture to print culture; and now, we are moving away from print culture to digital culture.

When I got a phone call from Robert L. Stakes, Associate VP for Information Resources and Planning, and Director of the Library, asking me to come to El Paso to present the 14<sup>th</sup> biennial Carl Hertzog Award Lecture, he said, “We were so impressed at how enthusiastic you were about receiving the 13th Hertzog Award when you were here two years ago, that I would like you to come back and tell everybody why you were so happy to get this award.”

Let me start by telling you about something I read in 2007 by Gerald Lange, who was the very first Hertzog Award winner in 1991:

“My move to Los Angeles, in 1986, was a turnabout. As the editor of a couple of journals during this period and the beginning of my writing about typography, printing, and the book arts, I began to question not only the validity of my previous work, but the rationale of classical typography and the fine press book itself. This was a long period of self-examination and I was quite uncertain how to resolve the dilemma. I would eventually clarify this for myself, but I emerged from it with a different purpose in my publishing efforts. In retrospect, this was somewhat inspired by James Trissel [The Press at Colorado College], who suggested that fine press printer-publishers should take more of an artistic stance and develop books from their own vision rather than follow the traditional paths. A contemporary press who vividly followed this methodology (independently) was Logan Elm Press. . . . This is a very legitimate, yet dangerous approach, as it can verge on self-indulgence, and the fine press book collecting market is extremely conservative.” (*GalleyGab*, August 2007)



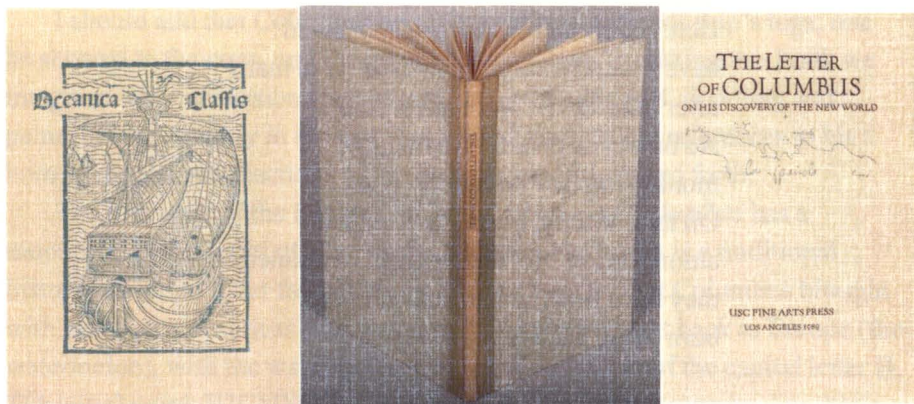
When Robert L. Stakes asked me to give this talk, I immediately recalled these comments by Gerald Lange. Also, I knew that he had won the first Hertzog Award for his *The Letter of Columbus*. Ironically, at that very same time in 1990-91, I was printing a very similar book, also based on the famous letter that Columbus wrote to King Philip II and Queen Isabella of Spain (the very first correspondence from the new world back to the old, and pure grantsmanship, asking for second year funding).

I had received the beautiful prospectus and had toyed with the idea of entering the first year of the Hertzog competition. I decided against it, because I thought my book based on the Columbus letter was going to be considered too “way out,” not traditional enough, not conservative enough: As fine printing, I didn’t think it stood a chance in this competition.

Much later, when I read Gerald Lange’s comments saying that he should rethink his approach to traditional fine printing and publishing, classical design and the more rigid approach to the design of books, and that he should start, instead, to follow the precepts of a mutual friend, Jim Trissel, and he named my press specifically as an example to follow, it blew my mind! Curiously enough, Jim Trissel was this year’s 14th Hertzog Award winner’s teacher, and inspired Tom Leech to become a printer/publisher. It seems very true to me that when you are running a teaching press, like the Logan Elm Press, or any other collegiate teaching press, like the one at Colorado College that Jim Trissel ran, and when you have students working with Art, Design or English faculty, along with visiting artists and poets, you naturally focus on doing work that expresses artistically unique points of view, and should not allow yourself, or your students, to become too penned in or fettered by too many of the traditional approaches to fine printing.

Compare Gerald Lange’s first Hertzog Award winning book, *The Letter of Columbus: on His Discovery of the New World* (USC Fine Arts Press, 1989), to my book, *A Letter of Columbus* (Logan Elm Press, 1990), that I did pretty much at the same time to celebrate the 1992 Columbus Quincentenary. I commissioned the poet David Citino to cast off this letter as contemporary verse. Anthony Rice illustrated the poem using monoprints, where no two copies are exactly alike. Each copy uses hand-colored plates that have to be inked and printed, then hand painted over and over again each time afresh; so, it is not like the image is carried on the printing plate, and then tickly-bumpy-boom, it can be reproduced one copy after another like so





*The Letter of Columbus* (USC Fine Arts Press, 1989)

many pages flying automatically off the press. This is an entirely creative process, where each individual print is unique. We made all of the paper for this book: the text from Spanish flax, endsheets from Abaca and straw fiber, and slipcases from a thick sisal/hemp anchor rope.



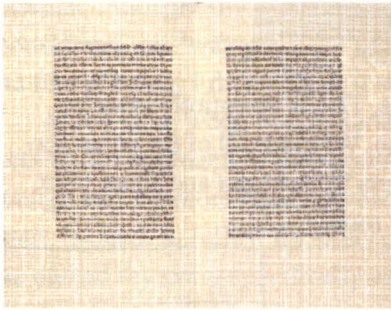
*A Letter of Columbus* (Logan Elm Press, 1990)

The two texts compare very distinctly: *The Letter of Columbus* text is a reprinting of the first Latin edition of the letter published in 1493 in May in Rome and accompanied by an English translation:

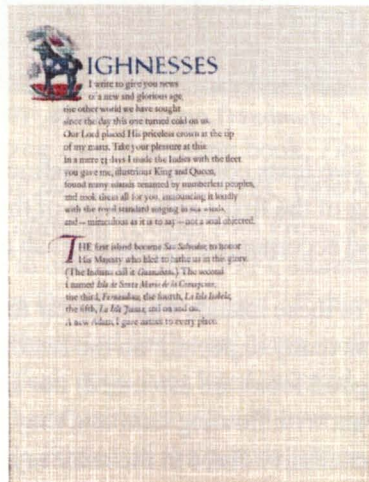
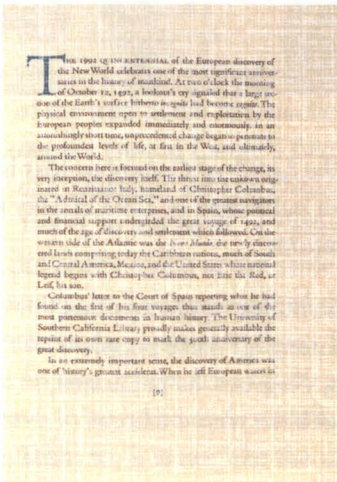
“In these islands I have so far found no human monstrosities, as many expected; on the contrary, among all these people good looks are esteemed; nor are they Negroes, as in Guinea, but with flowing hair, and they are not born where there is excessive force in the solar rays; “

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Here is a further wonder: on no island have I found a single monstrosity, as many after Mandeville warned I would. No one-eyed dwarfs, basilisks, monkey-men or hermaphrodites. On the contrary, beauty is famous among them. Not the Negroes of Guinea, they have flowing hair, and are not born out in stark, excessive sun.



David Citino's version is a poetic redaction or retelling. I might add that there were more than twelve different editions of the letter printed and distributed in the first year after Columbus returned home in February 1493; some, in fact, were long verse renditions by the Florentine poet, Giuliano Dati.



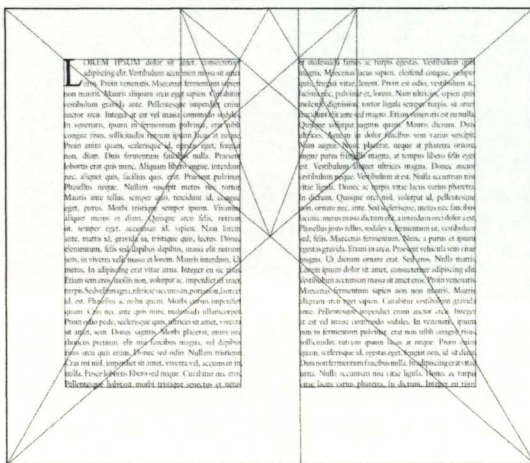


I should add that Columbus actually kept two different ship's logs; one he showed to the crew, and the other he kept secret. In making this book we imagined that our version was the one he kept for himself, doodling and painting amateurishly in the margins, including personal references to his home in Spain, recollections of the court in Madrid, and so forth.

The first page of the Logan Elm Press *A Letter of Columbus* has a monoprint initial letter of a horse and a watermelon. This is a traditional historiated initial letter that symbolically represents what Columbus brought with him to the Americas (the horse) and what he brought back to Europe (the watermelon), with the watermelon making the crossbar of the capital letter H. The initial word, HIGHNESSES, is hand-drawn in each copy by Ann Alaïa Woods, again making every copy of the book unique. In addition, each copy had eleven different initial letters hand drawn by Ann Alaïa Woods.

In retrospect, I do not know whether my book would have been a serious competitor that first year, but this was my first major *livre d'artiste*, which was offered at \$1,100 a copy; and, given my very different, maybe even unorthodox, approach to fine printing, at the time, it seemed to me to be too dear to part with if I didn't stand a chance to win.

In reality, both of these books were basically designed the same way. Here is the classic grid for laying out what has been called the "ideal book." This is a double-page spread and everybody studying book design learns this method of establishing the text blocks on the page. This is how you fit the shape of your text (type size, line length, lines per page, etc.):





Here is Gerald Lange's text for his book and here is mine. We both use the same grid to lay out the text. You may not detect the similarities if you do not see the grid lines, but they are there, underneath, guiding every glyph. Everybody uses them, one way or another.

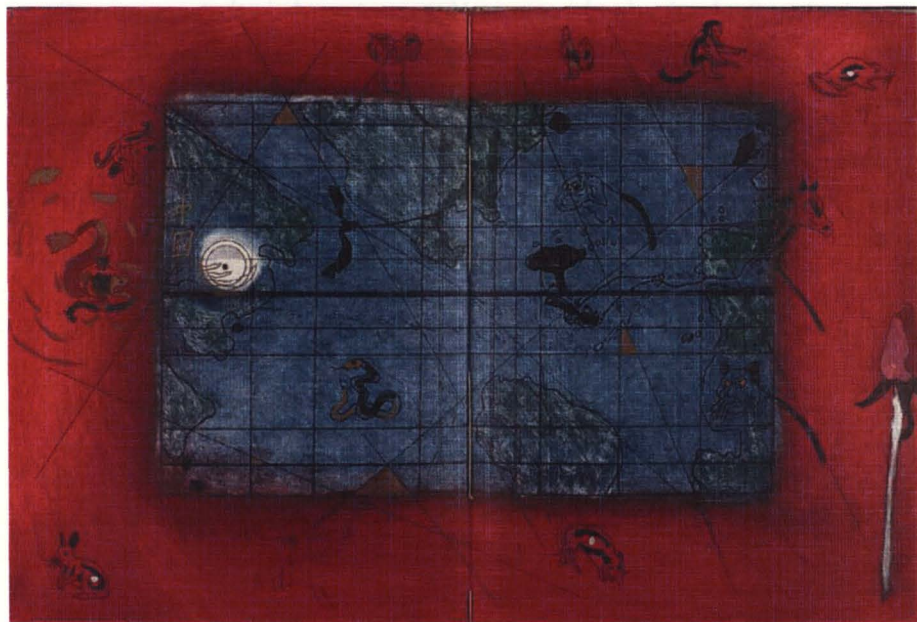


On the title page of my book you can see these same grid lines. When people look at this book, they say to themselves, "Gee, these lines must be nautical, or they probably represent the map of the world." Actually, they are the classical grid lines one uses for establishing the relationship of the



typographic elements to the page of the book. This is really a visual metaphor or allegory comparing the design of the book to the map of the world.

In addition, we put an actual map into the book to separate the body of the main letter from a postscript Columbus wrote that pretty much says, “Your majesties, I ran into really bad weather here in Portugal, and I was held up, and couldn’t get away; and I would have sent this letter to you earlier but for the bad weather.” Of course, this was not the case and not true at all; Columbus really was trying to sell his ideas and his need for more funding to the king and queen of Portugal. Failing to do so, he made a beeline back to Spain. However, before he left Portugal, he sent his letter to Barcelona in March, where it was carried by Luis de San Angel to Queen Isabella and the court in Madrid; the first Spanish edition of the letter was published in April, after which things followed pretty quickly, because this was a promethean discovery. To be sure, it was as momentous as landing on the moon.



The map that I put into the book is actually a Chinese restaurant placemat. Anthony Rice liked imagining that Columbus was traveling through southern Spain trying to get some information before making his protean voyage; and somebody maybe caught up to him and said, “Hey, listen, buddy, I’ve got

this terrific map that will show you how to get to China and you won't have to go around Cape Horn. This map is going to show you how to do it really quickly and easily, ya' know." But, it is actually just a restaurant place mat. He has been completely duped. Of course, it did not really matter, because Columbus was a fantastically good dead reckoner and discovered what he thought was China anyway.

There are some interesting tidbits I can tell you about this map: In the lower right hand corner – you cannot see it easily, since it is hand-written in Chinese calligraphy in red ink on a red background – it says: "Secret Map" or "Treasure Map." You have to look very carefully, because it is meant to be hidden, like the principles that underpin the layout of the book, and, of course, the New World, too.

My point is that books that may look very different are really designed sometimes in much the same way. We all follow the same principles. When you look at the books that have won Hertzog Awards in the past, as well as many of the entries, they have followed some very basic principles of typography and design that we all learn and we all use that go back hundreds of years, back to scribal traditions and to the advent of printing, because, of course, Gutenberg was trying to mimic the handwritten books produced by scribes. For hundreds of years after 1500, printed books were still designed basically the same way.

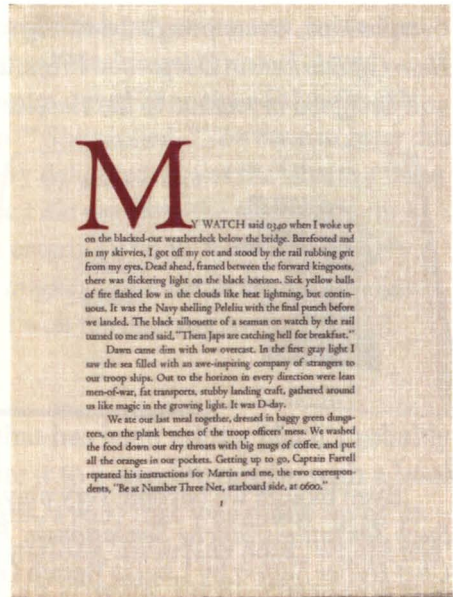
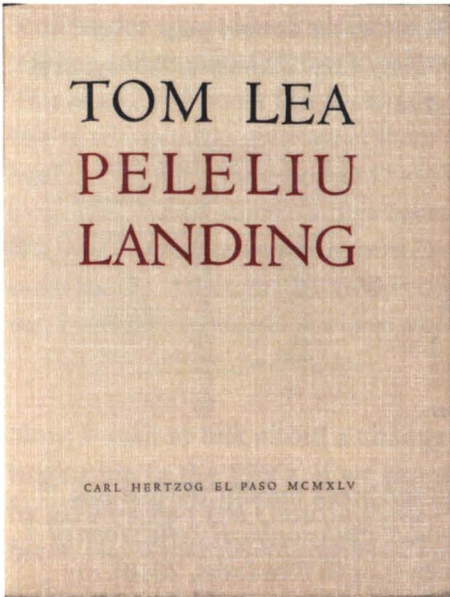


When I looked at this picture of Carl Hertzog with his friend Tom Lea, the first thing I noticed is the book on Carl's lap and how he designed it. It follows that same grid.





Here we have the famous first page of the Doves Bible, with the initial letter in red that runs down the full length of the text block. And, look at the Kelmscott Press page spreads. The same underlying structure applies!



Here is a book by Tom Lea that Carl Hertzog designed. The letter M is not arbitrary. The size and shape of the M is in proportion to the block of text that it goes with. The initial letter M is exactly in proportion to the block of text, and all of it is in proportion to the page!

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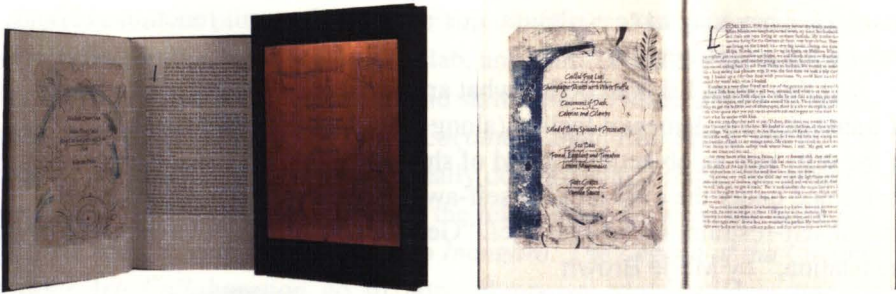


Here are a few Hertzog Award winning books: *No Shortcuts* (University of Iowa Center for the Book, 2001) by Sara T. Sauers (James Thurber's granddaughter); and *Mayflies* (Midnight Paper Sales, 2005) by Gaylord Shanilec. Both of these books use the same principles of design and type composition. Even though the titling runs across the double-page spread in *Heart of Darkness* (Deepwood Press, 2008) by Chad Pastotnik, the layout is still designed in relation to the classical grid.



Even though we become very playful and break through the margins, *Such Sensations/Solche Sensationen: Food & Philosophical Reflections of Chef Huber Seifert* by Louisa Bertch Green (Logan Elm Press, 2010), my Hertzog Award book from two years ago, uses the very same basic layout, structure and design. The columns along the outside edges of the book are reiterated throughout the entire edition, and are where we place marginalia. The long rectangular shape of the margins is not arbitrary; the shape, size and position of the margins are determined by that same classic grid, just like the size, shape and placement of the initial letters, as are all the parts of the book.





The irony of my entering this book into the Hertzog competition is that it was done collaborating with exactly the same people that did my *A Letter of Columbus* in 1990: Ann Alaïa Woods did all of the calligraphy for this book and Anthony Rice did all of the monoprints. I should tell you that when I received the prospectus in 2012 for the Carl Hertzog Award competition, Marcia Preston, who is a very dear friend, buys all of the Logan Elm Press books and is an avid book collector, loves British private presses, loves fine printing and the art of the book, said to me: “You’ve got to enter!” I said, “This is a \$2,000 book. I have only 18 copies out of 26 in the edition for sale. You’re telling me to give one of them up?” She replied, “You have to enter this book!” I did what she asked and I am very delighted. It was the smartest thing I ever did. It took some courage because I did not enter the first time with *A Letter of Columbus*, and then, here I am entering a book done with the very same people. I thought maybe this one might stand a better chance. Believe me, I was just knocked for a loop when I won the Hertzog Award in 2012.



Now, I want to talk about a change that has been taking place, probably beginning in the 1960s, if we can date it to a specific origin, with a book by Ed Ruscha (The Cunningham Press, 1963) that was made up of 26 black and white photographs of gas stations, an *artists book*, where the artist uses the book form to produce an artwork. Ed Ruscha’s book is a work of art in the form of a book.

The books I have been showing you up to now have art in them. They are certainly artistic. They are aesthetically shaped, but they are still books in the more traditional sense of being “containers” for texts and images. No matter how beautiful they are, they are not themselves

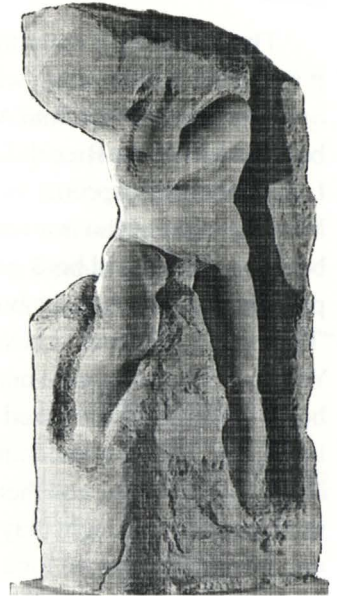
artworks. They may have sculptural qualities, but they still function as books, and are not sculptures.

At this point I should define what art is: Art is self-translation, the act of translating an elemental feeling (along with the prehensile reaching out of the self) into an objectified world of shapes, colors, textures, images, etc., performed under the over-arching self-awareness, conscious scrutiny and critical self-restraint of the artist. (cf. “Gentile’s Mature Aesthetics: Art as Self-Translation,” by Merle Brown in *Neo-Idealistic Aesthetics*, 1966).

This is what the literary critic Richard Poirier has called “the performing self” (*The Performing Self: Compositions and Decompositions in the Language of Contemporary Life*, 1992).

This statue by Michelangelo seems to me to be the most sublime image of the artist: Someone is trying to shape himself out of the very stuff from which he is made, straining and pushing his own head out of the stone even as he is made out of the very same stone. I like this idea that art is an act, not a thing, and is part of thinking itself, fundamental to being human. In this sense, art is both cognitive and constructive. It is the self, moment by moment, trying to articulate itself out of the very same stuff from which it is made, out of what we find in the world and in ourselves as well. Then, we say, “Well, that’s not quite right. Let’s try it again, let’s do it this way or that, attempting always to reshape, readjust and rethink oneself, over and over; and, all along, we are always aware of “Did I get it right?” Art is the struggle to translate oneself, exactly what many artists are doing now when they make books. What many artists have been creating will challenge future Hertzog competitions.

Here are some of the works that have been done at the Logan Elm Press with artists who have come into my lab to make books: My first experience along these lines occurred in the early 1980s at about the same time that Gerald Lange was going through his own self-examination. I began to question what I was going to do with my skills in book design. I had built a terrific



Michelangelo, Unfinished Slave, Academia, Florence, 1516-1519



lab with excellent presses and papermaking facilities. Many talented artists, writers and craftspeople came to my lab, and said: “What are we going to do with all of this great equipment and skill?” So we made a suite of books called *Inangaro: The Legend of the Coconut* (Logan Elm Press, 1987). The video I am going to show you now really does explain, I think, the protracted process by which I began to re-think the relationship between the book arts and the book as art. (To see the video *Inangaro: The Legend of the Coconut, A Book Arts Collaboration*, go to: <http://library.osu.edu/about/departments/preservation/book-arts-division/logan-elm-press>).

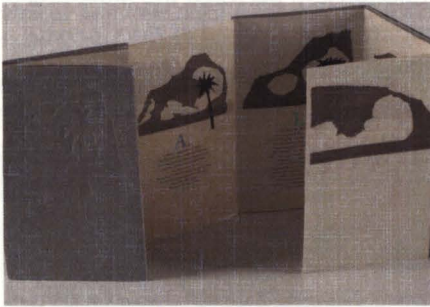


This was a pivotal point in my career. We invited four separate teams of artists and designers to the book arts lab. Each team was unknown to the other. Each team was given the same exact double-spaced, type-written story about the origin of the coconut. From this one manuscript we got a suite of four different books, which we boxed with a coconut inlaid into the cover. Each book represents a different version of that same exact story.

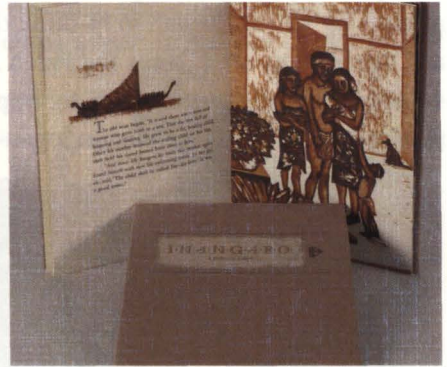
I began to think about all the different ways we choose to do a book. When you see the winning books for the Carl Hertzog Award, there is a lot you don't see: there was a lot that went on, a lot of decisions were made, a lot of “mock ups” or “dummies” (Now, I subtitle all of my classes “Dummies for Dummies”). There may be two or more different books that were discarded in the design process for every one of the books that end up being the one that wins the award.

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These are the four books: I collaborated with Margaret Prentice, who used paper pulp painting to create a sort of tableau showing the little girl Ina being transformed from a human embryo into the coconut seedling. I made the cover paper from Coir (coconut shell) and Abaca (Manila Hemp) fiber to look a like a beach.



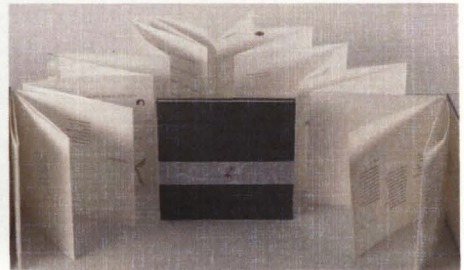
Ruth Leonard and David Macaulay



Richard Brunell and Sidney Chafetz



Robert Tauber and Margaret Prentice



Rod Johnson and Eric May

Sidney Chafetz and a designer named Richard Brunell collaborated to make a book using reduction wood blocks, which means that in the process of printing the images for this book, the printing plates were destroyed, because you start by printing very light, general image areas, then cut away portions of the wood block surface, print again, and then cut the block some more, and so on, until hardly any of the woodblock surface remains. Each time you must print all of your sheets of paper and then print them again and again for each color until there is no wood block surface left to print, with as many as four and five, or six printings off the very same wood block. Of course, this limits the size of the edition.

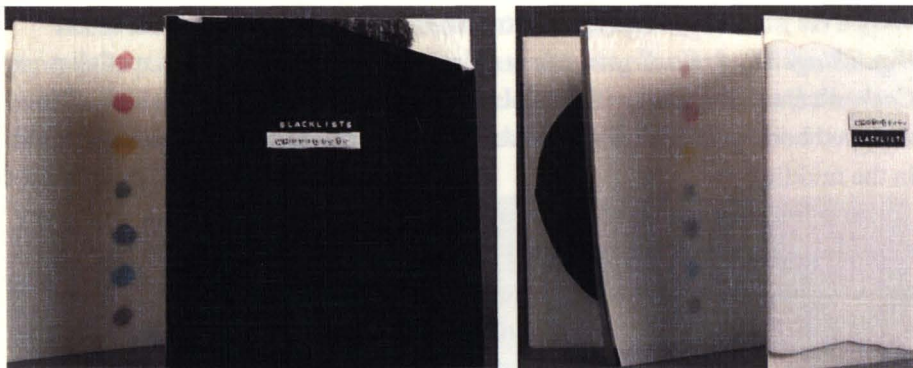


David Macaulay, who is well-known for his books, *City*, *Pyramid*, *The Way Things Work*, *Castle* and many more, as well as his Caldecott medalist *Cathedral*, collaborated with Ruth Leonard to create a saddle-stitched, self-wrapped book printed on Twinrocker handmade paper with a double gate-fold in the middle.

Rod Johnson and Eric May created a concertina, which is made from very long pleated sheets of paper, folded into an accordion structure. Of course, we had to print two large sheets, cut them apart and then re-assemble them into a concertina. The cover paper was made from different colored pulps that we pigmented the same. After the sheets were made, and just before they were fully dry, we crumpled them up and let them finish drying. Then we spread them back out and pressed the wrinkled sheets flat, which imparts a kind of “eel skin-like” surface texture to them.



At about this same time, the internationally renowned artist Kiki Smith came to the Wexner Center for the Arts at Ohio State, and I was invited to work with her on a book. She created an artists book called *Fountainhead*. We made all of the paper from Abaca fiber and sewed the text block into hard boards covered in silver foil-stamped handmade black Abaca paper with a Japanese black linen spine and corner tips, and with silver tea chest paper endsheets. This book is rarely sold in book stores or by book dealers. It is sold mostly in art galleries. Some copies have sold for as much as \$6,000. As just a book, it would sell for only one tenth of that.



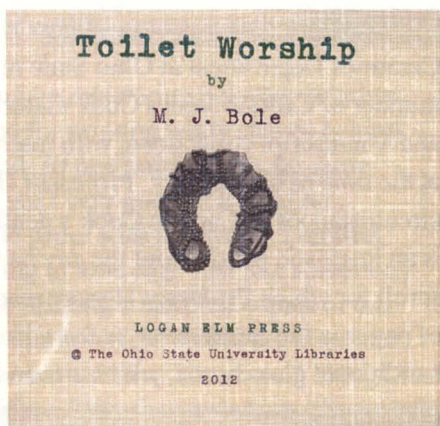
In 2008-09, I did a book called *Blacklists/Whitelists* (Logan Elm Press, 2009) with Professor Suzanne Silver, a faculty member in Ohio State's Art Department. We printed it on glassine, which is a sheer transparent, glossy paper. The covers were printed on black and white painted clear vinyl. The structure for this book is a dos-à-dos (from the French meaning "back-to-back"), so you read it one way as *Whitelists*, turn it around and read it back the other way as *Blacklists*. In this way the two books are bound together as one, sharing the same back cover, but with different front covers.



Each copy has Dymo labels pasted on it as well. You can hardly tell what some of the pages are because parts are printed with white ink on the transparent glassine, or just die cut into the clear paper. Obviously, this is not a traditional text contained in a book format. This artists book experiments with the meaning of non-narrative content. The embossed, die cut, white-on-white and black-on-black pages can be read recto verso and verso recto, opening and closing in numerous layers, to investigate the physical act of "reading" as the cumulative effect of superimposed texts and images.



I published my next artists book called *Toilet Worship* (Logan Elm Press, 2012) with Professor M. J. Bole. This book is everything you ever wanted to know about toilets but were afraid to ask. During her career at Ohio State, MJ was invited to be an artist-in-residence at the Kohler Company (plenty of you have something by Kohler in your house, like toilets, faucets, etc.). Later, MJ created an installation at Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia, which had the first institutional plumbing in the U.S. Quite a challenge! When you have a lot of prisoners housed together, the gases and sludge eventually become extreme. This prison was an engineering feat, but also represented an important shift in attitude toward rehabilitation rather than confinement. Naturally, they thought they should make the prison more “commodious!”



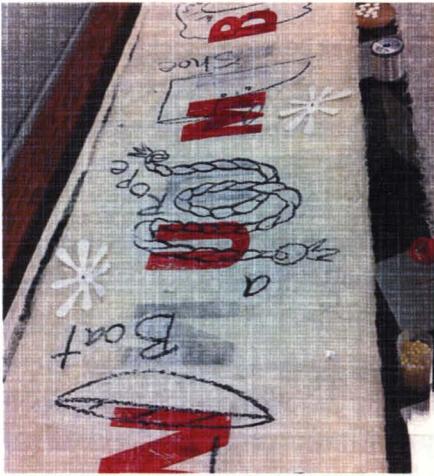
In doing her research over many years for her projects, MJ gathered a great deal of material about toilets, an unbelievable amount of it, and she put it all in her book. We worked on this book for over two years. *Toilet Worship* collages a vast amount of scatological meanderings, segues, tangents and autobiographical intricacies of bathroom minutia. This book was printed on Mohawk Superfine 100 lb. cover paper using a combination of color laser xerography and photo-polymer flexographic plates on a Vandercook No. 4 letterpress. Each copy includes a four-color process gatefold and a sheet of perforated gum-backed stamps, which were stencil-printed at Knust Press in the Netherlands. MJ made an original tintype, which shows a roll of toilet paper hanging on a tree in the woods, which is inlaid into the book's cover. Greg Jensen at Booklab II in Texas executed the case binding.



The book I am working on now with Professor Rebecca Harvey in the Ceramics Department at Ohio State reflects the fact that we have a substantial number of Captain James Cook materials in our Libraries' Rare Books and Manuscript collections, with many original items that Cook published at the time of his sailings. Professor Harvey has been fascinated by the circumstances of Captain Cook's death, and her book, *Any Number of Things*, is an imagistic poem about the day he was killed. The book is formatted as a scroll for which Professor Harvey made all of the ten foot by 10 inch sheets of paper in the Japanese style from Kozo fiber. The scroll fits inside her handblown glass bottle, which sits on her handmade ceramic plate.







Here are some of our students working on registering polymer printing plates with masonite cut-outs that we used for printing white shapes behind the detail images to be printed on the scroll. At one point, someone came through my shop and said, “The printing isn’t very good; it looks like someone came along and just drew on this paper with a crayon.” I replied, “This is exactly what we wanted the printing to look like. Just like somebody drew on the paper with a crayon.” We are printing a hundred copies of this scroll. There are three parts that make up this book: the scroll, the plate and the bottle, which gets sandblasted with the words “Any Number of Things.” A wooden bung with the copy number of the edition is inserted into the top of the bottle.



The bottom of the bottle is hollow so you can just lift the bottle up to get the scroll out of it. I want to show you the plate the bottle sits on because Ann Alaïa Woods, the calligrapher with whom I have worked before, drew the portrait of Captain Cook. The text about the life and death of Captain Cook that forms his portrait is made of calligraphy drawn by Ann Alaïa Woods. The lettering is a decal made out of glaze that gets fired on the ceramic plate. We got this idea from a 19<sup>th</sup> century image of Abraham Lincoln that Professor Harvey saw and thought that it would be good for Captain Cook's portrait.



To end my talk I want to tell the story about the invention of paper according to Sesame Street: One day, Ernie, the Cave King was waiting for the royal mail. As always, Grover, the royal mailman, carried the royal letters in his mailbag up the hill to the king; and, of course, the bag was very heavy, because the letters were carved into rocks. Invariably, Grover dropped one of the royal letters on the king's foot. As usual, the king got very upset.

Finally, he'd had it with his letters carved into rocks! "I need something else to write my letters on!" the king said. He called for the Royal Smart Guy, Sherlock, who went into the Royal Cave. After a short while, he came out of the cave and said: "Eureka! I've got it! I have invented a lightweight, flat, thin, smooth material called 'Paper!' You can write on it; you can make hats out of it; you can make kites out of it; you can wrap tuna fish sandwiches in it. It's great stuff!" Then, all of a sudden, the wind blew the paper into the air. What do you think they did with the rocks? Anybody? They used them as paperweights, of course.

The rocks were always heavy, but now being heavy became a really good thing. They didn't even have to read the marks carved into them anymore; the chiseled marks became interesting for their own sake, just little glyphs and symbols decorating the rocks. They became little heavy stone sculptures that sit on tables on top of the mail.

To a large extent, this is happening now with books, as it has happened before with other technologies: old technologies become art forms. The rocks no longer had to serve the utilitarian purposes of commercial and social interaction, and became art forms. Likewise, books are ceasing to serve as containers for the portable storage and retrieval of information. We now have new digital methods for this purpose. However, like the rocks,

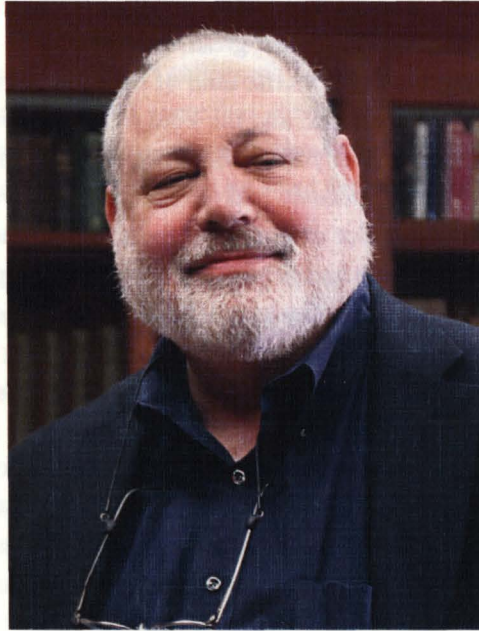


there are things about books that will always be valuable, just as the rocks were always heavy. Books have wonderful qualities that are now free to become whatever they want as they are no longer pressured by the demands of day to day economic and social progress.

We like to distinguish between the kind of books that the Carl Hertzog Award represents and encourages, and the kind of books you pick up to read and then discard. You know, as you are boarding a plane, that the paperbacks you bought in the airport, if nobody had purchased them, would not have been returned to the distributor or publisher for a refund; the bookstore would just tear off the covers and send them back to be pulped, because they are just objects for use. Books have a utilitarian function, and they have served a very important function to be sure. But many books have no certain functionality. In fact, we seem to enjoy artists books for their “functionlessness.”

What we like about genuine artistic creation is how it forces us to readjust our pre-established categories. Artists books goad and cajole us into bending our conventionally acquired frameworks. Like all works of art, they tease and provoke us into reexamining our tendency to become incorrigibly repetitive or inert.

Thank you very much.



Robert Tauber

Robert Tauber holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) degree in Visual Arts with a minor in Art Education from Denison University (1969) and Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree in Printmaking with a minor in Art History from The Ohio State University (1973). He has also studied in Cuenca, Spain (1969-70), and Guanajuato, Mexico (summer 1965).

For almost thirty years Mr. Tauber has taught Book Arts courses for undergraduate and graduate students, and has presented numerous workshops, lectures and demonstrations nationally and abroad. He directed the Logan Elm Press, a teaching press at The Ohio State University from 1979-1995 and 2005 to the present. The books published under the Logan Elm Press imprint are acclaimed internationally for their high quality and are owned by many of the world's major institutional and private collections. He is currently the Book Arts Specialist in The Ohio State University Libraries' Department of Preservation and Reformatting.



Thomas (Tom) Leech and Arlyn Nathan

2014 Recipients of the Carl Hertzog Award  
for Excellence in Book Design

Title: *Jack Thorp's Songs of the Cowboys*

Author: Jack Thorp; Mark Lee Gardner, Ed.

Publisher: The Press at the Palace of the Governors, 2012  
Santa Fe, NM

Printers: Tom Leech and James Bourland



## Remarks by Thomas (Tom) Leech at the Carl Hertzog Lecture, March 9, 2014:

There was a question as to whether I should be introduced as Tom or Thomas, and all I can say is that if Tom was good enough for Tom Lea, it's certainly good enough for Tom Leech!

Thank you also Robert Tauber, for your excellent lecture.

Where do I begin? Thank you Robert Stakes, Lydia Limas, and hosts Sam Moore, John Byrd and the Byrd Family. I wish also to thank, of course, the Friends of the Library here at UTEP. If anyone should be receiving an award, it should be you, the Friends. When we hear so much about the demise of print these days, that you continue to make this extraordinary effort to acknowledge what books CAN STILL BE, and what, hopefully, they will always be, your remarkable contribution to the culture of the book deserves to be recognized.

I was asked in an interview if there is a formula or technique I use to design a book. Definitely not! The inspiration for a book doesn't begin with a template, or a computer program, or a requirement to fit this or that format, and it certainly doesn't involve a deadline.

All I can say is that a book begins with a seed, a seed of an idea – it could even be a dream - and it slowly, slowly grows. It grows from the inside out and, perhaps years and many sleepless nights later, is only completely realized when it comes to your hands and opens like a flower.

I am extremely fortunate to have fallen in with such a talented lot as Arlyn Nathan, Priscilla Spitler, Mark Gardener, Rex Rideout, Ron Kil, and of course, Jack Thorp, who all of us, as westerners, owe a huge debt of gratitude. J. B. Bryan (who is here), Margaret Wood, Barry Moser, Rosalia Galassi, and my very capable colleague and fellow pressman James Bourland, are just a few of the people who made these dreams into books.

If I may, I'd like to point out some bibliographic highlights along the path that brought me here.

My brother Geoff and I grew up next door to a library. Actually, I should say that a library grew up next us. When I was in Kindergarten, the vacant lot next our house became the site of a branch library.

At 5 years old I had to ask what a library was, and was told that it was a place "to borrow books." So when it opened I did just that, and a year went by before

a librarian stopped me and said, “You need a library card to check out those books...” For a whole year I had been taking them home, reading them and then returning them to the place where I found them.

Did I say reading? Because honestly, I was slow to learn to read, but that never stopped me from looking at books, holding them, and smelling them and noticing their weight, their paper, their illustrations and their bindings. I can even recall the first time I opened a book that was printed in England and sensed that there was something really different about it. (It was only later that I realized its type was designed by Eric Gill - so yes, there was something strange about it.) All that is to say that kids need libraries. But even more - libraries need kids.

In the fourth grade Geoff gave me the *American Heritage Golden Book of the American Revolution* as a Christmas present. It may have been the best Christmas gift I ever received. I can't tell you why, but I am convinced that I am me because of that gift.

But jumping ahead to the year 2000, Geoff and I bet on who would win the presidential election. The loser of the bet would buy the winner a copy of Aldus Manutius's *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili*. I'll bet you never thought you'd hear *Hypnerotomachia Poliphili* and George W. Bush mentioned in the same sentence.

In eighth grade I learned to set type in an Industrial Arts printing class. I remember thinking “Please, God, don't let me be a printer.” The lesson I learned was that God has a sense of humor. If you seek a profession that makes you humble, be a printer. (Printing offers so many opportunities to make mistakes....)

I graduated from college with a degree in painting and sculpture, which made me eminently qualified for work in a factory driving a forklift. Luckily it was a printing factory and I made my way up to be a pressman on a 4-color 49 inch offset press. Forty-nine inches are not so impressive until you realize that 49 inches is the width of the sheet of paper it printed, and on a slow day we printed 5,000 sheets an hour in a ten hour shift. The press itself was the size of a greyhound bus.

My savior from that hellish situation was a great printer, Jim Trissel, who ran the Press at Colorado College. The light bulb went on for me when I heard Jim say that “books are a form of sculpture.” “Hey - I love books, I'm a sculptor,

I'm a printer. I can win the Carl Hertzog Award!"

Jim became my teacher, mentor and friend. Through Jim I was introduced to other great printers such as Harry Duncan, Walter Hamady and Kim Merker. Kim was at the University of Iowa, and he told me what has become one of my favorite jokes. (Q: What does the "N" on the helmets of the University of Nebraska football team stand for? A: Knowledge!)

Finally, and most of all, I'd like to thank my wife, Kathleen Koltes. She's a potter. She's funny and beautiful, and boy, did she play hard to get. The first time I asked her out she turned me down, because she said she had a date on the couch with Harry Potter. I asked her to marry me about 300 times and she had the good sense to say "not yet" - until I figured out that it might help if I got a real job. Just in the nick of time one came along in Santa Fe at the Palace of the Governors - and we lived happily ever after.

Thank you very much.



## Biography

### Thomas (Tom) Leech

Tom Leech is the Director of the Press at the Palace of the Governors, and has more than 35 years of experience in printing, paper-making, and related book-arts. A curator at the New Mexico History Museum since 2001, Tom has organized a number of successful exhibits, including “The Saint John’s Bible,” “Jack Kerouac and the Writer’s Life,” and “Album Amicorum,” which later traveled to Spain, Germany, Switzerland and Turkey. With Pamela Smith, Tom directed the exhibit “Lasting Impressions: the Private Presses of New Mexico.”

As an advocate for the Book Arts, Tom has drawn appreciative audiences to events at the museum for lectures, readings, demonstrations and workshops featuring artists, poets, printers, scholars and musicians of national and international renown. At the Palace Press he regularly demonstrates printing and discusses its history and importance with school groups and visitors of all ages. Books and broadsides that Tom has printed include *Jack Thorp’s Songs of the Cowboys*, *O’Keeffe Stories*, and *Word Art Poetry Portfolio*. He has also collaborated with all of Santa Fe’s Poets Laureate on fine limited editions.

Tom is a 2013 recipient of the Santa Fe Mayor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts Degree in painting and sculpture from Aquinas College in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He was a member of the 1990 and ’92 Everest Environmental Expeditions, and in 1994 co-founded the Paper Road/Tibet Project that reintroduced the ancient art of papermaking to Lhasa and rural areas of Tibet. Prior to Tom’s move to Santa Fe he lived in Colorado Springs, where he received the Pikes Peak Arts Council Distinguished Artist Award in 1995. Tom is married to ceramic artist Kathleen Koltes and has three sons and five grandsons.

## **Remarks by Arlyn Nathan:**

I chose the field of graphic design while a freshman at the Rhode Island School of Design. It wasn't so much that I really comprehended what the profession entailed, rather I just knew the various aspects of art I didn't wish to practice as a life commitment. The first year in my major I was enrolled in a typography class. We drew straight lines and spaced them for six hours at a time. I chewed NoDoz, having not yet graduated to swallowing a pill, and supplemented that with Mountain Dew and Entenmann's chocolate chip cookies. I was pretty much wired and not so keen on sitting still and spacing lines. I seriously questioned my selection of major.

It wasn't until we had a project that introduced us to the letterpress that my interest was awakened. The space that was previously intangible was now copper, brass, paper and lead. The sound of rain as just the right amount of ink traveled the rollers had me mesmerized. I was infatuated and addicted to the point that more than a few times a group of us would stand on toilet seats in the bathroom while the security guard cleared out the building. Once he left, we began. Over the years I have tried to translate the same understanding and appreciation I garnered about letters to the computer. It has allowed me to design from a different vantage point and see space as an important entity.

It has been a pleasure working with Tom Leech. Now that I teach typography I want to share the same experience that transformed my perception of design with my students. Tom and James Bourland, Tom's cohort at the Palace of the Governors, are gracious with their space and always welcome my students to touch and be touched by the past. It is 25 years since I graduated with an undergraduate degree and soon I will be inheriting a Vandercook of my own. Tom gave me the monetary gift that accompanied the award and gave me the advice, "don't spend it all in one place." I am doing just that though. The money will help me set up a letterpress studio in my home. I didn't take Tom's advice then, but am confident that I will be tapping into his breadth of letterpress knowledge quite frequently in the near future.

I feel honored to have received the Carl Hertzog award and believe as the individual for whom the award is named that, “ a typographer can do more than just make the type fit and look good, if he has the time, energy and inclination to consider the text and its thought as well as the type itself.”

## **Biography**

### **Arlyn Nathan**

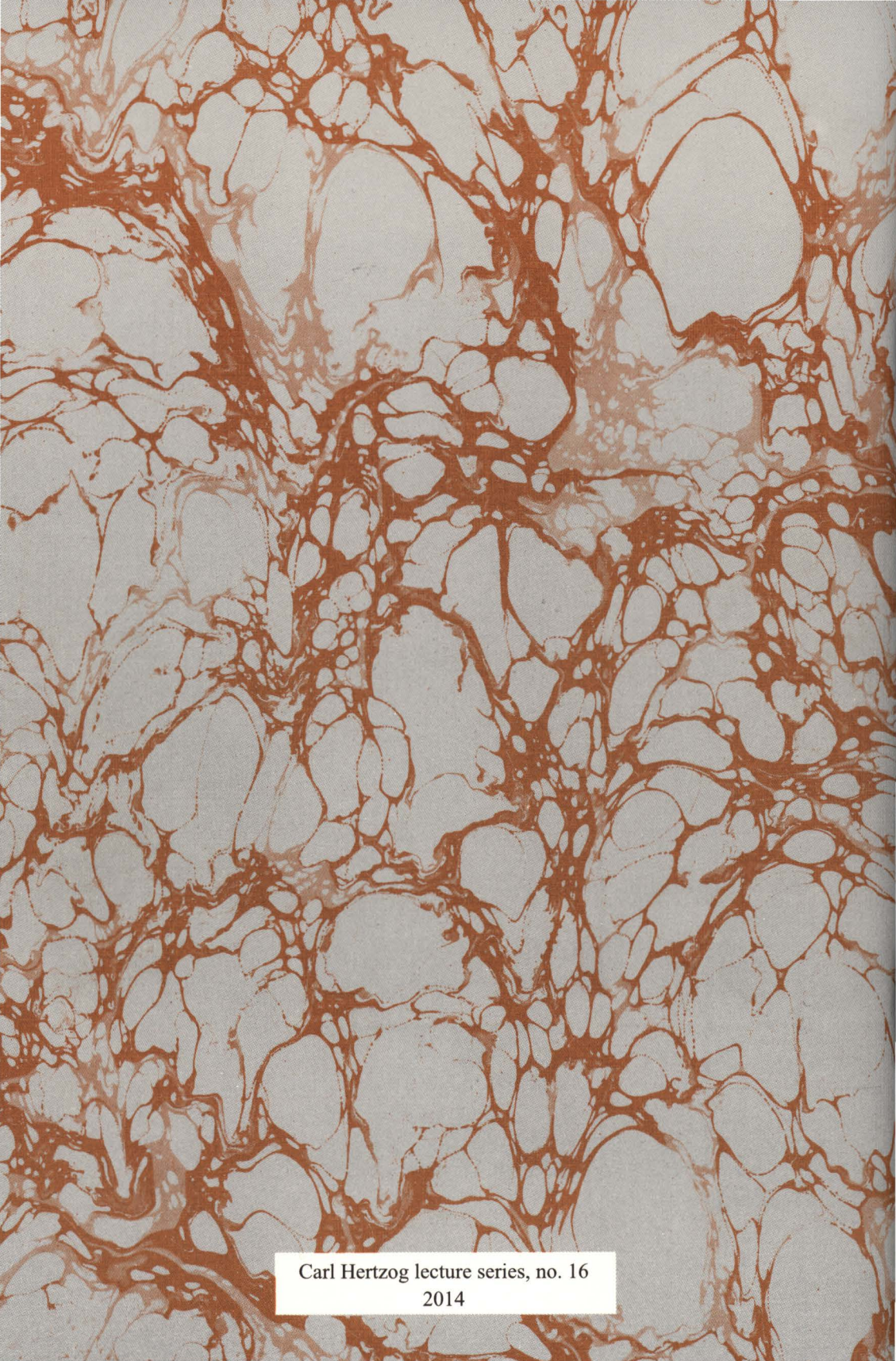
Arlyn Nathan holds an MFA from Yale University, and a BFA from the Rhode Island School of Design. She studied type history at the Smithsonian Institute and design methodology at the University of Canterbury in New Zealand. She has taught at the National Institute of Design in India, Ohio University and the Santa Fe University of Art and Design.

When she isn't teaching or designing books for Twin Palmas Publishers she is engaged with her family. Arlyn views letters and type like people, with different personalities, roles and characteristics. She loves the subtleties that define typefaces and works diligently with text to evoke a sense of play, meaning and visual poetry.









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