UNMASKING CONVENTIONS:
A re-evaluation of the notion of the double page spread within fine art practice.

By

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ABSTRACT

This practice-based investigation originated with a number of questions that have arisen from my fine art practice. The enquiry focuses on identifying which elements are bonded to the symbolic image of the opened book and how these can be unmasked to become a discursive space and material support to express visual ideas within a fine art context.

By asking why conventions associated with the page generate such an impact on the way we engage and read an opened book, my research developed to investigate how the illusion of mirroring and echo, the fold and the suggestion of text, generate a fundamental shift in the perception and reading of the double page. I have explored the limits of the page through my own practice, questioning the role of perception and how powerful connotations are associated to the symbolism of the book. The fundamental subject of enquiry of this investigation has arisen as a direct result of the use of the printed image and the dual form of the page within my art practice

Stéphane Mallarmé's poem *Un Coup de Dés* (1914) marks the historical context of this investigation. This poem questioned the nature of the page by suggesting not only a new approach to reading, but also unmasked some of the conventions associated with the structure of the book.

Theoretical and critical context to the research is considered through the discussion of visual elements that compose the material presence of the double-page as an independent piece of art itself as they play a crucial role in the way we perceive it. I studied the notions of opening, duality, mirroring, echo and fold both through my own work as well as through the work of artists such as Jasper Johns, Dieter Roth and Anish Kapoor. Umberto Eco's theories about mirrors also frame a questioning of the experience and perception of reading as a semiotic phenomenon as well as Deleuze's essay *The Fold* and Adorno's *Minima Moralia* contextualise the notion of fold. These ideas connect with my interpretation of the 'perception' of the page as articulated thought through the notion of connotation.

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CONTENTS

Abstract

List of illustrations…………………………………………………………....11

Introduction………………………………………………………………...19

Chapter 1. HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY………………………..25

1.1. CREATING THE DOUBLE PAGE……………………………………....27

1.1.1 Some notes on manuscripts and printed books…………………….28

1.1.2. *La Prose du Transsibèrien et la Petite Jean de France*……………35

1.2. THINKING THE DOUBLE PAGE……………………………………….41

1.2.1 Ways of reading…………………………………………………46

1.2.1.1 Reading artists' books ……………………………….46

1.3. STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ AND THE READING OF THE PAGE………50

1.4. CASE STUDY: MALLARMÉ, BROODTHAERS AND THE VARIABLE READINGS………………………………………………………………...54

1.4.1. *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolirà le Hazard. Poem*…………..…54

1.4.2. *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolirà le Hazard. Image*……………59

1.4.3. *Variable readings*……………………………………………..…64

1.4.3.1. New readings…………………………………………66

Chapter 2. UNMASKING PERCEPTIONS…………………………...……74

2.1 *Unmasking Perceptions (spreads)*…………………………………93

Chapter 3. **PERCEPTUAL DISRUPTION: SYMBOLIC AND POETIC LANGUAGE** ………………………………………………………...…95

3.1 OPENED BOOKS: THE PERCEPTION OF THE PAGE…………….........97

3.1.1 Mirrors and reflections ……………………………………..……..98

3.1.2 Mirrored pages ……………………………………………...........101

3.2.3 Creating the metaphorical page: the fold…………………………105

3.1.3.1 Analysing folds..……………………………………….107

3.2 SYMBOLIC AND POETIC LANGUAGE…………………………………110

3.2.1 Case study: mirroring and reflection in Dieter Roth artists' books.110

3.3 MIRRORING AND PRINTMAKING..117

3.3.1 Case study: The opened books of Jasper Johns..............................119

3.3.2 Case study: Anish Kapoor's *Folds*..127

3.4 ECHOES BETWEEN PAGES...137

3.4.1 Rebecca Salter: Echoes from the landscape....................................138

3.4.2 When a mirror echoes an image..141

Chapter 4. **ANALYSIS OF ARTWORKS**...145

4.1. Folding the page..146

4.2 Artworks #1. *Constellations*, 2014...149

4.3 Artworks #2. *Red (under black&white)*, 2015...158

4.4 Artworks #3. *Collecting pages: studies from a marginal sea*, 2016...............163

4.5 Artworks #4. *Against syntax*, 2016...171

4.6 Artworks #5. *[Dinstance]*, 2017..181

4.7 Artworks #6. *Signs of resistance*, 2018..185

Chapter 5. THE EXTENDED PAGE: MATERIAL AND METAPHOR.....197

5.1 A RATIONAL APPROACH TO TEXT……………………………………200

5.2. THE SUGGESTION OF TEXT……………………………………………203

    5.2.1 Signs………………………………………………………………206

5.3 SUGGESTING SIGNIFICANCE: PERSONAL EXPERIMENTS ……….210

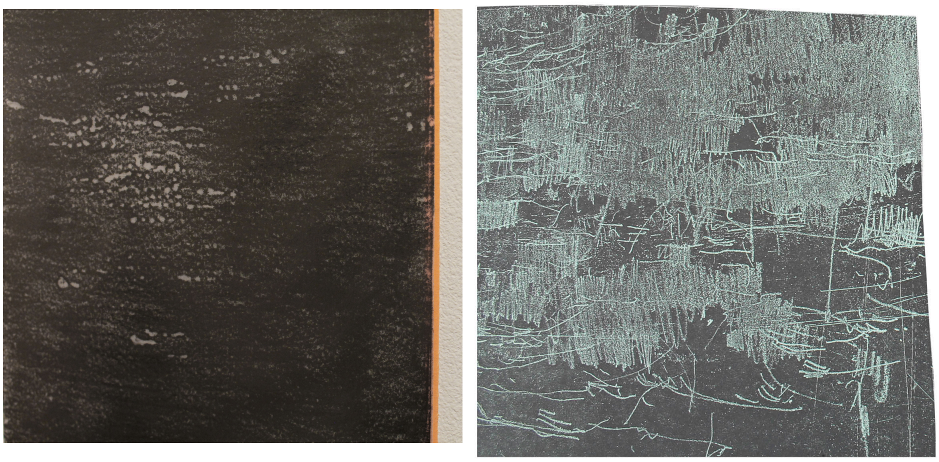
5.4. THE MATERIAL PAGE: JANE BUSTIN AND IAN MCKEEVER…….214

CONCLUSION……………………………………………………………222

RESOURCES…………………………………………………………….226

APPENDICES……………………………………………………………238

    Appendix. 1
    Appendix. 2
    Appendix. 3
    Appendix. 4
    Appendix. 5
    Appendix. 6
    Appendix. 7
    Appendix. 8
    Appendix. 9



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Figure 1. William Morris, cover and double page from the decorated manuscript *A Book of Verse* (1870) with a drawing by Edward Burne-Jones and miniatures by Charles Fairfax Murray. Page. 30

Figure 2. Page design's illustrations by William Morris in Walter Crane, *The Bases of Design* (1902). Page. 32

Figure 3. William Morris, *The works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Kelmscott edition, 1896) with engravings by Edward Burne-Jones. Page. 34

Figure 4. Detail of *La Prose du Transsibérien et la Petit Jehanne de France* (1913). Page. 36

Figure 5. Sonia Delaunay and Blaise Cendrars, *La Prose du Transsibérien et la Petit Jehanne de France* (1913). Page. 37

Figure 6. El Lissitzky and Vladimir Mayakovsky, *Dlja golosa* (1923). Page. 47

Figure 7. Fernand Léger and Blaise Cendrars, *La fin du monde filmee par l'ange N-D* (1919). Page. 47

Figure 8. A. M Cassandre, *Bifur: caractère de publicité* (1929). Page. 48

Figure 9. *La Revue blanche*, 8.49 (15 June 1895), end of the issue, inside back cover. Page. 51

Figure 10. *La Revue blanche*, 7.37 (November 1894), end of the issue. Page. 51

Figure 11. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolirà le Hasard*. (Cosmopolis Edition 1897). Page.55

Figure 12. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolirà le Hasard. Poème* (2014). Page. 58

Figure 13. Marcel Broodthaers, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira le Hasard. Image*. (1969). Page. 61

Figure 14. Marcel Broodthaers, *Pense-Bête,* pages 8-9 (1964). Page. 62

Figure 15. Marcel Broodthaers, *Un coup de Dés Jamais N'abolira le Hazard* (1964) [incisions on aluminium plate]. Page. 62

Figure 16. Michalis Pilcher, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolirà le Hasard. Sculpture* (2008). Page. 66

Figure 17. Michael Maranda, *Un coup de dÉs jamais n'abolira le hasard: livre*(2008). Page. 67

Figure 18. Johanna Drucker, *The Word Made Flesh* (1996). Page. 70

Figure 19. Cerith Wyn Evans, *F=R=E=S=H=W=I=D=O=W* (2010). Exhibition views. Page. 72

Figure 20. Abigail Reynolds, *The British Countryside in pictures* (2011). Page. 73

Figure 21. Abigail Reynolds, *The British Countryside in pictures* (2011). Page. 73

Figure 22. Abigail Reynolds. *Transposed* (2011): Ontwerp, Berghof, Hall of Mirrors and Ashridge. Page. 103

Figure 23. Dieter Roth, *Copley Book* (1966). Detail of one of the study and observational sessions at the Special Collection of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Valencia. Page. 110

Figure 24. Dieter Roth, *Copley Book* (1966). Page. 111

Figure 25. Detail of two pages. Dieter Roth, *Copley Book* (1966). Page. 113

Figure 26. Detail of two pages. Dieter Roth, *Copley Book* (1966). Page. 113

Figure 27. Dieter Roth, *Trophies (125 Two-Handed Speedy Drawings)* (1979). Page. 116

Figure 28. Jasper Johns, *The Dutch Wives* (1975). Page. 120

Figure 29. Jasper Johns, *Corpse and Mirror* (1976). Page. 120

Figure 30. Jasper Johns, *Untitled* (1972). Page. 123

Figure 31. Jasper Johns, *Foraides/Fizzles* (1976). Page. 124

Figure 32. Jasper Johns, *Foraides/Fizzles* (1976). Page. 125

Figure 33. Jasper Johns, *Foraides/Fizzles* (1976). Exhibition views at Royal Academy. Page.126

Figure 34. Anish Kapoor, *Wounds and Absent Objects* (1998). Page.129

Figure 35. Anish Kapoor, *Zumtobel Annual Report* (2012). Volume I and II. Page.130

Figure 36. Anish Kapoor, *Fold I, Fold II and Fold III* (2014). Page. 131

Figure 37. Anish Kapoor, *Fold V and Fold VI* (2016). Page. 132

Figure 38. Colour tests: prints drying on boards and mounted proofs. Thumbprint Editions, London 2015. Page. 133

Figure 39. Mounted proofs, Thumbprint Editions. London 2015. Page. 133

Figure 40. Process of printing: photopolymer plate and print, Thumbprint Editions, London 2015. Page. 134

Figure 41. Proofing, composition of the final image. Thumbprint Editions, London 2015. Page. 135

Figure 42. Rebecca Salter, *Weft I* (2015). Page. 139

Figure 43. Rebecca Salter, *Weft I* (2015). Page. 139

Figure 44. Rebecca Salter, *Inversion II* (2013). Page. 140

Figure 45. Rebecca Salter, *Shade Lines 8*. (2010). Page. 140

Figure 46. Rebecca Salter, *Skyes* (2009). Page. 141

Figure 47. Gerhard Richter, *Corner Mirrors* (1991). Page.142

Figure 48. Gary Colclough, *Vanishing Point* (2010. Page.143

Figure 49. Gary Colclough, *Still Being Still* (2013). Page.143

Figure 50. Gary Colclough, *Seeing the Wood in the Trees* (2010). Page. 144

Figure 51. Coqueley de Chaussepierre, *Le Roué Vertueux. Poëme en Prose en Quatre Chants, Propre à Faire, en Cas de Besoin, un Drame à Jouer Deux Fois par Semaine* (1770). Page. 206

Figure 52. Jarosław Kozłowski *Reality*. (1972). Page. 207

Figure 53. Dieter Roth, cover of Volume 9 *Collected Work*s (1975). Page. 209

Figure 54. Dieter Roth, *Stupidogramms* (1962). Page.209

Figure 55. Ian McKeever, *Eagduru Study III (*2014). Page. 215

Figure 56. Ian McKeever, *Eagduru Study V (*2014). Page. 215

Figure 57. Ian McKeever, *Eagduru I* (2013). Page. 216

Figure 58. Ian McKeever, *Eagduru V,* (2013). Page. 216

Figure 59. Ian McKeever, Eagduru I and V (2013). Page. 218

Figure 60. Jane Bustin, *Tabitha* (2014). Page. 219

Figure 61. Jane Bustin, *Nijinsky I* (2015). Page.219

Figure 62. Jane Bustin, *Rose* (2015). Page. 219

Figure 63. Jane Bustin, *Nijinsky's Window* (2015). Page. 219

Figure 64. Jane Bustin, *Tablet II*, (2014). Page. 220

Figure 65. Jane Bustin, *Cloth* (2014). Page. 220

Figure 66. Ian McKeever, *Eagduru/Against Architecture*, exhibition at Matt Gallery, London (2017). Page. 221

All the **AGV** illustrations refer to my own artwork and practice, therefore I haven´t indicated the author.

AGV 1. *Signs of Resistance* (2018). Page. 107

AGV 2. *Signs of Resistance* (2018). Page. 107

AGV 3. *Constellations*. Work in progress during installation. Page. 151

AGV 4. *Constellations*. Final installation view and detail. Centre del Carme, València. Page. 151

AGV 5. Platemaking process. Plates ready to be drawn. Page. 152

AGV 6 and 7. Details of the tests introducing colour using shine-collé paper. Page. 153

AGV 8. Testing projections of light with the over-head projector in the studio. Page.155

AGV 9. Page 1 (detail). Cardinal red, emboss and transference. Page. 159

AGV 10. Page 2 (detail). Open bite emboss and transference. Page. 159

AGV 11. Pages 8–9 (detail). Cardinal red, emboss and transference. Page. 160

AGV 12. Pages 4–5 (detail). *Contro estampa* of plate 5. Emboss, etching. Page. 160

AGV 13 and 14. Views of the site-specific installation *Collecting Pages*. Page. 165

AGV 15 and 16. Details of the installation. Page.166

AGV 17. Views of the installation *Collecting Pages*. Page. 170

AGV 18. Views of the installation *Collecting Pages*. Page. 170

AGV 19 and 20. *Resonate Fragments* (2016). Installation views, Cookhouse, Chelsea College of Arts. Page. 173

AGV 21. Detail of steel plate for *Resonate Fragments*. Page. 174

AGV 22. Detail of the print installation *Resonate Fragments*. Page. 176

AGV 23. Detail of the floor piece. Plate and print. Page. 177

AGV 24. Details of the light projection. See connections between print and projection. Page. 177

AGV 25. Detail of the frottage part of the installation. Page. 178

AGV 26. Sketches in preparation for the installation. Page. 178

AGV 27. Prints drying during process of work. Page. 180

AGV 28 and 29. Installation views at the Cookhouse Gallery. Page. 181

AGV 30. Views of the installation. Page. 183

AGV 31. Mounting the vinil for *[Distance]* installation. Page. 183

AGV 32. Installation views of *[Distance]*. Page. 185

AGV 33. *La siembra*. Detail, installation view. Page. 187

AGV 34. *Studies to fold a space*. Installation view. Page. 187

AGV 35. *Letters*. Detail of one of the plates of the series. Page. 189

AGV 36. *Letters I and II*. Etching and chine-collé on steel. Page.189

AGV 37. Detail of one of the plates and print of *La Siembra*. Page. 191

AGV 38. *La siembra*. Final exhibition views. Page. 192

AGV 39. Detail of *Studies to fold a space*. Page. 192

AGV 40 and 41. Detail of *Studies to fold a space* installation. Page. 193

AGV 42 and 43. *Studies to fold a space*. Page. 194

AGV 44 and 45. Detail of prints exhibited at FigBilbao 2018. Page.195

AGV 46 and 47. Details of the exhibiting table. Page. 196

AGV 48. *Mirrored Conversation_V* (2016). Page. 211

AGV 49 and 50. Detail. Proofs and work in progress for *Signs of Resistance*. Page. 213

All **A.** plates are illustrations that can be found in the Appendices.

A. 1 and 2. Sketches and notes related to Chapter 2. These studies show planning on structure, size, colour, texture and contrast between pages. Page. 240

A. 3 and 4. Sketches and notes. Page. 241

A. 5. Tests of scanned plates. Page. 241

A. 6. Colour tests. Page. 241

A.7 and 8. Proofing sheets for *Shadow III* (2009) above, and *Horizon Shadow* (2010) below. Page. 242

A. 9 Sketches (left) made by Peter Kosowizc during a meeting with Anish Kapoor around 2005 before starting the series *Shadow* (2007). Page. 243

A. 10 (right) Sketches made files. These show the shape of the plates. Page. 243

A. 11. Final printouts of the files, ready to be converted in films. We can see the files for (from left to right) *Shadow V* (2012), *Shadow II* (2009), *Horizon Shadow* (2010) and *Shadow* (2007). Page. 243

A. 12 and 13. Proofs for the series *History* (2007). This series was a transition project that combined painted films with photopolymer plates. Page. 244

A.14. Final proofs with printer's notes for the series *Shadow* (2007), the first Anish Kapoor's edition using only photopolymer plates made of digital effects. Page. 245

A. 15. Proofing sheets for *Folds*. These are the notes made by the printers during the proofing process. Page. 246

A. 16. Proofing and printer's notes for *Moiré* (2015). Page. 246

A. 18 and 19 (above). Proofing sheets of the first proofing of *Folds*. Page. 247

A. 20 and 21. Patterns and forms of the different drawings during the film and plate making of *Folds*. Page. 247

A 22. *Windows and Mirrors*. Fold. Page.253

A 23. *Windows and Mirrors*. Echo. Page. 253

A 24. *Windows and Mirrors*. Reflexion. Page. 254

A 25. Process of proofing. Print drying on boards. Page. 254

A 26. Proofing trying different plate combinations. Alterations in the order and transparency. Page. 255

A 27. Proofing during platemaking process and colour tests. Page. 255

A 28. Detail of the combination of textures. Page. 255

A. 29 and 30. *Wordscape* (2013). Page. 256

A. 31 and 32. *Wordscapes*. Page. 257

A. 33. Test of subtile print using transparent ink and oil. Page. 258

A. 34. Example of plate for *Rewriting Verses*. Page. 258

A. 35. Xiao Yu Dong. *One Day*. Inject print on tracing paper and thread. Page. 267

A. 36 and 37. Charlotte Rimmer. Fragments of *I'm Not Really a Tea Drinker*. Transferred images from wall to paper. Page. 267

A 38 and 39. Hui Zhang. *Tides End*. Spray paint on tracing paper and book covers. Page. 268

A 40 and 41. Lena Wurz. *Propositions of Folding*. Drawing on tracing paper. Page. 269

A 42. Ling Li. *Two Sides of a Body*. Inkjet print, single pages. Page. 269

A 43. Session at the Chelsea Special Collection with Gustavo Grandal-Montero and a group of students from the MA Book Arts course. Page. 272

INTRODUCTION

This practice-based investigation originated with a number of questions that have arisen from my fine art practice. By asking why conventions associated with the page generate such an impact on the way we engage and read an opened book, my research developed to investigate how the illusion of mirroring and echo, the fold and the suggestion of text, generate a fundamental shift in the perception and reading of the double page. The enquiry focuses on identifying which elements are bonded to the symbolic image of the opened book and how these can be unmasked to become a discursive space and material support to express visual ideas within a fine art context.

The fundamental subject of enquiry of this investigation has arisen as a direct result of the use of the printed image and the dual form of the page within my art practice. This research project has generated a profound shift in the way I am able to communicate visually, opening new possibilities of thought and ways of expression. It was during my MA Book Arts studies at Camberwell College of Arts (2012–2013) that I first started to consider the double-page spread as a focal element within my work. During that year I conducted practice-based research and developed a body of work exploring different ways of communicating using the very essential elements to conform the page. Using minimal components such as traces of typography, single words and loose papers I realised that the idea of the book was still being transmitted to the reader through certain *resonances* rooted in the page. I began to see a completely new and different awareness of space emerging from the paper page by exploring the limits of the page through my practice. I started to question the role of perception and how powerful connotations associated to the symbolism of the book. At this point, three key questions emerged. Firstly, what is the perceptual reading and the connotations associated with, an opened book? Secondly, what happens when, through my own practice, I try to unmask historical conventions associated with the double page and create different contexts for it? And finally, can double pages be considered as autonomous pieces of art in their own right?

My art practice has been a fundamental part in this research process. I have conducted a practice-based methodology in which the process of making the artworks has been analysed by how the result or the experimentation has opened up new observations and insights. I have identified a number of key aspects that have helped me to structure this research and may offer valuable insights into why the double page becomes an expanded space for site-specific practice: the notion of reading in the space of the page; the book as social symbol; the perception of formal elements such as mirroring, echo and reflection as transferors of connotations; the fold as a metaphorical element; the suggestion of text; the double page as a site. These aspects have been essential to structure parameters of, according to Schön, the reflection in/on action (2009, p. 7), as well as into the practice of this research, which comprises the main body of this thesis.

Stéphane Mallarmé's poem *Un Coup de Dés* (1914) marks the historical context of this investigation. This poem questioned the nature of the page by suggesting not only a new approach to reading, but also unmasked some of the conventions associated with the structure of the book. This work has been the catalyst of my research to understand how the dual form of the page originated and how it has forged an image icon. This context aims to investigate how these connotations associated with the book condition the way we read and absorb meaning, which links to frame the theoretical and critical context of this research.

This context is given through two central aspects that are also associated with my practice: the perception of the double-page spread, which I anticipate is related to the notion of *reading*, and the materiality and physicality of the page. These two areas (the material and perceptual) are interdependent on each other by creating and informing the experience of the artwork.

I position my analysis and making within theories that encourage the spectator to be active. One of the authors who I have identified to underpin and substantiate my argument is Umberto Eco with his notion of the 'open work' and contemporary 'openness' that leads to the construction of worlds (1979, p. 9). Eco's theories about mirrors also frame a questioning of the experience and perception of reading as a semiotic phenomenon. Other important philosophical thinkers are Gilles Deleuze, Roland Barthes and Theodor Adorno, who question our knowledge and understanding of the world through the experience of matter, perception and receptiveness. Deleuze's essay *The Fold* and Adorno's *Minima Moralia* contextualise the notion of fold and sustain and complete the idea that the artwork is in continuous movement and invites the viewer to finish the piece. These ideas connect with my interpretation of the 'perception' of the page as articulated thought through the notion of connotation. On the other hand, Roland Barthes' essays such as *The Imagination of the Sign* or *The Pleasure of Text* begin to unfold the visual and metaphorical implications in the significance of the reading experience.

My investigation sets out to examine, firstly, the perception of the page and its becoming an image icon, questioning how it has forged intrinsic connotations ultimately associated with the book, conditioning the reader´s absorption of meaning. This is framed through the analysis of William Morris publications on page design and the study of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés* and its contemporary interpretations. These two supposedly opposing orientations show how the page provokes changes in the way readers engage with it. Secondly, I consider the interpretation of the physical and material processes that configure the reading of the page, such as mirroring, reflection, echo and the fold. I have used a number of artist's works to examine the use of duality, echo and the fold within an artwork and in the exhibition context. These include specific works by Jasper Johns, Dieter Roth, Anish Kapoor and the British artists Abigail Reynolds, Ian McKeever and Jane Bustin amongst others. These case studies might offer singular insights into the different visual effects, contexts of display and approaches to the dual form of the double page and my aim is to propose new interpretations of artworks through the use of the notion of double page.

Most of the analysis and observations have been taken from original artwork whilst visiting exhibitions and special collections, where it was possible to experience and study each piece first hand, using my own strategy. In the same way, I have carried out research in the print workshop through my role as a printer at Thumbprint Editions (2014-2018). This position has given me access to valuable print material and has allowed me to be involved in the development of relevant projects (for example *Folds* by Anish Kapoor and *Eagduru* by Ian McKeever), as well as the possibility to learn how to analyse artworks from a printers perspective.

I also worked closely with the MA Book Arts course at Camberwell College of Arts leading a reading group. This pedagogical initiative was linked to the Chelsea Special Collection and has worked as an active platform to question and discuss ideas, develop critical thinking, and create, exhibit and curate artwork in different contexts. Analysing and discussing multiple artist´s books from the collection was one of the starting points of this investigation. Questioning the way they were displayed behind glass cabinets and showing only a double-page spread made me reflect on the autonomy and symbolism of this format. The platform has also been part of my research methodology, providing a fundamental tool to challenge my research, open up the discussion, and share thoughts.

Most of the outcomes regarding the reading group exhibitions and displays, in addition to the Anish Kapoor case study which took place at Thumbprint is reflected in the Appendices. They conform original and primary research that has been crucial to make progress with the investigation. I have also included sketches, work in progress, more photographs of exhibitions and an interview.

Alongside these studies, a large body of artwork has been produced and publicly exhibited during the research period, becoming the means to test and demonstrate the claims of this research. My practice is present throughout the whole thesis, and it was my aim to create *Unmasking Perceptions* as a site-specific work embedded in the thesis (Chapter 2). Using different types of papers and printmaking processes, I wanted to show how to use the double-page spread as a place for thinking visually. This section reveals how materiality and touch have helped me to understand the architecture of the page, and to be able to develop my own particular approach in relation to mirroring, echo, duality and fold. These experiments led me to re-define and formulate concepts such as double-page and perceptive reading. Besides *Unmasking Perceptions* pages, Chapter 4 reflects another crucial aspect of my practice-based research, where I introduce each body of work showing the links and associations with the thinking and theories I have discussed. Reflecting on these artworks has been crucial in demonstrating my research statement, not only by generating particular strategies of image making, but also in light of opening up perceptual possibilities and readings within the visual image. Although I have separated my practice from the analysis of different artist´s works and theories, I have also identified links between these two areas, to show how my projects have led me to evaluate the positions of others and offer new insights.

I'm aware this area of study is multidisciplinary and there are areas and artists closely related to my subject. For example, concrete poetry[1] draws attention to the word in the space of the page, and to the spaces between words, as an aid to emphasising their significance. However, concrete poets are primarily interested in exploring the material dimension of language, with its visual, acoustic and semantic aspects through autonomous linguistic realities. I acknowledge that there are connections, as my research studies the space of the page as an active agent, however, my investigation is focused on giving a new interpretation to the space of the double-page spread as an artwork itself.

The artists preoccupied with language and communication, for example Mel Bochner, Hanne Darboven and Lawrence Weiner, and more specifically, artists who focus on the relationship between drawing and linguistic communication, such as Henri Michaux, Mirtha Dermisache, Guy de Cointet and Mira Schendel inform this research. I also consider the suggestion of text and illegibility as elements that bring connotations associated with written language. However, the notion or the form of the double page is not always present in the work of these artists; they often take the single pages or sheets of paper as the medium to explore mark-making or asemic writing. Other elements such as mirroring, reflection, duality or fold, which I consider crucial to define the frame of this research, are hardly present in the work of those artists.

This distinction is important to frame the discussion around the significance of the concept of the double-page spread: both as a matter and a metaphor. A place to cultivate a site-specific dialogue alternating its meaning and implications, thus showing a new way of viewing this territory. I argue that the double-page generates new reading and perceptual understanding, both showing what is revealed at first sight and what it is hidden once conventions are unmasked. Challenging the attempts of reading within an image, which resonates in the way I communicate through my artworks.

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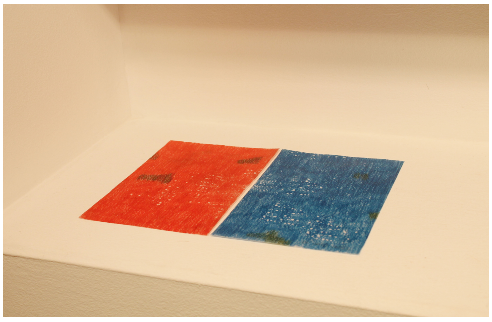
[1] Concrete poetry denotes both a poetic genre and an international movement. It emerged simultaneously in Germany, in Sweden and in Brazil in the early 1950s, and then spread to other countries. The Swiss-Bolivian poet Eugène Gomringer and the Brazilian Noigandres poets are considered the founding members.

[2] Codex describes the format that is now universal for printed books in the Western

CHAPTER 1

HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY



Chapter 1

This first chapter aims to map out the historical and theoretical context of this research. I will introduce the notion of the double page and how it is perceived within the printed book.

The first section analyses how the dual form of the page originated and how it has forged an image icon becoming one of the most important vehicles for the transmission of ideas and culture. I will investigate how connotations associated with the book condition the way we read and absorb meaning. This exploration will be framed by the definition of the notion of reading, a concept that I will use to support the importance of reader's emancipation and the analysis of Mallarmé's influence on book culture. The exploration of Mallarmé's last and revolutionary poem *Un Coup de Dés* will reveal new ways of approaching the materiality of the page to develop non-linear narratives. This will propose an argument that I will use as a departure point to support my hypothesis that the double-page spread is an independent unit and a space to develop site-specific art.

1.1 CREATING THE DOUBLE PAGE

The history of the page and the codex[2] is still ambiguous; sources (including Houlston, Mak, McKenzie, Kilgour and the British Library's Catalogue of Illuminated Manuscripts) indicate that it is not easy to determine when, why and where exactly writers started to fold paper, papyrus and scrolls creating the first two-fold forms. However, the structure and platform of the page has evolved building parameters and creating a particular perception that has constituted elements with which we still engage with ideas, knowledge, information and culture. But what are these elements? Why is the page dual? And why is the double spread still such a strong device, carrying firm connotations?

Keith Houston states in *The Book*, how diptychs, or two-fold writing tablets, were the everyday notebooks of the ancient world (2016, p. 257). The oldest found have been dated to the 14th-century BC, and were made of a pair of wooden or ivory boards tied together with a cord. The surface of each one was hollowed out, filled with beeswax on which a scribe wrote, making incisions with a pointed stylus. This format was then adapted so that the wax could be warmed and the writing erased, and then reused by smoothing the softened wax surface. These tablets could have more parts attached to them, making three-fold triptychs, quadriptychs and even versions with up to twenty boards. They were all made in the same way, bound with holes drilled along one edge of each tablet, then tied together with leather thongs (ibid). This was perhaps the first attempt at concertina books. Even if the purpose of these tablets was simply to draw notes and drafts, the format provides a clear indication as to how the format of the page would evolve.

What we currently recognise as a 'page' emerges from the ancient scrolls. Houston uses the term *orihon* (meaning folded book), or concertina book, to explain how the folded arrangement evolved first in China and then with the Aztec and Mayans in Central America, earlier than the eleventh century (2016, p. 266). The folded structure facilitated reading and finding information. Likewise Bonnie Mak in the chapter 'Architectures of the Page', proposes that the *pagina*[3] emerges in the scroll as a conceptual structure, to visually divide the long roll of writing material into shorter sections (2011, p. 13) In that way, the early *pagina* began to arrange the text and space graphically determining the order in which the text should be read.

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[2] Codex describes the format that is now universal for printed books in the Western world. This form of the book was not widely used in the ancient world until around the second century AD, when it slowly began to replace the traditional book form, the papyrus roll.

It is not the purpose of this thesis to analyse the history of the paper and the book, however, this brief historical context illustrates that the configuration of the dual form of the page evolved and changed slowly through history. Through this, it is possible to begin to understand why and how both format and physical materiality might be seen to embody meaning. According to Roberts and Skeat, a variety of systems and materials (papyrus, parchment, skin or paper) survived and have coexisted through the ages, for example: codices were used in the communication of literary and Christian writing during the medieval period; the scroll remained as the preferred form for documents by local, imperial and papal administration; letters, contracts and bills of sale were copied on papyrus rolls; and royal documents were written on rolls of parchment until the nineteenth century (1983, p. 69). This indicates that our culture of interpreting and engaging with texts has been adapting and creating a range of means to transmit and distribute information. It also shows that book structures and the material of the page have changed over time, influenced and in response to political, social or religious circumstances.

Diversity in communicating information means developing different ways of constructing and establishing a variety of structures in the page. Does this suggest that there are different ways of reading and interpreting a text?

1.1.1 SOME NOTES ON MANUSCRIPTS AND PRINTED BOOKS

The writing and construction of books evolved before the arrival of the printing press and movable type. Before Guttenberg and the introduction of printing to Western Europe during the mid-15th century, all books were written by hand and although Latin was the universal language of Christian Europe, there were some manuscripts written in the vernacular, local tongue. Daniel Wakelin in *Designing*

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[3] Mak describes the columns in which scribes (in the 1st century AD) painted text and image, called *paginae*, constituting the main method of organising information on the scroll (2012, p. 12).

English: Early Literature on the Page uncovers how book design began[4] in manuscripts and how this was challenged and adapted with the resources available (2018, p. 40).

Prior to movable type, the production of a manuscript was a slow, laborious, demanding and expensive process. Keith Houston describes this process of transforming a written text into an illuminated manuscript and how this practice was reserved only for the most revered texts. The procedure consisted in ruling the pages (paper or parchment), writing the texts, drawing the illustrations and finally illuminating and painting the book. Illustrators, monks, scribes, antiquaries, *scriptores* and correctors were involved in the process each contributing to the final book each contributing their specific skills.

Through this, knowledge was transmitted through the monastic scribes. Andrew Dunning (curator of Medieval Historical Manuscripts at the British Library), states that during the 12th century the number of monasteries and abbeys grew, all requiring manuscripts for their libraries (2017, p. 365). From around 1200, alternative centres of learning appeared in the shape of the first universities, and the production of manuscripts began to shift from monasteries to professional workshops in the new university towns. Their subject matter became broader and more secular. According to Dunning's descriptions, manuscripts represented an important part of history's legacy. Through them, we not only discover the stories, text and the way books were made, we also learn about life, society, culture and thought in the medieval period.

William Morris (1834–1896)[5] wrote a number of essays investigating the ornamented manuscripts of the Middle Ages,[6] giving a special importance to the 'workmen artists' who through their art, would 'represent this story of the life of the World in pictures' (Morris in Peterson, 1982, p. 4). In these essays, Morris analyses in depth the material quality and design of many specific manuscripts and illuminating schools, showing how words recorded on a page in a certain way can result in 'a work of art'. Morris even made his own contribution creating *A Book of Verse*, a manuscript in which decoration invades the space of the text.[7] The artistic approach is well presented in Morris's approach to book design; in his lecture 'The Ideal Book' (1893) he writes: 'By ideal book, I suppose we are to understand a book not limited by commercial exigencies of price: we can do what we like with it, according with what is nature, as a book, demands of Art'. But despite this statement, he continues the lecture by detailing a series of rules regarding the type, spacing of words, margins, positioning of the page on the paper or types of paper.

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[4] This publication accompanied a revealing exhibition called *Designing English: Graphics on the Medieval Page* held at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, illustrating the design of handwritten manuscripts and inscriptions in English language across the Middle Ages.

[5] William Morris (1834–1896) was an English textile designer, poet, novelist and social activist. He was associated with the British Arts and Crafts Movement, and contributed to the revival of traditional British crafts and methods of production.

[6] Specifically, in 'Some thoughts on the ornamented manuscripts of the Middle Ages' (fragmentary essay never published by William Morris) and 'Some notes on the illuminated books of the Middle Ages' (1894) in *The Ideal Book: Essays and Lectures on the Arts of the Book*, edited by William S. Peterson.

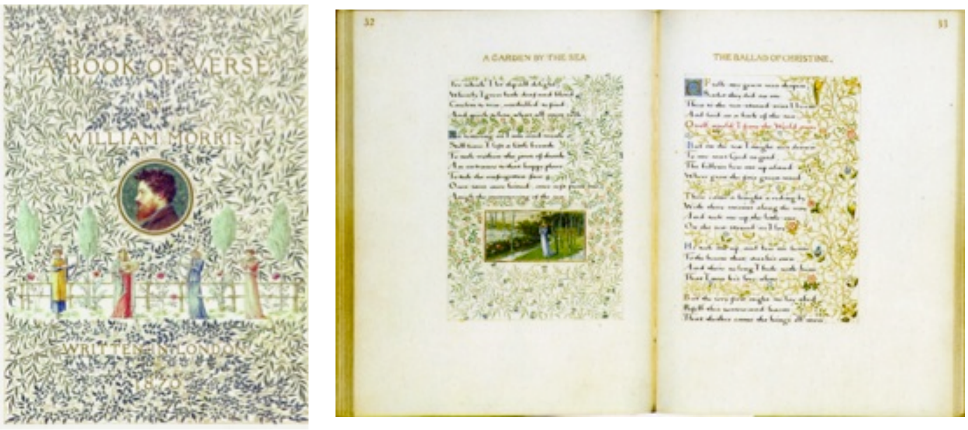

Figure 1. William Morris, cover and 'A Garden by the Sea', from the decorated manuscript *A Book of Verse* (1870) with a drawing by Edward Burne-Jones and miniatures by Charles Fairfax Murray.

There is a specific section in Morris's lecture that is particularly relevant for this study. He refers to how the printed page should be positioned on the paper, recalling 'we only occasionally see the one page of a book at the time; the two pages making an opening are really the unit of the book' (Morris in Peterson, 1982, p. 70). He continues explaining the importance of the margins, stipulating the exact measures they should have in order to create 'satisfactory proportions' in the double page. In 1902, it was Walter Crane in *The Influence of Conditions* who, following Morris's ideas, further reflected on the notion of the page. For Crane, the body of type impressed upon the paper, gives the proportions and dimensions of the page. The double page, when the book is opened, shows the right- and left-hand pages (recto and verso), and it is 'the true unit, not the single page' (1902, p. 135).

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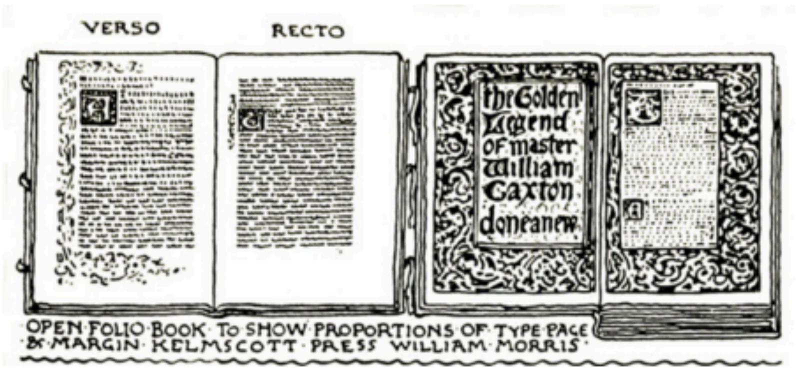
[7] More examples of this approach to word and image, can be seen in 'Illumination (The Decorated Page)' by James Bettley in *The Art of the Book: From Medieval Manuscript to Graphic Novel* (2001), where the author examines a number of books from the National Art Library at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

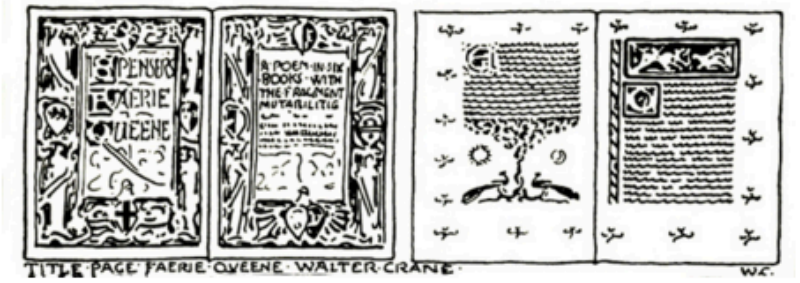
In *The Bases of Design*, Crane analyses every aspect of design, noting that there are natural limitations in every department of design: in the first place, scale and position in relation to eye and hand, in the second place of method and material. It is through this prism that he expresses his view in relation to the book and double page design. For Crane, the main condition in the matter of scale appears to be that 'we cannot afford to ignore the average human standard' (1898, p. 136) and it is in relation to that human scale that we should arrange all the elements of the page. For example, his descriptions of where the text should be placed:

> The type should be placed so as to leave the narrowest margin at the top and the inside, the broader on the outside, and the broadest of all at the foot. And this for obvious reasons, since in holding a book in our hand we naturally want the type brought well under the eye, the pages being set as close together as the necessities of joining down the middle will allow conveniently, so that the eye need not have to jump across a large brook of margin in travelling from one to the other, while the deep margin below enables the book to be held in the hand well set up before the eye, without touching the type. (1898, p.136)

Crane is reflecting on how our body and perception respond to stimulus, which designers should take into consideration. But with these considerations, he was also creating the basis of an approach to reading. Crane methodically describes how to deal with decorations, remarking 'it's a book-page and not a random sheet of paper' (ibid), and how the arrangement between illustration and text should have a sense of style and harmony.

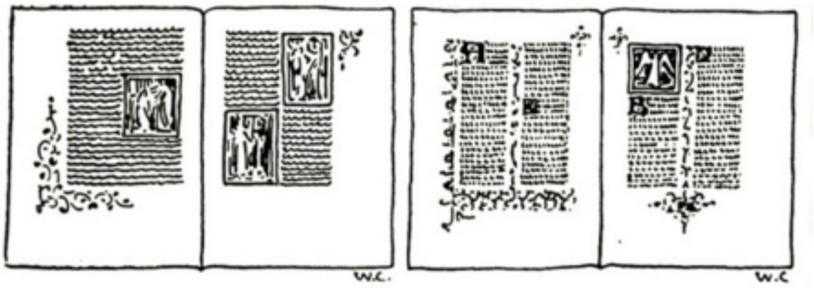

VERSO
RECTO
the Golden Legend of master William Caxton done anew
OPEN·FOLIO·BOOK·TO SHOW·PROPORTIONS·OF·TYPE·PAGE
& MARGIN·KELMSCOTT·PRESS·WILLIAM·MORRIS·

OPEN FOLIO BOOK TO SHOW PROPORTIONS OF TYPE PAGE & MARGIN, KELMSCOTT PRESS, WILLIAM MORRIS.


SPENSERS FAERIE QUEENE
A POEM IN SIX BOOKS WITH THE FRAGMENT MUTABILITIE
TITLE·PAGE·FAERIE·QUEENE·WALTER·CRANE·
W.C.

TITLE PAGE FAERIE QUEENE WALTER CRANE.

W.C.



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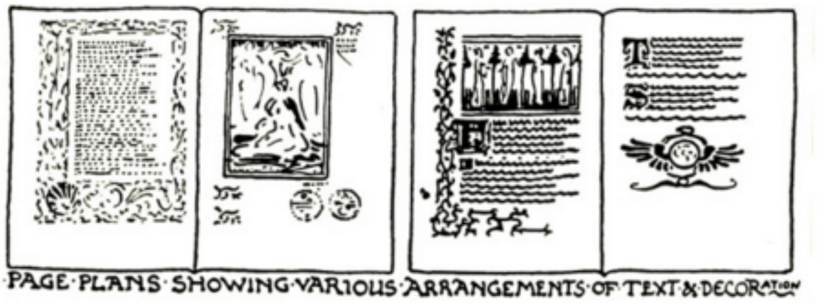
·PAGE·PLANS·SHOWING·VARIOUS·ARRANGEMENTS·OF·TEXT·&·DECORATION

PAGE PLANS SHOWING VARIOUS ARRANGEMENTS OF TEXT & DECOR$^{\text{ATION}}$

Figure 2. Page design´s illustrations by William Morris in Walter Crane, *The Bases of Design* (1902)

Walter Crane references Morris's contributions to book design, particularly under the imprint Kelmscott Press.[8] Perhaps Morris's aesthetics can be seen as antithetical or anachronic,[9] however, his emphasis on the relationship between production techniques and graphic style promoted a remarkable investigation of every element of the book as an object. Morris's revealing 1893 essay 'Printing' (in *Arts and Crafts Essays by Members of the Arts and Crafts Exhibition Society*) written in collaboration with Emery Walker, re-affirms and insists that the double page of a book should constitute a single cohesive unit, inciting publishers to focus on the double-page spread:

> The position of the page on the paper should be considered if the book is to have a satisfactory look. Here once more the almost invariable modern practice is in opposition to a natural sense of proportion. [...] the unit of the book being looked on as the two pages forming an opening. The modern printer, in the teeth of the evidence given by his own eyes, considers the single page as the unit, and prints the page in the middle of his paper. (1893, p. 128)

Here, Morris and Walker's argument focuses on the proportion and perception of the two halves of the opened book. They reinforce the idea of unity and composition of the page, and although this vision can be quite static and rigid (following the canons of the grid), their vision had an impact on the construction of the iconic aspect of the double spread.

Morris's particular approach to design and craftsmanship had a profound effect on his and succeeding generations of artists and designers. In the catalogue of the exhibition *From the Kelmscott Press*, examples from fifteen books show the special approach in which the publications were produced. The fine attention to detail indicates that there was profound research within the making of these books, an intention to experiment with the text, illustrations and adornments in the Kelmscott pages. Every double page is treated as a self-contained artwork, balanced and unique to itself. In particular, *The Earthly Paradise* (1896–1897) and *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (1893) contain elaborate decorations that produce a completely different experience in the reading of the book. Floral motives, large illustrated initial capital letters and beautiful borders frame the text.

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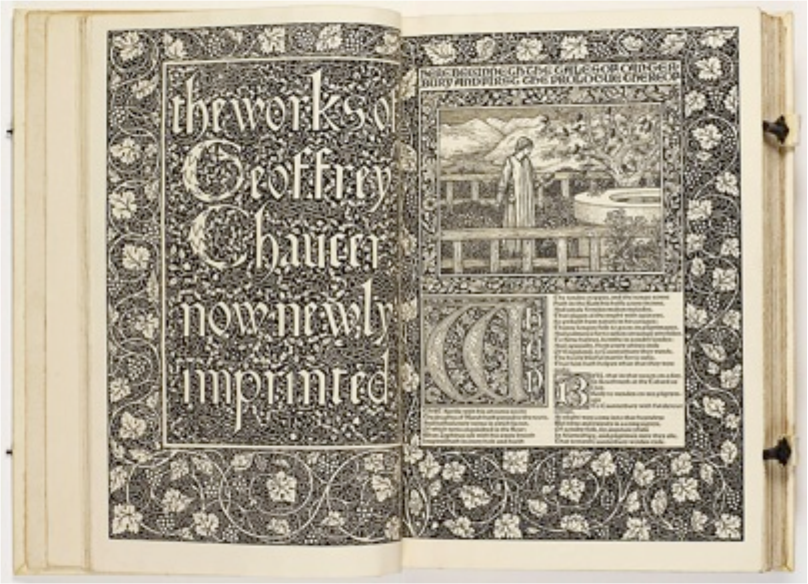
[8] The Kelmscott Press was a private press established by William Morris in Hammersmith, London in January 1891. Between then and 1898, the press produced fifty-three books.

[9] William Morris's philosophy was considered anachronic particularly by avant-guard artists such as the Futurists and Dadaists with their call for a modern aesthetic and experimentation in the language of graphic design.



the works of
Geoffrey
Chaucer
now newly
imprinted

Figure 3. William Morris, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer* (Kelmscott Press, 1896) with engravings by Edward Burne-Jones.

Crane and Morris made a significant contribution to the formation of the double page as a material unit. They both paid attention to the visual form in which literary texts were represented, demonstrating that the type gave the text a distinctive visual form[10] and condition as well as linking literature to its material encoding. They worked to integrate the poem and its performative medium by acknowledging the compositional environment (the layout) as a necessary part for the creation of poetry.[11] Through their well-crafted objects, the page began to become a place where the physicality of the ink, paper, the text, illustrations and adornments coexisted within a physical space. But how do all these considerations affect the relationship established between text and reader?

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[10] This was reinforced through Morris encouraging collaborations between writers and artists, for example in *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*: Edward Burne-Jones ornamented the initials and created engraved illustrations.

[11] See '"Thing to Mind": The Materialist Aesthetic of William Morris' in *Black Riders* by Jerome McGann for an in-depth study of the poetic aesthetics in William Morris's books. McGann analyses Morris's notes and typographical signals to understand his imaginative intentions to demonstrate how the physical media were vehicular forms for Morris's writing (McGann, 1993, p. 47)

The idea of enhancing the text by considering it as a visual form has been examined by many artists and writers, but does the content of the text define the structure of the page? Can the visual arrangement of text and typography enrich the content?

To reflect on this, I will consider of one of the most important Modernist books, *La Prose du Transsibérien et la Petite Jehanne de France* (1913). Although the format of this book is far from the dual form, *La Prose* is a hybrid book that illustrates traditional relationships with the book by linking them with new movements that propose a different and experimental approach to reading.

1.1.2 LA PROSE DU TRANSSIBÉRIEN ET LA PETITE JEHANNE DE FRANCE

Blaise Cendrars (1887–1961)[12] and Sonia Delaunay (1885–1979) collaborated in the creation of *La Prose du Transsibérien et la Petit Jehanne de France,*[13] an artist book where the poem is written in a free verse style that follows the poet's thoughts and impressions created while travelling in 1904 on the newly opened Trans-Siberian Railway, which still runs from Moscow across Siberia to the Sea of Japan.

The piece is made of four large sheets joined together and folded in half vertically. This fold configures the verso pages, painted in oil and the text printed only in the recto[14]. The paper is folded again horizontally to form a concertina book, which is made of twenty-two sections. The book is kept in a small colourful case. At first sight, when the reader begins to unfold and uncover the paperback, it operates like a concertina book: a long strip of paper folded in sections.[15] The reader has to choose whether to start with one side or the other: the painting or the text. If the reader starts exploring the writing, in order to read the poem, they need to position the book horizontally, turning the pages from bottom to top. This action challenges the traditional way of reading, changing the vertical focus of attention of the gutter.

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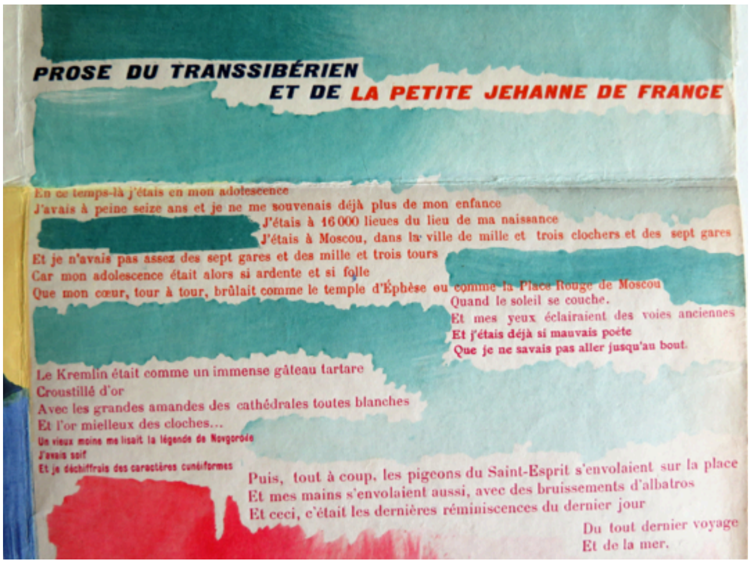
[12] Frédéric-Louis Sauser (1887–1961), better known as Blaise Cendrars, was a Swiss-born novelist and poet of considerable influence in the European Modernist movement.

[13] The English translation would be: The Prose of the Trans-Siberian and of Little Jeanne of France.

[14] The terms *recto* and *verso* refer to the text written on the 'front' and 'back' sides of a sheet of paper. Printed on recto means printed only on one side of the paper.

[15] These observations are made analysing the artwork from an original exemplar at the National Art Library in London.

The conventional way of reading and holding a book follows the vertical shape of the gutter. This position determines the linear order in which the elements are read, the direction of our eyes, the layout and therefore, the patterns of reading. From left to right, and top to bottom, it is the traditional way to approach and navigate any form of printed material. However, in *La Prose*, the artist chose to change the layout of the book. Altering this component, readers' expectations are confounded, making them more aware of all elements and actions involved in the reading of a book: scale, rotation, arrangement of text, action of turning the pages, rhythm and time.



PROSE DU TRANSSIBÉRIEN
ET DE LA PETITE JEHANNE DE FRANCE

En ce temps-là j'étais en mon adolescence
J'avais à peine seize ans et je ne me souvenais déjà plus de mon enfance
J'étais à 16000 lieues du lieu de ma naissance
J'étais à Moscou, dans la ville de mille et trois clochers et des sept gares
Et je n'avais pas assez des sept gares et des mille et trois tours
Car mon adolescence était alors si ardente et si folle
Que mon cœur, tour à tour, brûlait comme le temple d'Éphèse ou comme la Place Rouge de Moscou
Quand le soleil se couche.
Et mes yeux éclairaient des voies anciennes
Et j'étais déjà si mauvais poète
Que je ne savais pas aller jusqu'au bout.
Le Kremlin était comme un immense gâteau tartare
Croustillé d'or
Avec les grandes amandes des cathédrales toutes blanches
Et l'or mielleux des cloches...
Un vieux moine me lisait la légende de Novgorode
J'avais soif
Et je déchiffrais des caractères cunéiformes
Puis, tout à coup, les pigeons du Saint-Esprit s'envolaient sur la place
Et mes mains s'envolaient aussi, avec des bruissements d'albatros
Et ceci, c'était les dernières réminiscences du dernier jour
Du tout dernier voyage
Et de la mer.

Figure 4. Detail of *La Prose du Transsibérien et la Petit Jehanne de France* (1913).

If we continue to explore the artwork, another aspect is that the text is printed all the way to the edge of the paper, without any margins. The text is arranged so there are no gaps or line spaces so every verse connects with the one following, meaning the different strophes can be identified only by changes of colour, size or font. This arrangement gives flow and continuity to the piece, reflecting with the idea of a journey. The constant changes of typography and colour in the text (alternating red, grey and dark blue) is an early example of the deliberate use of multiple fonts in different sizes and colours, contemporaneous to experiments by the Italian Futurists.

The structure of the poem is reinforced by watercolour washes that increase the flowing effect, creating a unique step-by-step movement. This notion of movement and continuousness encourages the reader feel that they are in a permanent present, one of the characteristics of *Simultanisme*.[16]

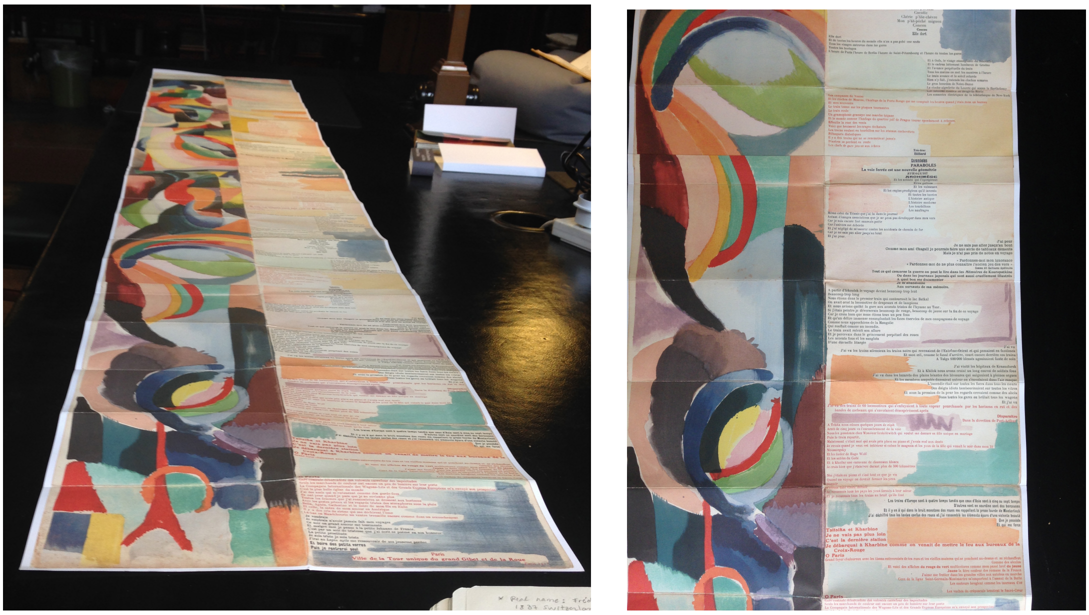


Figure 5. Sonia Delaunay and Blaise Cendrars, *La Prose du Transsibérien et la Petit Jehanne de France* (1913). Book seen at the Collection National Art Library, London.

The book, when unfolded, shows a divided, dual and binary image where the text echoes the painting and vice versa. Two long vertical panels of image and text connect and are in dialogue with each other, exchanging rhythms and visual compositions. The large format echoes the language used in newspaper construction and posters for the opera and theatre.

Due to the folding system, creases and pleats remain in the paper creating a grid structure that divides the artwork into small panels. Each panel features a portion

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[16] The term *Simultanism* is derived from the theories of Michel Eugène Chevreul whose book of colour theory *De la loi du contraste simultanée des couleurs* (On the law of the simultaneous contrast of colours) was published in Paris in 1839. Chevreul identified the phenomenon of colours looking different depending on the colours around them. Robert Delaunay used this term to describe the abstract painting developed by him and Sonia Delaunay from 1910.

of text on the right and a watercolour by Delaunay on the left. The first section, top right, represents a map of the Trans-Siberian Railway while the first segment on the left shows the title, imprint and edition size statement in blue and red. The imagery is made by applying pigments via 'pochoir', a type of stencil process, combined with gouache and watercolour washes. The watercolours are predominantly abstract and range from cool pastel tones to bright and vibrant blue, vermillion, purple, yellow and green. Delaunay's work also spills onto the right side, filling in the space between Cendrars' stanzas. The text is printed in letterpress in a variety of colours, sizes and typefaces.[17] The colour washes enrich the words and the content of the poem, echoing both the verses and the vibrant abstract painting next to it.

The use of colour is a fundamental aspect of this work. Delaunay uses it in a symbolic and interpretative way. In the essay "Voyelles": Sonia Delaunay and the Universal Language of Colour Hearing', Pascal Rousseau connects concepts related to language, music and colour. Delaunay musicalizes the spoken word through a range of colours…making a 'synchromatic presentation'. He postulates how the artist developed the artwork by transcribing written words into colours: 'the Simultanism of this book is in its simultaneous rather than illustrative *presentation*. The *simultaneous contrast of colours* and the *text* form *depths and movements* which are the *new inspiration'* (Rousseau in Monfort and Godefroy, 2014, p. 73).

Transcribing the spoken word through colours was at the heart of Delaunay's interpretation of the poem. Creating this luminous abstract painting presented alongside Cendrars' poem, the artist was trying to develop an archaic way of communication. That is, she was trying to create a more visual and instinctive language based on basic references such as sound, colour or light. Delaunay's aim was to extend the meaning of the text. While words have bounds and recognisable meaning, images are much more open-ended and have an unrestricted significance, especially abstract images. It is perhaps why Cendrars and Delaunay's experimentations were more focused on the visual and colour interactions with text than in exploring just the text itself through typography, layout or writing innovation.

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[17] Although Cendrars wrote the poem in 1904, the book wasn't published until 1913 in Paris by Éditions des Hommes Nouveaux, a journal and press founded by Blaise Cendrars and Emile Szytta, producing an edition of 150 books.

When the book is unfolded, it measures 1956 x 356 mm, nearly two metres long, and invites the reader to see the artwork as if it was a poster or hanging scroll. Art historian Juliet Bellow in 'On Time: Sonia Delaunay's Sequential Simultanism', has discussed how this 'extension of scale … challenges the viewer's perceptual limits'. Defying the codex form, the 'scroll like piece' gives 'visual form to the extended voyage Cendrars's text recounts … becoming aware of our spectatorial journey as it unfolds' (Bellow in Monfort and Godefroy, 2014, p. 99). Bellow describes how Delaunay interpreted through scale and form the themes expressed by the poetic text and how scale impacts on the reader's interpretation and experience of the work. I agree with Bellow that the large format distances the reader from the traditional concept of the book, however it is important to recall some details that retain the proximity and intimate approach characteristic of the book art language. While the painting is made of expressive strokes and asks to be viewed from a distance, the text's scale and typography is relatively small and impossible to read unless the reader is close. Furthermore, the type of paper, the creases and the paper's pleats all get lost when viewed from distance. In my opinion, Delaunay and Cendrars didn't conceive a scroll-like format as Bellow indicates, quite the opposite. They designed a complex system of pleats and panels which are an important element of the work. The folding system is what structures the layout and gives shape to the artist's strategy to communicate ideas. It is also through the folding that the reader can find their way to the message and begin with the reading experience.

I was able to view this piece when it was exhibited as part of the exhibition *Sonia Delaunay* at Tate Modern (2015). It was presented unfolded and framed hanging from the wall. That display enhanced the idea of poster and aesthetics of the newspapers and the expansion of the press in France at the beginning of the 20th century. Although it was important to see the totality of the work, that vertical display sacrificed part of the essence of the work, which was the aim of breaking the boundaries between poetry and art. Cendrars and Delaunay made an exercise of expanding the notion of the page exploring the effects of simultaneity with sequential structure, adding a temporal element to the artwork. Colour, text and space worked in simultaneity in the portable space of the page.

La Prose represents a pioneering approach to the evolution of the reading experience. Delaunay and Cendrars' collaborative approach in creating a new system embedded in the duality, the dramatic use of colour and large-scale presence combining the effort of painting, poetry and typography, exemplifies a step forward in the engagement with new book structures and different ways of reading. Cendrars and Delaunay placed their practice in the boundary between visual and textual language, turning reading into a visual perception. They made a transversal exercise to confront a vision of the future of the book and question the parameters that affect our engagement with the artwork, uncovering the naturalistic tradition and starting an enquiry into a non-hierarchy of the constituent parts of the creative act.

1.2 THINKING THE DOUBLE PAGE

Bonnie Mak starts her book *How the Page Matters* with this reflection:

> No matter how far a literary text or a poem may take us, it always does so from the physicality of pages impregnated with ink, from an intimacy very rare in other media. This eminently physical relationship with the book object indicates that it is not just an object of interpretation but also an object of experience. (2011, p. 5)

What do we read when we read a book or a text? Do we read only the words? As Bonnie Mak and Johanna Drucker state, the configuration of the page matters and adds a particular meaning to the content of the book. But, is it only the configuration of the page that predisposes the significance of the content?

The codex was established between the 2nd and 3rd century BC, and it was then that the structure and design of the page started to form. As discussed in 1.1.1, the page's architecture, as regards the arrangement of text in lines and columns, was first established in scrolls and tablets. The conventional features of the page were then developed in medieval manuscripts and adopted into printed books. It was through this process that the content became organised in the way that we understand it now, including headings, footnotes, titles, margins; every element, contributing to help structure the reading. But how do we read all these elements and how do we read across the double page?

Reading is fundamentally associated with the function and form of the book. Anna Sigrídur Arnar in *The Book as Instrument* (2011), affirms that 'Stéphane Mallarmé nurtured the idea of the book as a catalyst of profound social change' and he 'believed that change could be initiated by the process of reading because its empowered readers to become independent creative agents'. The French poet Stéphane Mallarmé (a key figure for this research and whose work I will analyse in depth in the next section 1.3) made significant contributions with his new approach to the emancipation of the reader with their engagement with books. Through his essays and poetry, he began an investigation into how to expand the power of individual readers, specifically in his essay *Le Livre, instrument spirituel*.[18] This text is key to understanding the poet's implication in renovating the idea of the book and the concept of reading. Mallarmé writes: 'the initiative […], whose spark resides within anybody to make connections between a dispersed notation' (Mallarmé in Folie, 2015: 121). This consideration of reading reveals a change not only in the process of reading, but also in the development of writing. Firstly, the importance of considering reading as a participatory process; secondly, to suggest that the readers need to be creative and recontextualise their own knowledge; and thirdly, the recognition of reading as a form of freedom. With *Le Livre*, Mallarmé opens up a debate on linguistics and semiology.

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[18] In English would be: The Book, Spiritual Instrument. Sigrídur Arnar points out that the French term *spirituel* is perhaps more correctly understood in the context of Mallarmé's title as 'intellectual' rather than 'spiritual', as in French, *spirituel* refers to one's wit and mental agility. The essay was written in 1895 and published as part of *Divagations* in 1897.

To the same extent, philosopher Helène Cixous also describes reading as an act of freedom writing:

> Not everyone carries out the act of reading in the same way, but there is a manner of reading comparable to the act of writing—it's an act that suppresses the world. We annihilate the world with a book [...] reading is a clandestine, furtive act. Reading is a provocation, a rebellion: we open the book's door, pretending it is a simple paperback cover, and in broad daylight escape! We are no longer there: this is what real reading is. When we read, we are eating. Reading is eating on the sly (1993, p. 54).

Cixous' definition of reading uses a graphic way of explaining that when we read, the rest of the world doesn't exist, we are immersed in our own particular reality. She compares it with writing because it is both a reflective act and a provocation. We are free when we write and read and we feel ownership of our imagination. Therefore, for Cixous, as for Mallarmé, the book is a creative and empowering object.

One of the first theorists to discuss the role of the reader was the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914). He developed a study of signs called semiology. Semiology studies the signs themselves, the way they are organised into systems, and the context in which they appear. According to Crow, for Peirce, the part that the reader plays in the process of communication was also a central aspect of his research, supporting the notion that the meaning of words can change depending on who reads them (2016, p. 60). Philosopher Roland Barthes developed that approach to the figure of the 'reader' in 1960 in Europe. For Barthes, semiology was much more than the study of signs: images, sounds, gestures and objects are systems and can have semiotic meanings. In his essay

‘Rhetoric of the Image’, Barthes studies the semiology of the image by considering the image as representation. He asks, ‘can “the copy” (analogical representation) produce true systems of signs and not just agglutinations of symbols and how does meaning get into the image?’ For Barthes, the image is made of signs that we can interpret for ‘optimum reading’ (1977, p. 33).

The way Barthes approached images and objects is similar to the way we approach texts: interpreting signs, connecting ideas, reading literal messages that support symbolic messages. To explain his theory, the philosopher points out that there are three types of messages: linguistic (the function of which is to transmit), coded-iconic (denoted) and non-coded iconic message (rhetoric). This last is the most suggestive one, as is symbolic, cultural and connotative, providing variable and multiple readings, which are affected by the lexicon.[19] It is here that we see the role of the reader, as meaning is constructed not solely by the creator, but also by the ‘consumer’ and the intersection of their lexicon with the signs contained in the image.

Consequently, for Barthes ‘reading’ implies analysis and interpretation. He reads images, structures made of signs drawn from a variable depth of lexicons. The reader plays part of the process of reading by applying his own knowledge. By doing this, the meaning is affected by the reader’s background. According to Peirce, this humanises the entire process because connotation is arbitrary. Each person, each reader, has and brings a different knowledge and culture and is exposed to particular conventions. Crow defines convention as an agreement about how we should respond to a sign (2016, p. 65). Accordingly, these conventions will vary from one culture to another, and they will establish certain directions or rules of how to read and interpret information.

Theodor Adorno (1903–1967) presents a similar approach in ‘Gaps’ (*Minima Moralia*, 1951), but here it is applied to the reading of texts[20]. Adorno points out that the writer shows the process of writing in their text. The steps followed reveal the writer's value of thought, which is measured by the distance of what is and what is not familiar to the reader. For Adorno, the thought is devalued depending on how familiar the significance is for the reader. If the text presents abstract ideas, it will have more value because it is where the 'claims of thought founded' are (1951, p. 80). Barthes and Adorno share the idea of 'conventions', as Adorno also believes that knowledge comes to us through prejudices (conventions, presuppositions), pointing out the Cartesian Rule, that we must address only to objects to promote intuition and create experience (ibid).

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[19] For Barthes, a meaning is derived from a *lexicon*, a symbolic plane, which is a body of knowledge within the viewer.

[20] Both texts ´Gaps’ and ‘The Rhetoric of the Image’ amongst others were analysed and discussed with the MA Book Arts Reading Group, which brought up a valuable critical analysis of the theorists’ ideas. Please see Appendices 7 for more information about the Reading Group.

Is this the precise idea that takes us back to the questions at the beginning of this section on how do we approach a double page? The conventions, rules, culture, history and background all direct us to look since 'a page is made to be read'. Historically, the pages of the book have carried knowledge; they have developed particular layouts and features to structure our reading in order to facilitate our access to information. For centuries, we have inherited an attitude towards the function and form of the page. These conditioned patterns of approaching the format, from left to right or top to bottom for example, allow us to navigate through written or printed material, and it is that predisposition that conditions our experience of reading.

This attitude is, however, an interesting element to be applied in the context of art. It is one of the purposes of this thesis to analyse the connotative properties of the double page to reflect on their significant outcome as art. I have been investigating this area in a number of projects,[21] particularly in *Collecting Pages* (2016), *Against Syntax* (2017) and *Signs of Resistance* (2018). It was during the production of these works that I became fully aware of the potential of using a format or an arrangement that carries such strong connotations and associated conventions. The book page is a symbol that belongs to a defined set of signs and the meaning of which we have learned and that is impossible to disassociate from. That means that when we are using that format to make an artwork, such as an artist book or a book-form piece, readers are going to bring theses associations with the book in order to interpret the work. According to Umberto Eco (1932–2016), 'the reader searches for as many possible associations as they can in a game of pleasure and surprise, trying to interpret the intentions of the author as they do so'.

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[21] During the research process, I carried out parallel and practice-based investigations to test out these ideas both in the studio and in exhibition context. All these experiments are described and analysed in Chapter 4.

In *The Role of the Reader* (1979), Umberto Eco expands the idea first formulated by Barthes; how texts activate the reader's not only linguistic, but also cultural competences. Eco always uses the term 'reader', even when he considers the visual arts. He 'reads' gestural marks made by the Expressionist painters, he 'reads' Alexander Calder's mobiles and also 'reads' music by composers such as Stockhausen. The reason is that Eco doesn't recognise the term 'code' to refer to the transmission of meaning, is that implies a one-to–one transfer of meaning. He prefers the term 'encyclopaedia' because it suggests that there are a number of interrelated interpretations, and the readers can choose to negotiate their own paths. So the same for the interpretation of artworks, Eco sees an openness in the reading of signs and the absorption of meaning, and it is precisely that notion of open work that he supports in the creative practice.

At the same time, Eco is interested in the tension between the information offered by the artist and the level of comprehension needed for the work to be interpreted. He defends the cooperative role of the addressee in interpreting messages. In 1962, he published *The Open Work*, which reflected on the relationship between the author of the work of art and the reader. Like Adorno, Eco describes the perfect reader not as one who interprets the artwork exactly as the author intended, but a reader who is awake to the possibilities that the work contains.

This philosophical context provides an essential analysis in order to understand the way we process information and connect our knowledge with new concepts. Although I agree and position my approach closer to Eco and Adorno´s perspective, I would argue that the engagement with text lies also with the experience we have with the object and container of that text.

I will develop this argument further in the next section to claim that the object and materiality in which information are presented becomes the reader´s experience, which has remarkable implications regarding the essence and perception of the printed image.

1.2.1 WAYS OF READING

Do we read text in the same way we read images? In the previous section I have considered the reader's awareness in relation to reading. I have suggested that there is both a distinction and an association between reading texts and images. In the analysis of Umberto Eco's ideas in *The Role of the Reader* we have seen how he supports creative practice through the idea of openness in the reading of signs and absorption of meaning. However, it is difficult to fully understand the concept of reading pieces of art without mentioning how the *livre d'artiste*[22] and book arts[23] have expanded the function of the book as a container of meaning and materiality.

It is not within the objectives of this thesis to revise or define any concept related to the book arts field. My intention is to analyse specific aspects of this practice for two reasons: firstly, to provide a context to support my idea of 'reading images' and secondly, to complement and provide a broader framework on how the symbolic power of the page continued developing during the 20th Century.

1.2.1.1 READING ARTISTS' BOOKS

The development of artists' books can be traced back to the beginning of the history of printing. We have seen examples of remarkable works produced in book form in the first section of this chapter, and although they are not considered as artists' books, I catalogue them as sources for informing contemporary artistic practice.

Even though there were several artists and publishers who produced pieces which were self-conscious about the book form at the end of the 19th century,[24] the artist book became a developed form in the 20th century. That was when artists started to create books as original and experimental pieces of art, rather than illustrating a particular text or reproducing a pre-existing work. The Russian avant-garde, French Symbolists and Italian avant-garde all used the visual properties of the page to make their manifestos dynamic. Their aesthetics were innovative and transgressive, using symbolic forms of language and images. Works such as *La fin du monde filmee par l'ange N-D* (1919) by artist Fernand Léger and poet Blaise Cendrars is a good example, with a clear influence from advertising and lettering, each spread is an explosion of colour, imagery and text, breaking completely with the linear structure of the traditional book. *Dlja golosa* (1923) by artist El Lissitzky and poet Vladimir Mayakovsky was also designed to search for a new way of reading.[25] Taking an anthology of Mayakovsky's poetry, Lissitzky created compositions using just type. The artist arranged each poem in a double-page spread, taking each fold as a different space (see figure below).

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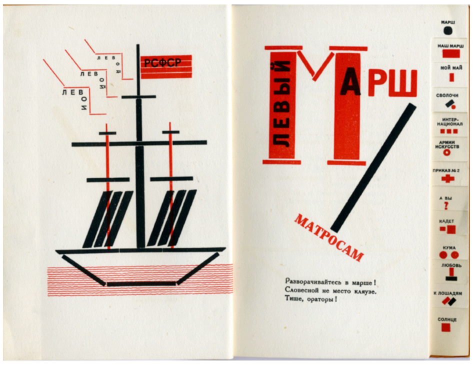
[22] Although there are many definitions for the French term *livre d'artiste*, I identify my positioning with Clive Phillpot's vision, who defines the term artist book as the product of the use of printmaking techniques – lithography, etching and engraving – and which were in editions limited either by process or intent (2014, p. 47).

[23] According also with Clive Phillpot, the term ´book art´ denotes those books in which the book form is intrinsic to the work (2014, p. 53)

[24] For example, some of the books included in the catalogue of *The Reva and David Logan Collection*, edited by Robert Flynn Johnson (2002, pp. 50–62), with works by Henri Toulouse-Lautrec, Odilon Redon, Edward Burne-Jones and Edouard Manet amongst others.



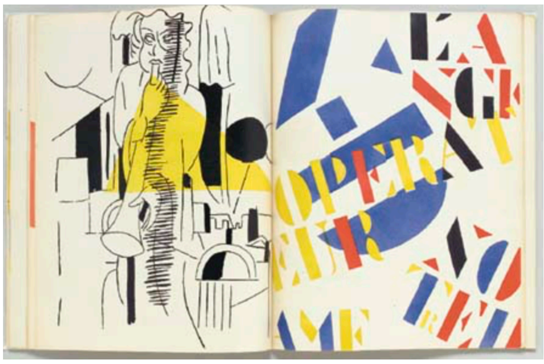


Figure 6 (left). El Lissitzky and Vladimir Mayakovsky. *Dlja golosa* (1923).
Figure 7 (right). Fernand Léger and Blaise Cendrars. *La fin du monde filmee par l'ange N-D* (1919).

Even more relevant examples are Karel Teige's *Abeceda* (1926), the Wiener Werkstatte (Vienna Workshops) books, Pierre Faucheux's book designs or A.M Cassandre's *Bifur: caractere de publicité* (1929) amongst others. *Abeceda* was a collaboration with choreographer and dancer Milca Mayerová, who inspired by Teige's poems, created different poses that then were combined with big letters in a photo-typo book. According to Mathieu Lommen in the catalogue *A Book of Books*, A.M Cassandre, like Teige, was a graphic designer who designed several letterings for posters and type-faces, of which *Bifur* was the first (2012, p. 338).

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[25] Both *Dlja golosa* and *La fin du monde filmee par l'ange N-D* have been studied from original exemplars at the National Art Library, London.

This book is only one example of how book design and therefore, the figure of the graphic designer was becoming increasingly significant. Books like *Bifur*, *Abeceda* or *La fin du monde* were works interested in and specially designed to express ideas using the book as a medium. We can see a similar approach in Faucheux and the Wiener Werkstatte books[26] (especially those designed by member Mathilde Flög). The Italians Filippo Tommaso Marinetti with *Le mots en liberté futuristes* (1919) and *Parole olfavive, tattily, termich*e (1932) and later, using Caproni's words, the 'metaphorical books' by Bruno Munari (2003, quoted in Maffei and Picciau, 2008 p. 21) also contributed with books to be read in new and unpredicted ways. Munari's *L'anguria lirica* (1934) and Marinetti's *Le mots en liberté futuristes* are printed on paper of various colours, and figures are formed using numbers and letters, considering the format of the page, the fold and texture in order to communicate through the materiality of the pages.

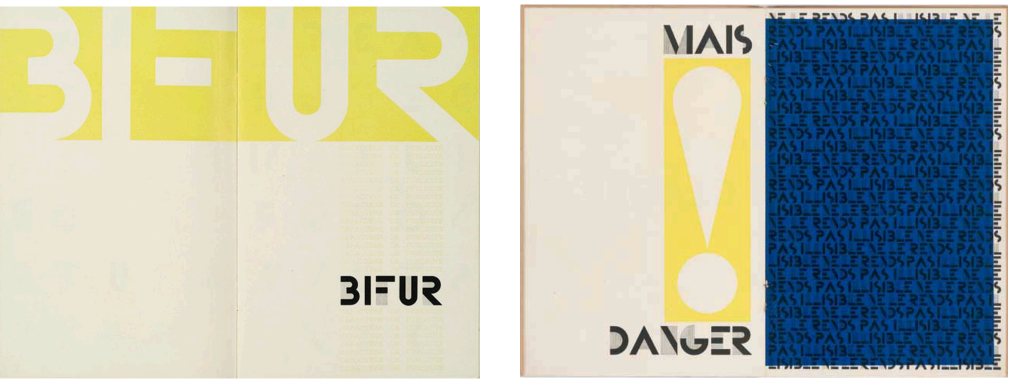

Figure 8. A.M Cassandre. *Bifur: caractère de publicité* (1929).

I have included these brief analyses to show how the dimensions of the book were dramatically changing during the period between wars. These works experiment with distinctive typography, with type running to the edge of the page, omitting paragraph spaces, creating massive and endless blocks of text or including big areas of colour to play with the architecture of the double-page spread. They fully integrate into the *mise en page*,[27] reflecting the artists' attention to every aspect of book design.

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[26] Several Wiener Werkstatte's books were studied from original exemplars at the National Art Library, London.

[27] French term used to refer the placement of all printed matter on a page.

Although the books described exemplify a very small part of the artists' book spectrum, they represent a new generation, evidencing a clear shift in the way books were conceived and how artists started to approach the medium.

However, the gradual transformation of the book as an artistic object, and its distancing from its original structure, allows the artist to use the pages freely, no longer subject to the guidelines of traditional reading. As was seen in section 1.1.1 and especially in section 1.1.2 in *La Prose*, the books become a new art form that unfold, capable of engaging in new aesthetic behaviour.

In the next chapter I will analyse in depth how by the end of the nineteenth century some books, for example *Un Coup de Dés*, started to be considered no longer a book illustrated, but instead an analytical entity in which the visual characteristics were inseparable from the content.

1.3 STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ AND THE READING OF THE PAGE

Why is the poet Stéphane Mallarmé one of the central references for this thesis? The previous section focused on the analysis of the reading experience and how meaning is shared between author and reader. However, this enquiry cannot be completely understood without a close consideration of Mallarmé's contribution and legacy. In *The Book as Instrument,* the poet expresses the experience of reading by redefining the textual, visual and sequential elements of the book, and with it, he anticipated a new role for the reader. More than fifty years before Barthes or Eco published anything related to the shared process of reading, these ideas were implicit in Mallarmé's poems. The poet called 'our multiple comprehension' (quoted in Arnar, 2011, p. 45) to the process and levels of engagement with the text. With that vision, Mallarmé commenced a reader-orientated poetic practice that would influence not only the discourse of Modernism in which he was engaged, but also a particular approach in considering the reader in the process of interpreting art.

Stéphane Mallarmé (1842–1898), was a major French Symbolist poet, and his work anticipated and inspired several revolutionary artistic schools of the early 20th century, such as Cubism, Futurism, Dadaism and Surrealism, and to some extent, his poetry also anticipated many of the fusions between poetry and the other arts that have flourished since.

In his early poetry (between 1860 and 1885), Mallarmé was influenced by Romantic themes and poetic techniques derived from the French authors such as Lamartine and Victor Hugo. Later, he found inspiration in Edgar Allan Poe's poems, as quoted by Lloyd Austin, admiring his 'lucid control in composition reducing to a minimum narrative, descriptive and didactic elements' (1987, p. 21). Charles Baudelaire[28] was another of his influences, and Mallarmé recognised the importance and successful application of the Baudelarean technique of correspondences, which involves 'the deliberate use of images taken from the external world for the perfect expression of the inner'. A good example of this is

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[28] Charles Baudelaire (1821–1867) was a French poet, translator, literary and art critic. His most important and influential poetry collection was *Les Fleurs du mal* (The Flowers of Evil (1857). This work is considered to mark the beginning of the Symbolist movement, in which artists sought to express individual emotional experience through suggestive use of highly symbolised language.

Mallarmé’s famous poem *l’Après-midi d’un faune*. *Églogue* (The Afternoon of a Faun, 1865). This poem explores the ambiguity between dream and memory evoking images and musicality using a synthetic language.[29] According to Austin, Mallarméan poetry lies in ‘the unspoken part of discourse’, and for this reason it has been such an important influence in contemporary art. Through the invocation of images and search for purity, he invented within the realm of the book, a modern space.

One of the central claims in this thesis is that the double page has autonomy, has its own identity. For this reason, Mallarmé is a primary historical reference and *Un Coup de Dés* is a key work to reaffirm the formation of the double page as a unique space for creation. This poem will be analysed further in the next section 1.4, but it is important at this point to underline the context and ideas behind Mallarmé’s poetic practice.

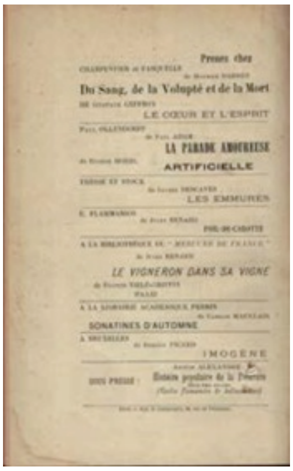
L'HORREUR

Le mystère des foules

Le pain gratuit

VICTOR BARRUCANO

LE GRAND PAN



Proses chez

Du Sang, de la Volupté et de la Mort

LE CŒUR ET L'ESPRIT

LA PARADE AMOUREUSE

ARTIFICIELLE

LES EMMURÉS

LE VIGNERON DANS SA VIGNE

SONATINES D'AUTOMNE

IMOGÈNE

Figure 9 (left). *La Revue blanche*, 8.49 (15 June 1895), end of the issue, inside back cover.
Figure 10 (right). *La Revue blanche*, 7.37 (20 November 1894), end of the issue.

The philosopher Jacques Rancière interpreted Mallarmé’s pages as ‘sites of negotiation’, where ‘democracy could be expanded and fully realised’, giving importance to autonomy and emancipation on the part of the reader. The book’s unique format and structural potential provided Mallarmé with the perfect context to experiment on how ideas could be transmitted to the reader.

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[29] This poem formed the inspiration for the orchestral work *Prélude à l’après-midi d’un faune* by Claude Debussy and the ballets of the same name by Vaslav Nijinsky. According to Hendrik Lücke in *Mallarmé-Debussy* (2005), *t*he Debussy and Njinsky works would be of great significance in the development of Modernism in the arts.

Industrialisation, newspapers and publishing's success at the end of the 19th century also offered Mallarmé a new opportunity to reflect on different reading experiences. In his essay *Le livre, instrument spirituel,* the poet explores relationships between collective sites and individual experience. That is, how reading belongs in the public space and is not solely an individual activity anymore. Anna Sigrídur Arnar examines Mallarmé's interest in newspapers in his series of essays published in 1890 in *The National Observer* and *La Revue Blanche*. She maintains that it was in those writings that Mallarmé reflected on the role of poetry in modern democratic society and his growing interest in mass media (2008, p. 193). Mallarmé's thoughts included the idea that the newspaper was a popular space, thus a truly democratic form that included a plurality of voices. Those voices represented for Mallarmé, 'multiple distractions' that encouraged 'new habits of readings', requiring visual acuity and even physical endurance from readers. For him, the physical interaction with the new medium involved more energy and noise and disrupted the traditional sequential passive activity of reading (1890, cited in Arnar, 2011, p. 190). Linda Goddard points out in her essay 'Mallarme, Picasso and the aesthetic of the newspaper', that throughout 1885, Mallarmé contributed with a series of prose poems, *Variations sur un sujet*, to the Symbolist periodical *La Revue Blanche*. This journal was particularly distinctive for its varied use of typography and for the collaborations between artists and poets. In these forms of journals, it was also common to see pages juxtaposing content, with advertisements, creating dynamic and eclectic spaces with a wide range of typographies and textual arrangements. Mallarmé, with his preoccupation with unorthodox ways of reading, promptly recognised the possibilities of including such variety into his own texts by using a multiplicity of type, sizes and arrangements.

The end of the 19th century was also the moment in which journals became popular and more accessible to the reading public. Sigrídur Arnar mentions the influence of the Belgian Revolution of Art Nouveau book designs and journals and the exhibition *The exposition international du livre modern* at the Maison de l'Art nouveau in Paris in June 1896 (2011, p. 179). This exhibition was curated by Siegfried Bing and featured nearly 1,200 books, manuscripts, papers, bookbinding, book ornaments, typefaces, etc. Five copies of Mallarmé's books were also part of the display. This large exhibit of books was an eclectic and revealing collection of innovative and modern publications that drew upon the context and influences in which Mallarmé designed his experimental project for *Un Coup de Dés*.

This context indicates that Stéphane Mallarmé's work from 1885 began to change and evolve, becoming more open and experimental. Incorporating his own practice into the new newspaper's use of language and communication, Mallarmé began to develop a new poetic aesthetic. By changing the locus of meaning, improvisation, intuition, imagination, visual acuity, democracy, and ultimately, reader's freedom these formed the pillars of his poetic language.

One of the most important examples of this new focus in Mallarmé's practice is *Un Coup de Dés*. In this poem, he incorporated his ideas about the process of reading, flow of text and the use of the page as a social space. Through this, he used visual presentation of text as a tool to represent a new poetic approach.

The next case study will show how this revolutionary poem not only represented a crucial move forward from traditional practices, but also how Mallarmé's unique exploration of the visual through experiences of reading, was echoed in other artists' practices.

1.4 CASE STUDY: MALLARMÉ, BROODTHAERS AND THE VARIABLE READINGS

The subject of *Un Coup de Dés* is the dice-throw, symbolic of the act of poetic creation itself. Mallarmé's poem moves away from the usual poetic focus on the meaning and sound of words and enters into a visual dimension. The positioning of the words is closely linked to their meaning, while the patterns they form help in creating imagery and space.

The Chelsea Special Collection contains a number of different versions of *Un Coup de Dés* including original versions by Stéphane Mallarmé and Marcel Broodthaers and a series of interpretations of the poem by artists such as Michael Maranda and Michalis Pilcher amongst others[30]. I have used this unique collection of artists' books with two different purposes: firstly, to study *Un Coup de Dés* from an original copy in order to generate my own interpretation; and secondly to analyse the influence of Mallarmé's work on contemporary artists within the context of the collection.

1.4.1 *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira le Hasard. Poem*

STÉPHANE MALLARMÉ

Un Coup de Dés was first published in May 1897 in the journal *Cosmopolis*. Although this was the only edition printed in Mallarmé's lifetime, Sigrídur Arnar notes that according to subsequent proofs corrected by the poet, we know that the *Cosmopolis* version only represented a partial fulfilment of Mallarmé's ideas. Initially, the poem was going to be published in book form by art dealer Ambroise Vollard.[31] Odilon Redon was going to contribute to this deluxe edition a series of lithographs. Sigrídur Arnar explains that the illustrated edition of *Un Coup de Dés* was planned to operate on two visual registers within distinct spatial and temporal frames (2011, p. 199), that is, the text and the illustration would work separately (in separate pages) but presumably at the same level, complementing each other but independently. This is a significant decision in which Redon, Mallarmé and Vollard agreed and advances Mallarmé's intentions regarding the composition of the book.

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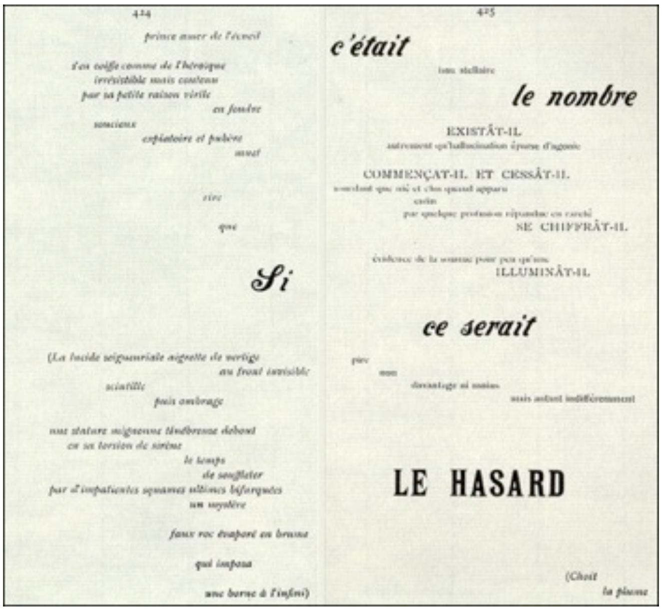
[30] These versions were studied from original exemplars at the Chelsea Special Collection in different occasions, including a critical session with the MA book Arts Reading Group. These life observations and discussions helped to deepen the analysis and contributed to shape original arguments. Please see Appendix 7.

[31] Ambroise Vollard (1866–1939) was a major dealer and publisher in Paris from the 1890s. According to Anna Sigrídur Arnar, he was one of the primary figures to implement and promote the values of the *livre de peintre*.

The fact that text and images were going to occupy different spaces and pages becomes more revealing when viewing the final edition of the poem. Mallarmé expressed his interest in having a complete double-page spread to create a particular layout with the text, a completely different approach to, for example, the earlier collaboration between Cendrars and Delaunay. While the authors of *La Prose* wanted to integrate word and image, Mallarmé was reclaiming the white space in between. As discussed earlier (Chapter 1, in 1.1.2) both works were influenced by the growing culture of the mass media press and the language and arrangement of words used in commercial posters and journals. They share their interest in challenging the reader's reading habits, and invite the reader to view it as a singular object, a work of art. According to Dalbello & Shaw, *La Prose* is a work to be displayed as a museum piece (2011, p. 146).



Si

c'était

le nombre

EXISTÂT-IL

COMMENÇAT-IL ET CESSÂT-IL

SE CHIFFRÂT-IL

ILLUMINÂT-IL

ce serait

LE HASARD

(Choit

la plume

Figure 11. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolirà le Hasard* (Cosmopolis Edition 1897).

Johanna Drucker in her essay ‘The Legacy of Mallarmé’ (in *Figuring the Word*, 1998), analyses the figuration in *Un Coup de Dés*, which is the visual appearance of the signification of words. According to her, it derives from the effect of language arranged to make a form independent of the grammatical order of the words (1998, p. 59). She argues that the concept of figuration belongs to the *presentational,* which aims to bring something into being in its making. That is, to conceive ideas in different levels of language: the actual meaning of words linked to the new arrangement on the page. Mallarmé didn’t conceive this as something outside the language, but as something against and alongside linguistics. This highlights the complexity and level of abstraction in Mallarmé’s poetry. This abstraction fits into Adorno’s analysis of reading texts. The abstract writing shows the high value of thought and openness in the interpretation, which requires more knowledge and effort from the reader to learn and discover meaning. The poet distanced himself from the conventions of the Symbolism movement, as he no longer tells a story or expresses his own feelings. He concentrates on representing an image, an abstract idea, to move towards a contemporary vision of art and in so doing, creates in *Un Coup de Dés,* one of the key works of Modernism.

Un Coup de Dés uses a system based on the suggestion of the visual. The arrangement of words in the page is perhaps not visually unusual as there are many examples of pattern poems in the past.[32] Analysing the 1914 edition,[33] we can however perceive how the poet structures the poem creating a hierarchy of ideas and thoughts. That is, there are different registers or argumentative lines in the text of the poem, and Mallarmé uses the typography, pages and spaces to differentiate them. Verticality and horizontality also play an important role in this structure. The opening words *UN COUP DE DÉS* (‘a throw of the dice’) appear written in uppercase on their own on the first recto page. The large font gives a sense of verticality that will become more perceptible when we turn the page, as we will read in the recto page *JAMAIS* (‘never’ same font size as opening words) and the beginning of a new text written still in uppercase, but in small font. I should emphasise the fact that in this opening the verso page is blank. The next double page shows *N'ABOLIRA* ('will abolish') on the recto and a new text on the verso using lower case types. The main sentence will finish in the eight double page when we read *CHANCE*. By keeping visual links, Mallarmé not only expands the sentence across the space of the book, but also across other textual units. By doing that, he is creating two and three layers of text that keep the meaning open for some space of time. However, the poet is also inter-relating those layers of significance. That is, that the text is read on its own (following the type and font rules) but also is read at the same time with the other passages. This means that the content of the layers is multidirectional, it gets mixed (as the layers appear in the same space) and is read and interpreted in relation to the context. This system makes this poem unique. The visual organises the content, marks the themes and creates mattering connections and opens up variable readings.

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[32] For example, Dick Higgings documents and classifies a large number of works prior 1900 in his book *Pattern poetry: guide to an unknown literature* (1987).

[33] The version I studied from the Chelsea Special Collections is a reprint edition by Gallimard (2014) from the original 1914 version. I used the Jim Houlson (2016) translation of the poem.

The text is written in lower case and is organised around the gutter of the opening of the page. It is displayed generating sequences and dynamic arrangements in the double spread. These words and sentences follow a playful and perhaps a more traditional reading pattern. But while the upper-case words would orientate the reading vertically, the lower case text creates a sense of horizontality. This sense is enhanced in the seven consecutive pages in the middle of the poem where Mallarmé used only italics, another subtle suggestion to create little differentiations between units of matter. Abandoning the columnar structure of the page as well as narrative sequence, the poet is creating a new expressive language. Using very subtle keys, jokes, syntactical anecdotes and the volatility of the words' meaning, the poet has created a book where the resonance and the musicality of words themselves transport the reader to look beyond the words and take the poem with its context (book, typography, the opening) as a totality. In the preface of the poem (in H. Weinfield, *Collected Poems*), Mallarmé writes:

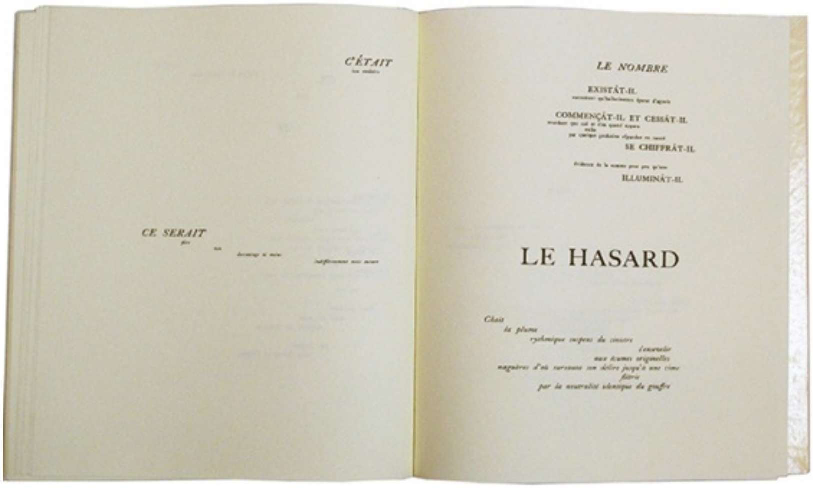
> […] The literary value, if I am allowed to say so, of this print-less distance which mentally separates groups of words or words themselves, is to periodically accelerate or slow the movement, the scansion, the sequence even, given one's simultaneous sight of the page: the latter taken as unity, as elsewhere the Verse is or perfect line. (1994, pp. 121–125)

Mallarmé specifically describes the importance of this 'simultaneous sight of the page' to guide the readers to fully understand the meaning of the poem. Moreover, the way the reading process is spaced out by the blank space also assumes importance. Regarding the page layout, he continues:

> The 'blanks' indeed take on importance, at first glance; the versification demands them, as a surrounding silence, the paper intervenes each time and image […] ceases, accepting the succession of others, […] at the instant they appear and for the duration of their concurrence in some exact mental setting…(ibid)

Mallarmé was establishing parallels within spaces, dealing with the layout, remarking the material dimension of the book and creating parallels between pages. All these ideas are stated in the preface of the book and indicate that nothing was created by chance, that every single element and page left blank (for example at the beginning, between the first and second double-spread) or change in the typography was planned and mediated to evoke a specific effect or feeling.

Lee Reynolds points out that Mallarmé was convinced that the author should be 'absent from the text' (1995, p. 87), allowing the reader the opportunity to create his own *mise en scène*.[34] This idea is also found in Jacques Rancière's essay 'The Space of Words'. The philosopher speaks of the intransitivity of language with the plasticity of the space of writing (Rancière in Folie, 2008, p. 204), This direction is evoked firstly, through a mental, illusory space arising from the power of words; secondly, through the use of the blank space and typographic arrangement of words; and thirdly, with the creation of a system of layers of matter and correspondences.



C'ÉTAIT

CE SERAIT

LE NOMBRE

EXISTÂT-IL

COMMENÇÂT-IL ET CESSÂT-IL

SE CHIFFRÂT-IL

ILLUMINÂT-IL

LE HASARD

Figure 12. Stéphane Mallarmé, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolirà le Hasard* (2014)

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[34] The English translation would be: 'direction'.

Mallarmé's contribution opens up a redefinition of the term 'reading', appealing to the reader's responsibility. Mallarmé calls the vision of his poetry no longer a text but a 'constellation',[35] referring to the significative and graphic potential of a group of words and drawing on the etymologic connotation of individual stars that form a group. It is this new vision and extensive understanding of poetry that has prompted *Un Coup de Dés* to be read with such visual and plastic implications. It is still a key reference in contemporary art, and artists find inspiration in re-reading and re-interpreting its words, spaces, silence and shape. I will revisit some of the most relevant versions with the aim of gathering different artists' interpretations and uses of one of Mallarmé's points of departure: 'the page as a unity'.

1.4.2 *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira le Hasard. Image.*
MARCEL BROODTHAERS

Marcel Broodthaers (1924–1976) was a Surrealist poet until 1964, when he turned to the visual arts. According to Deborah Schultz, Broodthaers' transition to become a visual artist was gradual; in the years prior to 1964 his production started to include word-image relations, films and photographs (2007, p. 31). Subsequently, his artwork retained a poetic quality as well as a sense of humour that he combined within conceptual frameworks. This background is important as it shaped his relationship with the material ground of the book, his attitude towards art and sensibility regarding Mallarmé's poetry.[36]

Marcel Broodthaers' intimate relationship with poetry and plastic arts can be appreciated through two literary exhibitions in 1968 and 1969, both held at the

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[35] The Mallarméan term *constellation* refers to the connection between linguistic sign, space and coded meaning. According to Theo Hermans, it is present in early Mallarmés poetry, and it often refers to the poem's climax. However, he explains that Mallarmé's constellations are grammatical and semantic polyvalences, resulting on the reader's part in a prolonged hesitation between various potential readings (Hermans, 2014, p. 40). Constellations take a particular meaning in *Un Coup de Dés*, as literary polyvalences take physical shape in the spatial distribution words in the space of the page, where form and meaning create 'constellation', appealing to the etymological connotation of the word: individual stars forming a group.

[36] Deborah Schultz points out that many Mallarméan themes and objects appear in Broodthaers's poetic work, such as the castle, ship or shipwreck, the dice and the notion of chance (2007, p. 39). This reveals an admiration and a complex artistic relationship between the poet and the artist.

Wide White Space Gallery in Antwerp. In the first one, *Le Corbeau and le Renard*, the artist used parts of the fable by Jean de La Fontaine, filling the gallery with large prints of specific lines of the poem. The second exhibition was *Marcel Broodthaers à la Deblioudebliou/S*, *Exposition littéraire autour de Mallarmé*.[37] According to Sam Seckeroff, these 'literary exhibitions' marked a fundamental breakthrough in which Broodthaers transformed poetic text into something that could be pushed beyond the page into the physical space of the gallery (Seckeroff in Borja-Villel and Cherix, 2016, p. 136). The idea of extending poetry out into space was a notion that both Mallarmé and Broodthaers shared. While the poet wanted to include space as part of poetic language, Broodthaers wanted to physically conquer the space of the gallery by using the gallery as a canvas, as a page.

Seckeroff describes how in the 1969 exhibition, the artist painted the floor of the gallery black, and arranged mostly black and white objects along the walls (Seckeroff in Borja-Villel, 2016, p. 138). The majority of the objects referred directly to *Un Coup de Dés*, white objects on black floor denoting a certain theatrical approach to the poem, as if the gallery itself was part of the white space of a page, something written on it. The exhibition included a copy of Mallarmé's book, a new artists' book that Broodthaers published on the occasion comprising a series of metal plates made of anodised aluminium engraved with black impressions. Next to it, three black shirts with the full text copied in white chalk while a continuous recording of Broodthaers reciting the poem completed the exhibition. Probably, the most representative element of the display was the artists' book, where the cover reproduced the original 1914 Gallimard's edition of *Un Coup de Dés* with Mallarmé's name replaced by Broodthaer's name and the word *poème* changed to the word *image*.

This artists' book[38] becomes an abstract version of the poem. The words of an entire line are fused in one black block. The width and length of Broodthaers' black rectangular bars replacing the text vary in accordance with Mallarmé's dynamic typography and the five font sizes. Even the use of italics in parts of the poem are matched by slanted ends of the bars. He erases the words in favour of graphic gestures. These black bars help the reader to focus entirely on the distribution of the elements across the space of the page and on the dimension of the double spread, radicalising the liberation of the word from the text and content towards a simultaneous view of the spread. The paper chosen for this book is opaque but quite thin, so the printed black bars are still visible on the other side of the paper when turning the pages. This show-through gives an extra dimension to the work. It demonstrates Broodthaers' interest in Mallarmé's plasticity-orientated poetry and capacity to generate images through his poetry. The paper chosen for the artist book generates a correlation of spaces. As we turn the pages, more and more black bars appear and remain in the space of the page. It creates depth and links between pages, like traces that remain in time, like the remaining significance (from the unfinished sentences) in Mallarmé's pages. According to art historian Gloria Moure in 'the space of writing' is one of main Broodthaers' concerns and investigations, and effectively, that exploration can be appreciated particularly in his versions of *Un Coup de Dés*. This exploration can also be found in an earlier work: *Pense-Bête* (1964).

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[37] The English translation would be: Marcel Broodthaers at WWS, a literary exhibition about Mallarmé.

[38] The copy I studied at the Chelsea Special Collection is one of the original artists books published in Antwerp in 1969 by the Wide White Space Gallery.

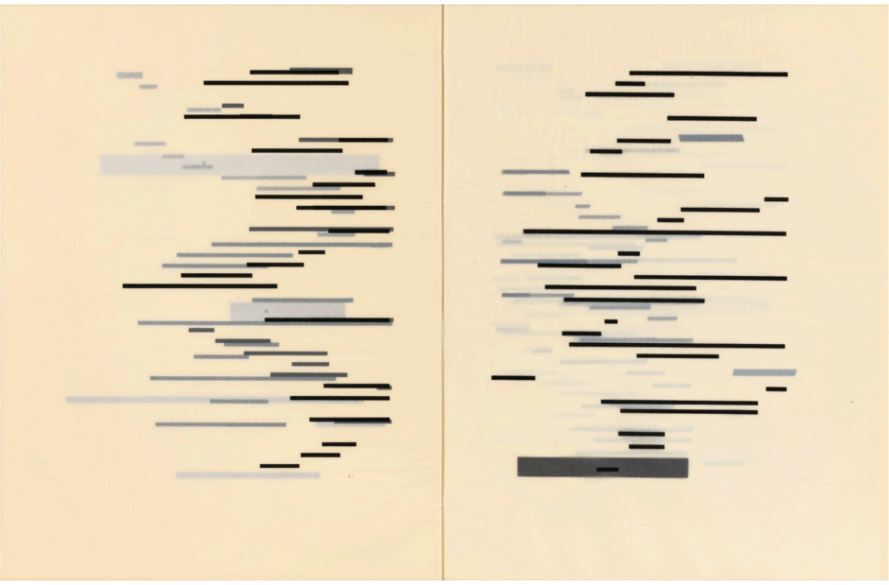
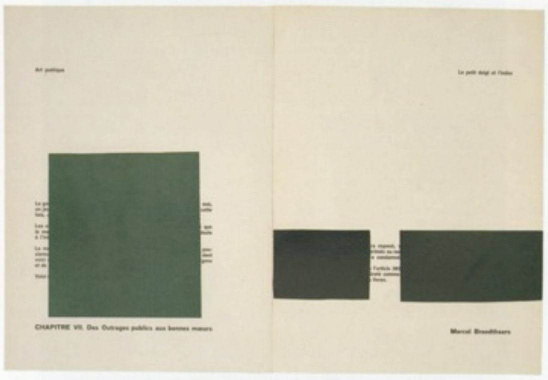


Figure 13. Marcel Broodthaers, *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'Abolira le Hasard. Image.* (1969)

The title of the first poem of *Pense-Bête* is *Art poétique* (The Art of Poetry), which suggests a metaphorical link between art and poetry. The first few verses introduce notions of secrecy and hermeticism reflected in the physical makeup of the book. The artist subsequently explored the space of writing through erasure. Adding collage to many pages, in some cases covering part of the text, leaving only fragments of the poem visible, the artist was playing with communication. Challenging attempts of reading, some parts of the text were covered with only partially pasted pieces of paper inviting the readers to unfold them and read the text underneath.

Broodthaers' interventions simultaneously suggest erasure and meaning. He used monochromy and geometric abstraction to reflect on both the surface and the materiality of the book and to open up an enquiry about failure, division and fragmentation. By superimposing rectangles of coloured paper, was he prohibiting the reading of the poems? Or was he inviting readers to make other connections between text and image, to expand the signification of the poems?


CHAPITRE VII. Des Outrages publics aux bonnes mœurs
Marcel Broodthaers

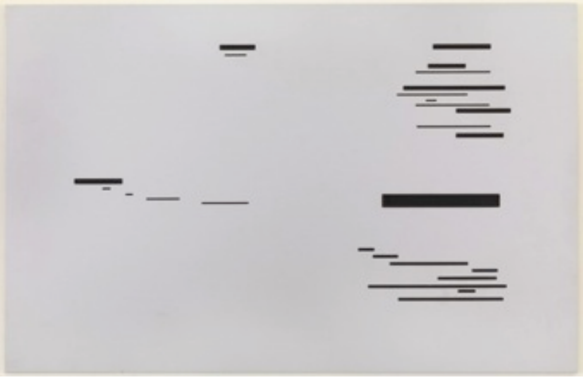


Figure 14. Marcel Broodthaers). *Pense-Bête* (1964*,* pages 8-9. Collection National Art Library.
Figure 15. Marcel Broodthaers. *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolira le Hazard* (1964) [incisions on aluminium plate].

In *Un Coup de Dés*, Broodthaers explored plasticity through a series of versions of the same poem, printing the black bars on thick and opaque paper, then on transparent paper and then on aluminium plates. By playing and producing so many variations on Mallarmé's poem, Broodthaers demonstrated that it was possible to use language in a place where art is normally the object on display and that is possible to communicate even if the words of the poem are missing.

Most importantly, he proposes that it is possible to read a piece of art rather than looking at it.

For this research it is particularly relevant to investigate why Mallarmean ideas influenced the artist Marcel Broodthaers. As mentioned in the previous section, Mallarmé used a metaphor to describe his poem, no longer to be as a 'text' but a 'constellation'. This constellation not only comprises a group of words, but also their significant and graphic potential. This graphic interpretation is what Broodthaers took to create his own version of a poem: he extracted the textual information and substituted it with an art object, perhaps emulating Man Ray's *Untitled Poem* (May 1924). With this action, he reinforced the fact that books are objects, are a physical space to express ideas and communicate, either with words or with images. Broodthaers manifested this idea during his transition from poet to artist, when in 1963, he immersed fifty copies of his poetry book *Pense-Bête* in plaster. Making these books unreadable and hermetic, he set the parameters for his interpretation of *Un Coup de Dés*.

This metaphor is key to understanding the connections between Mallarmé and Broodthaers. It was in this metaphor that Broodthaers determined the innovation of Mallarme's communicative process and how he wanted to avoid direct narrative.

But why did Marcel Broodthaers avoid the words of the poem? Jacques Rancière says in his analysis of the work, 'the lines imitate the idea insofar as the word did also, assimilating the imaginary design of the evoked objects to the visible distribution of lines' (Rancière in Folie, 2008, p. 203). Broodthaers challenges the function of language and perpetually frustrates the attempts of reading the book. The process of reading, the abstraction of words, the abolition of the act of writing is what he created instead: a completely different and independent piece of work than that to which it refers. Evoking the word, talking about words, about Mallarmé's words, but without using any himself.

Broodthaers' exhibit, translating the poem into various two- and three-dimensional media set up new tensions concerning several aspects: the consolidation of language as a valiant and conceptual sign system such as legible, transparent and even immaterial; the qualities of each medium used; and the disappearance of the poem. Moreover, through his version of *Un Coup de Dés*, he established the paradox between the poetics and the arts, examining the implications of a formalist tradition in his own moment. Is this what artists are still exploring? Is it the investigation on how the exhibit and the artwork can be read and does it have to do with the exploitation and re interpretation of the same material? I will consider these questions in the next section, analysing a series of artworks and exhibitions that take *Un Coup de Dés* as a point of departure; how Mallarmé's ideas have become a collective site, unmasking conventions associated with reading.

1.4.3 VARIABLE READINGS

Marcel Broodthaers' interpretation of Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés* didn't finish with the literary exhibition in 1969. The poem was still present in the artist's oeuvre, and is revisited in *L'exposition à la Galerie* held at the MTL Gallery, Brussels in 1970. The show consisted of typed manuscripts of poetry and other texts on which the artist had made alterations, notes and sketches. These pages were exhibited on a table and on the wall under Perspex and were organised in sections from A to D. The display showed the artist's working process and his thinking visible. The relevant aspect of this exhibition was that the first five pages of the first section (A) took Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés* as its starting point. Schultz points out the importance of this detail by stressing that they were the first five pages of the whole sequence.

This exhibition continues the exploration initiated in 1969 during the literary exhibition at the Wide White Space Gallery in Antwerp. The first exhibition was all about Mallarmé and *Un Coup de Dés*; each interpretation of the poem explored how to draw reader's attention to the visual qualities of poetry. However, in the MTL exhibition, the artist established a different context for the poem, mixing it up with his own thoughts and work in progress. Reworked pages of poems from *La Bête Noire* (1961) and *Pense-Bête* were included in the display creating a poetic context in which *Un Coup de Dés* was to be read. From what we already have seen in section 1.4.2, the display, set up of the gallery, the inclusion of specific text, the colour of the walls, etc. are details and decisions that confirm an artist's way of writing in the space.

Broodthaers decontextualises Mallarmé's poem to see if a different reading and interpretation could change or add meaning. However, he wasn't the only artist aiming to reformulate Mallarmé's ideas. Michalis Pichler for example, aims to explore the space of the poem by creating a 3D laser-cut effect with his *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolira le Hasard: Sculpture* (2008). This book is a close copy of the 1914 edition of Stéphane Mallarmé's poem of the same name, but with all the words cut out by laser, in a way that corresponds directly to the typographic layout used by Mallarmé to articulate the text. A preface features the entire poem written as a block of text with each line separated by a slash (/). This block-transcription of the text imitates the 1969 abstraction by Marcel Broodthaers, replacing the black bars with cut out windows. The interesting effect comes when turning the pages, as the cut-outs generate numerous shadows creating unique light movements.

A complementary interpretation is *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolira le Hasard: Livre* (2008) by Michael Maranda. In this version of the poem, the artist re-enacts the gesture of Broodthaers, taking it one step further in a meditation on 'les blanc' (the blanks). Instead of the black band where the text had been positioned is shown by an absence of ink. Surrounding these literal blanks is a cream coloured ink wash, imitating the paper stock of the original edition. The effect on the page is very subtle, evocating time through the absence of words and pigmentation on the paper. To highlight the transformation of the reception of the poem in Broodthaers' edition, the preface of this edition is Mallarmé's original one, translated from French to Dutch and then to English using the online translator, Bablefish. The English version is printed in black ink, the French is 'printed' in the absence of ink, and the Dutch version remains only in the traces of the transformation.

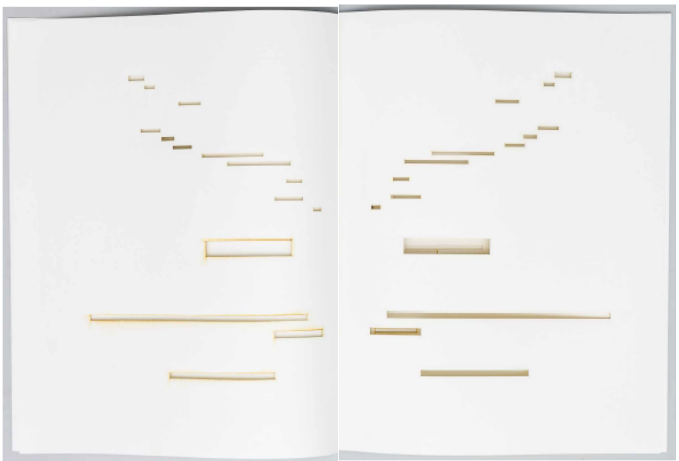


Figure 16. Michalis Pilcher *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolirà le Hasard. Sculpture* (2008).

Maranda and Pilcher's interpretations are clearly influenced by Broodthaer's approach to the original poem. We could say that they are interpretations of Broodthaer's *Image* more than Mallarmé's *Poem*. Both artists take the abstraction, shape and the black bars as a catalyst for their works. They propose a new version enhancing the absence of words through holes and white spaces creating physically empty spaces that make the reader literally fall into those white windows to have a completely different experience.

1.4.3.1 NEW READINGS

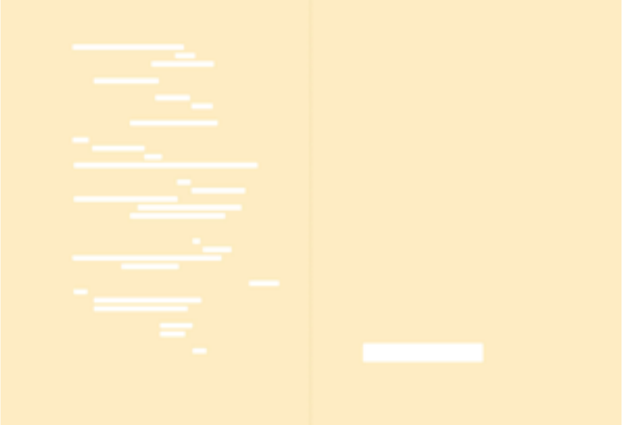


Figure 17. Michael Maranda , *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N'abolira le Hasard. Livre* (2008).

After its publication in 1914, *Un Coup de Dés* became an influential work, not only in poetry, but also in contemporary art, becoming the archetype for many investigations into the confluence of poetry, typography and visual arts. Apollinaire's Calligrams, Italian Futurist's *Parole in libertà* and the Cubist's collage are examples of movements and avant-garde expressions that derived directly from Mallarmé's ideas. Playing with the size and type of the words and layout, continues with Concrete Poetry in the 1950s. A good example of the genealogical influences in which Mallarmé's poetry serves as a thread of the history of modern art in its relation with language is the exhibition *Art and Utopia: Restricted Action*, held at MACBA (Museum of Contemporary Art of Catalonia, Spain) in 2004. This exhibition was displayed in chronological order, starting with Impressionist works by Manet, continuing with Braque's and Picasso's Cubism, the fantasy of Odilon Redon, collages and post-Cubism Constructivism, Dada works, Miró's poem-painting, Paul Klee, Russian poets and the *Word as Such*, etc. These are only a few examples of a long anthology of the key moments and works showing the exchanges between art and poetry in the 20th Century.

A contemporary interpretation of Mallarmé and Broodthaers' ideas and encounters was the exhibition *UN COUP DE DÉS: Writing Turned Image. An Alphabet of Pensive Language,*[39] held at the Generali Foundation in Vienna in 2008 curated by Sabine Folie. Here the collection of works is notable by their connection with conceptual art, institutional critique, and the art of the post-avantgarde. Again we encounter Stéphane Mallarmé and Marcel Broodthaers. The exhibition can be read in multiple ways, as a system of references between avant-garde techniques that considers interpretations on leading figures of Modernism, but also as a system of resonances between artists who have worked and are working over a period of time extending from the 19th century across 1960s and 1970s conceptual art to our own present. Both MACBA's and Generali Foundation's exhibition are examples of how Mallarmé's approach to language and ultimately to 'reading', are still a reference, a case study to learn on how to communicate by implicating the reader actively.

A completely different approach was used by Johanna Drucker[40] to develop two of her artist's books: *History of the/my World* (1989) and *The Word made Flesh* (1996).[41] In these cases, Drucker doesn't intend to make an interpretation of Mallarmé's poem, but they are made of an intricate system of visual and written elements that create a complex structure of layers. Drucker's books connect with Mallarmé's language through a particular arrangement of written tangents that make the readers the very centre of the story.

History of the/my World is a letterpress printed book in black and white and red that contains several types, small and large and images. These are articulated to create a personal version of feminist theory by combining typical pictures of majorettes and fashion plates with her intimate poetic prose that seems to humanise language. As Wasserman (in Wasserman, Drucker & Niffenegger) shows in *The Book as Art*, the artist expresses:

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[39] With works by Robert Barry, Lothar Baumgarten, Marcel Broodthaers, Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, Rodney Graham, Ulrike Grossarth, Jaroslaw Kozlowski, David Lamelas, Ewa Partum, Gerhard Rühm, Klaus Scherübel, Dominik Steiger, Ana Torfs, Peter Tscherkassky, Joëlle Tuerlinckx and Ian Wallace.

[40] Johanna Drucker is also internationally known as an artist, especially for her book art, which touches on a variety of themes. However, the explorations of the conventions of narrative and sequences, as well as the use of experimental typography to expand the possibilities of prose beyond the linear format, are areas in constant research in her artwork.

[41] Works viewed at the National Art Library, London.

> This book is a feminist rewriting of the history of the world and also a critique of feminist orthodoxies about language and patriarchy. I didn't experience language as exclusively patriarchal because it was so bound up in my connection to my mother. In the book, the large black text tells world history, and the smaller red text that breaks through the black recalls my experience of learning language with my mother. (2007, p. 73)

Drucker's autobiography becomes a type of hypertext, establishing one of many verbal and visual paths that suggest further possibilities in the writing of her story. Like Mallarmé, she creates a network of communications. Using different texts, letters and images across the spreads and adding new elements page by page, Drucker presents a number of independent voices showing two sides of history. The combination of typographic innovation, visual jests and linguistic plays are unique elements that Drucker knows how to articulate to make family history with imagined history confluence (Drucker, 1990). This complex and multiple-narration system is further explored in many of her publications, for example in *Through Light and the Alphabet* (1986),[42] where the artist creates a typographic fugue[43] in which the theme is the continual proliferation of texts as subtexts. Linear reading becomes impossible to read because of its format and text turns against the idea of language.

A similar idea is explored in *The Word Made Flesh* (1989), a beautiful letterpress printed book using many handset wood and metal types. The combination of typography seems to call attention to the physical and visual materiality of the page. The book has only been printed on the recto pages, which mean that Drucker doesn't engage with the duality of the pages. The general structure across the book is unveiled in the first 4-5 pages, when the artist presents the elements that will constitute the language of the book. That is a single large-scale black letterform, which dominates each page, and the individual letterforms are arranged on successive pages to spell out the title of the book. Surrounding each large black letter there are smaller black letters in a variety of sizes, patterns and typefaces that can be read; the background of each page is formed by a grid of small red capitals. This grid is explained in the preface: It 'invokes a reference to the *carmina figurata* of the Renaissance, works in which a sacred image was picked out in red letters against a field of black type so that a holy figure could be seen and meditated on in the process of reading' (1990, p. 4).

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[42] Among other publications exploring non-linear narratives including *Sample Dialogue*, 1989, *Bookscape*, 1986–1989 and *Tongues, A Parent Language*, 1982 (Drucker, 1994).

[43] Fugue takes the term from the musical language, where a contrapuntal composition in which a short melody is introduced by one part and successively taken up by others.

Drucker reflects on the process of reading and to do so she meticulously positions each letter and element on the page. Her aim is to create a sense of openness but still communicate. However, in my view, there is a lack of engagement with the format in this work. The blank verso pages interrupt the flow of the meaning and it is more difficult to make associations between the elements of each page. Drucker aims to explore the non-linear reading by using typography and playing with the space of the page, but the fact is that there is no consideration of the area of the page in its totality. Therefore, for me, there is less engagement with the space of the page.

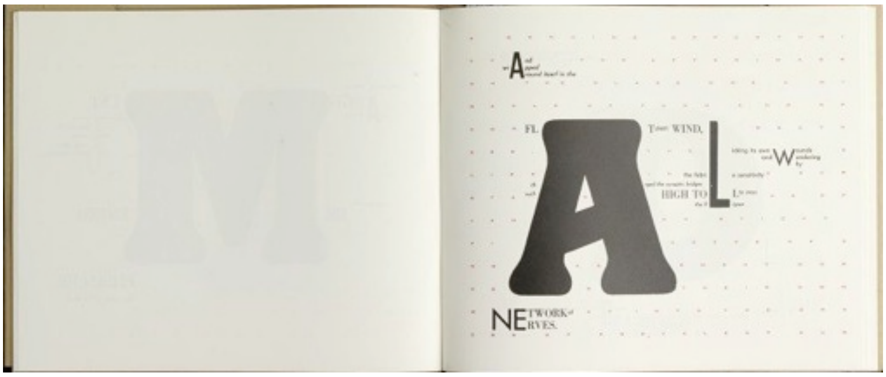

Figure 18. Johanna Drucker, *The Word Made Flesh* (1996).

In this book, Drucker creates a system of letters, text and grids encouraging the reader to contemplate and reflect on the process of reading itself. The author has created several layers of text and letters across pages, building an intricate system of correspondences. To decode every layer, the reader needs to spend time with the book, which invites the reader to bring their own experience to it in order to establish meaning. Like in *Un Coup de Dés*, meaning is created across pages, symbols and constellations of words.

Although the work of London-based artist Cerith Wyn Evans[44] can seem very different to Johanna Drucker's books, I can find similarities in their approach to language and creation of layers to generate meaning, for example in the exhibition *'Everyone's gone to the movies, now we're alone at last…'* at the White Cube, Mason's Yard, London 2010. His piece called *F=R=E=S=H=W=I=D=O=W* is made of twenty-two framed images displayed in a single continuous line broken by one of the corners of the room. Wyn Evans displayed the work by framing the pages individually as single pages rather than double-page spreads. Why did the artist decided to separate the pages and how does that decision and display read?

Every line of the poem is cut away leaving a composition of interstitial gaps on the gallery wall, like framing the materiality of the already framed 'white cube'. In an interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist published in the catalogue for the exhibition, Wyn Evans explains the way he addressed to the site to create a context, using sound influences (by Xenakis, Stockhausen, Messiaen) to generate spaces and how he focused on the notion of temporality. Other installations within the exhibition are crucial to reading this piece: a polyphonic sound mobile called *C=O=N=S=T=E=L=L=A=T=I=O=N (I call your image to mind)*, an installation of light columns, and a display of words in neon spelling out: 'Look at that picture, how does it seem to you now… Does it seem to be persisting?' By asking questions of the visitors, Wyn Evans created a world of subjective responses and personal connotations, inviting them to experience and reflect upon their thoughts. He establishes territory between the perceptual and the physical layers of matter, prompting the reader to think whether it's their background and experience, or the work itself which is provoking a chain of references. According to Louise O'Hare in her review of the exhibition for Afterall, Wyn Evans 'throws his voice, and puts the thought into the visitor's head that everything in the exhibition is in the very act of being' (2011). O'Hare compares the artist's position with the figure of the ventriloquist, pointing out that Wyn Evans appropiates Mallarmé's words and tries to put his voice into the reader's head.

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[44] Cerith Wyn Evans' practice focuses on how ideas can be communicated through form. His conceptual work incorporates a diverse range of media including installation, sculpture, photography, film and text. Wyn Evans' work attempts to break or unmask existing systems of communication, which is why his interpretation of *Un Coup de Dés* is particularly relevant.

In this context he creates a new version of *Un Coup de Dés*. The artist explores the system of references and created meaning not only though the cut outs of the pages, but also by using the gallery to create associations involving the reader's imagination. There is a non-narrative discourse created through the use of layers of matter in Wyn Evans' display. However, one of Mallarmé's main explorations, the notion of duality or the conception of the double page as a unit, is lost. There is still a dialogue and interaction between the pages, but where is the mirroring or echo against the gutter of the spread? Is it partially generated or evoked by aligning the pages across the corner of the room?

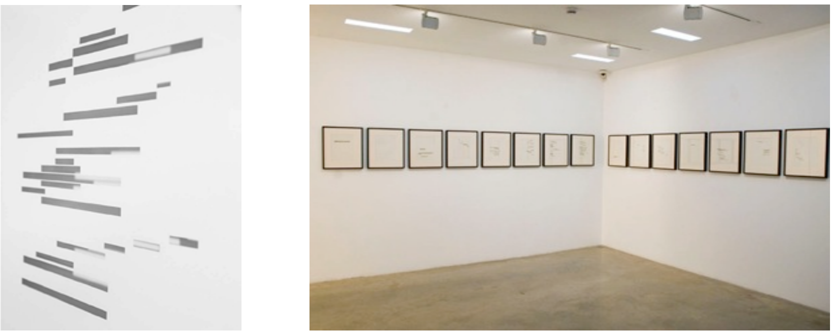

Figure 19. Cerith Wyn Evans, *F=R=E=S=H=W=I=D=O=W* , 2010. Twenty-two framed prints.

Wyn Evans' consideration of space set up some principles useful for analysing Abigail Reynolds' (1975) work. The British artist creates other types of constellations with her installations. While Wyn Evans broke the continuity and duality of Mallarmé's double spreads by framing each single page individually, Reynolds realised the significance of the dualism of the double page as a unit.

We can see in her installations how, like Broodthaers, Reynolds isolates the double page from the book itself. Broodthaers experimented making different versions of the poem on different materials, and for example the aluminium engraved versions, and he would take the individual double spreads into the gallery space by divorcing the double page from the book. Abigail Reynolds does something similar by dismantling the double pages to give them a new context.

Reynolds' works with books, photography and collage to reinterpret the countryside and cityscape as a site for discovery. She understands and explores the concept of place considering our surroundings as historic, social, political, cultural and personal sites. She plays with the books and photographs she collects for images, which are then deployed in different forms and configurations.

The artist is particularly sensitive to the materiality and the individualities of each book's design, print and construction, as well as the time and context in which they were produced. However, Reynolds' work is intimately linked to sculpture and installation. The pages and images she excavates are disarticulated from their original context to become more like artefacts or archaeological remnants, so they become more visible, enigmatic, mutable, and open to more complex meaning and association.

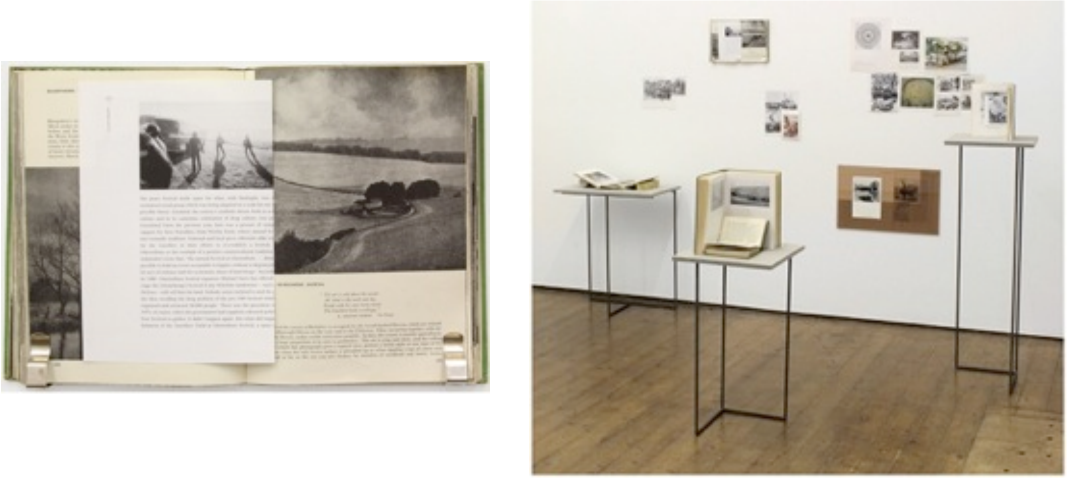

Figure 20 and 21. Abigail Reynolds. *The British Countryside in Pictures* (2011).

Her exhibition *The British Countryside in Pictures* (2011) at the Rokeby Gallery London, was especially interesting. In this installation, the artist combines objects and images, books, glass and metal. The exhibition title alludes to the genteel illustrated publications from which some of the source material is taken, but the countryside pictured also extends to include Modernist architecture of the 1950s, festival culture of the 1970s, protests at Greenham Common in the 1980s and rave culture in the 1990s. Reynolds brings this material together as a whole book, deploying it both structurally and symbolically, allowing it to represent its own historical moment. In some cases, she exhibits some books opened to a specific double spread. In other cases, multiple bookplates echo another volume, and several works involve glass to crop or alter an image. These are all strategies to make the viewer perceive the page in a different way: filtering images through glass, superposition of pages, cuts in selected images, unusual displays, etc. Through this she creates original material bringing new associations to the books. Although many of the images pictured represent key historical moments, the works also ask the viewer to direct their attention to the modes of printing and layout, as these formal decisions carry their own weight of cultural meaning and belonging. In this way the artist unearths new meanings and relationships uniting past with present, bringing forms and content into coexistence.

The analysis of works by Abigail Reynolds and Cerith Wyn Evans unmask some of the conventions associated with the book. Particularly in Reynolds' installations, where we clearly see how, by exhibiting an opened book in a gallery context, the artist considers that specific double page a piece of art itself.

In the first part of this chapter, we have seen how the dual form of the page has forged an image icon throughout history. Being part of the book, it has changed adapting new forms to be able to fulfil reader and writer needs at different times. Accordingly, the book page has established specific parameters, forms and visual conventions matching the page's particular architecture.

These parameters indicate how connotations associated with the book condition the way we read and absorb meaning. According to reflections by Adorno, Barthes, Cixous and Eco, the connotations are related to the reader's predisposition and cultural background, which means a reader's interpretation of the page is conditioned by several factors such as their experience, knowledge and culture. Therefore, it is the reader's predisposition what creates and connects with their own notion of book, and that is what makes the double-page spread a particular space to investigate.

Through the analysis of Mallarmé's influence in developing book culture and new ways of approaching the materiality of the page through the exploration of *Un Coup de Dés* and its context, I have revealed different methods that promote the reader's emancipation.

These are the ideas I will use as a point of departure to develop the next chapter. I have identified how the conception of the double page as a unit has been present in the history of the book. However, has it been present as a notion? In the next chapter I will analyse which aesthetic and formal elements reference the double page and why there is a space for it as an independent form.

CHAPTER 2

UNMASKING PERCEPTIONS

The double page is a metaphor, an object of associations.
A space of cultural values and identities.

It is a poetic space full of features,
structures,
conventions,
landscapes,
that resist time.

Signs that resist to show us a palimpsest of traces,
segments
and
portions

for us to return to.

2.1 *Unmasking Perceptions (spreads)*

2015–2019

Photo transfer, screen print and laser cut.

This experimental chapter is a site-specific artwork created specially to be part of this thesis. I started to think and plan it at the beginning of this investigation, and it has always been both a place of departure as well as place to return[45].

The six folds compose a visual reflection about the concepts and perceptual strategies in which I have been experimenting during these years of research. Although *Unmasking Perceptions (spreads)* started to be a playful and intuitive exercise, it soon began to be an important part of my practice-based methodology. It became the material, the pleats in which to test out ideas and thoughts. Each fold was alive and in continuous movement for all these years, changing and re-inventing themselves again and again.

This chapter is a graphic essay that aims to generate visual consciousness. The visual ideas explored here try to unmask and identify page's bonds with the book in order to perceive them from a different perspective. It is a piece that aims to suggest rather than to speak. It is made of traces, imprints of what could have been words or drawings but now seem to be erased, covered or cut out. Gestures that are impossible to read but that paradoxically favours its interpretation and an individual comprehension, helping to extend its meaning.

The work put in these pages has generated original material leading me to discover new ways of reading that conditioned my understanding of the notion of the double-page spread.

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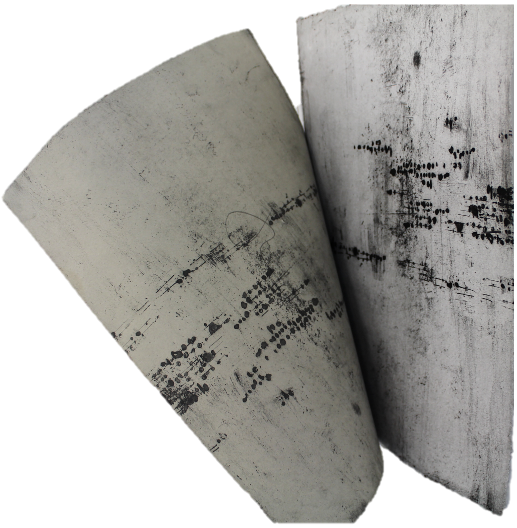
[45] Please see Appendix 1 for sketches, colour tests and proofs.

CHAPTER 3

PERCEPTUAL DISRUPTION:

SYMBOLIC AND POETIC LANGUAGE



Chapter 3.

The main objective of the first chapter was to reflect and gather sufficient evidence to suggest that the double-page spread is not only a component of the book. It is also an autonomous and self-functioning entity that can or cannot be linked to a narrative sequence part of a larger piece. This chapter aims to concentrate on studying the double page itself to determine why and how it can be considered as an independent and piece of art itself.

One key question within my research is to what extent the materiality of the double page is evident in the resulting aesthetic of the image. In this section, my investigation centres in revealing how the physical and material processes visibly uncover themselves by configuring not only the structure of the double page, but also shaping our receptiveness to engage with it.

Umberto Eco's writing about the notion of mirrors in written language may offer insights into the way the notion is explored and on questions of perception and response. In particular, notions of opening, duality, repetition, reversal, echo and surface and have arisen and been investigated through a series of case studies into printed work by Dieter Roth, Jasper Johns and Anish Kapoor amongst other artists.

3.1 OPENED BOOKS: THE PERCEPTION OF THE PAGE

In Chapter 1, I analysed the history and growth of the form of the book raising a number of issues about the perception, engagement and reading of the page. In this chapter my intention is to focus on identifying which are the parameters that create an illusion within the page and how these are articulated. The site-specific work of *Signs of Resistance* of Chapter 2 provides physical evidence of the multiple dynamics that create illusion in the perception of the double page. I have pinpointed a number of elements that extend the page's strength of conducting ideas, which are: mirroring and reflection, echo and fold.

Plato believed in the idea that it was the purpose of art and the artist to mislead, to enchant. The philosopher thought that art was a sensitive copy of the 'sensitive eyes' and that they were copies of the ideas. One of the objectives of art is to generate an illusion of reality, but the question is how? Gombrich, in *Art and Illusion*, expresses how our experiences, wishes and knowledge determine our perception of the world (1972, p. 48). For him, the artist translates his own perception of the world into the language of representation. This means that the language of art has its own rules. But does the reader of the artwork know these rules? Illusion creates signs, and perception makes those signs so transparent that through them, readers can perceive and orientate their own experience to decode the language of representation.

One of the main objectives of this thesis is to formulate a new interpretation of the dual form of the page by demonstrating that these intrinsic elements contribute not only to predispose readers to have a visual experience with the perception of meaning, but also that they extend page's effectiveness to transmit ideas.

According to Saussurre, expression and content are parts of the sign, and in both parts there is materiality and form. In works such as The *Rhetoric's of the Image* (1964) and *Camera Lucida* (1980) Roland Barthes has defined that the first content of a sign is its denotation, while the rest of content that could be associated, is what becomes its connotation. That is, a connotation is associated with a secondary meaning, a feeling or idea, which a word invokes or comes to mind in addition to its primary meaning. In *Mythologies*, he calls connotations 'myths', and in further works, 'ideologies' (1989)

Taking the double-page spread as an autonomous unit of matter, it is in the transmission of connotations, that the perception of the page is created. The denotation (first content) will be the primary meaning or mattering of the artwork. The connotations will be all the associations that the reader will make whilst experiencing the piece. Taking into consideration that the format of the piece is a double spread, the connotations will be related, for example with 'history', 'information', 'culture', 'knowledge', 'language', etc.

An opened book infers the idea of 'volume'. A volume, a book, opens and closes, so we know that we need to open it to be able to read the content. We need to hold it, open it and turn the pages in order to reveal its content. That action, even if it only occurs in our mind is crucial to articulate the perception of the double page. When we see a book at an exhibition, for example inside a glass vitrine, we confront an opened book, so we can't physically turn the page. However, we know that the double spread is part of the whole book. That assumption is what carries the connotations.

3.1.2 MIRRORS AND REFLECTIONS

> *The metaphor of the mirror is an invitation to wake up*
> *the imaginary and self-reflection.*
> (Carroll in Melchior-Bonnet, 2001 p. 261)

This is how Lewis Carroll's Alice begins her passage into wonderland. She invents a universe beyond appearances, but still resembles: 'Why, it's a looking glass book, of course! And, if I hold it up to a glass, the words will all go the right way again' (Carroll in Melchior-Bonnet, 2001 p. 263) Alice is at the same time delighted and lost; discovering that she herself exists only as a mirror reflection, as a projection of the other (2001 p. 263). A looking glass reveals an outer reality reflected in a detached image. At the same time, when we confront an artwork composed by two halves, what we have is a duality, an arrangement of panels that suggests a double intention.

One of the definitions of 'mirror' by the Oxford Dictionary is: *something that faithfully reflects or gives a true picture of something else*. 'Something' can refer to an object, but also to an idea or an assumption. Mirrors are polished surfaces that reflect incident rays of light and are usually valued for their capacity to reveal the 'true' appearance of things. They have functioned as poetic and metaphorical devices, holding up imitative forms of reality. Normally, a mirror image reflects ephemeral, temporary and therefore fragile images, evoking notions of subjectivity and identity. As a result, remaining between the imaginary and the real, they help to delineate human understanding. Mirrors are associated with, amongst other things, the relationship between good and evil, God and the devil, man and woman, the self and identity, the myth of Narcissus, etc. In addition, according to Alain de Lille, the theorists and thinkers of the 13th century would name as mirrors what we understand as books or paintings now (Alain de Lille in Melchior-Bonnet, 2001, p. 113). The *specula* or book-mirrors carried the knowledge to interpret the secrets of the universe. There were mirrors of nature or mirrors of history, encyclopaedias that would consider the relationship between two subjects, like that between the mirror and what it reflects.

The mirror's ambiguous nature has been an attractive dichotomy for artists to explore, particularly for the Surrealist movement. Artists were attracted by the psychology behind these notions and the fable and *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*[46] became a recurrent topic for painters such as Salvador Dalí, René Magritte or Max Ernst or writers such as Federico García Lorca or Luís Buñuel. They explored mirror images in their artworks, for example Salvador Dalí's paintings are full of references to the Narcissus myth, for instance in *Metamorphoses of Narcissus* (1937) and *A Couple with Their Heads full of Clouds* (1936). In works by Magritte, the mirror itself becomes a key element throughout his work as in *La reproduction interdite* (1937).

The Surrealist's exploration of mirroring through photography provides a more interesting insight in this context. While artists such as Claude Cahun, Florence Henri and Cecil Beaton used it to investigate into sexual identity, they also raised notions such as doubling, absorption, fracture of space or spacing between subjects. Although the surrealist's approach differs from the main concerns of this study, their explorations help us to understand how mirroring works and how it can be represented in the picture plane. For instance, Florence Henri in *Autoportrait* (1927–1928) and *Double portrait* (1927–1928) uses distance to make herself appear absent from the field and to increase the space between subjects; and Cecil Beaton in *Paula Gellibrant* (1928), *Nancy and Baba Beaton* (1927) in his photographs of sets of twins, uses the mirror to split the photograph in two halves to reflect on the nature of doubling. These works make us aware of the depth and intensity of mirroring, as well as the possible associations it might transmit.

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[46] According to David Lomas, the fable of Narcissus tells the story of a beautiful youth who, infatuated by his reflection in a pool, dies and is changed into a flower of the same name to be reborn every spring assuring his immortality (Lomas, 2011, p. 42). There are several versions; being the *Metamorphoses* by Roman poet Ovid (completed in 8 AD) is one of the most influential.

This general introduction to mirroring aims to present the multiple interpretations of this theme. Reflection is a phenomenon that works on multiple levels and brings conventions and cultural associations with it. However, here my objective is to analyse the pretention of mirroring associated to book pages and consequently to artworks. Using Lacan's words when referring to the 'mirror stage',[47] mirroring is in a place 'between imaginary and symbolism', because it represents a threshold to a deceptive image (Lacan and Sheridan, 1977). This false or illusory image is what I want to analyse in the context of opened books. How does mirroring interact with the fold and the gutter? Is mirroring an element that conditions our engagement with the artwork an is mirroring a metaphor for introspection?

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[47] According to Lacan in 'Topics of the Imaginary', the mirror stage is a phenomenon to which there is assigned a twofold value. In the first place, it has historical value as it marks a decisive turning point in the mental development of the child. In the second place, it typifies an essential libidinal relationship with the body-image (Lacan and Sheridan, 1977, p. 94).

3.1.2 MIRRORED PAGES

The first points that need to be addressed is what is a mirror image and can the double page be seen as a mirrored image?

Umberto Eco in *Semiotics and the Philosophy of Language* (1984) talks about the mirror image only as an optical phenomenon and does not touch upon the mythology or the symbolism of the mirror. Eco's definition of semiotic sign is that a sign is a meaningful phenomenon that can be included in a meaningful system of the same cognitive nature. Thus, meaning the sign is an exemplary element of a given code. Therefore, the mirror image is for him unique because it is neither a signified or signifier, its most important feature being instability and unpredictability (1984, p. 202). Eco analyses the mirrored image in an empirical way, focusing on the image reflected. What is it? What is it made of? What does it look like?

While that response is a 'learnt response', as humans develop a relationship with mirrors they learn how to use and experience them. Through that we are able to identify that what we are seeing is a mirrored image and not a real image. We will perceive the virtual image inverted, the right side of the form will be on the left and vice versa. However, for Eco, we should not speak of a reversed image or inversion, but rather of an 'absolute congruence' (1984, p. 206). Reducing the mirror reflection to a pure abstract effect, we realise that it does not imply any phenomena of the kind of dark chamber, the right doesn't project into the left and the left into the right. This phenomenon becomes clear with an example that explains the non- 'inverted symmetry' of a mirrored image. If we write on an etching plate, the printed image on the paper won't be legible unless we use a mirror, which will reveal a second congruence. The printed image on paper will show reversed letters in respect to our 'language code', but if we consider the actual imprint, ink signs will be exactly where the paper was lying. This thought shows that a mirror gives us an absolute double of the image we are projecting, what Eco calls 'an icon of the object' (1984, p. 201).

Therefore, according to the principles of mirror images, what is a double page? Two symmetrically aligned pages compose a double page. Although one of the pages doesn't project a mirrored image, an opened book does transfer the perception of mirroring by creating a visual disruption. This assumption takes us back to one of the reflective questions at the beginning of this chapter: is it in the transmission of connotations, that the perception of the page is created?

The double page is one of the key elements of the book, a pragmatic abstraction of the book as a symbol. In 'Mirrors', Eco describes humans as catoptric[48] animals, which means that we have developed a 'double ability to look at ourselves and others in both our and their perceptive reality' (1984, p. 207). Consequently, using our catoptric capacity, we have the ability to see the reflection, the mirroring effect that books have, even if it is only a perceptive experience. According to my research, there are two main phenomena that articulate mirroring and reflection in a double page. The first is the iconic abstraction of the double page: the assumption that a double page originates in the book. Accordingly, that perception establishes a relationship of absence between the antecedent (the book) and the consequent (the double page). However, we cannot eliminate the causal connection between the referent and the new object, creating a reflection, a mirrored image of the book on the double page. Thus, there is a projection from matter to matter. This projection carries all the connotations associated with the original source, associated with identity, reproduction, imprint and trace[49]. When we approach a double-page spread, we experience a book as well. The mirroring is activated through the pretention of closing, as if we approached a single page, we wouldn't link it to the book that easily. That imaginary action is a connotation: an implicit meaning that we will always link to a double page, and consequently to a double image. The pretention of closing will activate all that succession: the mirroring, the association with the book and its implications, the act of turning pages and the space between pages, which takes us to the second phenomenon: the symmetry.

Two joined pages form a double page. The vertical joint articulates symmetry creating an axis in the middle. Symmetric structures are related to well-proportioned and well-balanced compositions and denote some sort of concordance of the parts. The binding of a book provokes symmetry between the two splits, creating an illusion of mirroring.

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[48] Eco uses the term 'catoptric' in the context of mirrors as it is a branch of optics that deals with the phenomena of reflected light and image-forming. In this case, Eco assumes that humans have the capacity to deal with virtual images and abstract realities.

[49] While examining these notions, I developed a set of prints titled *Windows and Mirrors.* Working on that set helped me to reflect visually and be more aware of the connection between imaginary action and connotation. Please see Appendix 4.

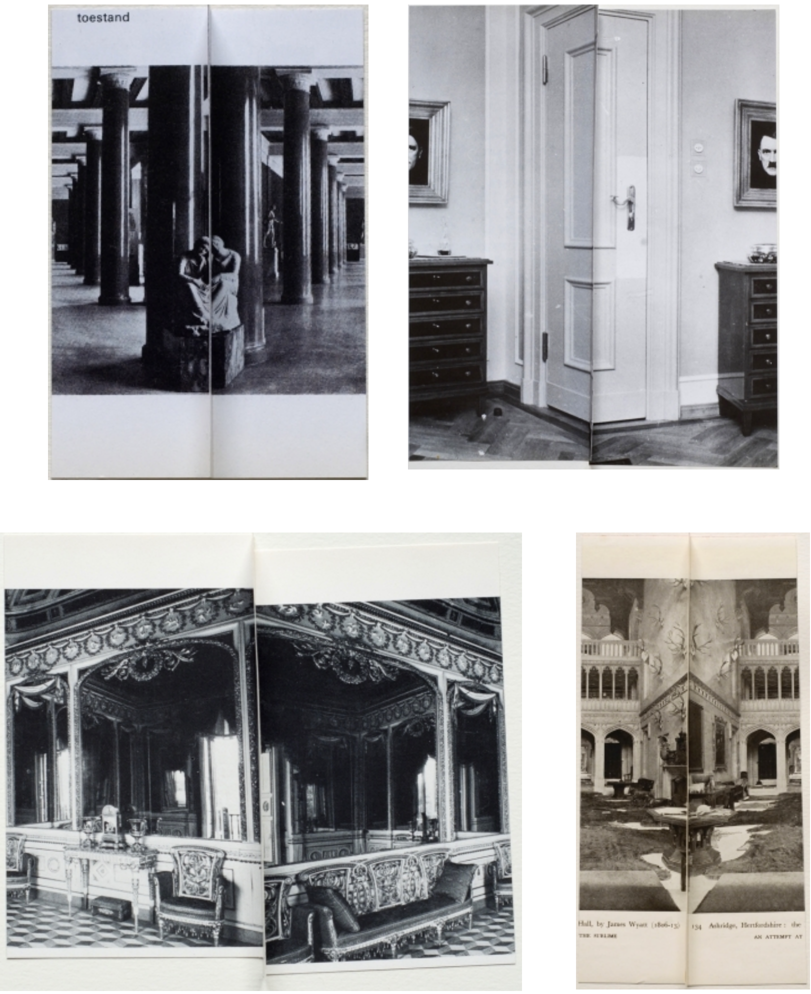
toestand
Hall, by James Wyatt (1806-13)
THE SUBLIME
134 Ashridge, Hertfordshire: the
AN ATTEMPT AT

Figure 22. Abigail Reynolds (2011). *Transposed*: *Ontwerp, Berghof* and *Hall of Mirrors*

Although the two actual pages are symmetric, it doesn't mean that the elements of the pages are. But it does predispose our perception to associate the two parts of the opening. This implies a connection with an opened book and the illusion and configuration of printed artefacts. This idea can be understood better by considering the series *Transposed* (2011) by British artist Abigail Reynolds. In this work, the artist reflects and plays with these two phenomena by creating images that articulate the perception of the double page through mirroring. In this case by suggesting space and time through the cut. As I mentioned in Chapter one (1.4.3.1) the artist is interested in the construction of space in the image. She creates collages by appropriating photographs of famous monuments printed in books, atlases, magazines or archives to then transform them. The artist decontextualizes pictures by overlapping different images, cutting and folding them up and then arranging them in installations, combined with other elements. The cut and the fold become a constructive method and a disruptive paradigm, and the opening the fragment that creates links and allows the reader to experience both images' time.

The series *Transposed*[50] is of particular interest for this research. Abigail Reynolds uses mirroring to expand the concept of temporality in photography. Six images compose the series, representing six different indoor and outdoor locations. Collecting and selecting images from old books and guides, Reynolds plays with the perception and the construction of space in the image. Due to this multi-perspectival quality, the reader can no longer read the photograph with regard to the space or monument it refers to the image shifts between illusion and disillusion. Synchronising fragments of rooms from different temporal origins, the artist creates a new dimension. Meticulously choosing scenarios and the right lines or places to converge, Reynolds builds new spaces based on reflections and allusions. These segments are not presented one after the other but coexist and interpenetrate each other in an image, which could also be read as a reminiscence of the 'crystal image'[51] in Deleuze's film theory (Stivale, 2005, p. 35): the indivisible unity of the virtual and the actual image. Four mirrors alluding to four fragments of history. This crystal image shapes time as a constant two-way mirror that splits the present into two directions, one of which evokes future while the other falls into the past.

These works could be interpreted as a series of single images: two found photographs displayed together. However, the artist decided to present the collages binding the two plates together and intentionally leaving a crease in the very centre of the image, a groove that conforms and shapes a double image. This gutter is the element that structures the symmetry, the axis that replicates the images.

To be exact, she evokes symmetry but her compositions are asymmetric. This gives the pieces more tension, are less stable and become more complex. By breaking the original order of the images, she enhances the fact that the content of two pages is never symmetric. Each page mirrors each other but without ever being a copy.

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[50] Reynolds explores mirroring also in other works such as in *Mirror (Benrath)* (2010), and then less explicitly in installations like *Prop* (2012) and *Begin Afresh* (2013), where she creates direct associations with the double page through introspective gazes into mirrored compositions. That way, the artist references the imaginary logic of metaphors implying notions of identity, dematerialization, reproduction, replica, etc.

[51] The crystal-image, which forms the cornerstone of Deleuze's time-image, is a shot that fuses the past of the recorded event with the present of its viewing. The crystal-image is the indivisible unity of the virtual image and the actual image, where Deleuze assigns a form of temporality that accounts for the 'present/pastness' of the film image.

Mirroring defines both its nature and potential, demarcating its geneses and implications. From the intrinsic evocation of mirroring emerge questions about the configuration, meaning and allusions to the idea of fold, which I sustain it is a concept ultimately related to mirroring. In the next section I'll expand this idea conceptually and how it is developed into art practice.

3.1.3 CREATING THE METAPHORICAL PAGE: THE FOLD

What is visible within Abigail Reynolds' artworks is the creative use of the crease as a central element. Images in *Transposed* rely on those undefined spaces created in between images in order to be understood. In the previous section I argued how mirroring reveals visual effects associated with pages such as the pretention of closing. The question that emerges from this idea is what activates that echo and consequently the perception of page?

Reynolds explores this question in *Transposed* by creating a central crease. By engaging with this element, Reynolds recognises its suggestive strength, which is what I find revealing. The crease is essentially a pleat, a fold, which can be seen as a simple gesture, such as crumpling a piece of paper, but it also implies and triggers artistic and philosophical implications. For example, the word origami, which comes from the Japanese 'oru' means fold, and 'kami' means paper. More than simply being a technique, origami implies thinking about how to give form to an object, thus how that a three-dimensional form can emerge from a single surface area. It is specifically that idea that I'm interested in exploring: why the action of folding can transform the way we read and perceive a piece of paper.

In *A Thousand Plateaus,* Gilles Deleuze proposes that there are a variety of folds: the fold that represents our material selves, then one's relation to oneself and the folding of time (which is the memory) (2004, p. 34). Yet, for the theorist, as stated in the book *Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (revised edition, 2006) the fold is a way to think creatively about the production of subjectivity. Using the notion of fold to explain how thoughts are connected but divided in parts at the same time creating pleats of matter (2006, p. 8), Deleuze says that the inside is nothing more than a fold of the outside,

> Thus a continuous labyrinth is not a line dissolving into independent points, as flowing sand might dissolve into grains, but resembles a sheet of paper divided into infinite folds or separated into bending movements, each one determined by the consistent or conspiring surrounding… A fold is always folded within a fold, like a cavern in a cavern. The unit of matter, the smallest element of the labyrinth, is the fold, not the point which is never a part, but a simple extremity of the line (2006, p. 18)

The fold then is not merely a technical device, but an ontology of becoming something else, of multiplicity, of a differentiation while maintaining continuity. That way the fold should never to be accepted as a singular event but rather it is to be seen as a mixture of many folds. Even its antonym 'unfolding' doesn't mean the opposite of the fold as the language may suggest, it means the fold up to the following fold: it is itself a multiple of the fold.

Deleuze further defines the fold not as one of a metric or dimensional change but one that can operate as a degree of development and differences:

> Folding-unfolding no longer simply means tension-release, contraction-dilation, but enveloping-developing, involution-evolution…The simplest way of stating the point is by saying that to unfold is to increase, to grow; whereas to fold is to diminish, to reduce, to withdraw into the recesses of a world (ibid, p. 19).

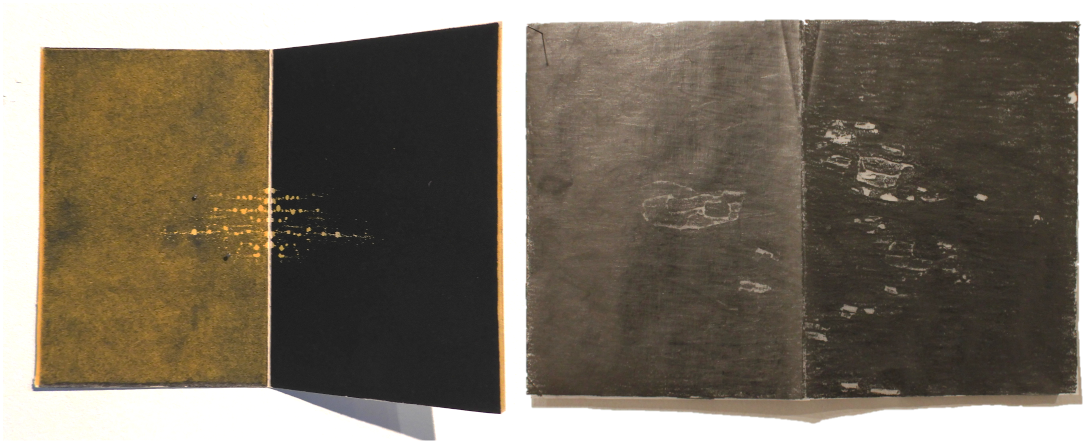
In terms of the context of this research, this can be interpreted as a series of potential differentiations, alterations where there are no fixed reference points or suggestive identities. According to Deleuze, the fold is also associated to one's relation to oneself (2006, p. 13). These views connect with reflections made in Chapter 1 (1.2) where I explored the concept of reading and the idea of being involved and participate in one's own process of self-creation. I argued how this field of expanded practice, or 'relational aesthetics' does not consider spectators as such but as readers who are transformed through their interaction with the practice. If the fold is a way of creating connections, I suggest that it can also become a process of connecting the outside with the inside to signify that all knowledge is linked.

Deleuze's form of connection can be extended to further understand the notion of mirroring and help us to recognise that the two parts of a double page are united through distinction and difference. The structure of the double page is not separated into parts, but is divided by a fold, which is what articulates duality. These two halves always retain a certain cohesion. This idea takes us back to the question of the verso and recto of the fold. When the double page is displayed, what does the inside or outside of the crease of the paper transmit?

3.1.3.1 ANALYSING FOLDS

In Chapter 1, the analysis of Delaunay's book *La Prose* opened up the question of the fold, especially for its display in an exhibition context. When I studied this book, I realised that when unfolded, *La Prose* showed different creases directing the paper inwards and outwards, and through this directing the reading in and out of the pages.

In *The Fold*, Deleuze describes that 'to unfold is to increase, to grow; whereas to fold is to diminish, to reduce...' (see last citation). The crease in a double page spread show what parts of the paper have been in contact and also indicate whether we are reading the recto or the verso of the page. Through that pleat, as readers, we recognise here how the process of folding and unfolding has been created. That perceptual process affects the way we read as well because we identify both a pretention of closing when folding (reduce) and a pretention of opening when unfolding (grow).



AGV 1 and 2. *Signs of Resistance* (2018), notice the difference between foldings.

I have experimented with this concept in some of my own artwork, especially in different exhibition contexts. For the series *Signs of Resistance* (which will be analysed further in the next chapter) I created a few frottage and small prints as tests that then I used in different exhibitions. If we take Figures AGV 1 and 2 as examples, we can see how I used the fold in different ways. AGV 1 is a print that was made using only one plate and transferring the ink onto the other side of the paper applying pressure[52]. The paper was folded retaining that shape, so the resulting image is seen with a strong pretention of closing. This piece is read from the inside, with a verso on our left-hand side and a recto on our right hand side. The central white line marking the actual fold shows the natural drive of the paper and enhances the idea of a closing double page.

The AGV 2 is a frottage made of two different plates. The tracing paper was folded before applying the graphite but it still holds a tension that creates a fold. The crease is pointing towards the reader, which transmits a different effect than AGV 1. This piece shows the outside of the fold, creating an interior that we can't see but activating at the same time the principle of *subjectivation*, which implies the connection between the inside and outside of a fold. This display creates more tension, as it remains more ambiguous about the suggestion of closing. It seems we are reading something from the outside and therefore the order of the pages and the direction of the reading is less clear.

I also saw this effect of folding and unfolding in the cover page of the book 'The Exquisite Fold' by Carson and Miller. This was a revealing reflection on the function of the crease and the fold, as it shows the traces of the action of folding. This first page invites the reader to follow the crinkles and creases through the texture left on the paper. Through touch, the reader explores and discovers the paper as a material with a history. The simple act of folding a piece of paper transforms that which it contains into something intimate and produces a moment of concealment as well as the possibility of revelation. In this case, the fold becomes a topology of thought, the inside space shows that it has been in contact with the outside space, bringing the two into confrontation at the limit of our present.

This flow from outside to inside, across different scales and independent of distance, is what the fold implies. In a double page, a book behaves as a hinge, creating, out of a simple surface, two. The element of the fold is essential to generate both a critical process as well as to embody reading.

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[52] This is the process called *controestampa*, which is further explained in the Project *Red*, Chapter 4.

The fold appears in the work of many artists and has particular implications in printmaking, where the idea of mirroring is not only an evocation, but also a specific and real quality. In the next section, and as a first introduction to mirroring in relation to printed matter, I'll analyse a number of publications by artist Dieter Roth. These artists' books will show the multiple suggestions and associations consequence of the use of mirroring and folding within printed pages.

3.2 SYMBOLIC AND POETIC LANGUAGE

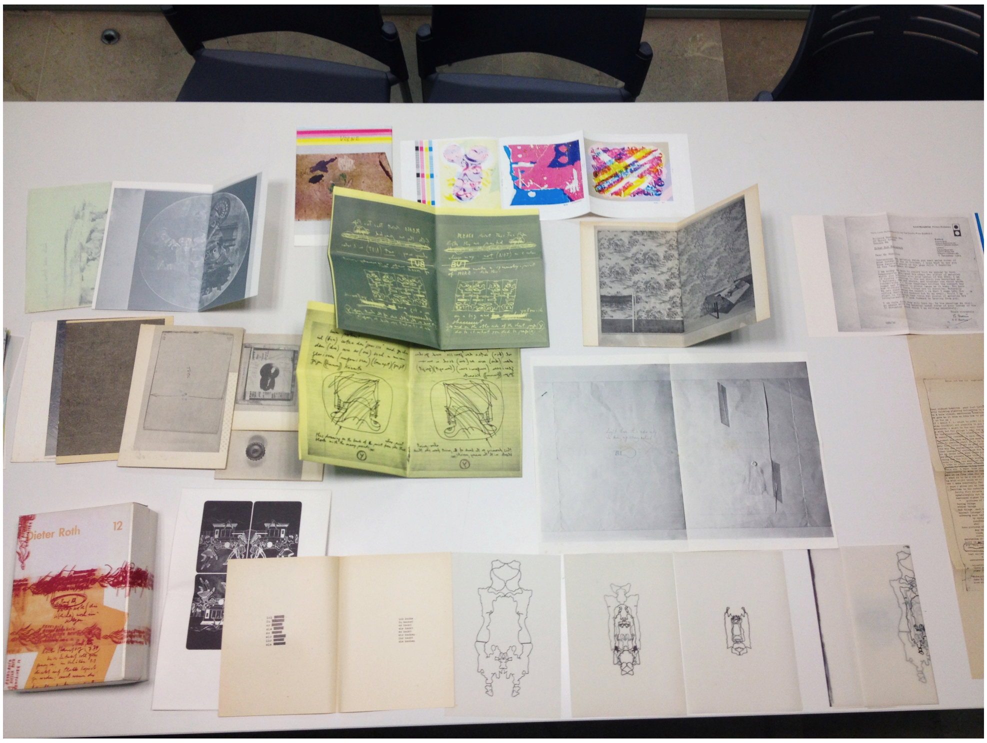

Figure 23. Dieter Roth, *Copley Book* (1966). This is a detail of one of the observational sessions at the Special Collection of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Valencia.

3.2.1 CASE STUDY: MIRRORING AND REFLECTION IN DIETER ROTH ARTISTS' BOOKS

Dieter Roth (1930–1998) was a versatile Swiss artist who worked across processes in sculpture, painting, book art, collage, poetry, film and music. While his eclectic practice is broad, he made particularly significant contributions in his experimental graphic works and in the territory of the artists' books. The analysis of a number of his artworks will inform this research by putting in perspective his use of the page.

Firstly, I want to consider two-handed drawings made between 1977 and 1990 some of which are included in his artists' books *Copy Books*. These works share Roth's interest and exploration into symmetry and mirrored images through graphic processes such as drawing, printing techniques and reproduction (such as photocopies). Another characteristic of these works is that they were, to some extent, driving works behind other artistic projects, in the manner in which they were made embraced accidents, tests, writing, mutations and play with the idea of process itself.

Dieter Roth artists' books are immensely rich and varied in both context and design. In his early works from the late 1950s an experimentation in language[53] can be appreciated, particularly in his *Collected Works* Volume 2 (published later in 1971) with material 2; *Ideograms* (1956) and material 5; *Bok 1956–59* (1959), where the artist translated his notebooks playing with the elements of the page making, according to Suzuki, a 'page inside the page' game (2013, p. 24). Through symmetrical letters arranged in the space of the page and grouped forming constellations, alternate black and white pages and positioning of the inner pages, Roth starts unveiling the possibilities of symmetry and mirroring. This interest was further explored in his *Bilderbuch* (1959) (picture book) and later variants such as *Bok AC* and *Book c6* where the artist experiments with geometrical forms through cut outs of black and white and coloured cardboards. In those lose pages, Roth plays with the composition creating visual associations through symmetry, echo, layering and colour. However, one of the works that best represents a direct initial interest in using mirroring more conceptually is the *Copley Book* (1965).[54]

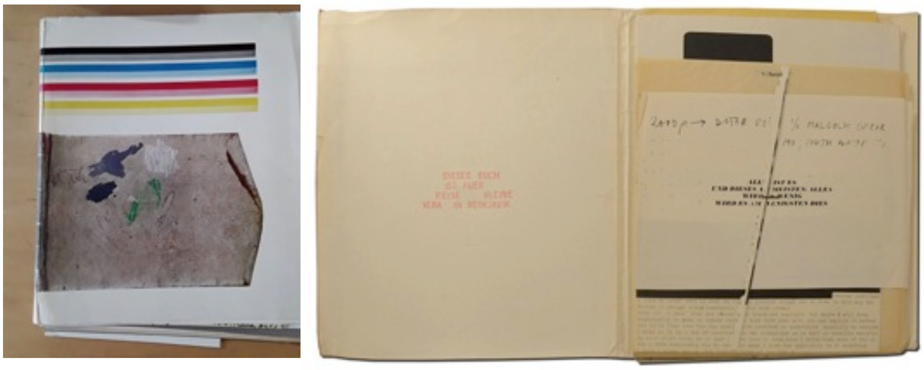

Figure 24. Dieter Roth, *Copley Book* (1966).

In his *Catalogue Raisonné*, Dirk Dobke explains that in 1960, Dieter Roth won the Willam and Noma Copley Foundation Awards, and instead of using the award to fund a monograph of his work, the artist asked to use the money to publish a new artist's book (2004, p. 56). The result was a book in form of a folder containing an assemblage of printed matter, consisting of 112 sheets of different sizes, texts, drawings, photographs, collages, reliefs, letterpress, offset and embossing. The artist also used a variety of types of paper (such as glossy, matt, tracing and sugar paper, photocopied, carbon or ruled paper) in which the sizes and the thickness of it also vary.

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[53] According to Stefan Ripplinger, during the 1950s Dieter Roth frequented concrete poetry circles and met poets such as Eugene Gomringer, Claus Bremer and Daniel Spoerri (Ripplinger in Dobke, 2004: 127). He published a few poetry books himself, for example, the *Scheisse books* made between 1966 and 1975, *Munduculum* (1967) and his *Poesy* books made between 1966 and 1968. The exposure with poets and interest in writing, reflected in Roth's publications sensibility.

[54] This work was studied from an original exemplar from the first edition, at the Chelsea College of Arts Special Collection and also from a 1998 edition at the Special Collection of the Faculty of Fine Arts of Valencia.

The *Copley Book* was made in close collaboration with the artist Richard Hamilton between 1961–1966, and the proof of it is a letter that Dieter Roth sent to Richard Hamilton from Reykjavik Island on 19th July1962 that then becomes the first 'page' of the volume. In this letter (written without any full stops or commas), Roth explains how he is developing ideas, still indefinite because 'I want it to be a row of reactions in two dimensions on as well as possible everything which might touch me or meet me the time to come […] I think I will give up worrying about accurateness of execution I want to give the executioner a chance of his own' (1965, p.1). He also includes a list of notes and ideas for the book he 'makes constantly to remember'. The list includes: 'fairly flat objects used as relief-printing block (without ink)', 'symmetrically cut things (like cut cards)', 'destroyed signs (letters cut combined twisted, ruins of letters)', 'symmetries of form symmetries of sense', 'texts made up of pictures (for the same words the same pictures)', 'take different texts and mix them, 'pages filled with the same letter' (ibid), amongst many other ideas.

Among these notes, prints in different orientations of the same image, a photograph of two young kids that look very similar posing in the same way or reversed photocopies reprinted on the same paper, manifest Roth's interest in symmetry and mirroring. He combines a very playful experimentation on symmetry with a component of chance. There are a few booklets that contain handwritten text that have been doubled symmetrically where the reader needs to keep unfolding the sheets, to find more reversed and reiterated text and try to read it and make connections. These folded and symmetric handwritten texts don't work as a text anymore; they create abstract images, like illusions or suggestions of text. As the book isn't bound, these sheets of texts become independent pieces that use the fold as structural element. Using the fold, Roth uses a practice of spacing, creating not only an inside and outside, but also additional edges and spaces where new things can happen.

This work links with ideas developed in section 3.1.2.1 regarding the concept of the fold. We can see clearly that the artist made the decision of not binding the book because of his interest in generating the reader, the need of folding and unfolding. The different folded sheets invite the reader to touch and explore, revealing the print as a material with a history. The creases mean that someone has manipulated that piece before, it means that the action of unfolding is part of the process of reading the work, then the simple act of unfolding reverses that previous action, making the reader the proposition to open it, so it is there for the reader to unfold him or herself into it.

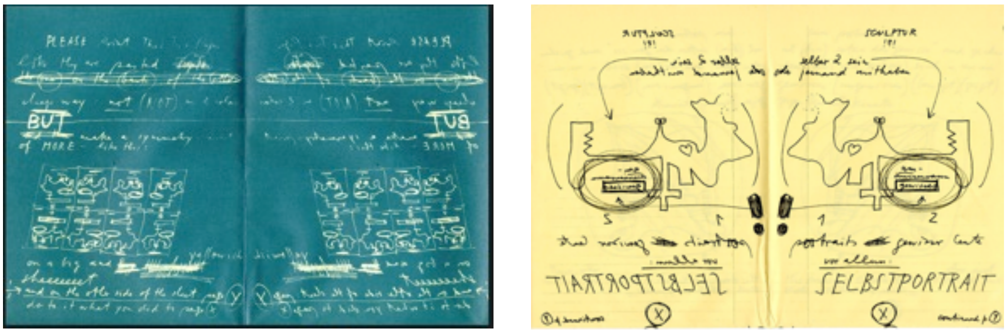

Figure 25 and 26. Detail of two pages. Dieter Roth, *Copley Book* (1966).

The combination of notes (Roth talking to himself), letters (to Hamilton or giving instructions to the printers) and drawings, document exhaustively the entire process of making a book. According to Sarah Suzuki, the *Copley Book* echoes Marcel Duchamp's *The Green Box* (1934), pointing out that both of them embraced accidents and process in their work. Duchamp's work is a book that collected print facsimile reproductions of manuscript notes pertaining to the process of creating *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors* (known as *The Large Glass*) (Suzuki, 2013: 18). Both artists work with their own notes and material, exhausting the substance and traces of their ideas and making the creative process itself a performance, a piece of art.

Dieter Roth continued working with reproduction techniques, and in 1977 started to publish photocopied books he called *Copy Books*. This technique allowed him to document, experiment and assemblage material and publish it. Agreeing with Dirk Dobke we can find four different topics in this series: diaries and notebooks (1966-67), drawings (1977–1980), catalogues for his own exhibitions (since early 1980s) and a collection of folders collecting all sort of material (2006, p. 172). These four topics are related to each other by Roth's interest in documenting ideas, processes, notes, drawings etc. to create his own archive of material.

The drawing series begins in 1970s when, according to Stefan Ripplinger, Dieter Roth started to incorporate elements of chance into his art (cited in Dobke, 2006, p. 138). He started to create his *Speedy Drawings*[55] by drawing with one hand and later with both hands at the same time in *Two-Handed Speedy Drawings,* which he mainly published as *Copy Books*. Roth created the latest series by coordinating the movement of his hands. He used to draw figurative scenes with his both hands at once. In 1978 he produced three portfolios: *Trophies*, *Bats* and *Dogs*. Roth explains that every drawing and its mirrored image were produced on a double page spread of the book, generating a further duplication.

In his first *Speedy Drawings* from 1970, Roth started to integrate some elements of symmetry as we can see in his xerox copies of the series *Self Dogs*. It is remarkable that in these initial series, the symmetrical drawings are made in single pages of his sketchbooks. These drawings don't show any structural element dividing the two halves of the drawing. While in further drawings from 1977, for example in *Two-Handed Speedy Drawings for Ira Wool* (1977), the artist started to use the gutter of his sketchbook to articulate the mirroring effect. This particular use of the gutter can be distinguished as well in his *Speedy Drawings* (using only one hand), as the artist used to draw only in the right side of the sketchbook. The thin paper shows the traces of the previous drawing creating a mirrored image. However, more than a mirror image, I would say that the ghost-image would be an echo. An echo because it was a drawing made in a different time and echoes its shape in the current time. An example of it could be the series *disturbed, broken off 19 march* (1980) or *Heterogenii* (1989), amongst many other series, where I believe Roth was getting inspiration from the echoed image to develop new figures. The shapes are very similar and are often drawn following a symmetrical arrangement conforming a real composition unit formed by an image with its echo. Works such as *25 symmetric soft drawings in Belcanto taste* (1982) or *16 moving gestures on*

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[55] The analysis of Dieter Roth's drawings is based taking Roth's drawings and books documented as examples and found in three sources: Catalogue Raisonné of books and multiples curated by Dirk Dobke (2004), the book *Dieter Roth in Print* (2006) by Kirk Dobke and the catalogue of drawings edited by Veit Loers (2007).

base (1994), show Roth's notion of unison between the two parts of the spread. In these drawing the artist intentionally makes the ghost and real drawing interact, and in *14 Portraits* (1990) he completes the echoed image by adding some lines and colour in the back of the page.

From the early 1980s, as can be seen from the material published by Veit Loers, (2007), Roth started to use an experimental technique by drawing directly onto film to then expose it on to offset plates. He drew on transparent material, and then overlaid a new piece of film, using the first drawing to inspire the next one and so on. This way he would have the old drawing that would lead to the new one. Another technique he developed was to photocopy the reverse of his drawing. As he was using extra-thin paper, the copy would make into a drawing what originally was a reversed trace, so this technique would lead to new effects and images. A series of drawings made by combining these techniques with double hand drawing include *13 Bridges* (1981), *Lines, Stuttgart-Bali-Mosfellssveit* (1982-83), *Portraits, Lollies* (1981), *Superficial Plant-Animal* (1994) and *Biscuits* (1994) amongst many others. From my point of view, these works continue the experimentation started in the 1960s around ideas on symmetry and mirroring but taking it one step further as he could juxtapose several layers of imagery.

Although I am not aware that Dieter Roth was trying to formulate any idea about the use of the double page in his drawings, his work clearly represents an important contribution into the use of mirroring and echo within fine arts. My interpretation is that Roth proposes a new engagement with the act of drawing and self-reflection through the double page. The time spent drawing in his sketchbooks, gave him the opportunity to explore deeply into the dual space of the opened book. He used that space as a performative site, where the gutter played a decisive role by allowing him to be able to keep old drawings within the same format.

For this thesis, Roth's drawings and experimental artists books exemplify a new way of using the book: the book as potential site for materiality. But it also shows the active and creative role of mirroring and fold; especially in the process to develop creativity in his own work. Roth's publications (in particular the *Copley Book*) not only reveal how material can be reused to create new work, but how by using particular strategies such us mirroring through either drawing or print, it can transform both the form and the meaning of the artwork.

Roth’s particular way of working becomes a bridge to analyse, with a different perspective, how certain processes in printmaking also generate insights that help us to define the notions of fold and mirroring. We will see in the following section, part of the nature of printmaking is its property to produce multiples as well as to reverse the image, two qualities that allow us to explore, the concepts of duality, mirroring and echo.

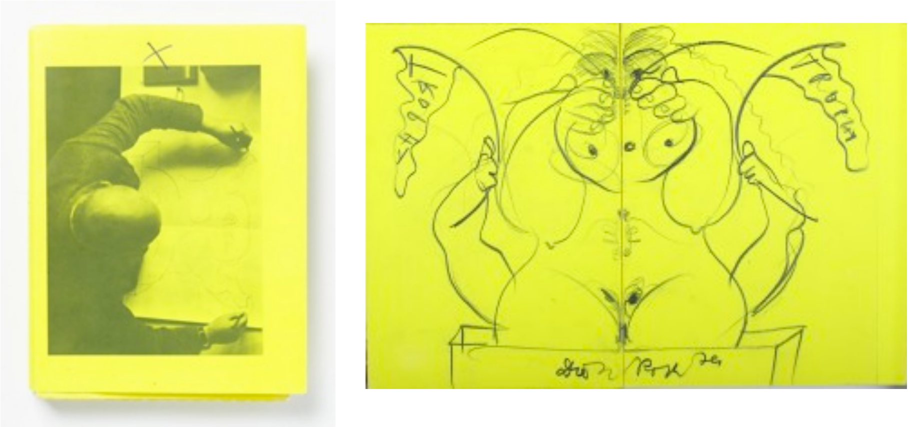

Figure 27. Dieter Roth, *Trophies (125 Two-Handed Speedy Drawings)* (1979). Offset on French folded paper.

3.3 MIRRORING AND PRINTMAKING

In printmaking, the concept of the 'matrix' plays a very important role. The matrix is the foundational part, the initial material that constitutes the place from which something else originates and takes form. The matrix not only provides the vehicle to produce multiple images, it also establishes a first relation between artist and materiality, as the steel, copper, wood, aluminium, stone, screen or any other material will leave particular traces on the printed surface. Each material requires a specific technique to work with and the process of work, tools and printing method will enhance and enrich its potentials.

The production of a print is a very physical process, involving contact and transfer between two surfaces. In techniques like relief or intaglio,[56] the process of biting or carving the plates offer an incisive form of mark-making in which material is gouged away rather than added to the surface. Concepts like 'depth', 'recession' or 'distance' are important to be understood as something physically hollowed out of a plane (the plate) rather than produced optically through drawing. Professor Jennifer L. Roberts in *Jasper Johns/in press* (2012) refers to this practice as an *indexical process* (2012, p. 23), meaning that the print results from immediate physical contiguity with the matrix (the plate, block or screen). Printmaking combines both rational and sensory thought. Rational, because a high level of expertise is needed to control every print process and method. Sensory, because the physicality of the surface preserves the actions, puncturing, cuttings, and deformations like the stretching or folding of the paper. These changes imply a material understanding of the surface. Consequently, touch and physicality become part of the topological surface, adding a human resonance, imperfections and traces into the printing procedures.

In most print processes, when the main indexical event occurs (the plate or stone meets paper, and the ink is transferred from the surface to the paper), the result is reversed or mirrored. Therefore, drawing in printmaking involves understanding questions of right and left, before and after, above and below. Accordingly, reversals and symmetries become inherent qualities in printmaking. When the artist prepares a plate, they must be conscious of all these turnarounds, and need to learn to draw and think, inverting orientations, composition weights or text. However, the body makes itself known in this process through the peculiar, sometimes irregular, traces it leaves in making an image for reversal. This happens through analogy: the bilateral symmetry of the print addresses and mimics the bilateral symmetry of the human body. In all printmaking processes that involve reversal, the artist has to work not only against the technical demands, but also against the natural body action too.

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[56] In the intaglio printmaking process, lines of an image to be printed on paper are incised first by hand-held tools and acids onto the surface of a flat metal plate. The surface of the metal plate is inked and then wiped so the only ink that remains is in the incised areas of the plate. The paper is carefully positioned on top of the inked metal plate and run through a press, pressure pushing the paper onto the inked plate allowing the ink to be transferred to the paper producing an original print.

Prints become mirrors, echoing the artist's use of technique. However, with new technologies and photosensitive techniques such as photointaglio[57] and polymer[58] plates we can reproduce nearly every brushstroke, wash, mark or word. Artists expand their language, combining and mixing all sort of techniques and materials generating hybrid prints and increasing print's potentials. This diversity offered through new technologies enriches and complements traditional techniques.

The consideration of the mirrored image is one that artists often use without thinking, but not many of them use it and take it as an element that constitute and inform the work itself. Jasper Johns understands and explores the physicality of printmaking process and the efforts it requires in artists' involvement. He has used reversal and mirroring in his paintings but it is in his prints that he develops a particular and personal language using mirroring and reversal evoking the nature of reproduction.

On the other side, Anish Kapoor combines photographic techniques to develop a minimal and suggesting language where colour vibrates dying the paper. Kapoor uses mirroring both to build his graphic compositions as well as to construct 3D prints. These two different approaches to printmaking will be analysed in the next two cases studies to show how mirroring is developed and what kind of meaning is suggested from it.

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[57] Photointaglio is a printmaking technique where the original artwork (photograph, drawing, collage, or whatever) is reproduced onto transparent or translucent film or paper and then exposed onto a plate that has been prepared with a light sensitive plate. The emulsion on the plate hardens where it receives exposure and will resist acid in the etching process.

[58] Photopolymer plates are specially made plates covered with a thick photosensitive emulsion. The plates are exposed and then developed in water or a mild alkaline solution which washes away the unhardened photopolymer creating fine recessed crevices for the ink.

3.3.1 CASE STUDY: THE OPENED BOOKS OF JASPER JOHNS

Jasper Johns (1930) is an American painter and printmaker widely known for its treatment of iconography and appropriation of symbols, objects and words. His work is broad and with continuous overlapping between themes and motifs across his career, but in this section, I will focus on the artist's artwork in print and will analyse specifically those pieces in which his artistic language developed through the exploration of symmetry, seriality and mirroring. I will interpret one of his bodies of work from a different angle, proposing a new analysis based on the importance of reading.

Although Johns is better known for his paintings, in 1960 he began to work closely with Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE)[59] in a variety of printmaking techniques. R. Field, in his book *Jasper Johns: Prints 1970–77* catalogues an extensive compilation of Johns' work, both in series and single prints, showing his long and productive collaboration with master printer Tatyana Grossman and his commitment to printmaking. Field points out that Johns' focus and interest in printmaking relies on the nature of memory, reproduction and replication (1970, p. 5). That can be seen especially in his prints from the mid-1960s and 1970s, where artist engaged with the medium, as well as the processes, as evidences an interview by Mark Rosenthal in 1992[60]:

> Working with this medium is interesting because it has to do in part in time: whether you do something before or whether you think of it after […]. When something is printed, it has to be done in an order. You have to

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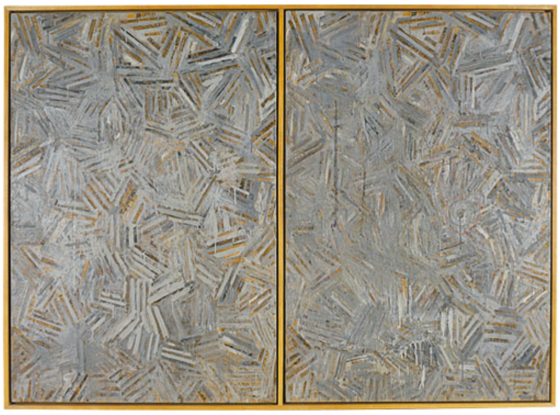
[59] Universal Limited Art Editions (ULAE) is a fine art print publisher established in 1957 by Tatyana Grossman in New York. Initially making lithographs with artists such as Larry Rivers, Sam Francis, Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg. Today, ULAE continues collaborating with artists to publish small editions of prints and artists' books.

[60] Mark Rosenthal interviewed Jasper Johns in *Artists at Gemini G.E.L.: Celebrating the 25th Year* (1992) prepared in conjunction with the exhibition 'Both Art and Life: Gemini G.E.L. at 25' at the New Harbor Art Museum, Newport Beach, Calif, 1992. The interview was conducted on 2nd September 1992 in New York.

> consider how it can be printed, and how it will be printed. (1995, quoted in Varnedoe, 1996, p. 281).

Barbara Rose provides a similar analysis to Rosenthal, sustaining that Johns' work is bound to the idea of 'perpetuation and continuity of memory' (1976, p. 69). These ideas connect, as mentioned in the previous section, with some of the principles of this medium and sustain his interest in printmaking.

To deepen and explain the process a little bit better, in etching, for example, every incision, mark or scratch the artist masks, leaves a trace on the plate as a record. The metal plate stores and accumulates every gesture, and we can re-work it for as long as we wish, even years after starting that piece. These actions reflect the artist's performance, literally recording traces of time. Johns explores that idea in many of his early works and by looking at his working proofs, how he plays with the nature of perception juxtaposing drawings and re-working old images into new forms can be seen.



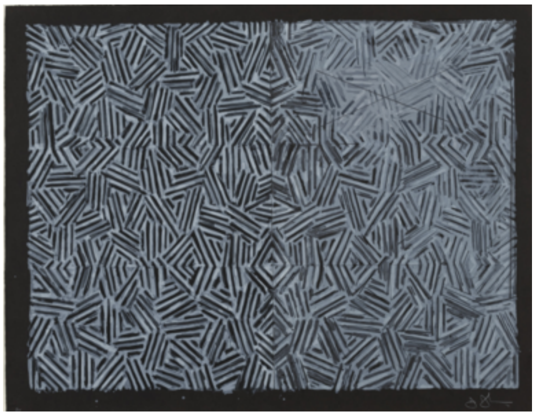


Figure 28 (left). Jasper Johns, *The Dutch Wives* (1975).
Figure 29 (right). Jasper Johns, *Corpse and Mirror* (1976).

During the 1960s and 1970s, Jasper Johns was working on paintings where he was trying to trace actions like scratching, transferring or pressing objects into the paint; all actions with clear links to the printing process. However, one of the procedures that, based on the examination I have done, had more resonances in Johns' work was the reversal of the composition on the matrix in the final print. The artist has specifically stated that 'it was in printmaking that mirroring and reversal became concerns' (quoted in Johns, Quick and Roberts, 2012, p. 24). This affirmation can be seen in his work where elements like the flipped, hinged and mirrored forms that appear in his works during these two decades, are definitely concepts that have a close affinity with printing. Indeed, mirroring and hinging became primary methods. According to Roberts, 'any flat shape presented along with its mirror reversal implies that the original shape was flipped in a three-dimensional space above the surface, therefore referring to that real space but without illusion' (ibid). A very clear example of this can be seen in his painting *According to What* (1964), where words appear reversed, reflected and printed by the wooden letter.

This effect then is translated and further explored in his prints. The reflectional symmetry of crosshatched works such as *Corpse and Mirror* (1976), echo the principle of the hinge (element inspired by Duchamp and deeply explored in Johns' work). This work echoes *The Dutch Wives* (1975), a painting comprising two halves that replicates itself showing symmetry, not only between the two canvases but also in the repetition and distribution of the hatches. Both works and *Hatching* from *Foraides/Fizzles* (1976) were composed as diptychs and by two splits, suggesting a gutter in the middle, like a cut forming a double page spread. These pieces, through their complex print-base pattering illusions evoke a fold, a pair of newspaper pages or an open book.

Why do they suggest a double page spread? Traditionally, hatch marks were used as a method of line drawing to describe light and shadows, a system to suggest volume in figurative space. Alternatively, these strokes function for Johns as if they were codes, guidelines or rules for transcribing a message on a page, a way of manipulating the surface of the work. John's diptychs don't look like a window that invites the viewer to walk into the painting to explore a fiction; he rather creates a dense structure on a flat surface to generate optical illusions. His works are impressions delivered through a complex and abstract language, inviting the viewers to awaken their intuition, sensitivity and memory. According to James Cuno, the artworks, composed in two panels or two halves, as diptychs, carry connotations of dematerialization (2003, p. 69). I interpret that quality as particularly attributed to works that use replication. I partly agree with Cuno's interpretation about dematerialisation. I concur with his vision about the possible association between repetition and loss of authenticity, however, I claim that the use of duplication can be used to formulate or reinforce an idea. Johns' crosshatch-mirrored works rely on the use of repetition. The artist deliberately repeats a pattern that then becomes a motif that eventually develops into a piece, which is then duplicated again. He creates a tension within that structure, which is the component that makes these works read differently. Each sheet stands as an individual, but at the same time its meaning is dependant to the pair; each exists not only as a copy, but for the other.

A further exploration of symmetry and reflection in John's body of work in print can be seen in the artist book *Foirades/Fizzles*[61] (1976) created in collaboration with Samuel Beckett.[62] According to Jessica Prinz in her article 'Foirades/Fizzles/Beckett/Johns' (1980) it was Johns who first approached the poet, and who took responsibility for the layout and arrangement of the book. Beckett's texts (five in total) recall themes such as aging, decay of the body, dissipation and consciousness to which Johns responded with thirty-three prints, all of them using intaglio techniques, such as etching, aquatint, soft-ground etching and sugar-lift.

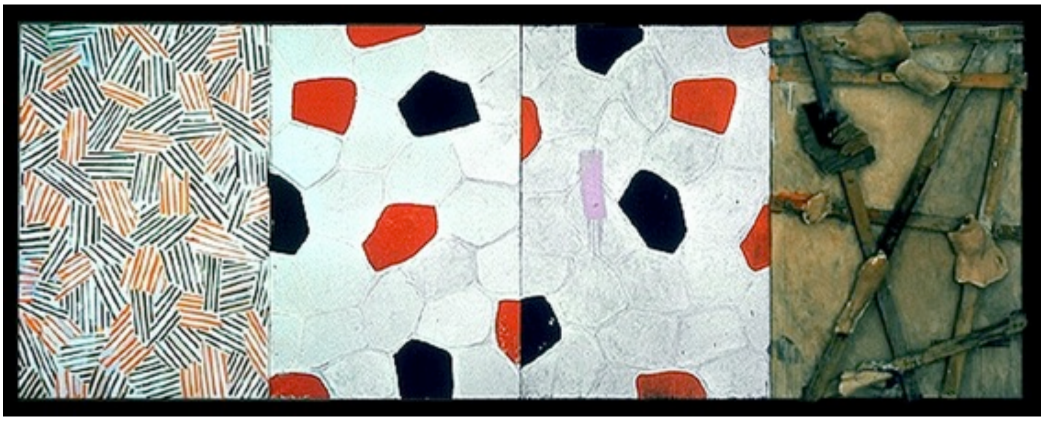


Figure 30. Jasper Johns, *Untitled* (1972).

All the prints are in black and white, and a printed number and a full-page (recto and verso) print precedes each Beckett text. Beckett's short pieces appear in French and English. The prints do not illustrate Beckett's work but freely respond to the text allowing for resonances and confluences between them.

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[61] 'Foirades/Fizzles' was published by the Petersburg Press, London in an edition of 250. It contains five essays are given in French and in Beckett's own English translation. The etchings were printed at the Atelier Crommenlynk, Paris in 1975.

[62] Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) was an Irish avant-garde novelist, playwright, theatre director and poet, considered one of the most influential figures of the 20th century. Beckett's works offers a bleak, tragicomic outlook of human existence, considered one of the last modernist writers, and one of the key figures in the 'Theatre of the Absurd'. In 1969 was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Untitled, 1972 is the painting that generated Johns' thirty-three prints and it is composed by four panels: two of them painted in oil featuring hatchings and flagstones, and the other two painted in wax encaustic and casts. Considering the place of memory in Johns' art, the panels can reflect the place of memory as a form of revision. That is, the two central panels echo each other, one painted in oil, creating a difference through texture. In this work he uses duality again combining paired images, like we have seen in *Corpse and Mirror* (1976) but also in other works such as *Molloy: Two maps I and II* (1965) or *Two Flags* (1973).

Foraides/Fizzles was conceived to be a book, so the artist developed the prints having that format and structure in mind. During the research period, I had the opportunity to study this book in three different contexts: in a special collection and in two exhibitions where it was displayed following two completely different approaches. This applied research contributed significantly to this investigation by providing valuable visual observation and direct research from the original sources.

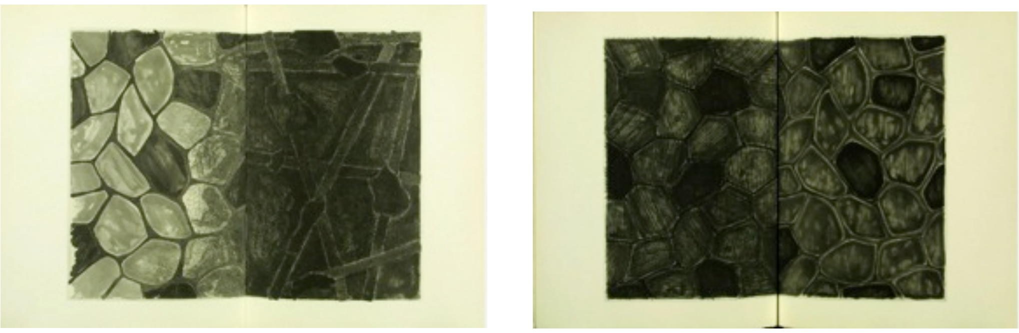

Figure 31. Jasper Johns, *Foraides/Fizzles* (1976).

The first time I saw the artist book was at the British Museum, part of the exhibition *The American Dream: from pop to the present* (2017). The exhibition explored the creativity of the printmaking medium in the context of the most dynamic and turbulent years of US history. Many of American most renowned artists featured including Robert Rauschenberg, Jasper Johns, Ed Ruscha, Andy Warhol, Donald Judd or Louise Bourgeois amongst others. One of the pieces displayed was the artist book *Foraides/Fizzles*. It was surrounded by a number of screen prints (including *Two Maps* 1966 and *Flags I*, 1973) and lithographs (*Flags II*, 1973 and *Two Flags*, 1980), artworks with a clear exploration of doublings and inversions. The book was placed in a vitrine showing one of the double spreads, an etching and aquatint made of words.

The second time, I requested the book from the Special Collection at the National Art Library, London. In this context, I could spend some time and go through all pages. I sensed the quality of prints, paper, binding, covers, weight, scale and experienced the artwork itself in its natural format as a book. The volume is presented in a 330 x 247 mm specially designed linen box. When opened, we can see the book with a soft-white paper cover and the interior of the box covered with one of the crossed-hatch coloured lithographs. The book is printed on thick paper (around 250–300g) and bound in accordion fold-around support leaves.[63] Each print shows the depth of the amount of time and work invested in each image. As mentioned, when working with metal plates, each mark and incision represents a permanent trace incised within the matrix, and depending how long left in acid, creating deeper or lighter the marks. John's prints are full of marks, both light and deep, at so many levels within the thickness of the plate.

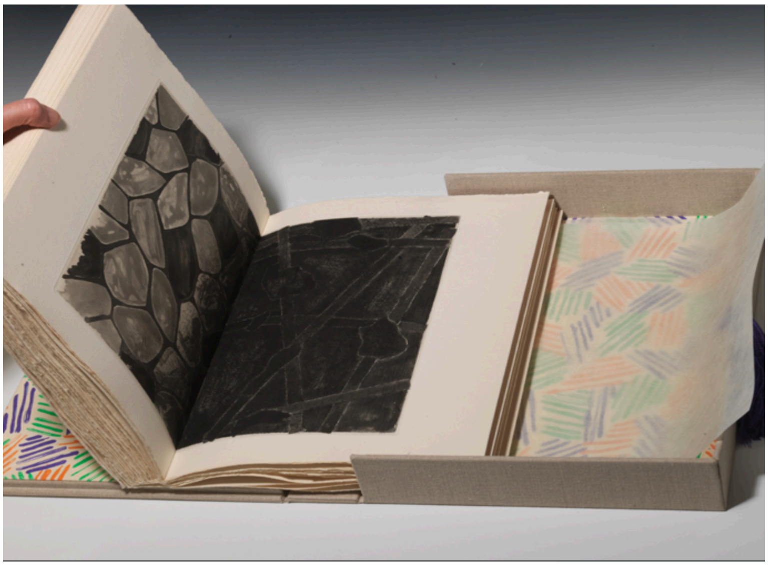

Figure 32. Jasper Johns, *Foraides/Fizzles* (1976).

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[63] This type of binding reflects artist's interest in using each spread of the book. When using intaglio techniques, the metal plates emboss the paper, which can difficult the use of the verso of the paper. This type of binding folds the paper covering the emboss with another page allowing the printing with both sides of the paper.

The printing process and traces of the medium engender spaces, a new dimension that makes every turn of the page seems like a new piece of art. Each page has autonomy and could work independently, but reading them in a narrative way, they acquire a different significance. The forms and traces remain in the next page creating an echo that blends in each new spread. According to Field, one of Jasper Johns' hallmarks is that 'virtually force the viewer to detect various degrees of mirroring, repeating, matching and shifting' (1970, p. 13). The artist uses mirroring and reflection not only as part of a technique or result. He uses it to reflect his own habits and decisions, as part of his own reflection on his work. Johns arranged the structure of the book to be able to use a number of double pages for his prints before introducing the texts. The artist was aware of that space, aware of the movement of the pages and also about the disruption that the fold would cause to the print.

These details are the elements that give structure to the prints. The echo is articulated through the gutter between the pages, and even if the motives are contrasting, the pages still help the image to echo the motives in each other. The third context was at the exhibition *Something Resembling Truth*, at the Royal Academy in London. This exhibition was a comprehensive retrospective of the artist's work, comprising a large number of paintings, sculptures and prints, revealing the eclectic nature of his artwork and the continuous changes and experimentation in his practice. *Foraides/Fizzles* was exhibited alongside other prints and paintings including *The Dutch Wife* and *Corpse and Mirror II* and the lithography *Gray Alphabets* (1968). That context gave a specific background of the type of research (words, newspapers, layering and doubles) that Jasper Johns was undertaking at the time.

The book was displayed page by page alongside a copy of the artist book. Although the sense of narration of the images and text was partly lost with the exhibit, it was quite revealing to be able to see the work simultaneously. Seeing all the prints at once, it was easier to appreciate the variety and richness of the line drawings in the etchings, the intensity of the cross hatch, the dense and subtle aquatints and how powerful is the layering and depth of the marks. That display also shows the way Johns treated individually every double page spread. Each page has different margins, different layout, the plates used had different sizes and

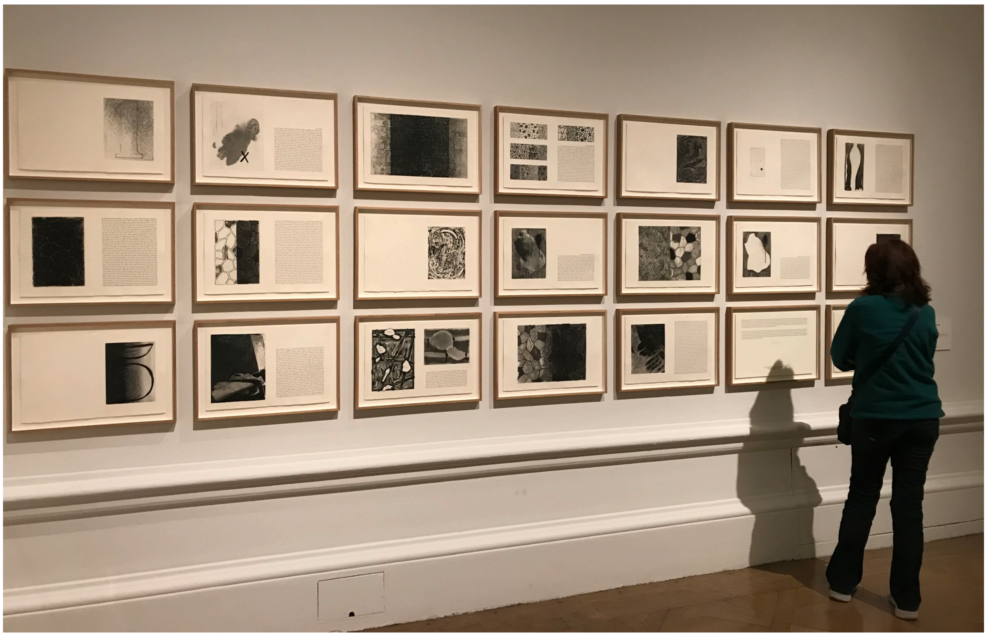

Figure 33. Jasper Johns, *Foraides/Fizzles* (1976). Exhibition views at Royal Academy.

material and there isn't a specific order or rhythm that organises the structure of the book.

The study of this artist book has been very relevant for this research for two different reasons. The first one because it has allowed me to get a better insight of how an artist engages, through print processes, with the notions of echo and mirroring. This understanding helps me to trace certain differences from mirror images, image reversal on the plate and symmetry. Especially analysing how the artwork worked in different contexts and what communicated exhibited differently in both exhibitions. The exhibition at the British Museum showed only one double spread, highlighting that those two pages, in that format, was an independent artwork itself. Displayed as part of the book, it was strengthened the echo effect of the plates as well as the structuring axis of the fold. That way, Johns' ideas and way of working were more projected than the surrounding artworks part of the same exhibition. This idea was reinforced at the exhibition at the Royal Academy, where the opened book revealed the importance of the fold to create the images. The display manifested the echoes and the composition of each page, showing how unique each of them was. Although the physical fold of the page was lost due to the framing, it still showed the intensity of the relationship between pages.

3.3.2 CASE STUDY: ANISH KAPOOR'S *FOLDS*[64]

The London-based artist Anish Kapoor (1954) is one of the most influential artists of our time. Most famous for his public sculptures and installations, his work explores materiality and the notion of infinite space. The artist uses a variety of materials to address absence and void as sites of potential.

Anish Kapoor became known for his organic sculptures and installations using materials such as granite, marble, plaster and pigment (for example in his exhibition *New Sculpture* at the Hayward Gallery London, 1978) and later he started to carve apertures and cavities in stone. It is from the 1990s, the artist started to work and experiment with the reflective surfaces of stainless steel. Kapoor investigations extend from ideas, thoughts and drawings to video works and gigantic sculptures. Perhaps less well known is his body of work in print that continues this process of experimentation. The artist began his involvement with printmaking in the late 1980s working with Crown Point Press[65] in San Francisco and later in the 1990s with the Paragon Press[66].

Anish Kapoor's artwork uses a variety of materials, including concave and convex mirrors whose reflections attract and swallow the viewer. The artist explores voids through 'deep-felt metaphysical polarities of presence and absence, concealment and revelation' (Obrist in Rosenthal, 2013, p. 517). His experimental mirrored or reflective surfaces started in 1998 with *Turning the World Upside Down* and *Turning the World Inside Out,* and then *Double Mirror* (1998), *Sky Mirror* (2006), *Cloud Gate* (2004), his series *S-Curve* and *C-Curve* (2006–2007) are examples that show his interest in exploring ideas such as infinity, inside-outside space and the uncanny of physical presence through reflexion, mirroring. In 2007, the Paragon Press published *Shadow*, the first set of prints using only polymer gravure plates (Lullin and Simm, 2007) where the artist investigates notions of light and materiality within printmaking techniques and reflective effects. However, for this research his recent series *Folds*, is particularly significant for its use of mirroring and reflection and creating a fold.

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[64] This case study was presented at Impact_10 International Printmaking Conference. Santander, September 2018.

[65] Crown Point Press is a printmaking studio founded in 1962 by Kathan Brown that produces and publishes limited editions for established and emerging artists.

[66] The Paragon Press was founded in 1986 by Charles Booth Clibborn to publish and commission printmaking projects by some of the most renewed artists. Paragon works with a number of UK studios, including Coriander, Stoneman Graphics, Senecio Press, Paupers Press and Thumbprint Editions among others, who work closely with the artists and the publisher. The idea is to stimulate a significant work of art in print by the chosen artist.

Although the first set of *Folds* was published in 2014, the starting point and catalyst for this series of prints can be traced back in 1997. *Wounds and Absent Objects* is a video commissioned from Kapoor by Channel 4 in the UK and broadcast in November 1998, which has subsequently been exhibited as a looped video projection lasting seven minutes and thirteen seconds.[67] The film consists of abstract fields of saturated colour that blend from a central circular point, moving through tones of red, brown, green, purple, blue and white and accompanied by an atmospheric, faintly echoing soundtrack. The image slowly creates clearly defined discs of changing tones that fuse and expand to cover the full screen in red or black, then start blending again from the centre, like a black hole that wants to absorb the colour.

The second work related to *Folds* is a portfolio of nine prints with the same title, *Wounds and Absent Objects*, presented in a wooden box published in 1998[68] by Charles Booth-Clibborn under his imprint the Paragon Press, London (2001, p. 76). The prints are four-colour pigment transfers produced from single still frames taken from the video work. Adam Lowe printed them at Permaprint London between 1997–1998. The pigment transfer process used to create the prints has resulted in visual alterations such that the colours in the prints have subtly different hues and levels of saturation to those in the original film. Both the video recording and the prints comprise two of Kapoor's most distinctive artistic departures: the use of pigment and his exploration of light and space through the invocation of the void. That notion of the void has frequently emerged in the artist's drawing and printmaking practice. His portfolio of thirteen etchings *Blackness from Her Womb* 2000, use colour to describe amorphous, organic forms. The drawings in the series *Mass* 1998–2003 resemble the *Wounds and Absent Objects* prints in their bold but softly rendered colour that is used to produce abstract compositions rooted in a central circular form. Kapoor said of his drawings in 2004:

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[67] Video reproduced on the artist's website, http://anishkapoor.com/602/Wounds-and-Absent-Objects.html, accessed 12th September 2015.

[68] This series were viewed and studied from the Tate Britain's Prints and Drawing rooms.

> There is something completely nebulous about them. It's as if they enter a kind of dreamy space' and that 'My real subject is darkness … It's black and dark, in the cave, foreboding, back to the womb, in the tunnel, underground, deeply creative, the Freudian uncanny, the unresolved (Lewison, 2005, p. 183).

This emphasis on darkness and irresolution can be seen in *Wounds and Absent Objects*, in which an apparently indefinite receding tunnel-like centre offers no visual or interpretive clues to the viewer beyond an experience of abstract colour and space.

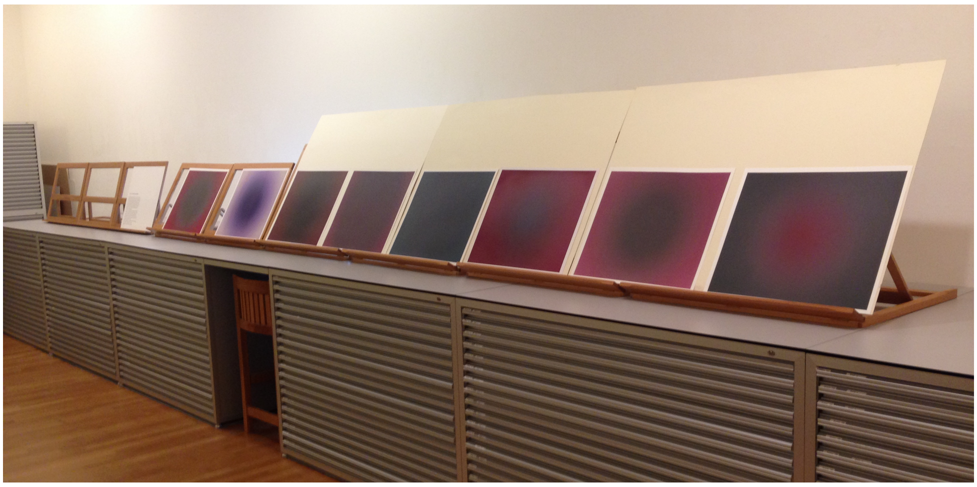

Figure 34. Anish Kapoor, *Wounds and Absent Objects* (1998). Portfolio of prints seen at the Tate Special Collection.

In 2012 the Austrian innovative lighting solutions Zumtobel Group, commissioned 'Brighten the Corners' and Anish Kapoor to produce their 2011–2012 annual report. Normally, this type of corporate document tends to be grey and factual, but Zumtobel decided to every year invite an internationally renowned artist and a design studio to create an innovative volume[69] that utilises no less than ten overlaid neon inks. The designers separated the report into two different volumes: a purely typographical, black and white book with the annual facts, alongside a publication of pure colour (Zumtobel, 2013).

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[69] See full annual report here: http://www.zumtobelgroup.com/Reports%5FZumtobelGroup/annual%5Freports/2012/kunstbuch/, accessed 8 September 2015.

This work contrasts with the portfolio of nine prints of 1998 *Wounds and Absent Objects* where the artist chose the dimmest still frames to invocate absence and void. The result was a sequence of intense, intriguing, absorbing yet quite opaque and dull works. With the annual report, Kapoor explores a completely different palette to investigate chromatic contrast and the idea of darkness and void from a different angle. According to Jeremy Lewison, Kapoor tends to reject narrative elements in order to stimulate kinaesthetic experiences, but in this case, there is a clear correspondence between the original video work and the book. The rhythm of the 'silent volume' is obviously faster than the video, changing from one tone to another more drastically. The colours are much brighter and rich, exploring fluorescent and glowing tonalities that are systematically organized creating a cyclical structure. The intensity of the colours grows gradually from the white page, using the spine of the book to spread hued circles, from the very pale tones to intense, to the vibrant and colourful.

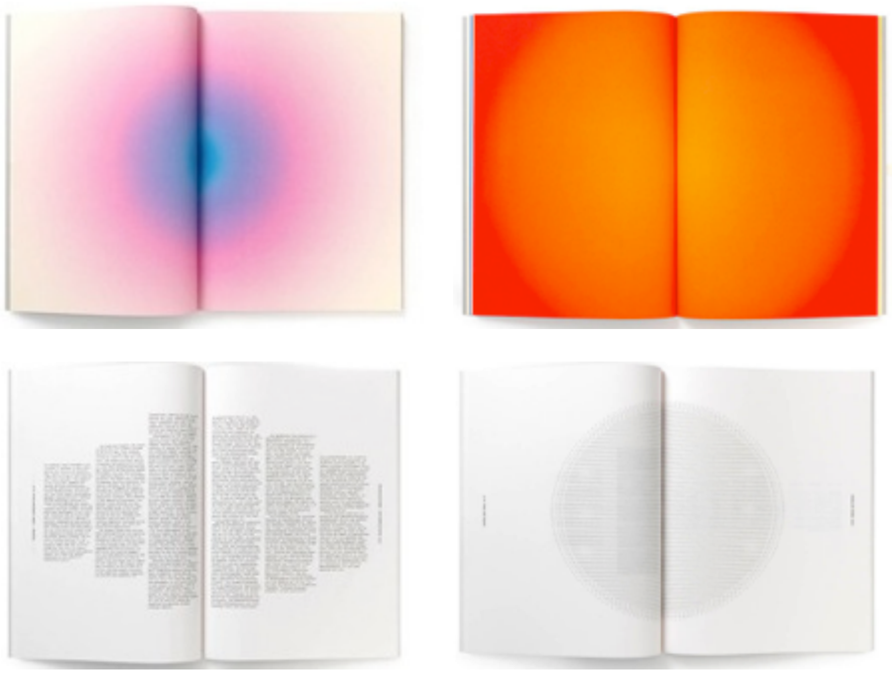


Figure 35. Zumtobel Annual Report, Volume I and II. Anish Kapoor (2012).

The book format uncovers a dynamic relationship between the material embodiment of the page and its mattering, and furthermore proposes a way in which to investigate the complex expression of the page which is constituted of both form and content.

It was this notion that interested the artist, he was attracted by the idea that the spine of the book was a wound, a void or a 'primary space' that has the tendency to absorb and captivate the viewer. The shadows, changing light and darkness produced by the folded pages dividing the image in two symmetrical pages, certainly suggest a fall into what Jeremy Lewison calls the black hole. This idea was completed in 2014, when The Paragon Press published the first set of *Folds*: *Fold I, Fold II, Fold III* and *Fold IV*.

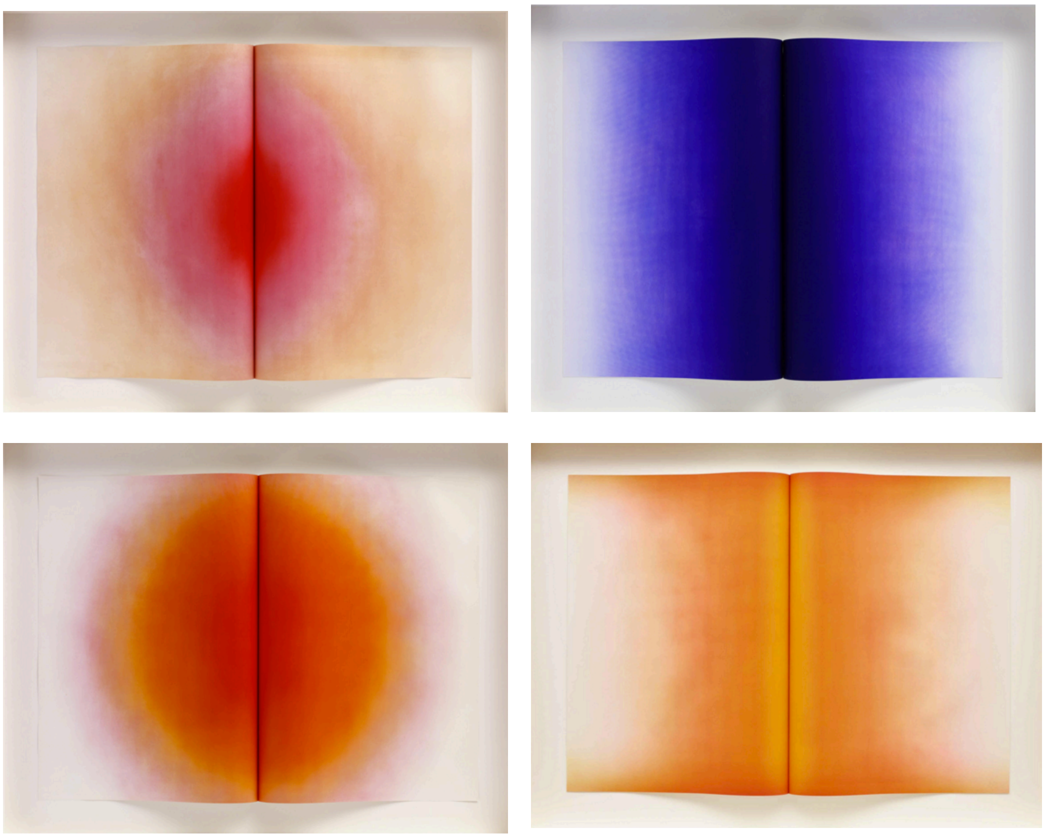


Figure 36. Anish Kapoor, *Fold I, Fold II and Fold III* (2014).

This recent series of works consist of identical two-sheet prints mounted symmetrically. Each sheet measures 96.5 x 72.5 cm, and the final frame size is 157 x 119.8 x 12.8 cm. This is the first time that the artist plays with both the print and the paper itself to create a certain effect and situate the work in a liminal space between print, book and sculpture.

Anish Kapoor often uses mirrors and reflections in his sculptures to explore the sublime and the space. In *Folds*, the artist uses a cylindrical symmetry for *Fold I* and *Fold II*, imitating the trunks of the trees. The trunk grows an additional ring each year, and when this is cut through, perpendicular to its axis, we can see these annual rings. A mirror symmetry is used for *Fold III*, a bilateral balance that occurs when two halves of a whole are each other's mirror images, in this case, the vertical cut as an axis to echo the pages. One page reflects the other, printed from the same plates; they would not make sense without each other. Each page feeds and grows off the each other; the work forms itself.

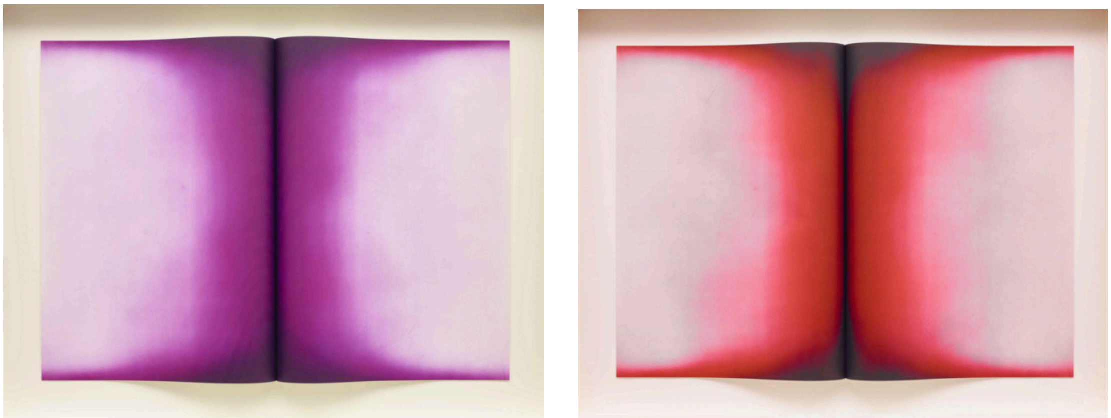
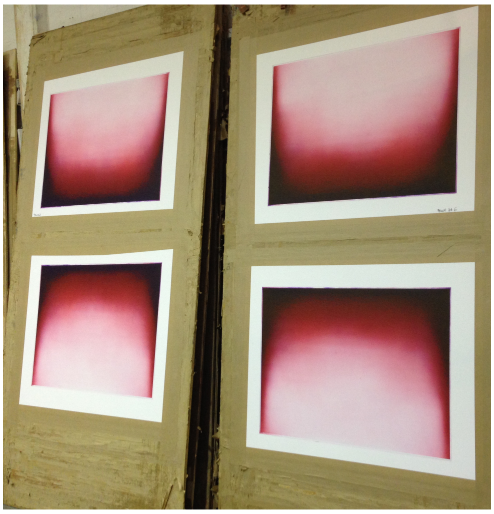


Figure 37. *Fold V, Fold VI*, Anish Kapoor (2016).

The artist enlarges the pages distancing the 'standard scale' of a book in order to use a more abstract format. They are metaphorical artefacts that function as an echo of the world. However, the size of Kapoor's works is always in relation to the human figure. He uses the space of these big pages to make us to discover and experience the origin and the wound through the language of the void. But using a fold, a double-page spread, he also incorporates the duality and the echo, the symmetry and the reflection, elements that set the parameters for our engagement with ideas.

Kapoor uses the colour not only to grab our attention, but also as a key element to bring together the context, the idea and the format. The real allure of each page is what happens as the pigment dissipates both towards the centre and towards the corners of the double spread. The intensity of the image grows as the material thins to bright white, and after registering the spine at the centre; the viewer is seduced back to the paper by the pigment. In the past, the artist has described the colour as material as opposed to surface (Celant, 1996, p. 181) therefore, particularly in these prints that are in the border of the two dimensions, he makes us experience the symbolic power of colour as essence and material in an almost sculptural way. Such properties in Kapoor's work have led to comparisons with that of abstract expressionist artist Barnett Newman (1905–1970), whose colour field paintings present an enveloping surface of expansive colour that aims to draw viewers into



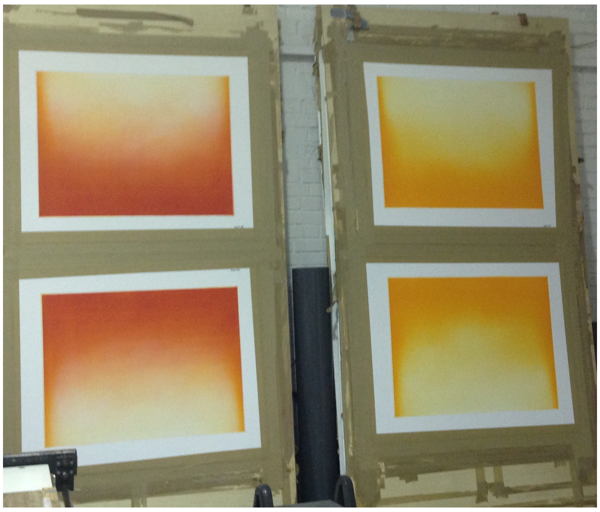


Figure 38 (above). Colour tests: prints drying on boards. Thumbprint Editions. London 2015
Figure 39 (under). Mounted proofs, Thumbprint Editions. London 2015

an experience of the sublime. Particularly, with the portfolio of lithography *Eighteen Cantos* (1964), Newman experimented with the relationship between the imprint and the paper, and the experience of the colour and contrast. Jeremy Lewison has extended this discussion to Kapoor's works on paper, observing that these 'can be inhabited in a phenomenological sense … At eye level the work becomes engulfing, enveloping, sculptural; it is a kinaesthetic rather than a cognitive experience' (Lewison 2005, p. 185).

In the majority of Kapoor's prints, the surface becomes one of the most interesting aspects because the colours are disrupted, agitated by the *moiré*: a visual interference pattern created when two identical layers of, for example, dots or grids, which are not perfectly overlaid. That is, when the flat surfaces, in this case the plates, are overlaid while rotated a small amount from one another. Normally, that effect is associated with mass printing mistake rather than a desirable result, but in this case, it is the outcome of many experiments, tests and years of engagement with the process. It has also become the key element that connects his prints with the tangible tension intrinsic in his sculptures.

Anish Kapoor started to develop a printmaking practice in the 1990s, invited by Charles Booth-Clibborn to create a project in the form of a portfolio of prints. Since then, he always worked with Peter Kosowicz at Thumbprint Editions in

London realising numerous projects.[70] At the beginning of their collaboration, the artist used to work applying subtle but vibrant spit-bites on to copper plates, as we can see in the series *15 Etchings* (1996) or *History* (created between 1996–1998[71] but published in 2007). But since 2005 Peter Kosowicz started to experiment with photopolymer plates. First combining both copper and polymer plates but later only polymer, when the printer described for me (see appendix 4) the happy accident that led them to start working with the moiré pattern and their subsequent re-creation of it.

Kapoor started with the idea of achieving a deep coloration, consequently Kosowicz first generated films of graded tonal forms using Illustrator (resulting 250 lpi half-tone screens) and then printing two polymer gravure plates using different colours on top of each other.[72] Pleased with the quality, they decided to use it and experiment with it. The first work created with moiré was *Shadow I*, where intentionally tweaking the registration, Kosowicz was able to vary and strengthen the effect in each of the nine prints of the set.

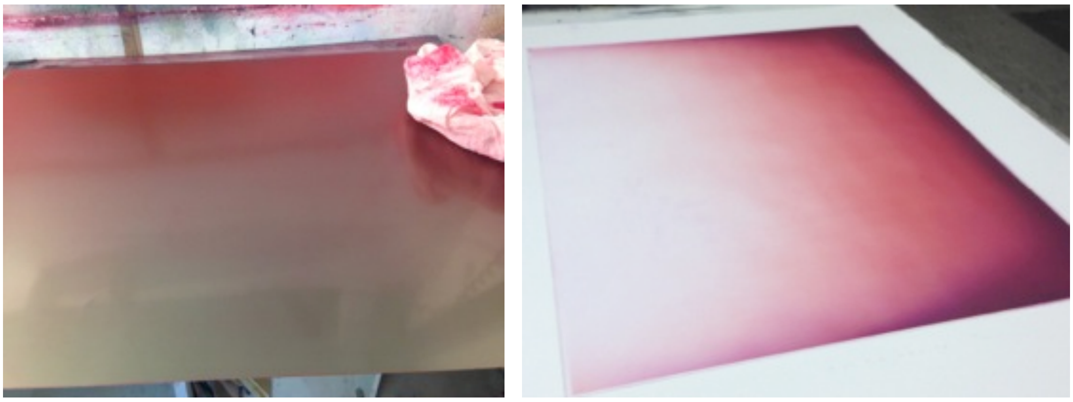


Figure 40. Process of printing: photopolymer plate and print, Thumbprint Editions, London (2015).

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[70] See Pete Kosowizc interview in Appendix 3.

[71] See Appendix 2 to see studio material including working proofs, printer´s sheets and more material to understand how Anish Kapoor developed his printmaking practice.

[72] The moiré was created by chance; only because the paper required to print these images needs to be very wet, so pushed through the press at really high pressure, stretches. This effect would be impossible to create with any another technique, because two plates with exactly the same pattern, printed correctly, would only superpose the colours on top of each other and would not create any pattern.

Folds are created using that effect, but in a very subtle and refined way. The films are the finest used at Thumbprint (300 lpi half-tone screens), so the dots are completely imperceptible on the plate.[73]

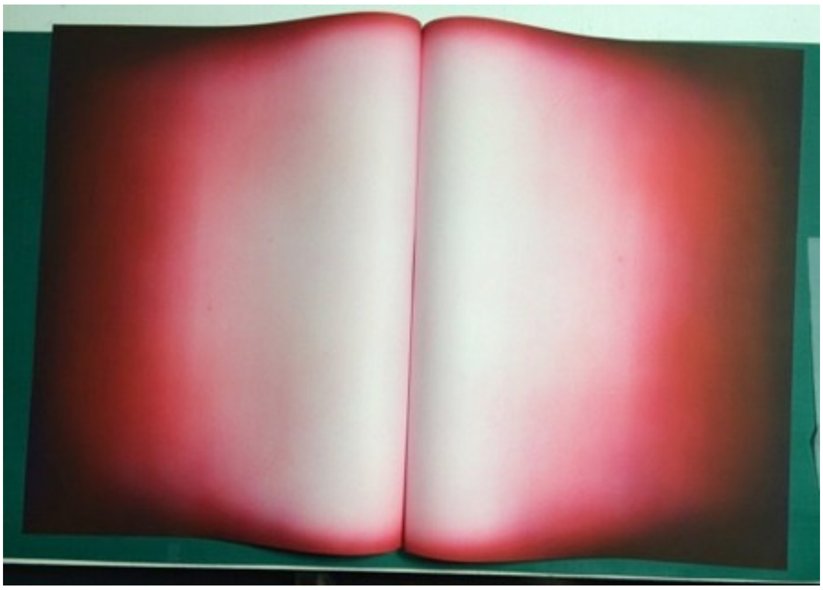

Figure 41. Proofing, composition final image. Thumbprint Editions, London (2015).

The results, with the combination of colours, plates and fine moiré are extraordinary. His work has often been described in terms of alchemy, and these prints are evidence of that. In Kapoor's images where darkness encroaches on light there is a sense of the process of dying, and in this particular work, it looks like the spine, the heart of the book, spreads its stain.

When I interviewed Peter Kosowizc (Appendix 4), he showed me Kapoor's proofs and works, as well as explaining the preparation of files and plates. One of the many peculiarities of the process is the way the files, and therefore the images, are constructed. Taking the project *Shadows* (2007) as example (Appendix 5), we can see that a blend divides the image is in two parts creating a mirrored image. According to Kosowizc, the image was created drawing only one blend and duplicating it. He applied that procedure to many other series, such as *Shadow III* (2009), *Horizon Shadow* (2010) and even in works such as *Shadow V and V* (2011–12) and *Green Shadow* (2011) where the image doesn't look mirrored. That image creation made of duplicated shapes configures the structure of the prints, generating balance and connecting form and content. Sometimes the image is not only made of one duplication, but the motive is replicated and then the whole structure is doubled again, like in *Blue Shadow* (2013) and then in *Folds* (2014). That is, the replica (one of the pillars of the medium) makes the print, that then is replicated to make the edition.

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[73] Due to my job at Thumbprint Editions, I was involved with the proofing and printing this project from 2014–2017. From a printer's point of view, I would like to note that the fine dot of these prints affects the process of printing, where aspects such as the humidity of the paper, the viscosity of the ink, the wiping of the plate or the pressure of the press and the stretching affect the effects of the moiré and therefore the shape of the image.

This way of using mirroring not only represents an inventive way of operating with polymer plates in printmaking by creating new effects and textures, but also a creative approach to reflection in art. Kapoor's prints engage with the medium in an intimate way, understanding its process, materials and qualities and pushing its boundaries further in every new project. With *Folds*, the artist pushed the confines again by creating a print with an opening that connects the medium with the notion of double page. Through the fold and evoking the symbolism associated to the book, he invites the reader to engage with the page. This engagement is intuitive, archaic, appealing to the very foundations of the double page: paper, fold, spine, ink, time.

3.4 ECHOS BETWEEN PAGES

In previous sections I have reflected on the notion of mirroring associated to perception and in particular I analysed its function associated to the book page. However, there is another element that is related to mirroring but with different particularities: the echo.

What is the echo? Echo normally refers to a when a sound reflects off of a surface and travels back to our ears (Brain, 2015), producing a distinct repetition of the original sound. For example, when we shout in the mountains, the echoed sound is different by reason of distance as it travels after the original voice has ceased. That means that both time and variation play important roles into the construction of echo.

Echo also refers to repetition and mimicking of a certain passage, usually with less force and volume than the original material. For example, in music echo is used to build up motifs and they are repeated in different moments of the piece by different instruments and intensities to refer and make the theme reappear. In mythology, Echo is related to the myth of Narcissus as I mentioned at the beginning of the chapter (3.1), as she was a nymph who always repeats the last words of the phrases she heard. The nymph because of her unreturned love for Narcissus, pines away until she becomes just a voice (Lomas, 2011).

Therefore, it is important to point out that echo is different than mirroring and reflection. Echo represents distance, time, repetition. In the event of a book, pages mirror each other, but it is the content that echo through the pages. The words, the images, the prints that conform the substance of every page vanish when readers turn each sheet; how does that content remain echoing in time?

In the context of the double spread, if we go back to the principles of perception of the book established in Chapter 1, I concluded that an opened book does transfer the perception of mirroring by creating a visual disruption. That is, taking the iconic abstraction of the double page: the assumption that a double page originates in the book and establishing that way a relationship of absence between the book and the double page. This visual disruption extends to the perception of echo too. As readers, we assume that the double page is part of the book, and this association creates an abstract connection between the absence (in the case, the rest of the book) and the actual object (the double page). That means that this association still brings connotations and 'presence' of the rest of the book, still brings content and matter from the rest of the pages. This works the same way when we read a book, the words or the images we read in one page, still resonate in our heads when we turn the page. There is an echo that expands its trace in time.

3.4.1 REBECCA SALTER: ECHOS FROM THE LANDSCAPE

Rebecca Salter is a British artist whose work includes in painting and printmaking. After finishing her studies in Bristol, she spent six years in Japan. While living in Kyoto she studied traditional Japanese woodblock printing, technique and process, which has greatly influenced her approach to art.

Her intricate, laboriously constructed and multi-layered two-dimensional abstract works remain on the boundaries between painting, drawing and printmaking. Her subtle language fashions delicate structures creating arrangements that hold an internal arrangement of grids, hatches, blends and repetitive motifs that create thoughtful works. Both her paintings and prints are densely and meticulously worked over many hours. The artist usually starts using pronounced colours and explicit forms to end by covering completely the surfaces with rhythmic marks and patterns. The surface of her works is dense but ethereal and fresh at the same time.

Drawing is an important aspect of her practice and process of work. In an interview for the Royal Academy, she affirms: ‘the act of drawing is at the heart of everything I do. It is the most intimate of processes, encouraging you to explore and take risks and at its best reveals both the hand and mind of the artist to the viewer’ (Salter in McKenzie, 2017). This approach is present in her works inviting the reader to spend time and being active in the way they are looking. Her repetitive strokes and mark-making drawings evoke rhythms, succession and natural sequences. Salter’s mark-making become especially interesting in her prints. The texture of the wood she uses layers with her incisions and marks, generating a subtle coarseness that then she enhances with more layers of colour.

The quality of her woodcuts relies on the richness of the surface of the print and her engagement with the possibilities and qualities of the medium.

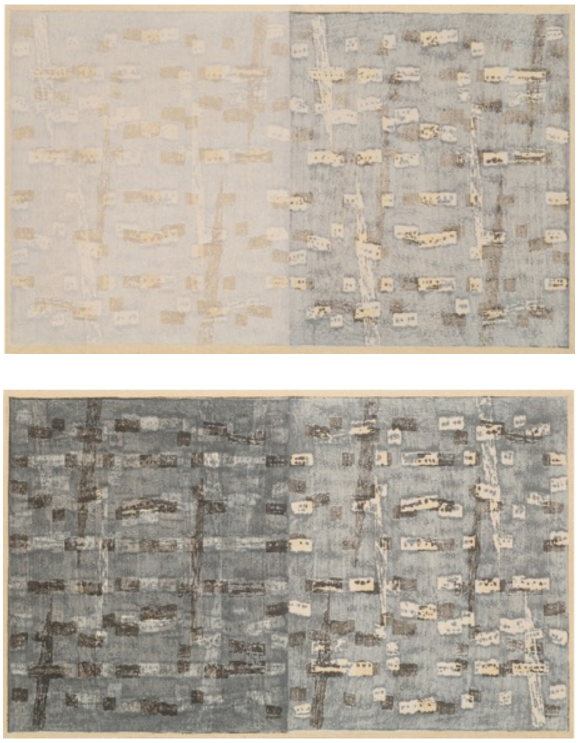
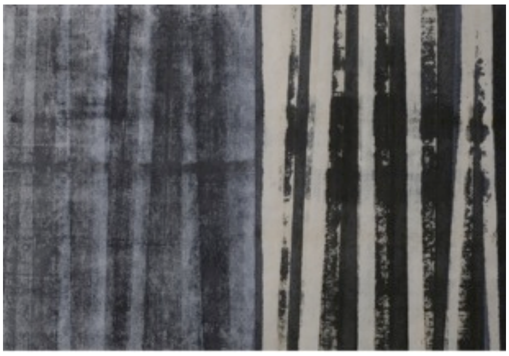


Figure 42 and 43. *Weft 1 and 2,* Rebecca Salter (2015).

Salter's works are based on layering marks, dashes and washes that then worked on, removed, covered, building up residues of light, tone and line which fuse and blend into lines. Her work is informed by the observation of landscapes and nature. It is in the combination of her observation with her artistic language that echo is evoked. Salter doesn't only repeat marks, but she alters them and creates a temporal universe within her prints. Layering plates, using transparency and opacity and playing with the wood grain, she partly covers incisions by leaving untouched shapes. Creating traces, she builds a past, a history with its accidents in the print. This way, traces echo marks, and the artwork suggests time and distance. It her works, the artist often divides the image in two halves, either vertically such as in the series *Weft* or horizontally, like in *Inversion II*. This division also enhance and reinforce the idea of echo and temporality as creates two different spaces.



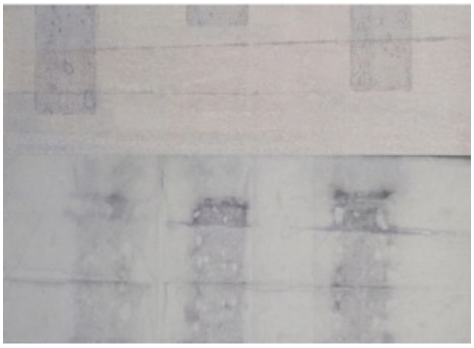


Figure 44 (left). *Inversion II*. Rebecca Salter (2013).
Figure 45 (right). *Shade Lines 8.* Rebecca Salter (2010).

The series *Weft* (2015) is particularly interesting to study Salter's use of echo. The two parts of the diptychs are not in symmetry as we observed in Jasper Johns' works too, but they still have a strong connection between them. Can we still talk about mirroring? She has probably used the same plates on both parts of the diptych but changed the order, colours and transparency. The fact that she uses and re-uses the same plates to create just one print means that the artist is opening and exhausting the possibilities of the matrix, moreover, it shows her intention to evocate echo through the printing process.

A similar way is used to create the series *Skies* (2008) and *Shade Lines 8 and 9* (2010). They are also woodblocks printed on Japanese paper. The forms and drawings continue from one side to the other generating a graphic blend. The mark making changes from one side to the other but continuing the drawn lines. In these works, Salter creates patterns and plays with the depth and opacity of the two half of the print. The use of shine-collé incorporates the sense of verticality by suggesting the notion of page.

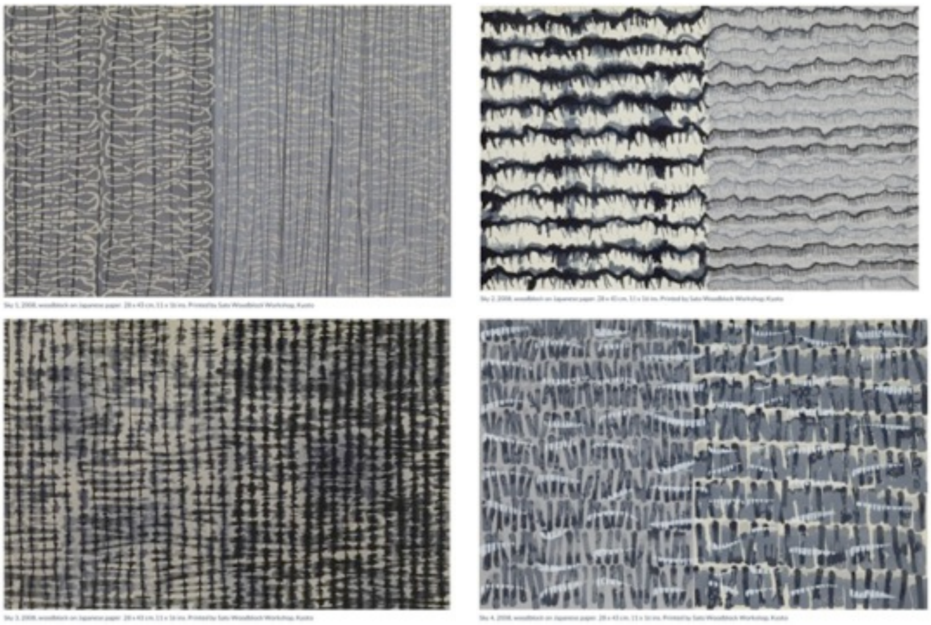


Figure 46. *Skyes*, Rebecca Salter (2009).

All these works are created and inspired under an active and thorough observation of landscape and nature that influenced the artist's use of echoing and mark-making. Through gestures, treatment of materials and presentation of the prints, Rebecca Salter creates artworks that become liminal spaces between prints and book pages. Her works expand by not only echoing elements from the nature, but also by acquiring book qualities such as duality, temporality and echo. In different ways, artists such as Gerhard Richter and Gary Colclough also expand their practice by opening up a new dimension that leaves space to combine double page connotations with space installations.

3.4.2 WHEN A MIRROR ECHOES AN IMAGE

We have seen how a mirror image is constructed, how it works as a whole and how the viewer reads it. However, there are concepts intimately linked to mirroring, for example, the idea of echo. In my opinion, the difference between mirroring and echo lies on the inclusion of time. That is, the echo is the repetition of sound produced by the reflection of sound waves, so the echo of a form suggests a different order of relations between two systems. For example, in Jasper Johns' paintings, the use of symmetry creates mirror images and evokes notions of dematerialisation, replica and the self. However, the artist often uses pieces of newspaper in the background that aligned, echoing the hatchings. The newspaper, through gesture of the traces, imitates the original form of the hatchings.

The echo is a very evocative and allusive figure that evokes mythology and fables, like the flute of Pan, condemned repeating the last phrases of others. So, it has double connotations: on the one hand, echo is a repetition of a voice, but on the other, it's a pure and affirming voice that interpret, distorts and return. In both implications the consideration of time is crucial. The original source has a stronger presence and authenticity; the figurative echo of allusion arises from the later.

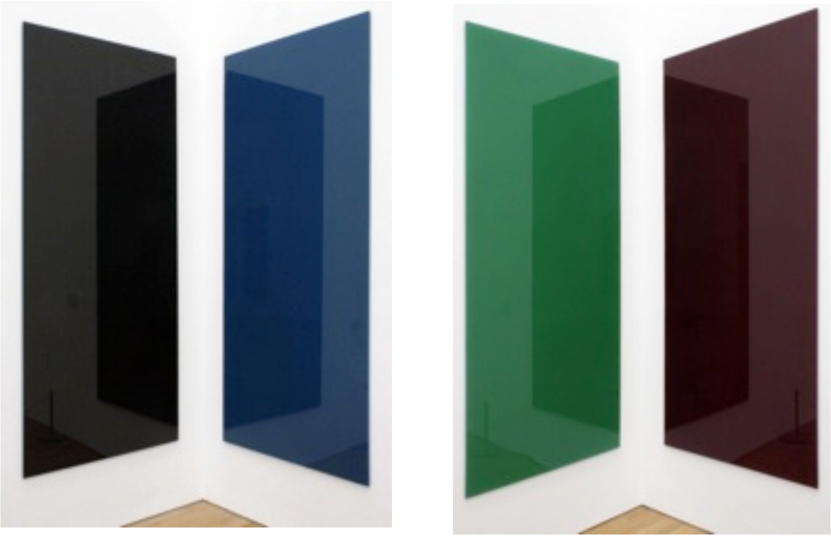


Figure 47. *Corner Mirrors,* Gerhard Richter (1991). Colour-coated glass.

There is a particular artist that completed a series of works that are in between these ideas: mirrors and echoes. The German artist Gerhard Richter (1932) is known for his abstract paintings, photographs and glass pieces. In his *Writings*, Richter explains how his work explores illusionistic space creating a tension and interference between the natural, the physical and the material of painting (Richter et al., 2009). To alter reality, he has a method of fusing colour and glass in a single sheet, forming unruffled expanses of grey and blood-red which reveal a profound disquiet. In his mirror works, the artist uses intense colours to cover the glass, which severely curtail its reflective properties increasing the ambivalence and creating the notion of incompleteness. Manipulating the reflection of the glass, the viewer is forced to admit that our vision has become partial and unable to discern appearances and shadows. Richter often frames his works in dark wood to reinforce their connection with traditional mirrors. However, this association reinforces also the frustration involved in finding their natural powers of reflection.

Of particularly of interest for this research is his *Corner Mirrors* (1991), two mirror pictures on adjoining walls so that they simply reflect each other's cloudiness. Changing the colour of the glass, the artist creates a distance, and even if the images are reflected in real time, evoking a different time and space. The display of the glasses in a corner not only reflects the mirror in one and the other, but also multiplies the image of the viewer when they are located in between. So, the installation is a mirror effect with a suggestion of echo.

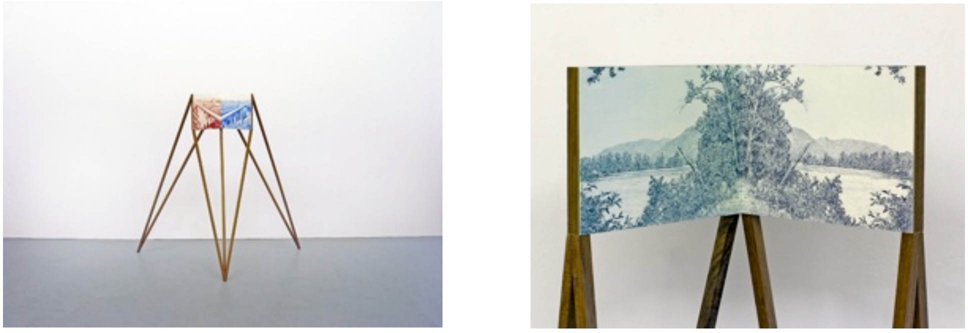


Figure 48 (left). *Vanishing Point*, Gary Colclough (2010).
Figure 49 (right). *Still Being Still*. Gary Colclough (2013).

All Richter's works are concerned with looking at reality, whether reproduced in paint, whether in the form of paint itself (abstract) or whether reflected or looked at through a frame, but his glass works have a cool, conceptual quality that sets them apart. Richter's *Corner Mirrors* have pigment attached to their backs, so that the reality reflected in them is coloured and, because mirrors reflect each other, their colour is optically mixed.

In a different way but conceptually similar, British artist Gary Colclough (1977) also intends to disrupt reality through his combinations of drawings with sculptures. With delicate pencil drawings Colclough frames small fragments of forests, lakes and natural spaces and then he frames and suspends them by meticulously constructed sculptural structures, which not only support but complement them. His drawings capture partial landscapes, images that invite to immerse into that scene from a different perspective. The artist often uses symmetry and repetition in his work to construct the pictorial space of his landscapes. Changing the colour or the texture of one of the half, he creates multiple temporalities of the same space.

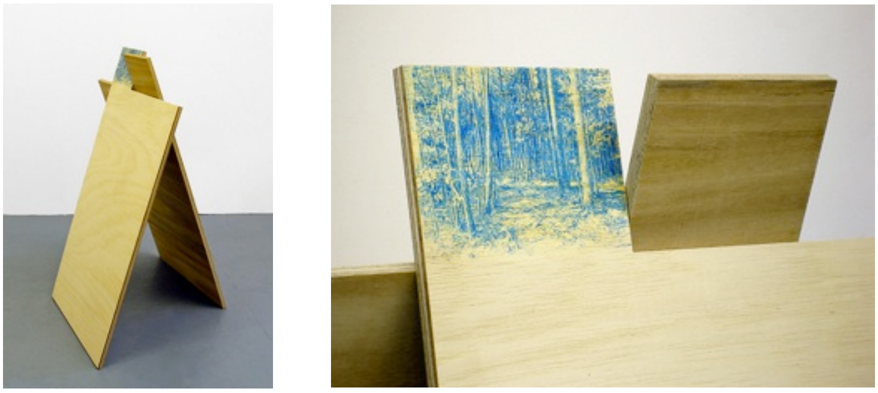


Figure 50. *Seeing the Wood in the Trees,* Gary Colclough (2010).

The potential readings of the drawings are further complicated by their interaction with sculptural supports. Carefully composed from rosewood and teak hardwoods that are, according to the artist, woods commonly associated with furniture, the structures integrate a subtle utility with their own aesthetic logic. These architectures integrate their own reading and rhythm and reinforce the dual quality of the drawings. They compose a constellation of symbols that we no longer know how to read. This effect is seen for example in his exhibitions *Other Worldly* (2014) and particularly in *Material Symmetry* (2015–2016), where objects extend and enhance the duality of the drawings.

Reynolds, Johns, Kapoor and Richter use mirroring as a resource to add meaning and special connotations to their work. Through different uses of echo and mirroring, the artists enhance the idea of duality by activating imaginary actions to awake references in viewer's perception and memories.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS OF ARTWORKS

4.1 FOLDING THE PAGE

Since my early works, my art practice has had an interest in developing an abstract, symbolic and poetic artistic language. Due to my interest in poetry, sequence and narration, I started to experiment with words, books and the printed image. This interest was cultivated during my MA in Book Arts (2012–2013), where I had the opportunity to study and reflect on the notion of the book and to investigate and test out within my own practice where the boundaries of the book were and push the limits of its perception.

The use of printmaking within my work has an important impact in the way I develop visual and conceptual ideas. This medium is at the centre of my practice, through which I explore its particularities through the long processes, the indirect way of working, the reversal and the direct contact with the materials. Early works such as *Wordscape* (2013) and *Rewriting Verses* (2013) started to consider the relationship between the printed image and the printed page (see Appendix 4). Through the experimentation with the possibilities of traditional techniques such as aquatint and etching, I started to develop a visual language that tried to question the parameters not only of the process of printing itself but also of the elements of the page. Artworks that would start unmasking the conventions of the perceptual reading of images by proposing something different, a new dialogue with the form of the page.

This analysis generated a profound shift in the way I approach and express visual ideas. The questioning of the parameters between single and double page established a background and constituted the preliminary material to start an enquiry on the perception of the double page.

The initial project for this thesis emerged from the observation and analysis of a number of my own artworks (included in Appendix 5) and the intent of establishing connections with other movements, schools of thought and artworks. The practice also generated the initial questions that helped me to trace a methodology and a line of work. One of these questions that then led the investigation, was why is the page, and essentially the double page, such a powerful symbol? What are the elements, the particularities that make us read a 'page' and not a sheet of paper? Or what are the features that bring and add specific connotations to the work determining a certain experience?

To answer these questions, I have developed an important part of the investigation in the workshop and in different exhibition spaces. My own practice has become the platform not only to experiment and to test ideas, but to actually research actively. In this chapter my aim is to analyse the practical side of this research, how the investigation has developed through tests, prints, drawings, plans, installations, exhibitions, responses and feedback. The process of work has brought new ideas, hypothesis and suggested different points of view to explore visually and to reflect theoretically.

I have tried to use processes and materials to embody meaning and connotations to the works through certain qualities, finishings and textures. I will discuss a number of artworks that I have created during the research period (2014–2018) to think visually and to propose new questions, which have resulted and developed in further research and experiments. Each project has been crucial to opening up new approaches and directing the research. For example, the notion of fold has emerged as a significant concept and visual element, and this has been given increasing attention within the practical work.

The notion of site-specificity has also arisen within practice and experimentation but especially through the residencies and experimentation in the exhibition space. Trying and taking risks in the display of the pieces and in the different opportunities I had to show my work has allowed me to give a different context for my artworks. The type of work has been changing over the research period and it has been partly because I have been increasingly interested in including a dialogue between the work and the space.

I have learnt from project to project to analyse my own progression and methods of decision-making. The practice component has become gradually more important, particularly to generate the ideas to develop Chapters 2, 3 and 5. Without projects such as *Constellations* or *Against Syntax*, I couldn't have positioned an argument about the perceptual reading of the image, or without *Red*, and the exercise of the *controestampa*, I wouldn't have been aware of the potentials and importance of studying mirroring and reflection. Testing and being in touch with the materials have helped me to be more sensitive and to be able to identify suggestions and the meaning that emerges from the engagement with the visual, spatial, material and connotative properties of the artworks.

The projects are organised in chronological order, showing images of the process, experimentation and the final results. I will begin with a short description of each series of artworks to explain the nature of each project. Then, I will include a detailed explanation of the process of working and decision-making to finish with a conclusion evaluating the results and outcomes.

4.2 ARTWORKS #1

Constellations (2014)

Series of etchings, drawing and projected laser cut pages. Variable dimensions.

Artwork outputs from 2014–2018

2014 Group exhibitions:

- *Trazas*, Centre de Cultura Contemporània del Carme of València, curated by Joan Peiró. Valencia, 15 July–12 October 2014.

Catalogue:

Perió, J.B. and Pérez, I. (2015). *Trazas*. Valencia: Consorci de Museus Generalitat Valenciana.

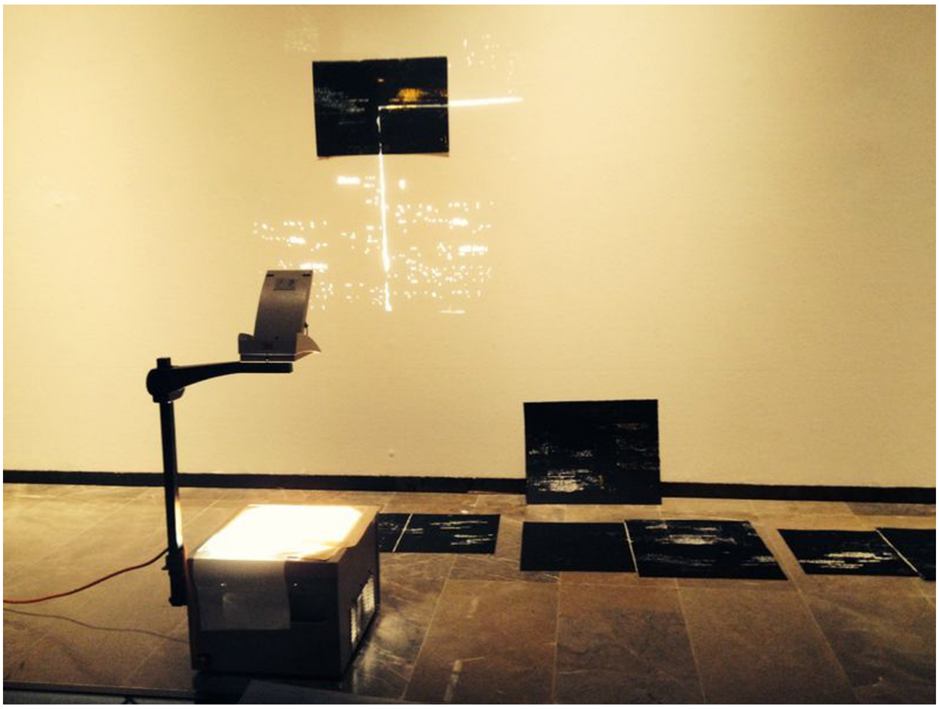
Reviews:

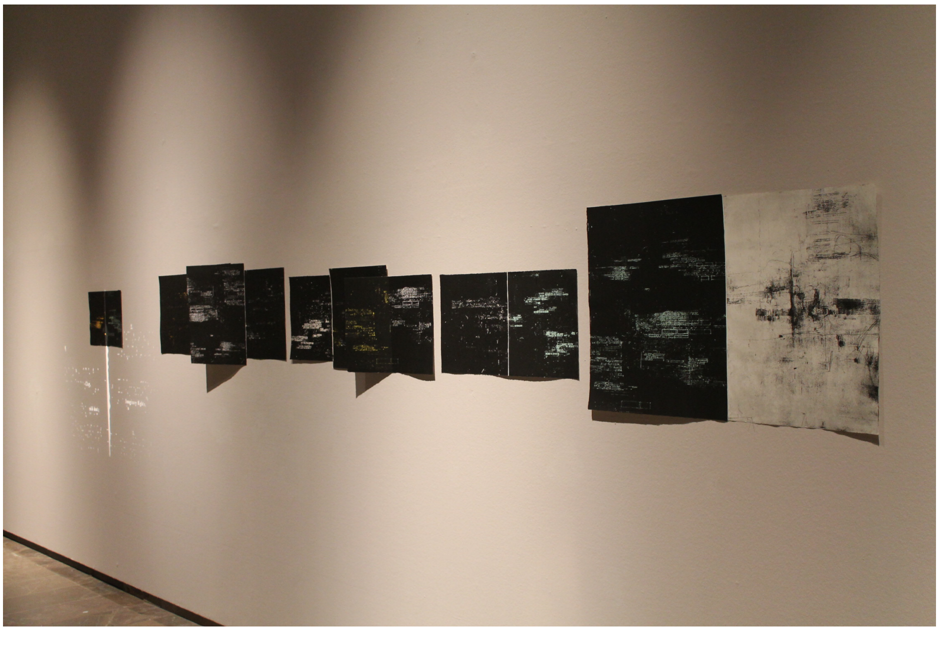
https://elpais.com/ccaa/2014/07/11/valencia/1405103200_232271.html

https://www.laventanadelarte.es/exposiciones/centro-del-carmen/comunidad-valenciana/valencia/trazas/765

2016 Solo exhibition:

- Swab Barcelona Art Fair. Pavellón Italiano (Z.6). Feria Barcelona.





AGV 3. *Constellations*. Work in progress during installation.
AGV 4. *Constellations*. Final installation view and detail. Centre del Carme, València.

In January 2014 I was invited by J.B. Peiró[74] to produce some new work for an exhibition he was curating at the Centre del Carme of València. The title of the show was *Trazas* (traces), and the exhibition would include a selection of eight artists whose practice was positioned or interested in exploring the vestiges of traces, records or marks. According to Peiró's proposition, 'printmaking is associated with impurity, repetition and hybridisation' (Peiró, 2014, p. 7). He considers that the nature of printmaking is dual and is clearly marked by its first status as a trace, record of its previous reality and it is precisely this fact that enables its other natural condition: reproducibility.

Process of work

My first idea to respond to the proposed area of enquiry was to create a new series of work based on primary associations of the printed image, that is: the exploration of the duality of the double spread, questioning the role of the written word, considering the visual aspect and expression of the text but being in the 'in between', the subtle margins of the visible/legible. Inspired by the variable readings of Mallarmé's *Constellations* and Broodthaers' interpretation my intention for this project was to reflect on this from the materiality of the page and the print, referring to the original terminology of the word 'writing'.

AGV 5. Platemaking process. Plates ready to be drawn.

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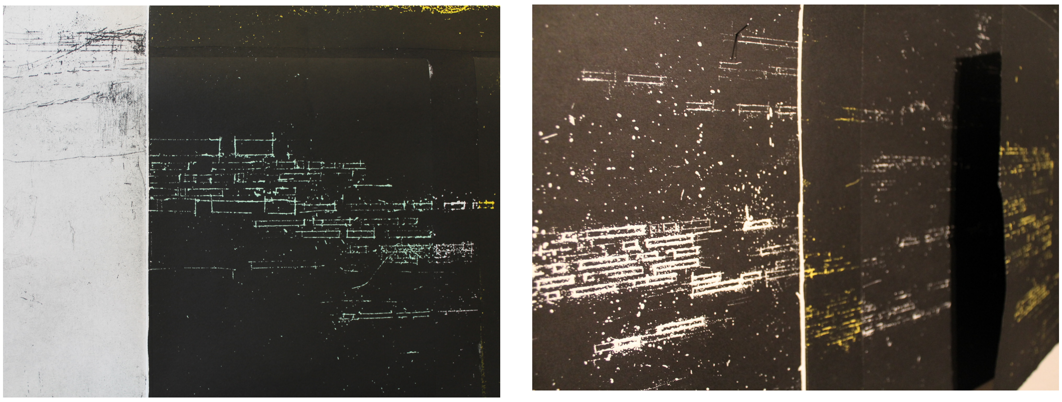
[74] Joan Bautisa Peiró is a curator and Professor in Fine Arts at the Polithercnic University of Valencia (Spain).

Normally, when I work in my print studio, I like to work with many plates at the same time. I prepare[75] as many metal plates I can so I feel free to be spontaneous and experiment. Working this way, I can develop thoughts and try effects instantly without having to stop the process by having to prepare more plates ready to draw. In this case, I kept a set of six steel plates of different sizes forming three pairs. My sequence of marks explored the space, interacting across the plates, creating connections and dialogues on the edges of the metal surface.



AGV 6 and 7. Details of the tests introducing colour using shine-collé paper. In the images above, a close up of the incisions printed in negative, rolling over the ink on the surface of the plate.

I made different types of incisions[76] on the plates using a drypoint tool and two roulettes to make particular marks. I immersed the plates in nitric acid at least three times, creating different intensities of depth and relief in the metal. The idea was to generate different levels and thicknesses in lines and marks to produce a wavy and intermittent effect, like a song or a voice that emerges from the silence and reflects rhythms and images. Some of the marks are very intense and present, others being more difficult to be perceived.

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[75] By 'prepare' I mean to cut, sand, polish, degrease and varnish a metal plate, so they are ready to be drawn or taken into action.

[76] I made incisions using the etching technique. Etching is one of the oldest and most traditional methods of producing intaglio type prints. As the name suggests the image is formed by using the chemical reaction of acids on metal to erode the surface of the plate. A simple example is the age-old technique of hard-ground which involves covering the whole surface of the plate with a waxy, bituminous layer that resists the acid. When the

Narration and time are present in this artwork. I organised the prints creating a wall installation because my intention was to invite the public to walk and read the sequence, as if they were unfolding a book. 'Reading' emerges here as an important term because of the deliberate attempt of suggesting text through the marks and traces in this piece. I had a clear intention of creating a texture that can recall some kind of language, script or score. Basing my arguments according to Tim Ingold in *Lines*, the word *writing* originally referred to incisive trace-making. Ingold explains that in Old English, the term *writan* carried the specific meaning 'to incise runic letters in stone' (2007, p. 35). Thus in this work, I would write lines by drawing a sharp point over a surface, questioning the relation of writing and drawing.

I also questioned the notion and form of page through the printing process. Generally, an etching is printed by inking the incisions and wiping using scrim cloth to remove the excess of ink. In this case, I used a roller to ink the surface of the plate. That way the incisions are in white and the background in black (see image on the opposite page). Playing with the positive and negative of the print my aim was to push the boundaries of our perception. Do we still perceive a page if this is black?

The installation was completed with a light projection using an overhead projector. I prepared cut outs and laser-cut drawings to be projected with light. The projection would unveil notions about surface. Now the content of the pages wasn't printed on paper, but on the wall. The projection would also add a new dimension contrasting with the prints printed in black.

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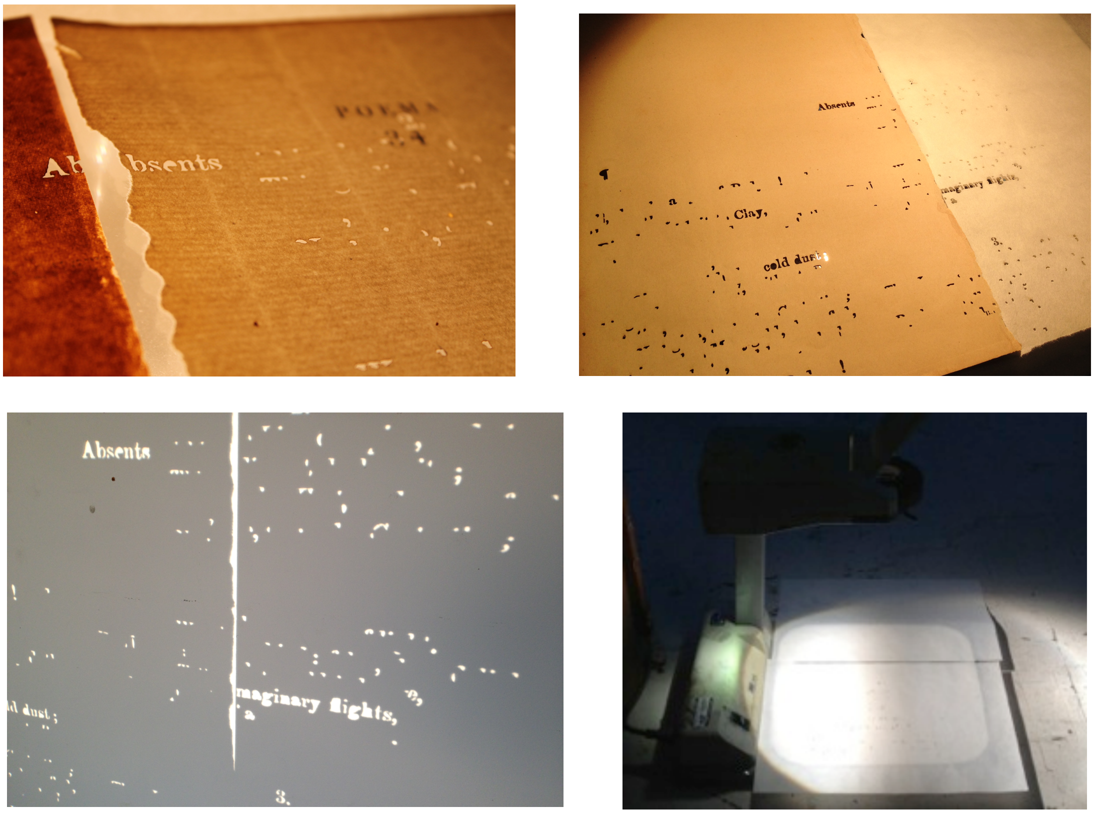
plate is then submerged in a bath of acid, the acid will bite into the metal where it has been exposed and create the furrow which will hold the ink



AGV 8. Testing projections of light with the over-head projector in the studio.

My intention was to challenge the parameters of the reader's interpretation, to subvert a linear reading of the text. Disassembling and taking apart words I create a new symbolic language with new plasticity based on marks, incisions, drawings, symbols that refer to whispering words, spaces, even scores and constellations; ultimately, representations that evoke text. This concept is also linked to Mallarmé's aesthetics; the 'fiction' is constituted not only by the process of miming representation without an object or event, but also by the construction of an imaginary image. With my prints, I leave just the traces of what has been written, a metaphor of the memory, no matter what happens over time, the memory will always remain, and there will be permanently an image to interpret.

Exhibition

I travelled to Spain four days before the private view of *Trazas* to set up the installation and to be able to spend some time in the space. *El Centre del Carme*, is a beautiful space located in the centre of Valencia. It is a restored convent from the sixteenth century with two gorgeous cloisters, and since 2008 it has been a space committed to contemporary exhibitions. Four large rooms were dedicated to the exhibition, all spacious and with high ceilings and painted with pale grey. I had a wall around 4 m long to install my work.

My initial request was to have a corner instead of a long wall, but the curator suggested that the sense of narration and time would be better expressed using just a single long wall, as the projection and the sequence of prints wouldn't be interrupted. In that moment, I accepted his suggestion, but analysing this decision with more perspective, I don't think the linear arrangement helped my piece, quite the opposite. My intention using the corner was to imitate the use of the natural fold of an opened book. Using the fold of the wall, I would also have invited the reader to experience the space of that duality created by the physical gutter of the wall.

I worked on the long wall instead, distributing my prints creating three big double spreads. I experimented with the arrangement, superposing some prints one on top of the other, and creating folds and hidden areas with them. The use of spotlights illuminating the pieces, created sharp shadows that intensified the actual shape of the page on the wall, so I decided to leave the prints quite separated from the wall and to use that shadow as an element to increase the movement of the spreads.

Conclusion

With the display of the installation, I tried to reinforce the initial idea of inviting the viewer to step forward and 'read' an opened book. I used this first opportunity to exhibit in an exhibition dedicated to explore the notion of 'traces' to investigate two different aspects of my research: the way suggestive language is developed and meaning is transmitted, and to test out scale

From the feedback received and my own reflection, I learned that while the suggestive language and traces I used were definitely evocative and it were disrupting linear reading, the notion of the opened book wasn't always being transmitted. Through the dialogue between gesture and surface, the work also questioned relations of scale and sense of material weight. In this occasion, the exhibition of the piece showed that either the scale and the display of the pieces enhanced the ideas behind the work.

As a consequence of this installation, I began to re-consider the attempt to find a poetic language through materiality, exploring how I might be able to refuse functionalization of language and challenge the act of reading. I also started to consider more how works are read depending on their scale. This experience also made me aware of the importance of studying the architecture of the page in order to know the perceptual limits of expression within this layout. This project helped me to develop some of the ideas analysed in Chapter 2 and particularly, to start formulating the notion of *suggested text* discussed in Chapter 5.

4.3 ARTWORKS #2

Red (under black & white) (2015)

Original artists' book. Cooper and zinc plates printed on Hanemhüle 230g natural white paper. 15 x 20 cm.

AMBruno Red project 2015. Curated by Sophie Loss.

http://ambruno.co.uk/red.html

Artwork outputs from 2014–2018

- Group exhibitions:

International Contemporary Artists' Book Fair, Leeds at the Tetley (6th–8th March 2015). https://www.arnolfini.org.uk/whatson/babe-2015-bristol-artists-book-event

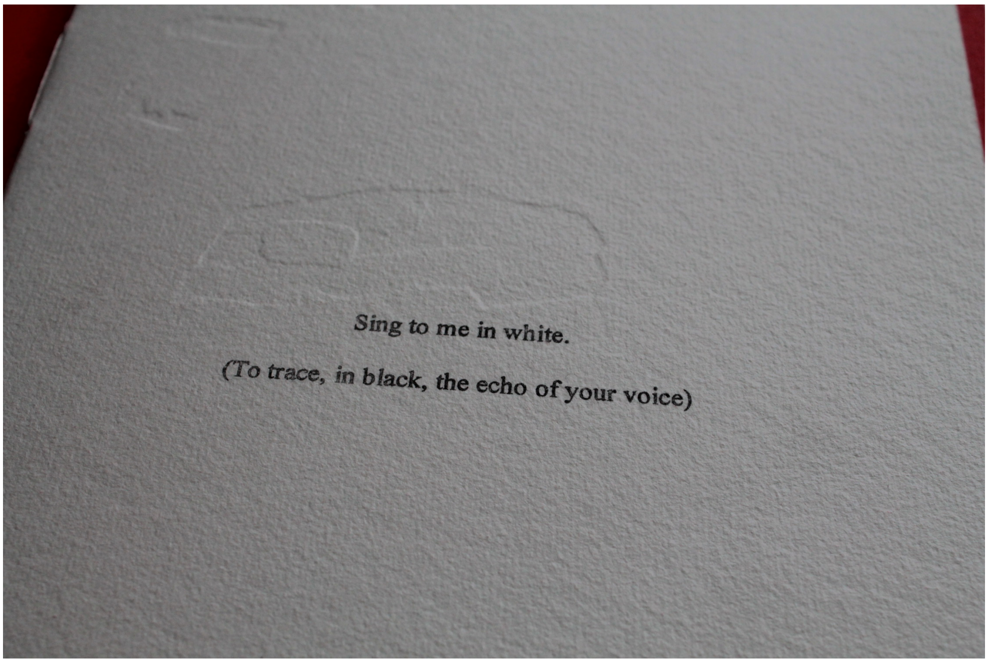
Bristol Artists Book Event (BABE), Arnolfini, Bristol (11th–12th April 2015). https://www.arnolfini.org.uk/whatson/babe-2015-bristol-artists-book-event

The London Art Book Fair, Whitechapel Gallery (10th–13th September 2015). http://www.whitechapelgallery.org/events/london-art-book-fair/

Counter (Plymouth Art Book Fair), KARST, Plymouth (23th–24th October 2015). Marco Calí from AMBruno presented a performance lecture entitled *Narrative and the Brain*.

Small Publishers Fair, Conway Hall, London (6th–7th November 2015). http://smallpublishersfair.co.uk/

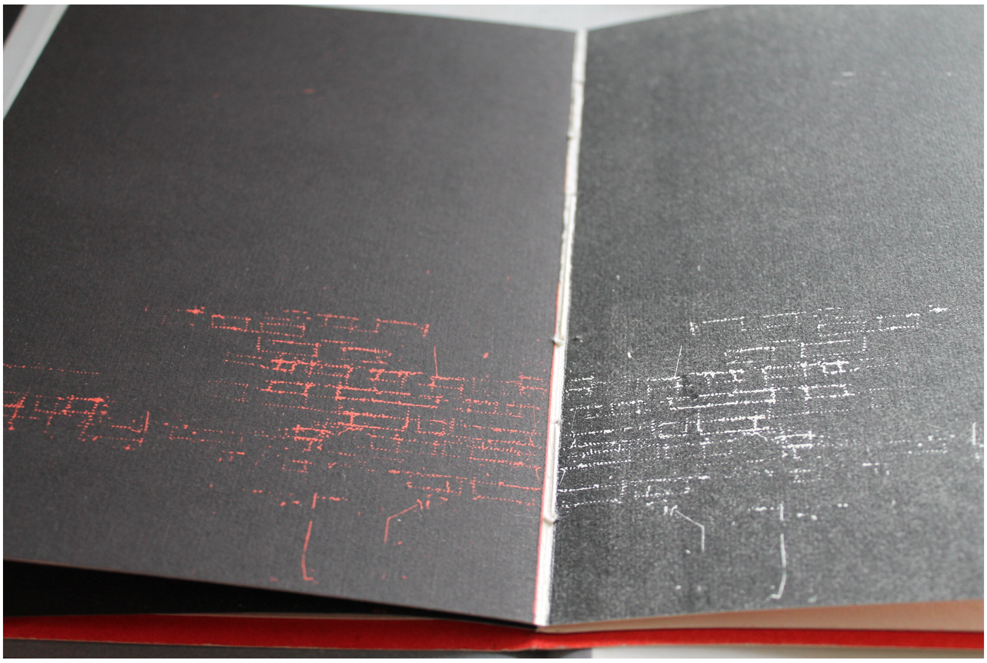
Acquisitions in collections: Leeds and Chelsea College of Art Special Collections.



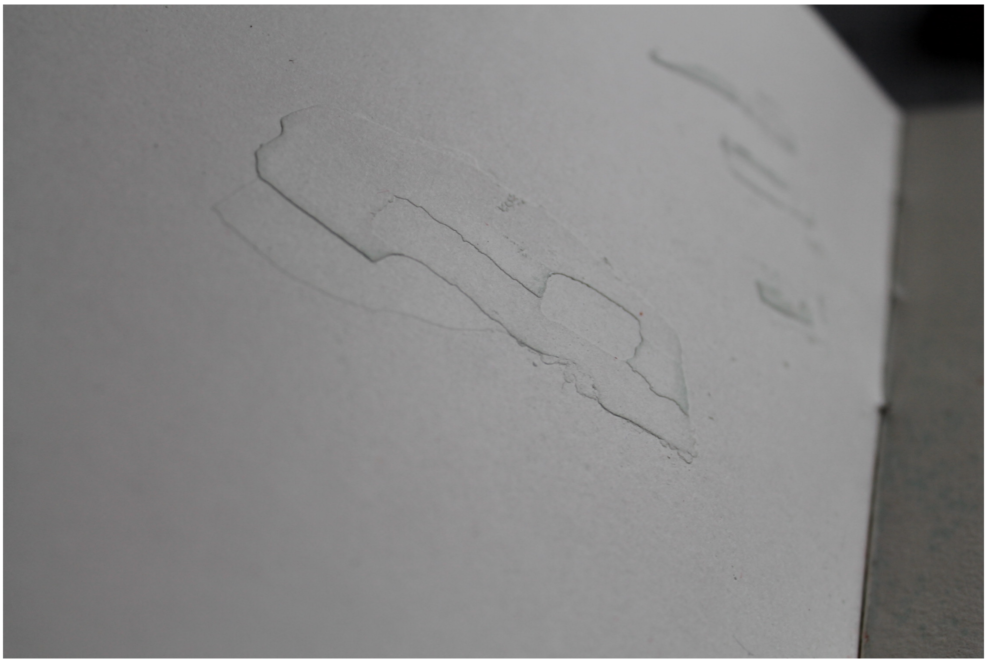
Sing to me in white.

(To trace, in black, the echo of your voice)

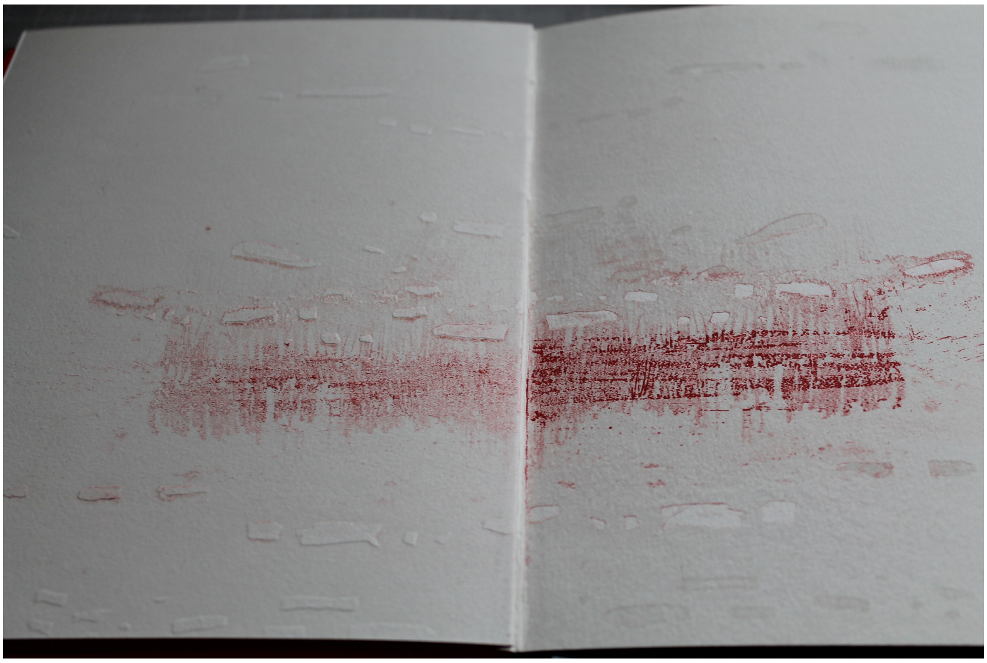
AGV 9. Page 1 (detail). Cardinal red, emboss and transference.



AGV 10. Page 2 (detail). Open bite emboss and transference.



AGV 11. Pages 8–9 (detail). Cardinal red, emboss and transference.



AGV 12. Pages 4–5 (detail). *Contro estampa* of plate 5. Emboss, etching

In 2014 I was selected to take part of the AMBruno *Red* project. AMBruno is a coalition of artists who show new work in exhibitions and specialist book fairs, for which they are asked to engage with a given theme. An annual open call for artists to submit a proposal responding to a theme is the way artists are selected to participate in each project.

Continuing with the research initiated in *Constellations*, my proposal was an artist book exploring the visual possibilities of the pages of the book. That is, notions associated with the nature of the page itself such as echo, mirroring and the fold. To do so, I would use traditional printmaking techniques to find new ways of organising the elements of the page and placing visual material in the place we normally find text.

Process of work

The process of working was decisive to shape and complete the concept of this project. The process chosen and the technique I used came from two different experiences as a printmaker. The first was the result of my daily activity in a printmaking studio; I spend days and days repeating the same actions: inking, wiping, polishing the plate and running the press from one side to the other to print it. Throughout the time the press is running, we have to hold the paper on the roller with our hands, and it is during these seconds that the image on the paper becomes a reflection of the plate, leaning on the press bed. Besides that, the action of taking the paper separating it from the plate creates (only during a few seconds) a mirror effect between the plate and the print.

The other experience was that a few years ago I learned in a print workshop in Italy the word *controestampa*.[77] The Italian printmakers use this to describe a print which is made using another print, as opposed to the plate. When a fresh print is made, the printer can overlay another piece of wet paper and run both sheets through the press (at a higher pressure). As the ink from the first print is still wet, the image will be transferred this way, obtaining an exact replica. The resulting print will be different from the original one because: the image will be reversed and the replica won't have the plate's emboss.

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[77] In English this would literally mean 'against the print', but the correct word to describe this technique is setoff or reproduction print.

The combination of both observations brought the idea of experimenting with the double images to explore notions of echo and mirroring within the context of the book. I realised that by folding the print and running it through the etching press, I could obtain a mirrored print. Carrying on with this process and technique I developed new methods to evoke repetition and variation through my own visual language.

My strategy was to bite the plates at different levels, trying to combine subtle drawings with deeply etched forms. This allowed me to play with different possibilities, such us inking both the incisions and the surface of the plate, consider the reversal of the image, incorporate the negative/positive printing and to use emboss.

Exhibitions and book art fairs

This book has been exhibited in a number of book art fairs and exhibitions. Book fairs are good opportunities to show work to a large audience, moreover, the public who attend these events are likely to be interested in books so they tend to have a special predisposition to spend some time with the work and read it carefully. Work is generally presented on a table, without any restriction for people to handle and read it. I had the chance to discuss this book at multiple venues including Show and Tell at the Tate Britain, Leeds Book Art Fair, Small Publishers Fair London, and Chelsea Library. These occasions gave me the opportunity to obtain direct feedback from artists and book collectors.

The responses were positive in relation to the innovative way of constructing the visual material through the *controestampa*. However, discussions at Show and Tell, made me consider aspects related to the rhetoric and the purpose of the written words I included in the book.

Conclusion

Red was a key artwork that completely changed my perception of the double page. By experimenting with the processes, I could acknowledge through the practice, what parameters of the page condition our experience with the book. This body of work centred on enhancing perceptive and intuitive aspects, such as the mirroring between pages. The reflected and faded image on every spread empathises a structural element: the gutter. This is the axis that articulates the fold and organises the space.

As a result of making and exhibiting of these artworks, I was led to explore further mirroring and echo as intrinsic and connotative properties of the double page; two qualities and elements that have become central arguments in the definition of the notion of double page spread.

In *Red* I also continued exploring a disruptive visual language in the place where we normally find text. In this case, it allowed me to analyse further how this is perceived in the context of the book and how this is seen evoking echo and mirroring establishing a dialogue between pages.

This project led me to explore the parameters of the double-page spread in more detail. I began to use it as a material support as well as a discursive space, understanding better the importance to engage with the form to be able to communicate with all its potential. This artwork also led me to start considering the notion of double page in a broader sense, a place to develop a site-specific practice.

4.4 ARTWORKS 3

Collecting Pages: Studies from a Marginal Sea (2015)

Aldeburgh Lookout, 1-week residency, May 2015.

Project: two site-specific installations composed by drawings, prints and video projections.

Artwork outputs from 2014–2019

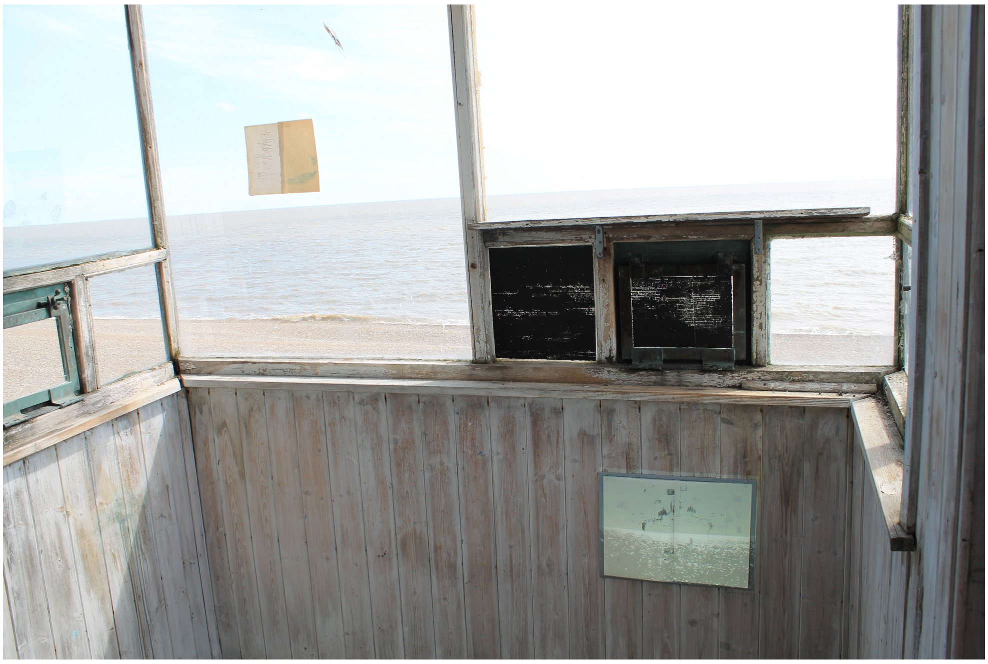
2015 Solo exhibitions:

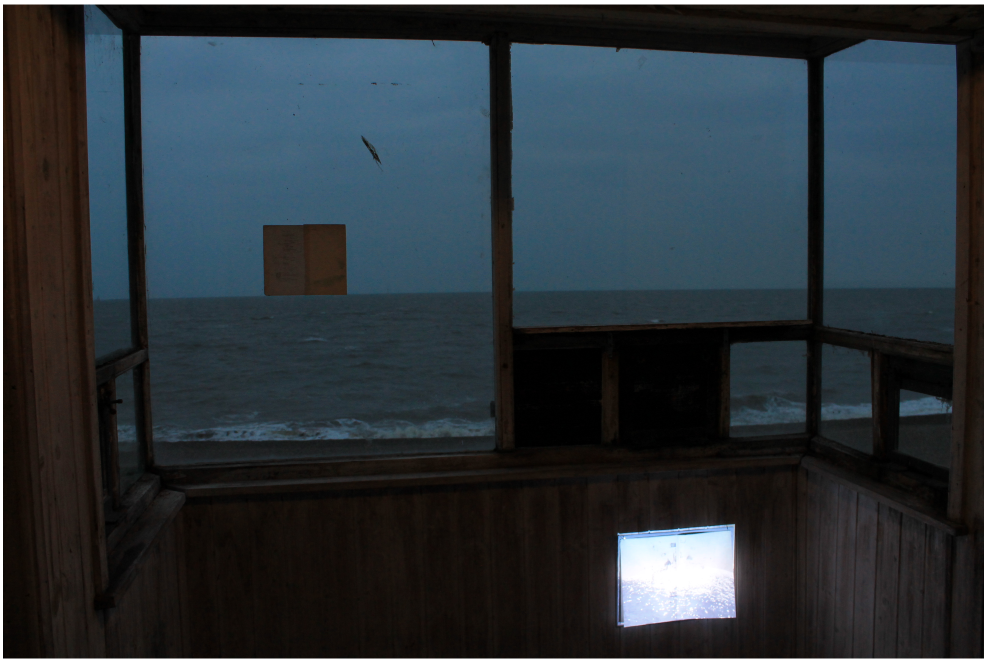
South Lookout, Aldeburgh.

Cookhouse Gallery, Chelsea College of Arts.

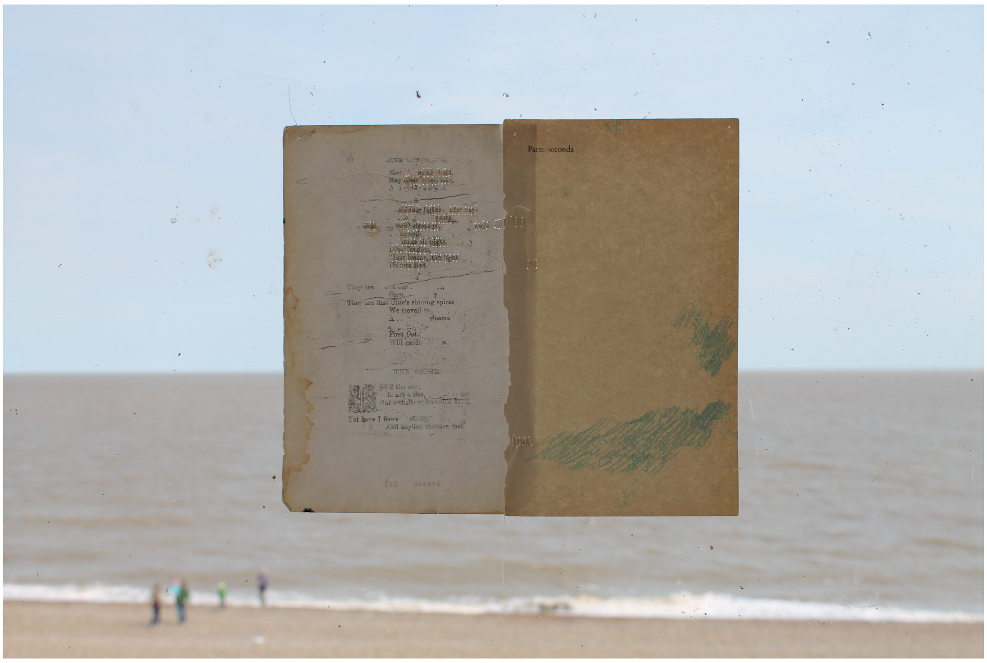
Reviews:

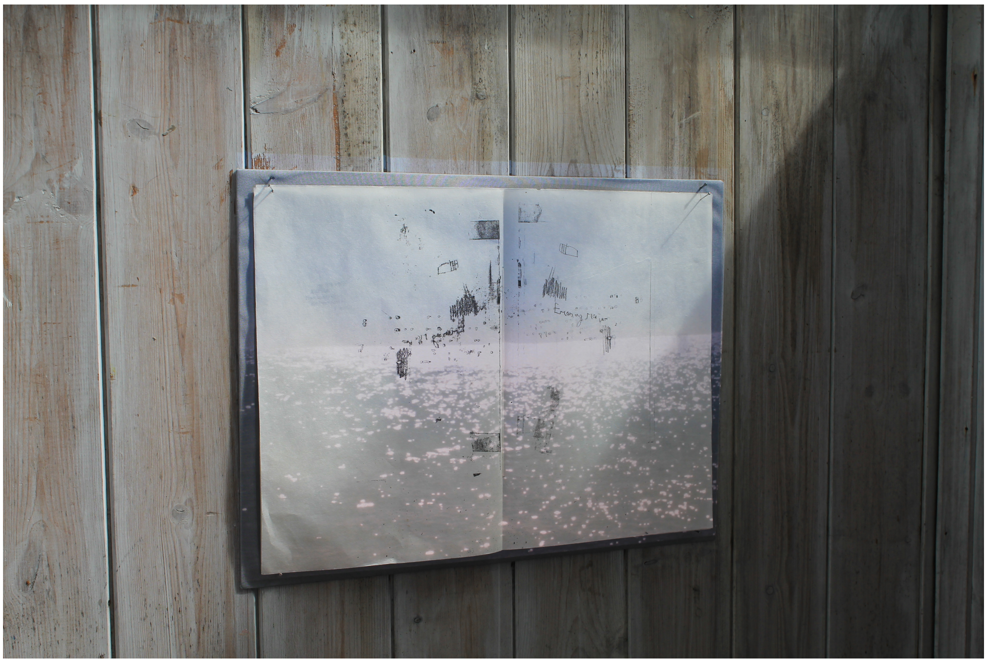
http://www.ccwgraduateschool.org/tag/altea-grau/





AGV 13 and 14. Installation views of the site-specific installation at the lookout tower.


Parte seconda



AGV 15 and 16. Details of the installation.

Y el mar sigue moviéndose.
Yo busco un tiempo mío entre dos olas,
ese mundo flexible de la orilla,
que retiene los pasos un momento,
nada más que un momento,
entre la realidad y sus fronteras.[78]

In May 2015 I was selected through an open call to spend one week in the isolated Aldeburgh South Lookout. The lookout tower, built in about 1830, rises above the shingle beach at Aldeburgh, Suffolk, just in front of the house where Caroline Wiseman lives with her partner, Francis Carnwath. Throughout the year, both emerging and established artists are invited to create new work, which is inspired by the location and its evocative landscape.

The initial idea in my proposal for the position was to use the Aldeburgh residency to make new site-specific work stimulated by the landscape and the intrinsic connotations and resonances that the sea carries. The residency could help me to put ideas around echo, mirroring and space in a different context, challenging the borders of the double page.

The space I had as a studio was a tower consisting of three spaces. The main studio area is on the ground floor, a spacious room with double doors that opens directly onto the beach. There is a tiny room halfway up the lookout tower, which is a spare, monastic space with distressed wooden walls, simply furnished with a chair and desk. The lookout room at the top is a small, unfurnished room with a beautiful bay window facing the North Sea.

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[78] The English translation:
And the sea, still in motion. I look for
My time between two waves,
Flexible is the time of the shore,
It holds time a moment,
Only for a moment,
Between reality and its borders.
El insomnio de Jovellanos. Luís García Montero. In: *Habitaciones separadas*

Process of work

I started the residency exploring the beach and the nearby places to familiarise with the site. I spent much of the first two days walking, observing and taking photographs during the day and drawing and analysing the visual material at night. I collected lots of material: photographs, video captures, drawings, stones, photocopies… The landscape, the quietness, the sunsets and the narrow strip of land stretching south of Aldeburgh separating the sea and the river Alde fascinated me. I was completely captivated by the contrast between the sea: immense, constant, rhythmic, always in motion dragging stones and making noise; and the river: calm, peaceful, silent, surrounded by reeds and only disturbed by the presence of small birds and insects. They were like different worlds, separated only by a fragile pile of sand and stones. The sea hosts the dawn while the river, the dusk.

The lookout tower was in the middle of that vacillation, like a metaphor of that duality, standing equidistant listening the endless rumour of the sea in motion. That was the idea I wanted to express with the two site-specific installations I created for the space.

The first installation, held in the main studio, was composed of a series of small drawings, two intervened photographs and a moving image. The drawings complete a collection of studies made of repeated gestures and forms, creating rich surfaces with graphite. The moving image was made by juxtaposing two recordings: the sea and the river. They were two captures of two different sites but at the same moment of the day: dusk. It was during those minutes when the two landscapes were most similar. The sea would calm down and the colours were neutralised by the lack of light, fading shapes and disparities. I projected the video into a poem. I altered this poem by erasing words and laying it out in a double page.

The second installation was placed at the top room of the lookout tower. It was a very simple display playing with the light and the movement of the sea (Figures 51 and 52). I combined a drawing-collage of two found pages, a punctured print and a moving image projected into a drawing. Every element of the installation was unique and different; they could be taken as individual artworks. However, placed on the bay window gathered a different meaning. My idea was to play not only with the new work I created during that week, but also with the elements I had outside:

the wind, sea, changing light, shadows, etc. I used the bay window as a wall and a background. That is, as variable element part of the site-specific installation.

The key component of the installation was the video projection; it was displayed small scale and on an A4 paper drawing mounted on a book cover, so even if the day was bright and there was lots of light coming through the bay window, the images in motion could be appreciated. As the day went by and the light changed, the reading of the work was changed. During the day, the views and the sea dominated the scene; during the evening, the light coming in through the projection would contrast becoming much more bright due to the contrast.

AGV 17. Installation.views

AGV 18. Installation views of the installation.

Conclusion

Having the possibility of changing studio and living in an immersive experience encouraged me to take more risks and to experiment more with my artworks. The residency helped me to analyse my practice from a different angle and re-evaluate some of the concepts and investigations I was undertaking.

As a consequence of the project *Collecting Studies*, I began to consider the double-page spread as a site to develop a site-specific practice and also to consider how place affect and inform perception. It was especially relevant the installation developed at the top of the lookout tower. Although I included different elements, I took the whole space as a page, trying to create mirrors and dualities between the window, the sea and the drawings; I also considered the folds of the space and made them interact with the altered pages.

It led me to expand the notion of the double page spread to formulate new questions related to notions of reading and materiality.

4.5 ARTWORKS #4

Against Syntax (2016)

Project: two site-specific installations and display of two series of works.

Artwork outputs from 2014–2019

2016 Solo exhibitions:

Cookhouse Gallery, Chelsea College of Arts (confirmation meeting exhibition).

2017 Solo exhibitions:

Swab Barcelona Art Fair.

MARTE Art Fair with La Carboneria Gallery.

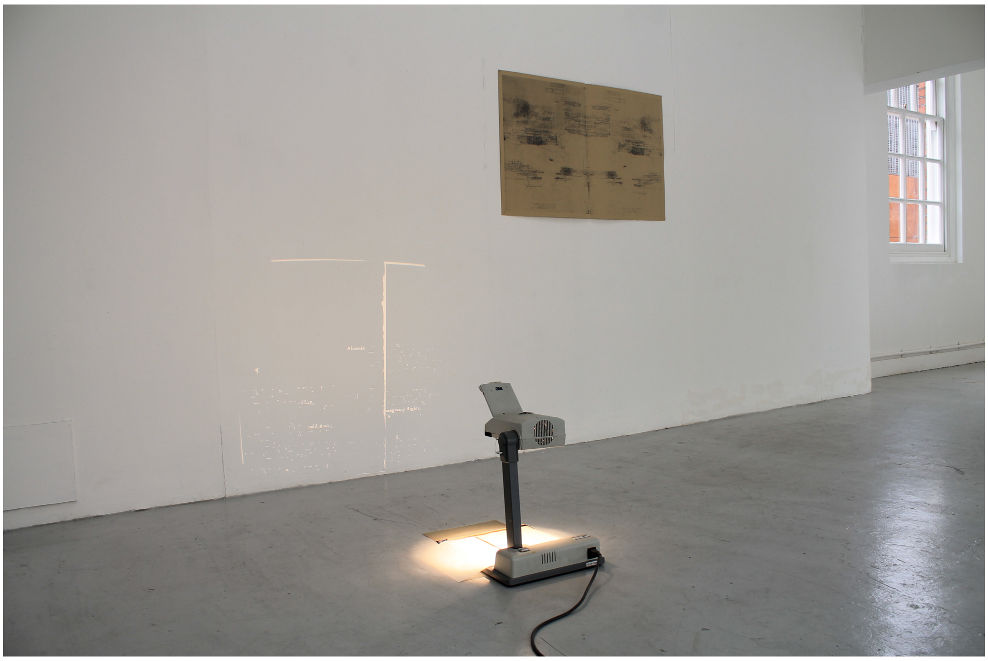
2018

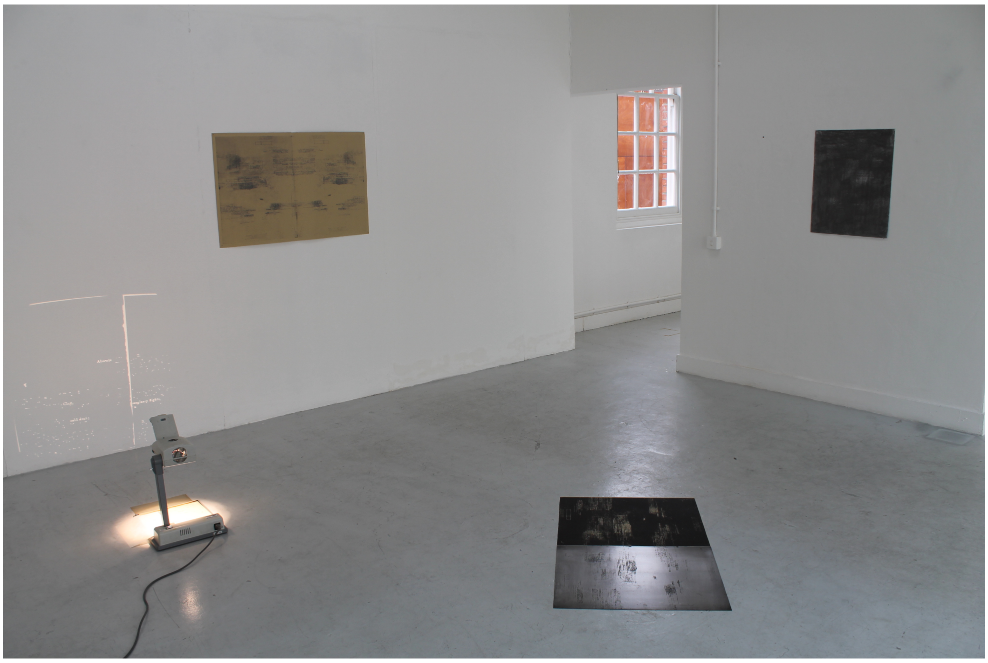
Selected project for EMERGENTS.

https://apuntmedia.es/va/a-la-carta/programes/vist-en-tv/emergents/06-11-2018-altea-grau-i-adrian-salvador

Acquisitions in collections:

Consorci de Museus de la Generalitat Valenciana.



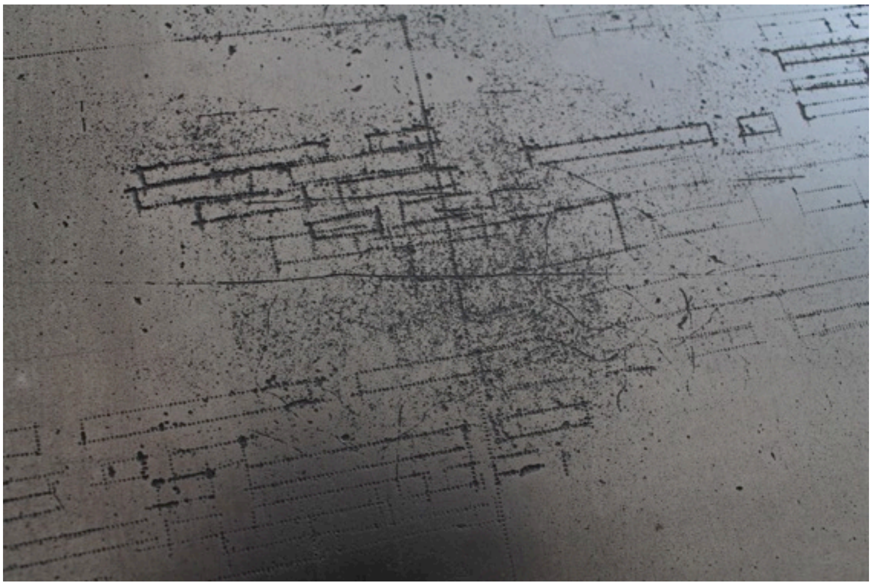


AGV 19 and 20*. Resonate Fragments* (2016). Installation views, Cookhouse, Chelsea College of Arts.

At the beginning of this research, I considered it fundamental to focus on understanding that the power of the double spread originates from the iconic and symbolic power of the book. That is, the double page bringing connotations associated to the book, such as history, culture, information and knowledge. Why is the page a powerful object? How do readers react when confront it? My research was motivated by my practice and the first step was to recognise the elements and parameters that conform the structure of the double page, including social and perceptual aspects.

That was the idea that motivated the three previous projects, however, for this exhibition, I wanted to take further the notion of page and concentrate on two interrelated elements:

- The space in between pages, the 'gutter'. The gutter is the double pages' axis, the element that structures duality and mirroring. It divides the space connecting the two halves structuring narration. It is also a rhythmic and dynamic element that suggests a pretention of opening and closing.
- How works 'spoke' with the space. My intention was to experiment and play with the display of the pieces and test how that presentation influences its reading.



AGV 21. Detail of steel plate for *Resonate Fragments*.

The exhibition was divided in four separate rooms, allowing me to distribute the work in a way that the installation would share elements but it could be organised in independent projects. Showing a number of artworks at the same time and through this structure, the pieces would also read differently. That means that each project would help the rest to be read by unveiling and revealing fragments of the visual language developed in each of them.

Process of work

RESONATE FRAGMENTS

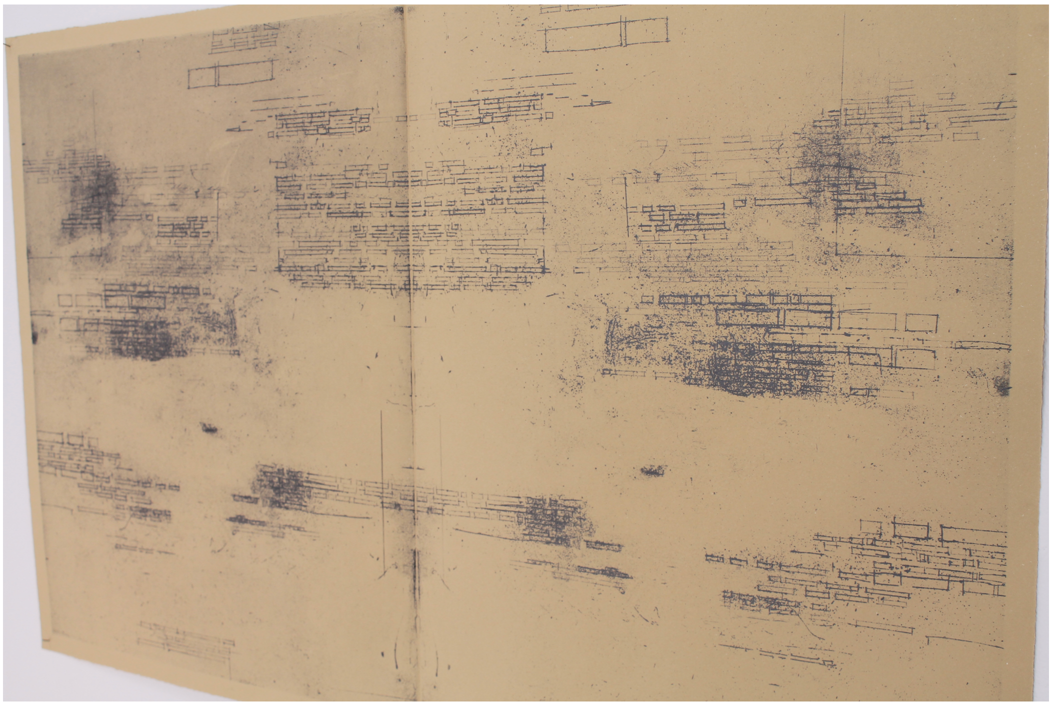
The main element of this work is a steel plate that I started to etch in April 2015. It is a large plate measuring 55 x 78 cm that I worked and re-worked many times. During the summer of 2016 I took up the plate again. It had lots of marks and textures as a result of the several interventions and immersions in acid. The marks on the plate were arranged without following a particular order. They looked like different groups of inscriptions laying out on a large page, and some of the groups were linked to the others by lines. I associated the plate with a page full of notes and dispersed ideas, so I decided to try printing it using graphite powder, to associate that material with a sketchy effect.

I had to try a few solutions mixing graphite powder with medium oil and extender. The best mix I found was 80 % graphite powder, 10% magnesium and 10% medium oil. The result was an intense and thick graphite effect that would deeped the materiality of the plate.

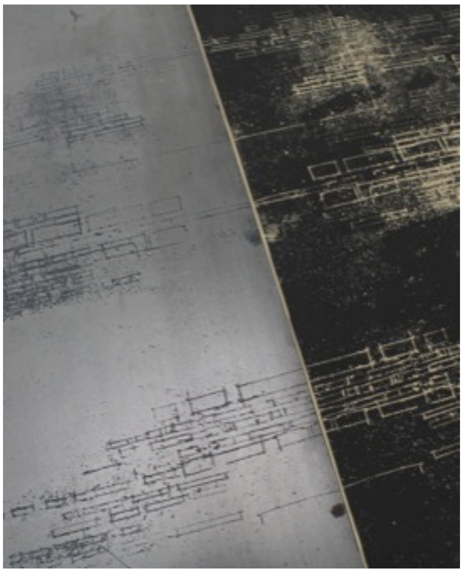
I also tried printing the plate on different types of paper and in a variety of ways, including printing the plate in negative (rolling the ink on the surface of the plate, like a relief print). Finally, I chose to use Somerset Yellow Satin paper because it has a slightly darker colour that contrasts very well with the graphite. I used the *controestampa* too, and the notion of mirroring worked very well. Some of the drawing structures finished just on the edge of the plate, so the mirroring worked to extend its shape and enhance the idea of *extended division*, the gutter. The result is mirrored print, that characterises because one side of the print is darker and holds more in ink than the other.

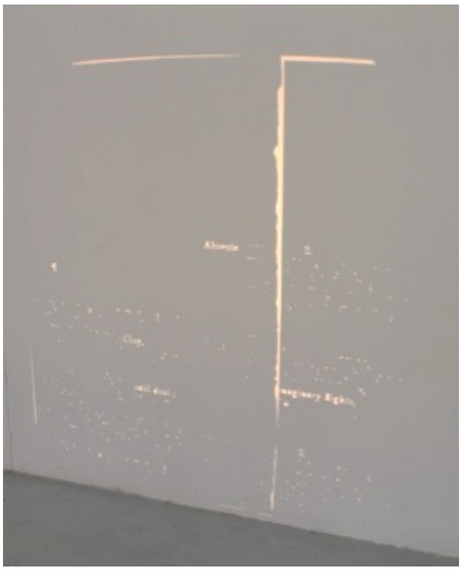
Analysing the process of printing that plate, the idea of 'division-continuation' emerged. That is, when the print wasn't mirrored, it looked like it was interrupted and the division between prints (the gutter), would give the sense of narration and continuation.

To exhaust the material, I had and keep finding possibilities. I continued investigating on different ways of incorporating materiality. The graphite powder embodied the idea of sketch and hand-drawing, then I tried making frottage and using the plate itself as part of the installation. I also played with light and an overhead projector to enhance the idea of surface and project a stripe of light articulating the gutter. The space between pages is a white line, an empty vertical stripe that produces a space for the light to come in. The gutter is a structural element that connects and hold together two spaces (that can become one).



AGV 22. Detail of the print installation *Resonate Fragments*

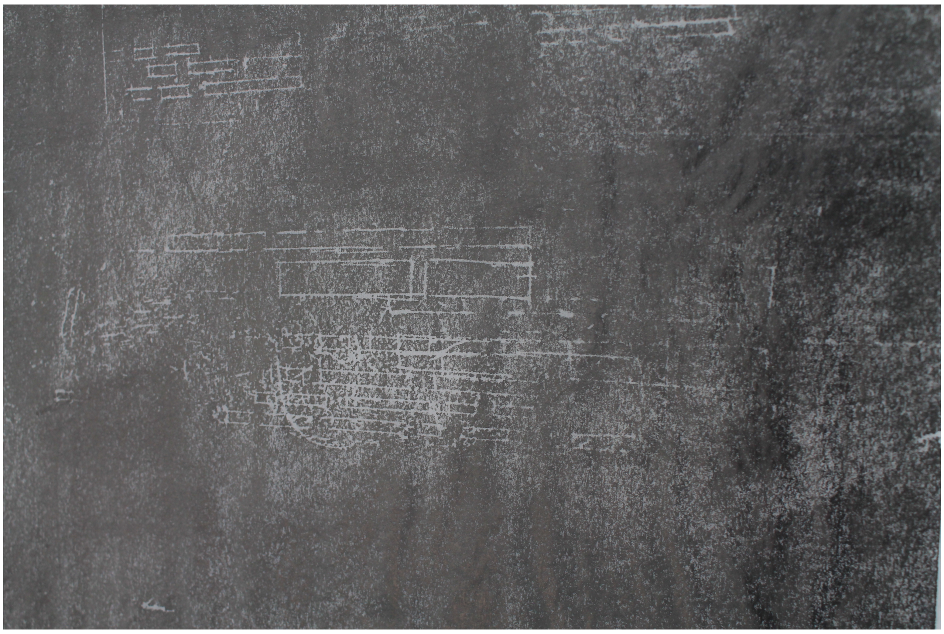




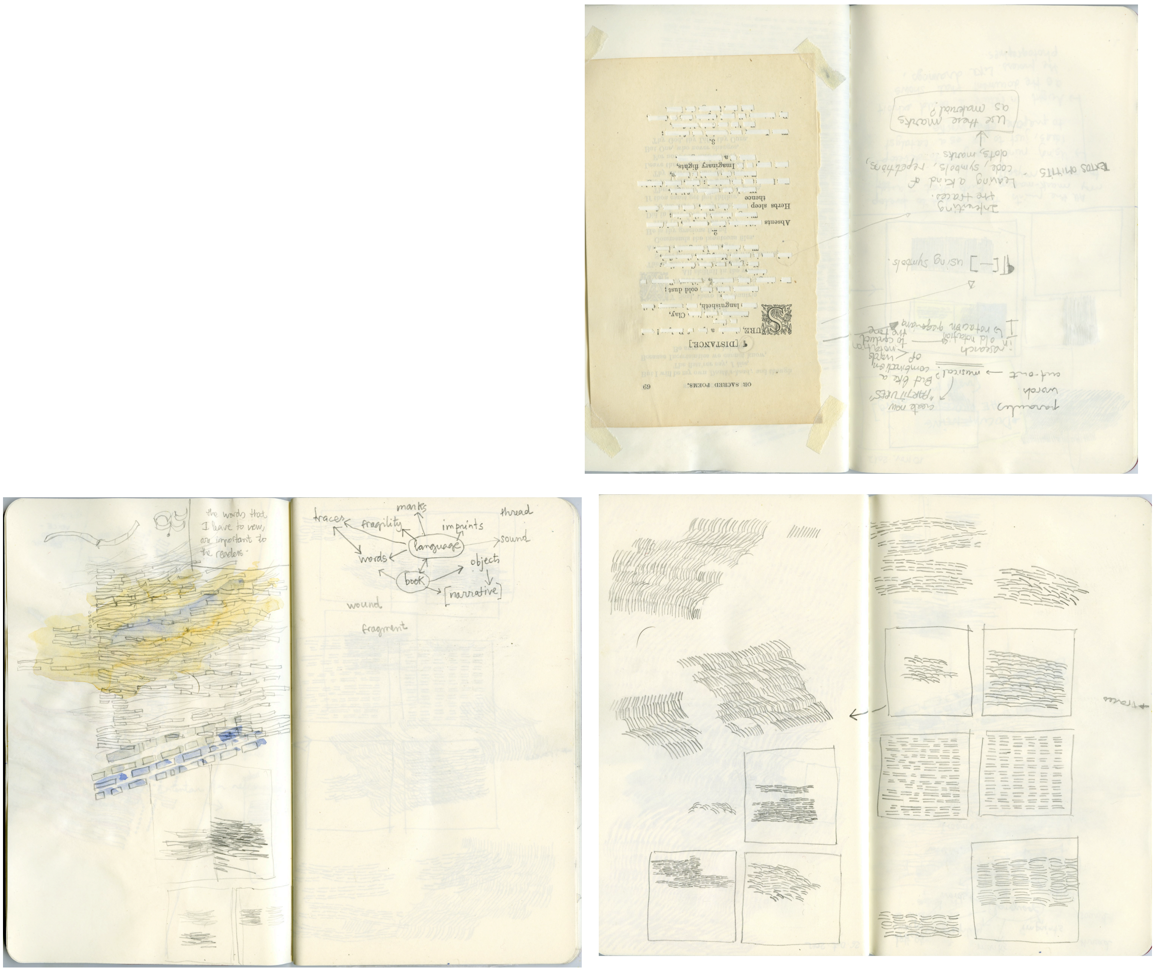
AGV 23 (left). Detail of the floor piece. Plate and print.
AGV 24 (right). Details of the light projection. See connections between print and projection

The installation was finished in the exhibition space. I placed the steel plate on the floor. Next to it I placed one of the prints I had made rolling. I cut that print leaving a slightly yellow line in one of the sides to enhance that connection between plate and print, and enhance, once again, the need of that structural light coming between the two elements that composed the floor-based diptych. Because it was a plate and a print, the drawing would still mirror each other, but in this case positive and negative, revealing clearly the nature of printmaking and describing how a print is made, where the textures come from and showing the depth of the incisions.

The last component of the installation was a frottage on Japanese paper hanging from the wall, in an attempt of to exhaust the material even more, that is, to find more ways of expressing using the same plate.



AGV 25. Detail of the frottage part of the installation.


the words that I have to sew, are important to the readers
traces
marks
thread
fragility
imprints
sound
words
language
objects
book
narrative
wound
fragment

AGV 26. Sketches in preparation for the installation.

AGAINST SYNTAX

The second and largest room of the Cookhouse held an installation composed of a combination of large and small prints. Is scale another element or quality that affects or enhances the iconic power of the book?

With these large artworks, I wanted to experiment including elements that evoke connotations such as mirroring and reflection, the gutter and the fold and introduce ideas related to the echo of the pages.

The display consisted of two large prints 124 x 82 cm each, a folded print on the floor and two small prints 25 x 18 cm and 32 x 24 cm. The large images contain abstract drawings made in etching using hard and soft ground. As the hard ground creates sharp and incisive lines and the soft ground imitates soft and more gentle pencil marks, my intention was to use that quality to evoke some sort of echo or resonance between them.

In etching, to have different tones in the lines of the drawing, you need to immerse the plate several times in the acid. The longer the plate has been in acid, the darker the lines will be. For that reason, I normally start drawing the lines I want darker, and finish with the lightest. That process helps me to structure my mind and allows me to see the drawing from a different perspective.

My drawings were inspired by Sausurre's ideas about the sonority of the words. For him, 'the sound was physical and material, and in language there are no sounds as such'; there are only what Sausurre calls 'images of sound' (Sausurre, 1959, p. 53). According to the philosopher, it maps the configuration of differences on the plane of sound-imagery, so language-sound-song are closer than ever. Part of my art practice is concerned with creating a 'surface', a physical process of mark making, an entropic cycle of creating whilst, at the same time, erasing and ultimately changing. Once a new surface is made, I always want to disrupt it again in some way. Most of the works went through a series of transformations before settling on their final appearance, but this led me to know better my own practice and to deepen into the materiality of the process.

AGV 27. Prints drying during process of work.

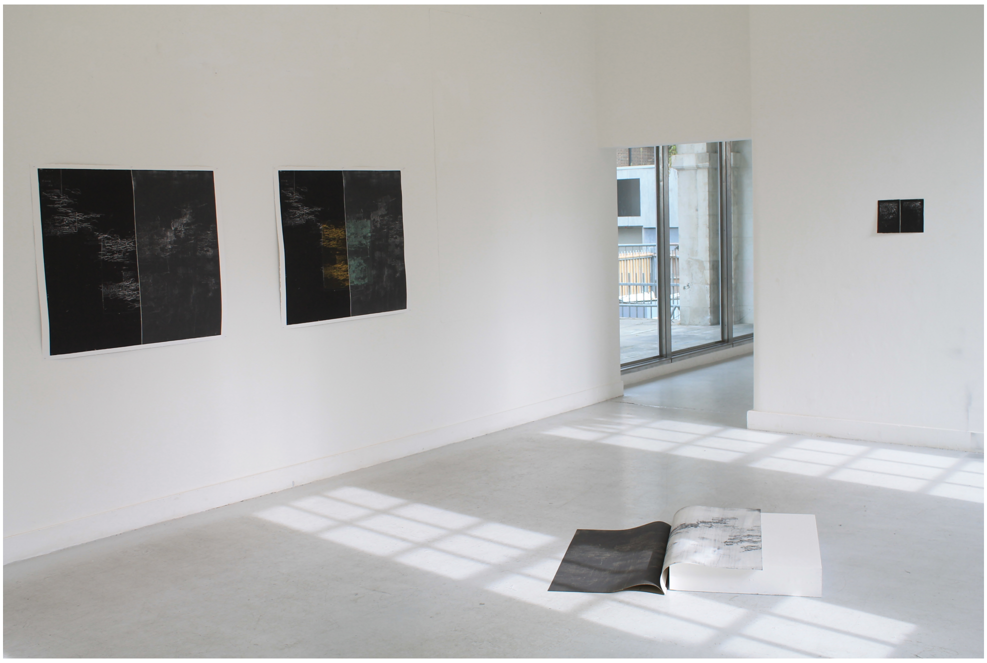
Conclusion

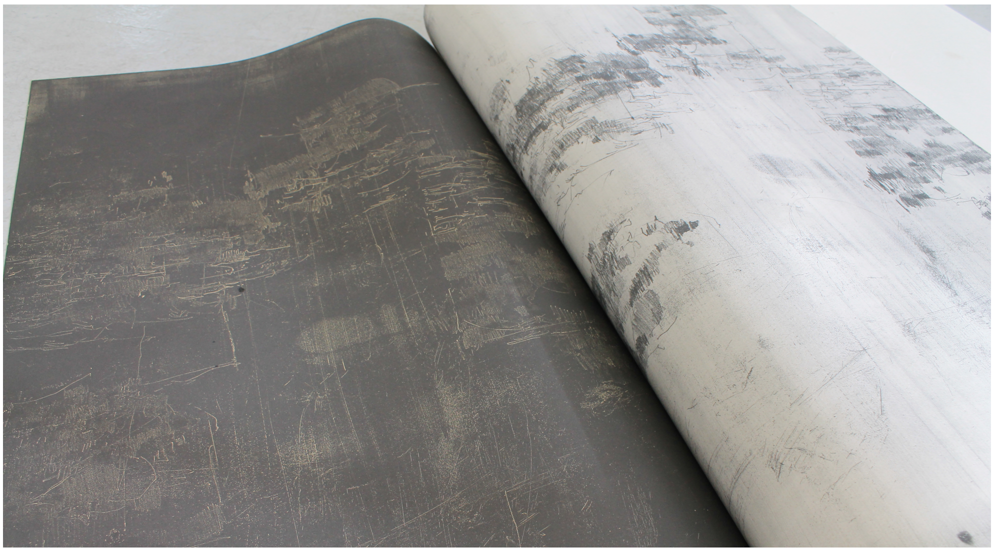
The small images were part of an on-going series of prints and drawings *Signs of Resistance* (see Chapter 5), a folder of prints and drawings in which I experiment with mark making and visual transcriptions. They were made in a similar way of marking and erasing. While the larger pieces were printed in black and white, the small ones had colour. Following reflections from previous works such as *Constellations*, in this exhibition my aim was to test out notions of scale. By placing works of different sizes side by side, the display investigates how scale plays a key role on the way works read. The small prints are closer to a book size, so act as a reference and inform reader's approach to confront the larger works.

As a consequence of these artworks, I learned how to use materiality to embody meaning and connotations. The installation *Resonate Fragments* led me to use a wider range of materials to broaden and push further the notion of double page.

I could test out how scale and display play a decisive role in the way artworks are interpreted. Both installations showed that the double page spread is a notion that can be expanded and interact in space.

This exhibition explored how to unmask and uncover the conventions associated with the page. I experimented with materiality, scale and display through the exploration of mirroring, echo and the fold across two halved pieces. Although it was a revealing presentation of works, I also realised that the exploration could go further and incorporate more site-specificity into the research. As a result of this body of work I decided to create more site-based pieces to explore the how the notion of double spread can also inform and determine that experience.





AGV 28 and 29. Installation views at the Cookhouse Gallery.

4.6 ARTWORKS 5

[DISTANCE] (2017)

Project: site-specific installation in a window using vinil.

Residency part of the CompARTE series.

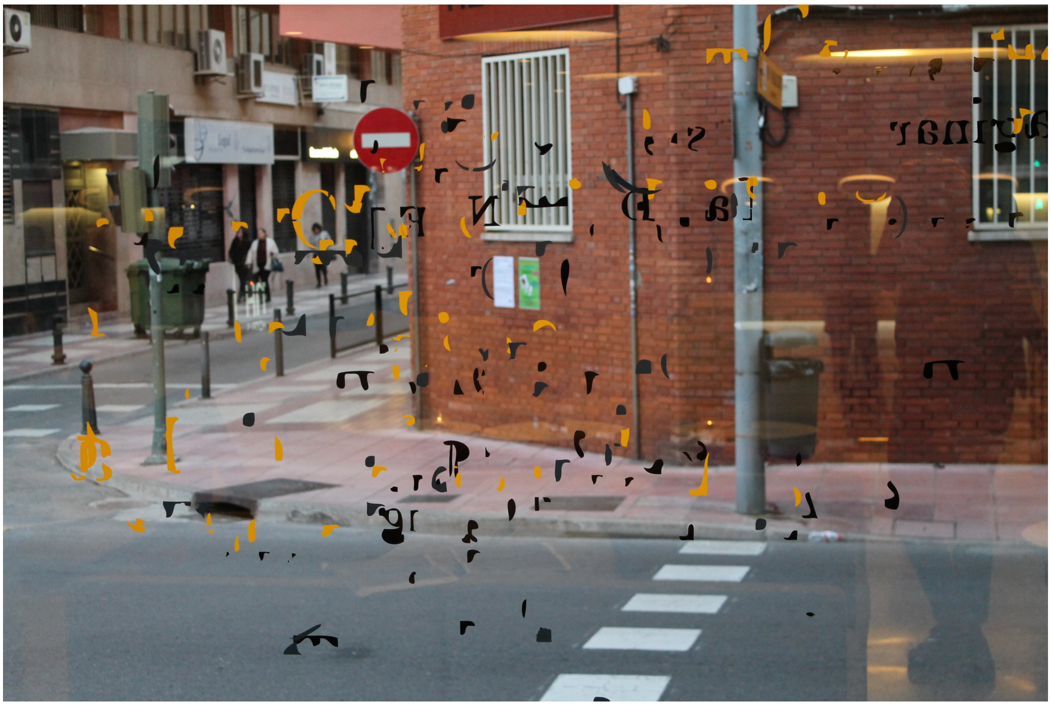
Artwork outputs from 2014–2019

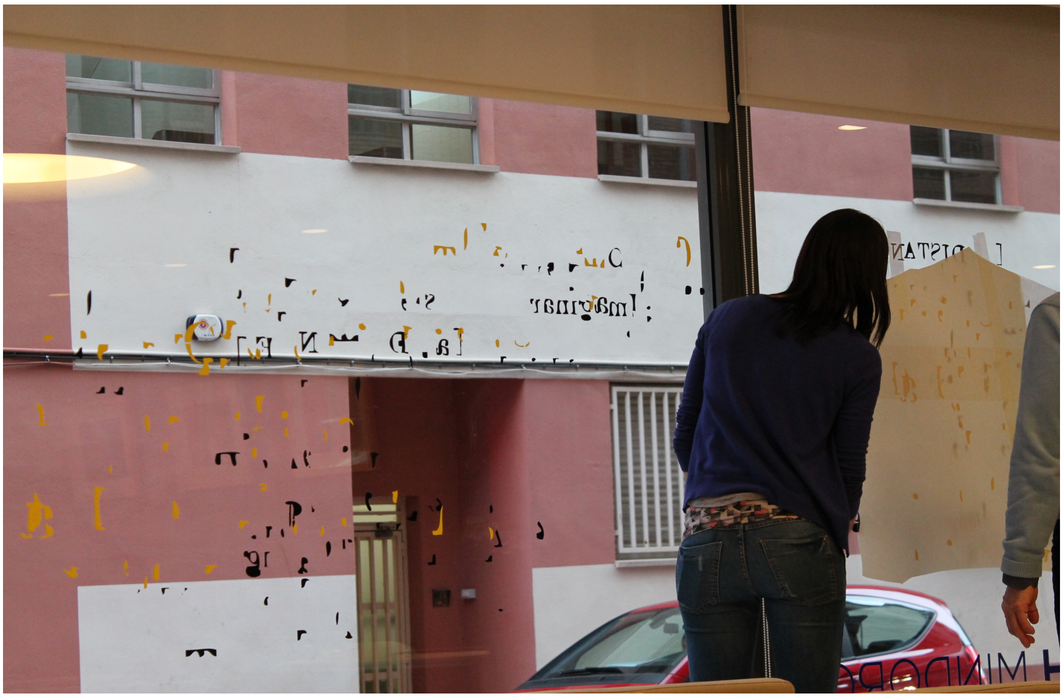
2017 Solo exhibition:

Mindoro Space, Castelló, Spain.

Reviews:

https://www.elperiodicomediterraneo.com/noticias/cuadernos/altea-grau-entrevista-plecs-castello_1062025.html





AGV 30. Views of the installation.
AGV 31. Mounting the vinil.

[Distance] is a site-specific window installation. It was created during three days residency at the Mindoro Space in Castelló, Spain. The Mindoro Space is dedicated to art events that holds conferences, presentations and small exhibitions. I was given was a 2 m wall and a window space, and the final installation was discussed in a round table of artists and curators at the end of the residency.

Process of work

The intervention consisted of using the intersection of two glass panels that formed the window. I saw that join as a gutter, therefore as an element to articulate a fold. The joint was also more visible from the outside of the window, creating a physical pleat. Using that site, I translated elements of the page to a completely different context.

I used translucent paper first to test out transparency and colour, and although I used simple forms and shapes, I didn't manage to make it work with the spatial fold of the space. My aim was to bring the connotations of a spread into that window, so I decided to bring some of the 'conventions' associated to the book. In this case, the text.

Following explorations on the suggestion of language initiated in *Against Syntax*, *Constellations* and *Red*, I scanned several pages of poems by Pedro Gómez, a local writer who evokes ideas on the use of words and the way language should be cultivated in order to communicate. I dismantled two of his poems and fused it overlaying words and punctuation marks, keeping only a few words, letters and spaces.

The digital image was produced over three vinyl layers that then I overlaid in the window. The marks created a disruption both in the gallery space as well as from the view outside. The buildings across the street reflected on the glass creating a pattern and adding colour and drawings to the image.

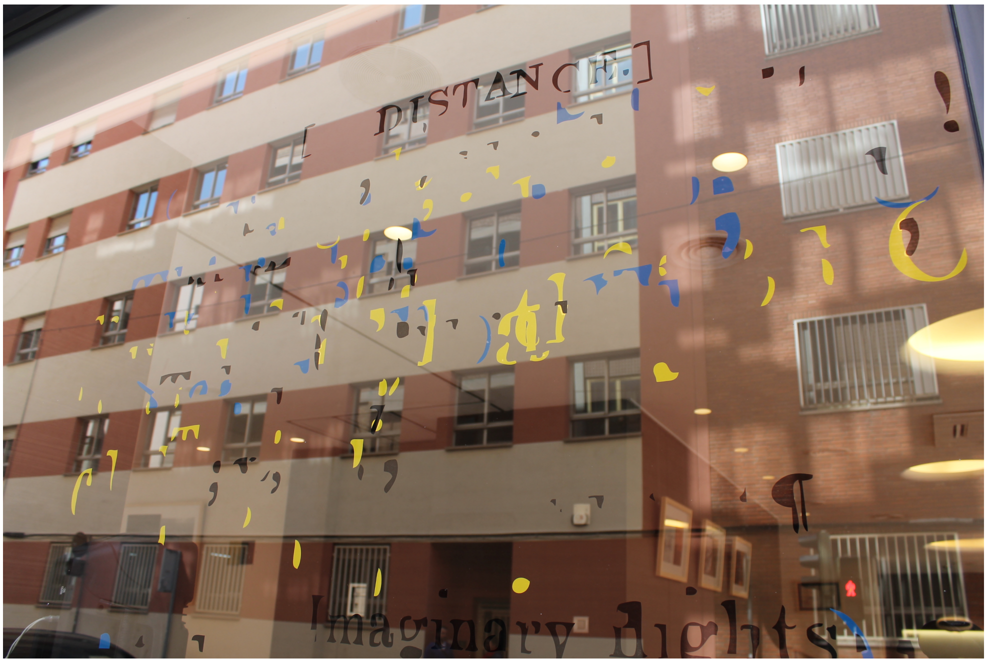
This piece was accompanied by a series of three small pieces hanging in the wall. They were a combination of drawings, cut outs and prints, based on preparatory sketches for installation on the window.

Conclusion

Creating this installation, I reflected on what conventions are, what elements bring the connotations of book, language, information or poetry to reader's mind. Why is it important for me as an artist to bring these connotations to the work of art?

Experimenting with site specificity allowed me to see clearer that the perception of the two-fold format of the double page moves beyond the symbolic form of the book. It showed that the iconic form is perceptually embodied in the way we process information. In this case, the lack of other works[79] to compare the installation with made more difficult to establish connections, however, the text-inspired marks and gestures would also carry associations.

This experience led me to continue experimenting with space and site-specificity as well as to reflect more on perception. Moreover, this exhibition has brought questions about whether my work needs references or not in order to be read within certain bounds.



AGV 32. Installation views.

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[79] The pieces exhibited on the wall weren't visible from outside, therefore the viewers from the streets didn't have any other works to compare the installation with.

4.7 ARTWORKS 6

Signs of Resistance (2018)

Project: two site-specific installations and display of two series of works.

Artwork outputs from 2014–2019

2018 Solo exhibitions:

Signs of Resistance, La Carbonería Gallery, curated by Maria Tosat.

Swab Barcelona Art Fair.

Medi-Terrània. Centre d'Art Melchor Zapata, curated by Irene Gras.

PLECS. Metàfores d'una Veu. CompARTE Espacio de Arte, Castelló, Spain

Group exhibitions

Impact_10, Santander.

FigBilbao. International Printmaking Fair. Curated by Joseba Acha and María Tosat.

De Femíneo. Un art sense limits. Curated by Irene Gras.

2019 Solo exhibitions:

The Drawing Room Art Fair, Madrid.

Acquisitions in collections:

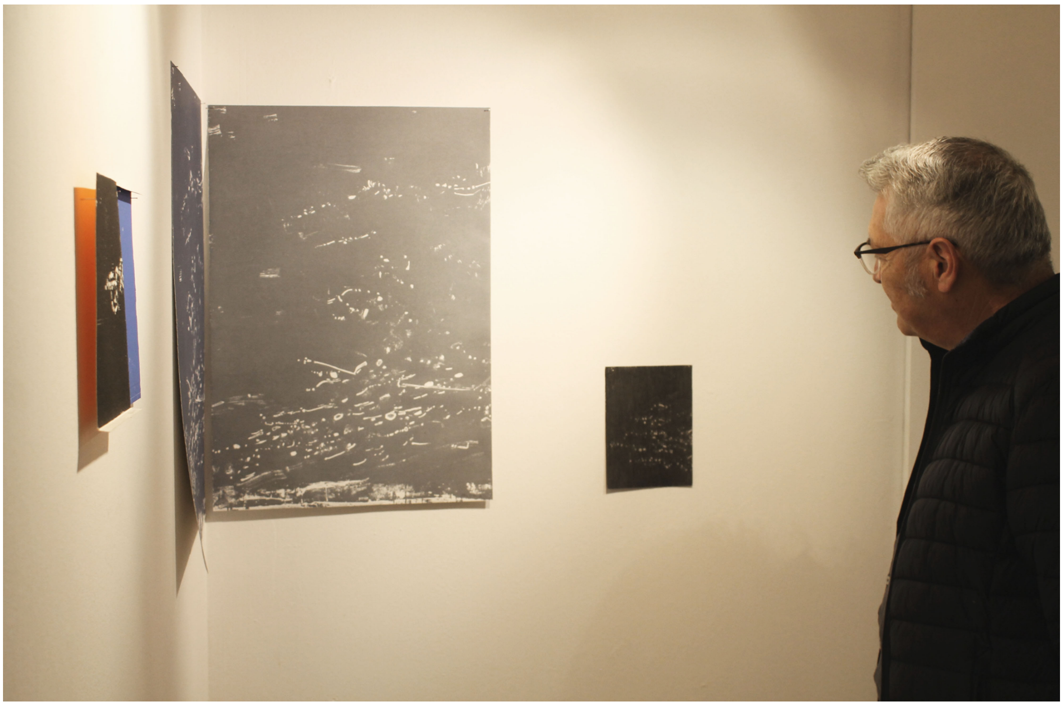
Harold Berg Collection.

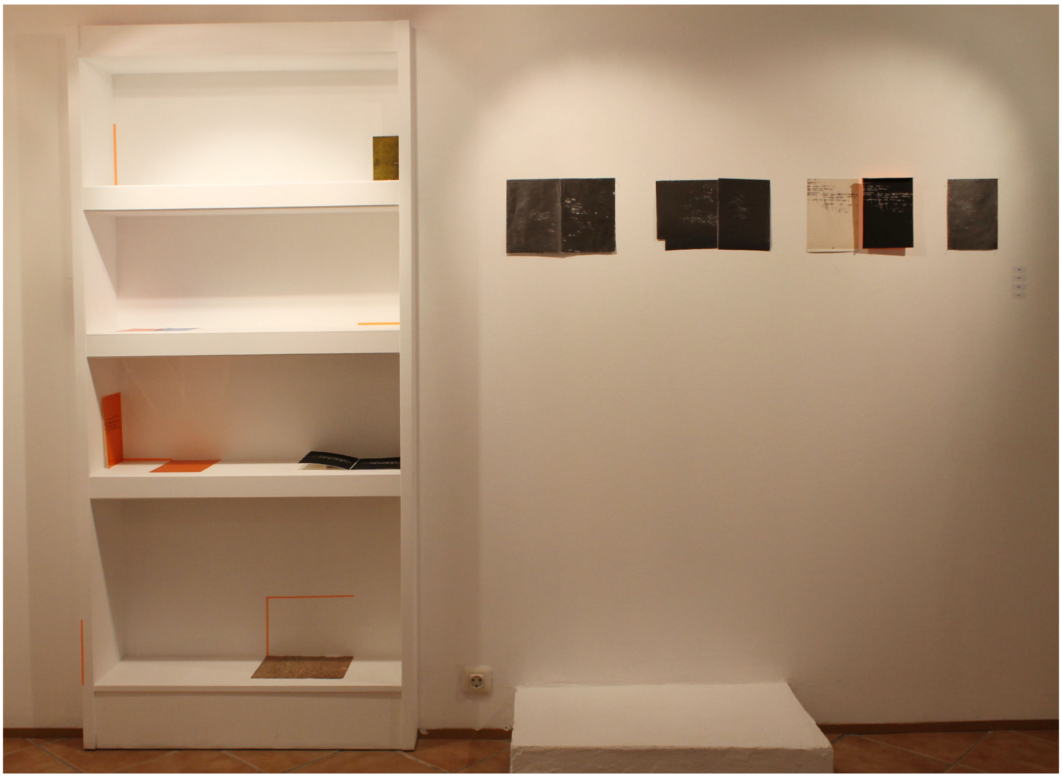
Jose Maria Civit Collection.

Reviews:

https://www.elperiodicomediterraneo.com/noticias/cuadernos/mediterrania-altea-grau-2018_1165717.html

http://www.diariodelaltoaragon.es/NoticiasDetalle.aspx?Id=111580





AGV 33. *La siembra*. Detail, installation view.
AGV 34. *Studies to fold a space*. Installation view.

Signs of Resistance was an exhibition held at the *La Carbonería Espacio de Arte*, a small gallery in the Spanish city of Huesca. I created two bodies of work for the show to be located in two different spaces. The first series was to be displayed in the gallery space across two different rooms, while the second, was a small site-specific piece made for a built-in shelf.

The ideas behind these two series were to continue developing the work initiated in *[Distance]* and *Against Syntax* and further my research into both the suggestion and materiality of visual language. My aim was to create visual metaphors and generate different temporalities in the artworks: firstly, transmit and engage with the idea of page through a dual format; and secondly enhance this experience through drawing, colour and visual effects.

Process of work

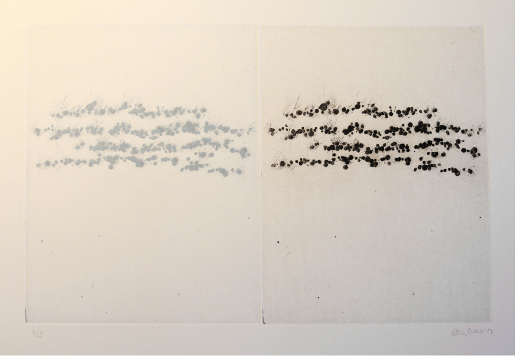
The process to develop this project started when I visited the gallery space, which was only one-and-a-half months before the show. The space is quite small, and like the name indicates, it was the old coal yard. The space recalls a traditional house showing the internal wooden structure. The first visit was very useful to be able to see the light of the space, the size of the rooms, the materials used for the architecture and to find out about the existence of a built-in shelf.

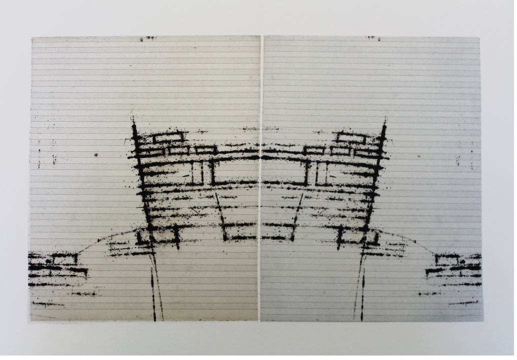
I decided to develop a new body of work structured in three series of artworks. One of them would be using the space of the shelf; the second one would be of small size in which I would make a pictographic interpretation of the same poem that inspired *[Distance]*, but in a much more intimate and exhaustive way; and the third piece would try to play with scale and colour and with the space of the gallery.

I started working with the *Letters*, which was the name of the poem I would base one of the series. The poem talks about how a seed-holder ‘saws words’, words that are still in shell and can’t say anything yet, imagining the power they’ll have when they break that cover.

I developed a series of four two-part prints using steel plates, etching the incisions and lines very deeply. The drawings were inspired by imagining an arrangement of words sawn in soil, where groups of indiscriminate words, happen to be together.

In this piece, I played again with the mirroring of the images, but I dedicated more time to the printing process. I included chine-collé[80] to one of the pieces, which in this case was a ruled paper and I also played with the *controestampa* (as I did in *Red*), with colour and repetition. In two of the final prints of this series, instead of creating a mirror effect by folding the paper, I printed the same plate twice next to each other. That way the design doesn't appear mirrored creating more of an echo, a reiteration.





AGV 35. *Letters.* Detail of one of the plates of the series.
AGV 36. *Letters I and II.* Etching and chine-collé on steel.

La siembra, the second body of work, was an installation composed of a series of prints of different sizes, a frottage and three assembled prints. I began the composition by working on the main print to be located in the corner of one of the spaces. The poem for *Letters* also inspired the drawings for this piece. Two panels composed the piece, one was made using a polymer plate in which I used a design taken from a photograph of sunbeams, and the other one was a traditional etching. The photograph was taken and manipulated during the time I was in the process of working the etching. Incorporating the sunbeams, my intention was to add a new component, a different poetics or interpretation to the graphic language I was using.

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[80] Chine-collé is a printing technique where the image is transferred to a surface that is bonded to the plate in the printing process. This allows the printmaker to print on a much more delicate surface, such as thinner paper, which pulls finer details off the plate; and to add colour or different textures to the print.

I continued elaborating the plates to make the assembled prints. These ones were made from a frottage I made on my journey to Huesca to visit the gallery space. In that first trip I went to visit the old castle of the city, located on a hill just outside the old town. It was there that I found a big stone with a very peculiar texture. It seemed to be the marks of water or some sort of erosion created with oxide, as it was exposed outdoors. The texture looked like an inscription; I returned with some paper and graphite to make a drawing and a frottage of the stone.

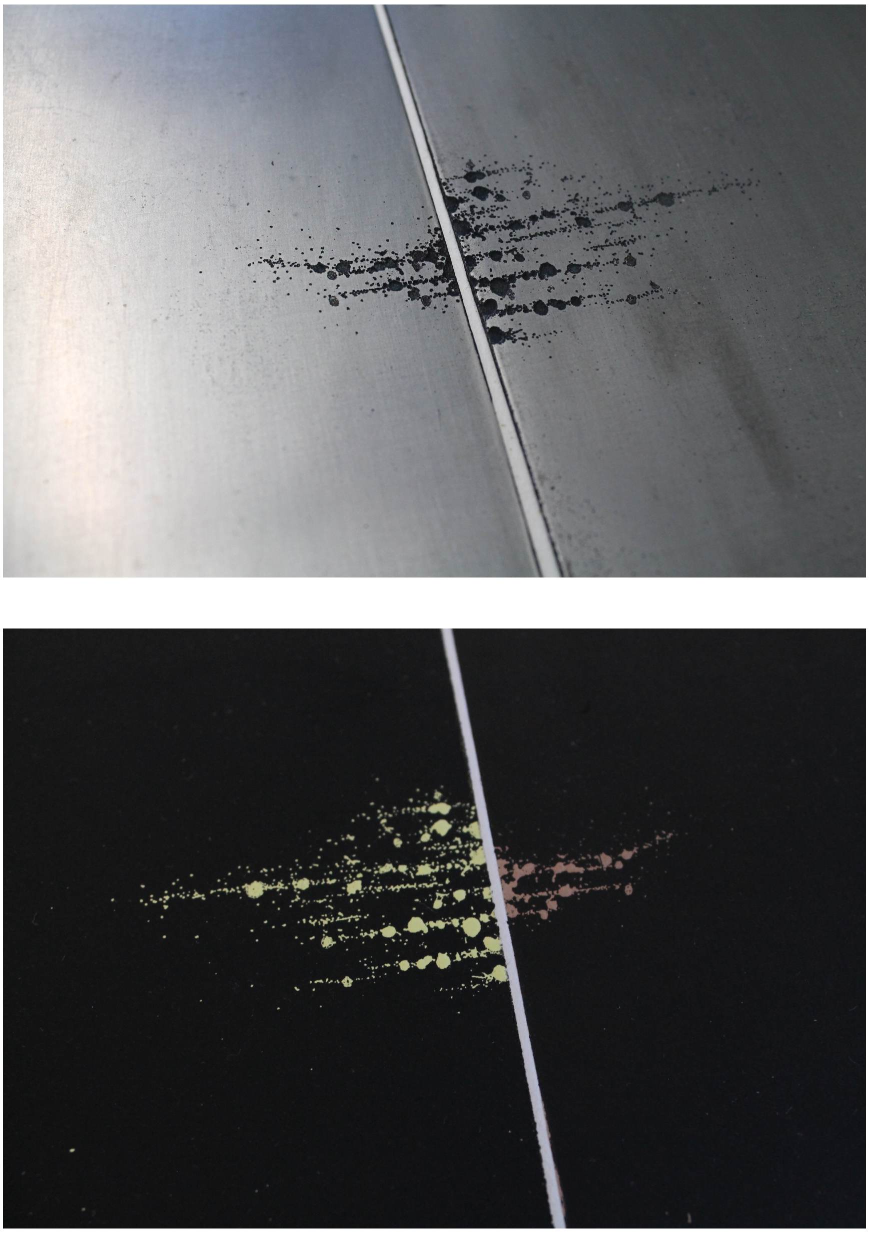
I created the *La siembra* on that action, trying to incorporate some of the elements of the place: the colours, traces, faint marks of the stone embodying that experience into the boundaries of an opened book. I printed the back of the plates in a fluorescent orange colour to transmit the oxidization found on the surface of the stone. During the printing process, I also found that by folding part of the print, I could enhance that effect.

For the final installation of the pieces, I cut down the prints without leaving any margins and installed the pieces on the wall playing with the fluorescent colour and the shadows coming from the folds.

For the last piece, *Studies to fold a space*, I decided to experiment with the folds of the space, the pleats of the shelf. The word 'pleat' derives from the Greek *plectos* and the Latin *pli* which means 'fold'. There many words in languages derived from Latin that incorporate that root, often used in combination with a prefix or suffix, for example 'duplicate', 'replica', 'simplify', etc. Therefore, the word pleat or fold not only describes the action of folding something, it also embeds emotions and abstract thoughts.

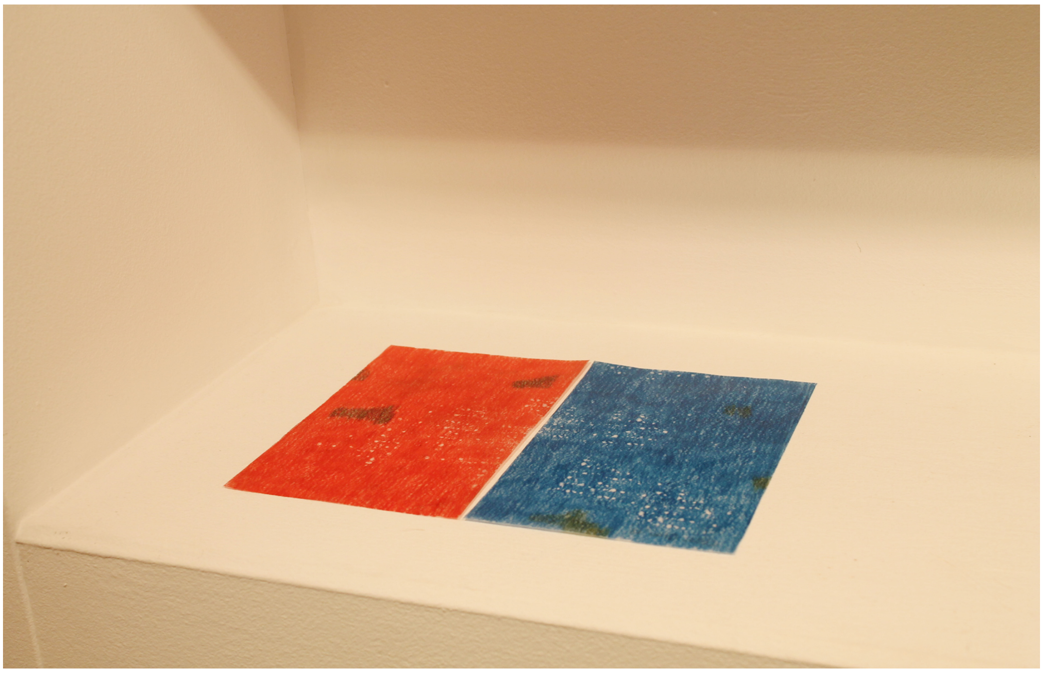
Normally, we understand by pleat a sheet of material folded, creating a 'valley' with a 'mountain' (using terminology from origami). A fold can also create rhythms, essentially, just pairing and grouping them; an example of it could be an accordion or concertina book. In architecture, the term of fold is also used to opening up the design process and a research technique to easily build quick walls by folding paper. In this case, my aim was to unfold the architecture of the bookshelf in order to understand how pleats work in the space. I used that space as a small exhibition space to test out references and analogies between the gutter and the edges of the page, which are the elements that circumscribe the double page.

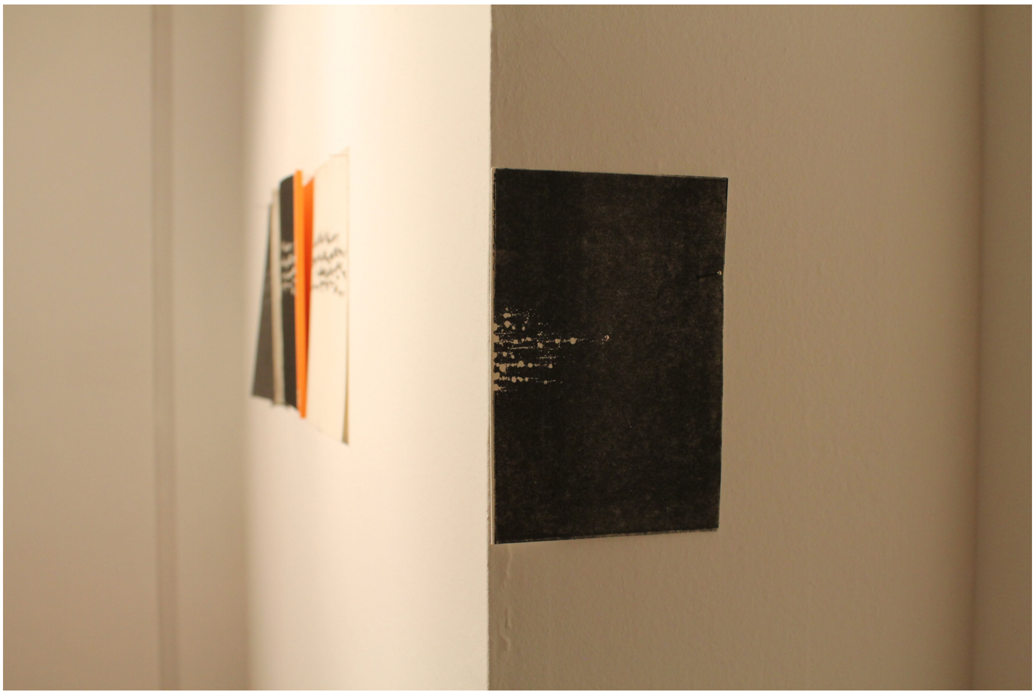
I combined a number of small drawings and prints with an arrangement of vertical and horizontal lines across the creases of the shelf, establishing connections between them. I also complemented this installation with a series of three frottages hanging from the wall next to the shelf. These pieces completed the composition as they contained the orange lines used to highlight some of the folds of the space of the shelf.



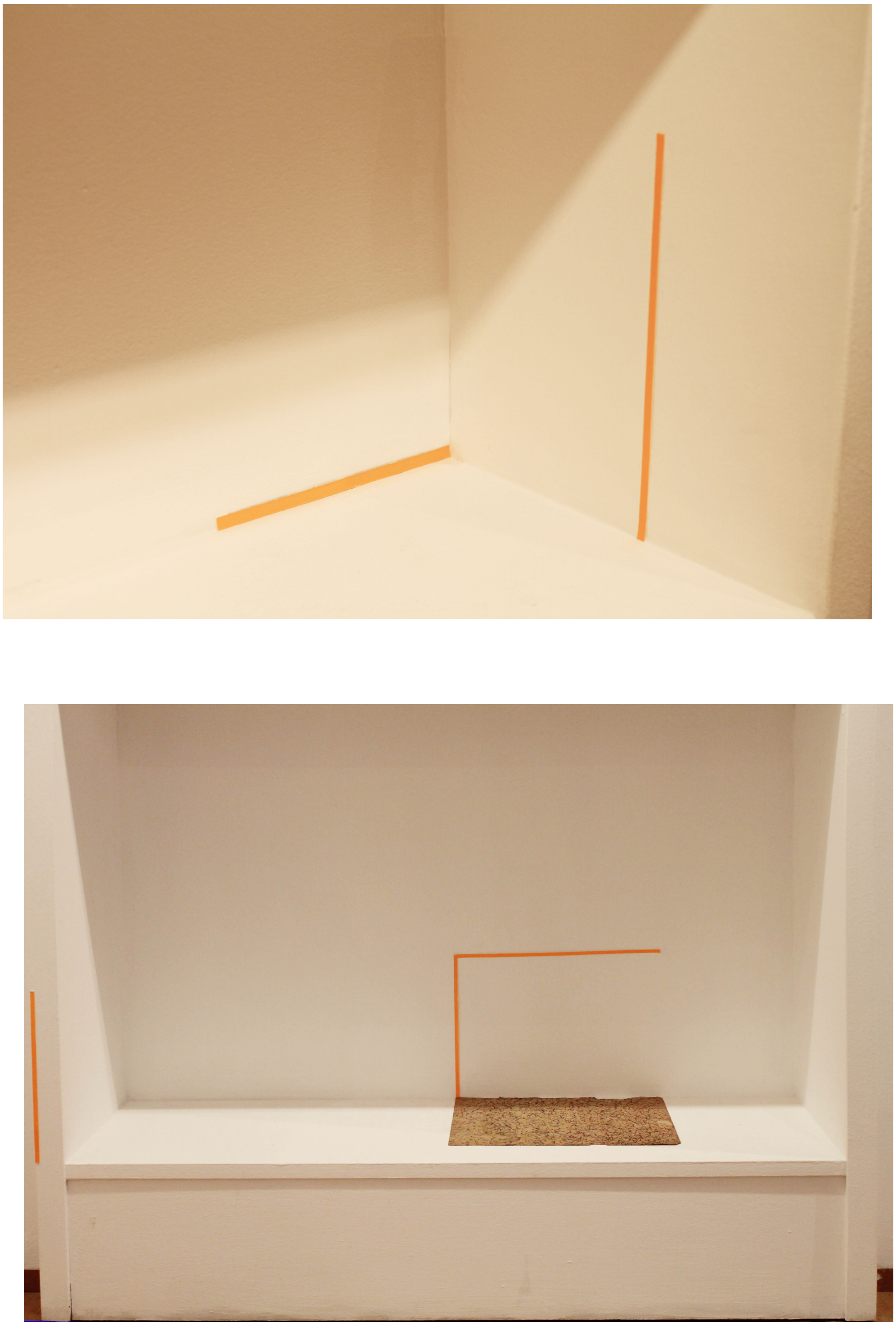
AGV 37. Detail of one of the plates and print.

Images of the final exhibition

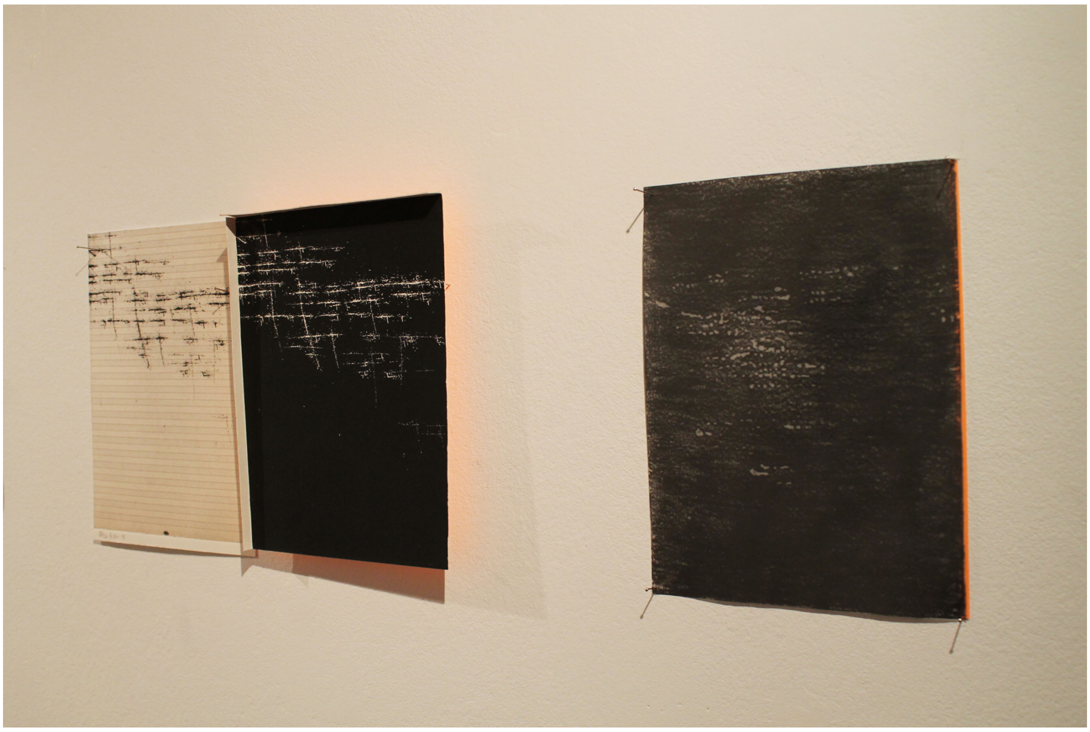


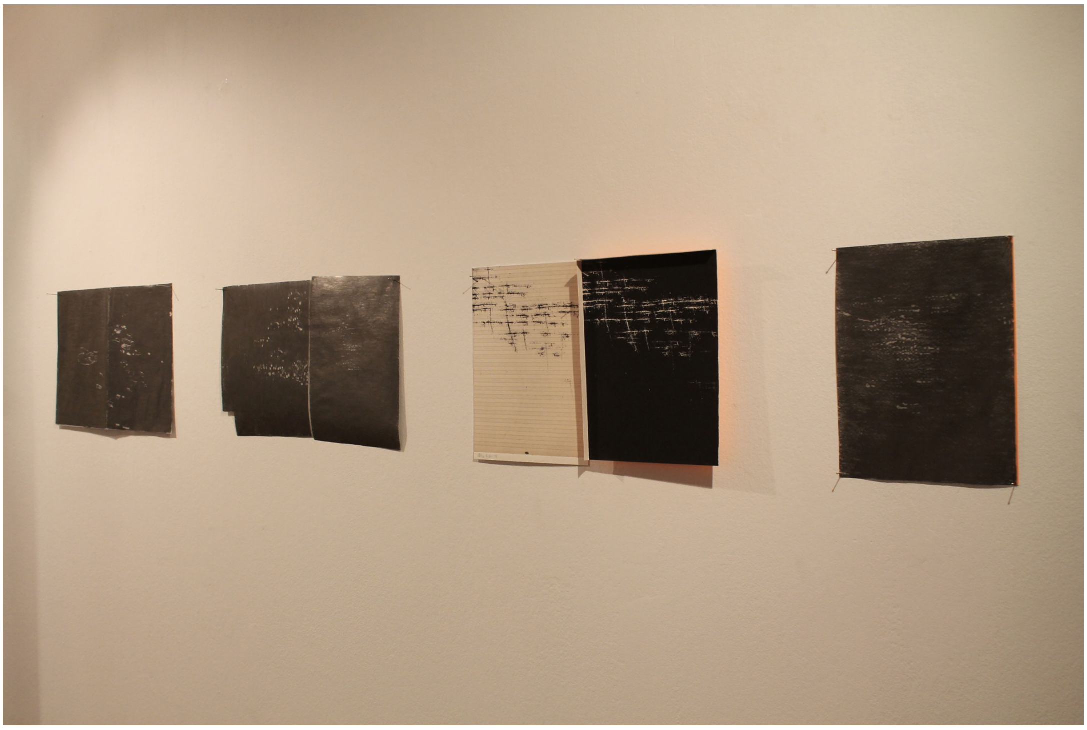


AGV 38. *La siembra.* Final exhibition views.
AGV 39. *Studies to fold a space.*



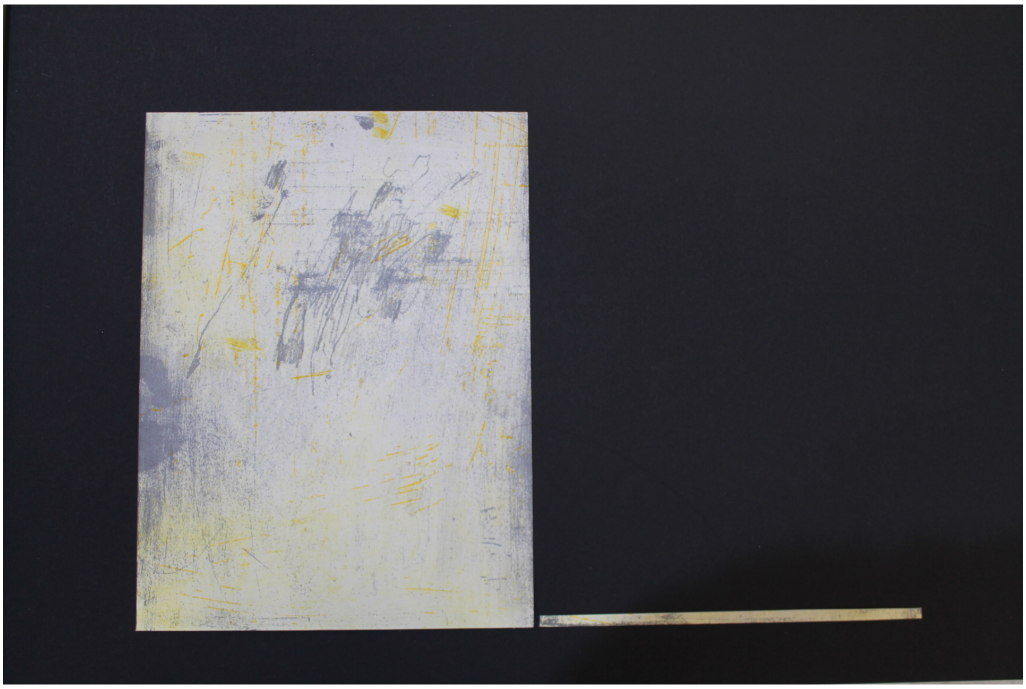
AGV 40 and 41. *Studies to fold a space.*

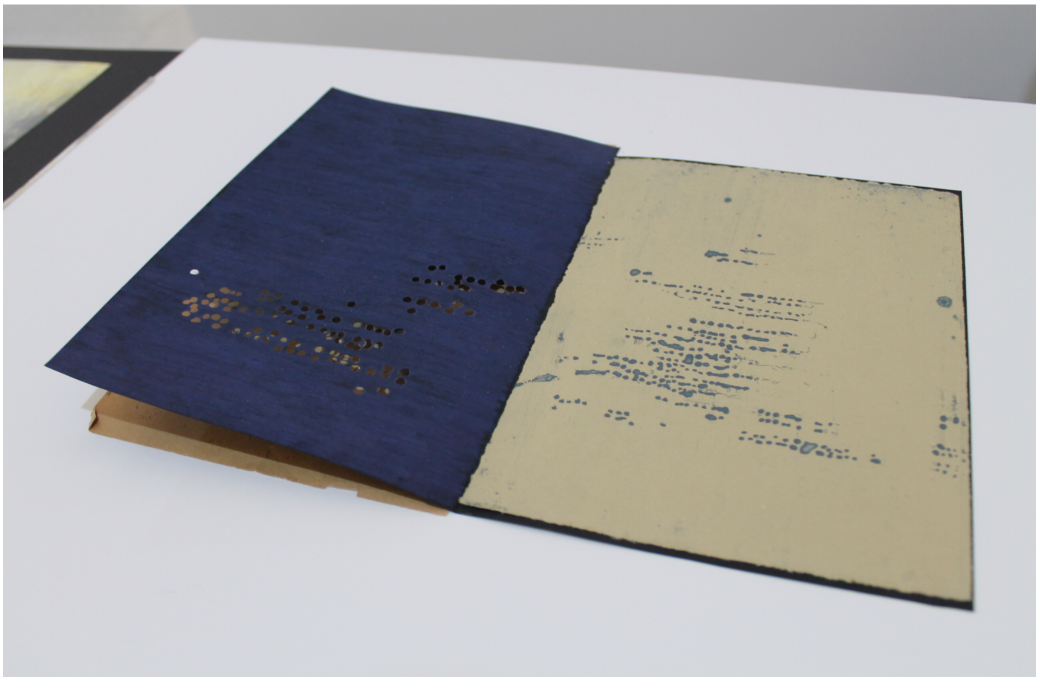




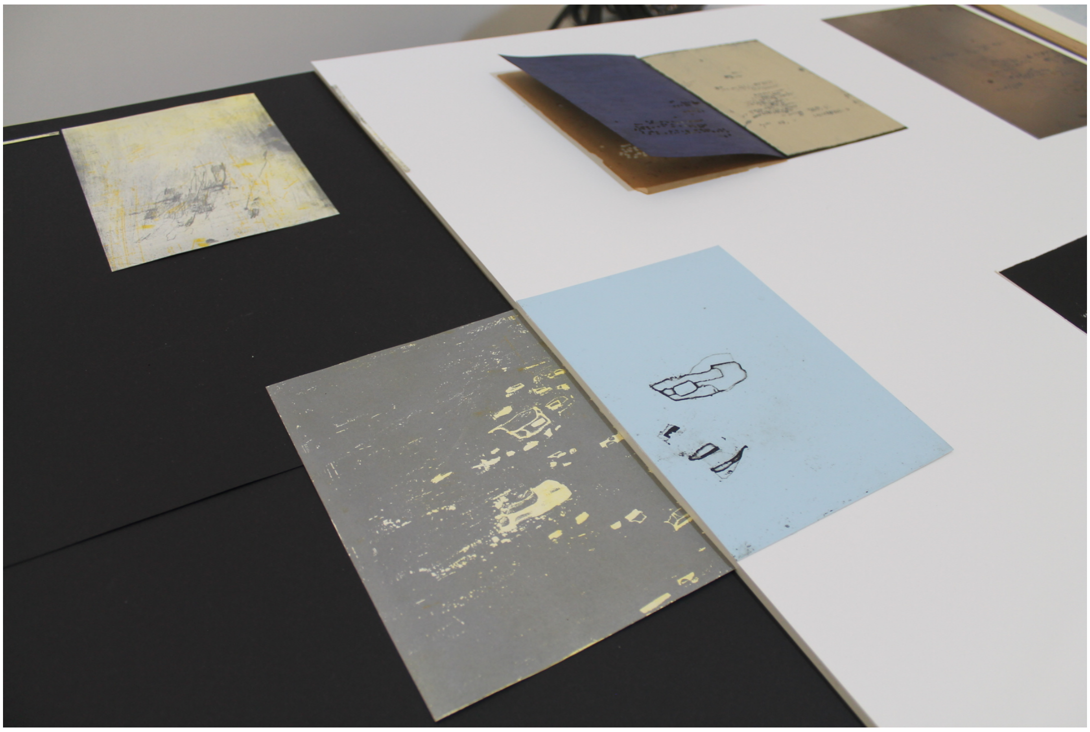
AGV 42 and 43. *Studies to fold a space.*

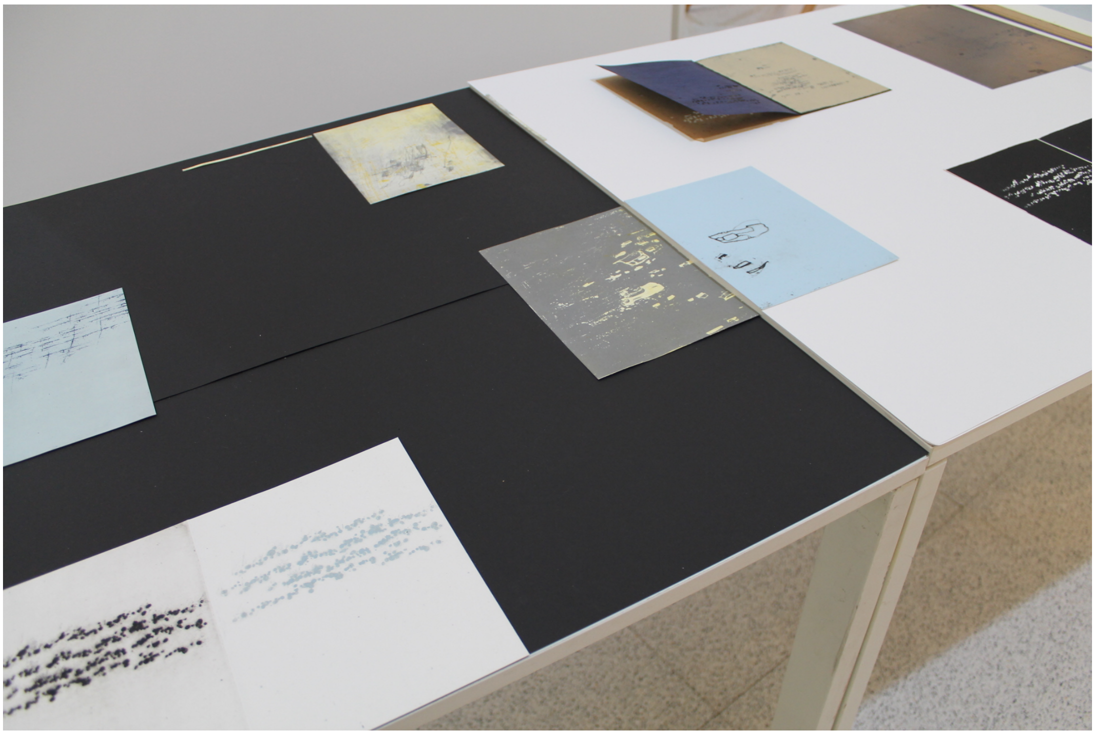
Images of the display at FigBilbao 2019





AGV 44 and 45. Detail of prints exhibited at FigBilbao 2018.





AGV 46 and 47. Details of the exhibiting table.

Conclusion

This project was the last body of work produced during the research period (2014–2019).

In previous chapters I set out central issues regarding the perception of the page through mirroring, duality, echo, materiality and the fold; notions that awake our awareness of the double page. From these discussions, arguments emerge for the shift in perception and reading of the double page spread. Following these discussions and questions which arose from the site-specific piece *[Distance],* one of my aims with this exhibition was to test out whether my work needed any context or reference to be read and if the idea of the opened book was transmitted.

These two exhibitions showed that the connection with the book is communicated not only through the printed images. The paper, ink, the colours used and especially the display and the combination of the different series of works, informed and marked the way artworks were perceived. Although the main exhibitions were at the Carboneria Gallery and CompARTE space[81], I also took part of a project in the art fair FigBilbao in 2019 where I could exhibit the series *Letters* and *De la siembra*. In all contexts, I adapted the works and deliberately engaged with the physical space.

With this new body of work, I experimented using a specific space, in this case the book shelf. Working on that installation, I realised that the perception of the page extends and becomes a broader concept, an idea that can be applied to interpret art practice. The format of the page is a site in itself. It is a place where specific work can be created and removed from the two-fold space loses all or a substantial part of its meaning.

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[81] Professor in Aesthetics at the Universitat Jaume I de Castelló wrote a review about this exhibition. Please see Appendix 6.

CHAPTER 5

THE EXTENDED PAGE: MATERIAL AND METAPHOR

Chapter 5

My own practice has been the platform not only to experiment, explore and test out ideas, but also to actively investigate. In the previous chapter, I reflected on a number of projects that I have developed during my investigation, however, in this final chapter, my aim is to further the enquiry on some of the ideas that came out of the time and experimentation in the studio.

In the majority of my artworks, but perhaps especially in *Constellations*, *[Distance]*, *La Siembra* and *Studies to Fold a Space,* I consider the role of the text. In this section, my aim is to analyse the idea of the suggestion of text. How the abence of it generates the question of the transparency of communication. I have analysed how artists, such as Dieter Roth, Jaroslav Kozlowsky, Ian McKeever and Jane Bustin dismantle the language, articulating and embodying a strong sense of visuality in their works.

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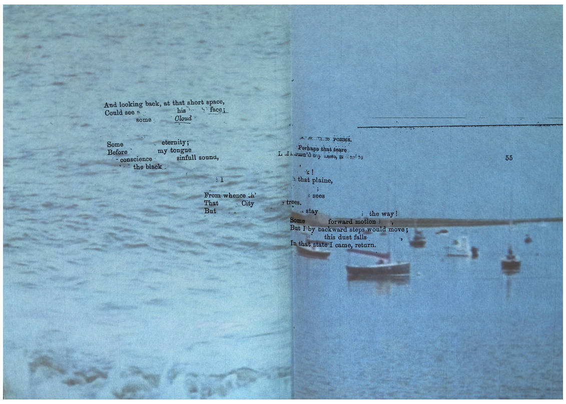
And looking back, at that short space,
Could see his face;
some Cloud
Some eternity;
Before my tongue
conscience sinfull sound,
the black
From whence th'
That City
But
POEMS.
Perhaps that teare
55
k!
that plaine,
sees
trees.
stay the way!
Some forward motion
But I by backward steps would move;
this dust falls
In that state I came, return.

5.1 A RATIONAL APPROACH TO TEXT

> What I enjoy in a narrative is not directly its content or even its structure, but rather the abrasions I impose upon the fine surface: I read on, I skip, I look up, I dip in again. Whence two systems of reading: one goes straight to the articulations of the anecdote, it considers the extent of the text, it ignores the play of language...the other reading skips nothing; it weights, it sticks to the text, it reads, so to speak, with application and transport, grasps at every point in the text the asyndeton which cuts the various languages–and not the anecdote.
>
> *The Pleasure of the Text*. Roland Barthes (1973)

Using a personal and expressive voice, Roland Barthes invites us to reflect on the nature and connotations of the text as well as the act of reading. Alluding to the reader's interpretations, he makes us feel sharp, intelligent and in dialogue with his literature. 'There are those', Barthes wrote, 'who want a text (an art, a painting) without a shadow, without fecundity, without productivity, a sterile text'. And he continues 'the text needs its shadow: this shadow is a bit of ideology, a bit of representation, a bit of subject: ghosts, pockets, traces, necessary clouds…'. Barthes doesn't want a text without implications and that´s why he uses shadow's metaphor, concept that he later develops in what he calls 'voice'.

Barthes expresses the duality of texts, like a double voice created between literal words and metaphors. But what is a metaphor? The Collins Concise English Dictionary defines it as: *a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied to an object or action that it does not literally denote in order to imply a resemblance*. It is an echoed voice used to enhance signification by giving a second interpretation. This expression is also posited by Jorge Luís Borges when he writes that a metaphor should 'be felt by the reader or the hearer' (2000, p. 27). Borges goes through many patterns of metaphors in his essay 'The Craft of Verse', concluding that one of the strengths of it is to 'suggest' and not to 'argument' ideas. For him, when ideas come through suggestion and poetry, they are more likely for us to accept them. That suggestion that needs to be felt by the reader, is perhaps a similar idea to the 'shadow' or that 'bit of ideology' expressed by Barthes.

There is no doubt that text is a code, but while language is an open-ended code or structure for Barthes and a subtle way for suggesting ideas for Borges, Umberto Eco finds the traces and sections that hold significance and allegory together.

According to Umberto Eco, a text is much more than tautological linguistic systems. On the contrary, texts use codes, and a code allow us to 'enunciate events as well as metasemiotic[82] judgements that call into question the legitimacy of the code itself' (1979, p. 67). That is, codes have two messages: one that refers to original ideas and experiences and the other one that places a doubt on the structure of the code itself. Moreover, Eco points out in his essay 'The Semantics of Metaphor', that a code has also a cultural identity and thus allows us to assign new semiotic marks on them, what he refers to as 'rule-governed creativity' (ibid.). That means that, even an apparently closed code, in this case a text, has multiple interpretations, therefore it is an open structure. Eco analyses this phenomenon through rhetorical figures[83] (used to enrich the aesthetic usage of language), tracing metaphors back to a subjacent chain of metonymic connections, which constitute the context of the code. According to Eco's theory, rhetoric figures have a primary or 'analogical' explanation in language, which connects and roots with the closed edge of the code. The metonymic chains founded in this theory show metaphor's complexity and therefore, creativity in language, as they take us to a more abstract use of language. Metaphor, in this sense, becomes a new semantic unit that is able to create content.

Both Barthes and Eco's approach to the structure and signification of texts are applicable to different contexts, particularly to creative and artistic frameworks. Although it is not the aim of this thesis to analyse how texts function or are designed, I am interested in questioning what they evoke and how? What do they transmit? Does text have 'aura'[84] like some artworks do? The phenomenologist

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[82] 'Metasemiotic' relates to the function of language in which a signifier is transferred from its normal signified, adding a metaphorical meaning.

[83] A figure of speech or rhetorical figure is any of the forms of expression, which give beauty, variety, force, etc., to a composition in accordance with the theory and principles of rhetoric such as metaphor, metonym, hyperbole, repetition, alliteration, assonance, etc.

[84] Aura is a quality integral to an artwork that cannot be communicated through mechanical reproduction techniques. Taking the term from 1936 Walter Benjamin essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction'. Benjamin argued that 'even the most perfect reproduction of a work of art is lacking in one element: Its presence in time

Vilém Flusser (1920–1991) analyses the nature of writing in a very particular way in his essay ‘The Gesture of Writing’. He considers the original and physical form of the act of writing (on stone and on different materials) and describes that writing is cultural and follows a behaviour pattern (Flusser in Roth, 2012). However, according to Flusser, writing also has an artistic gesture, a form of movement associated with a particular type of consciousness. Flusser’s theory of gesture proposes a new way of defining and valuing the way human beings make and share meaning.

These concepts help us to understand how subliminal meaning is created, how texts go beyond the literal meaning of the words, and although writing is a vehicle and transcribe linguistic statements, it also induces implications, associations and traces of consciousness that change depending on the recipient.

The suggestion of text through abstract drawings has emerged as a significant visual element within my artworks to signify the presence of surface and materiality but also to frustrate the attempts of reading. The generation of a number of paradoxical readings through abstract and metaphorical language is what I aim to investigate in the following section.

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and space, its unique existence at the place where it happens to be.' He referred this unique cultural context, for example 'it's presence in time and space' as it's 'aura'.

5.2 SUGGESTING TEXT

Where does drawing end and writing begin and where does writing end and drawing begin? My research has brought me, both through theory and my own practice, to consider the role of text within the double page spread. When we think about a double spread, one of the first images that come to mind is an opened book with some text. Consequently, with no doubt, text is one of the most suggestive and powerful bonds that the page carries.

The use of words and text in art, as well as the connection between poetry and the visual arts has always been an area of confluence for poets, writers and artists. Particularly in art movements such as Dada, Surrealism, Futurism, concrete poetry and Conceptualism, the relationship we have with reading and writing through artworks has created a liminal space between the two practices.[85] Especially in the book arts field, there is a broad practice that tends to move away from the narrative layout and remove the symbols that allow the reader to reach the meaning. These artists who experiment with the use of the material properties and linguistic resonance of the language, frame a context that helps us not only to understand the difference between perception and conception in pieces between image and text, but also to comprehend what the artists were proposing with their creative practice.

My research is positioned closer to what Simon Morley calls *inter-media*, which for him it is the interaction between the visual and the verbal (2003, p. 12). According to Morley, this relationship refers to the recognition of the material and performative side of the letters, underlining the fact that writing is also a visual language. That is, that writing expresses through its form as well as through the message it carries.

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[85] I have studied the use of text in concrete poetry with more depth in two seminars. The first one was part of the reading group with MA Book Arts and it was co-coordinated with Gustavo Grandal Montero. It was held at the Chelsea Special Collection Room. We selected a number of artists books by concrete poets such as Eugene Gomringer, Haroldo de Campos, Decio Pignatari, F. Gullar and Bob Cobbing amongst others. Pleasee see Appendices 7 and 8. The second seminar was held at the Special Collections Rooms of the Faculty of Fine Arts in Valencia, and I also selected a number of books by Jiri Kólar, Fernando Millás and Marc Saporta. With these activities I could investigate the use of poetic text, typography, colour and the creative layout of pages of this movement, giving me a broader context of some of the practices that make use of verbal explorations.

Closer influences for this research are artists who take language and the written word as the subject of the work itself, rather than to influence interpretation of an accompanying image. For example, the Lettrist[86] movement with Romanian artist Isidore Isou (1925–2007), and other existentialist artists from the post-war period such as Jean Dubuffet (1901–1985) and Cy Twombly (1928–2010)[87] experimented with these ideas. Writing and image-making share common roots, and the visual nature of the inscribed sign, has been studied by art historians such as Ignace Gelb (*A Study of Writing*, 1952), Johanna Drucker (especially in *The Alphabetic Labyrinth,* 1995), Martin Lyons (*A History of Reading and Writing*, 2010), Tim Ingold (*Lines*, 2008), Stephen Farthing and Janet McKenzie (*The Drawn Word*, 2014) amongst others. These investigations are articulated around Peirce's definition that images are iconic signs (close to reality) while words are symbolic because they are related to their reference only by convention.

My aim here is not to analyse practices that are in between writing and drawing, or to speculate about the linguistic resonances of the text. This section of the thesis aims to centre in an argument about *what* is and *how* the suggestion of text is articulated.

While various scholars of word and image practices have carried out investigations and studies looking at the materiality of words and texts, there isn't much research that attempts that explore the subject in such particular aesthetic terms. To carry out this analysis, I have used a practice-based and analytical methodology involving the creative practice into the research to be able to legitimise the outcomes and generate new knowledge.

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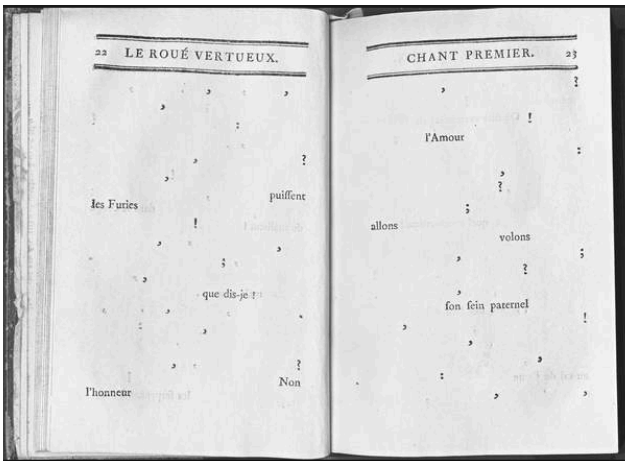
[86] According to artist Isidore Isou (founder of the movement) the aim of the Paris based Lettrist movement, was to loosen the grip of the word and to reveal the purer presence of the letter (Isou in Foster, 1983). In practice, Lettrists employed both calligraphic writing and printed typography to create artworks that ranged from plain letters to gestural traces.

[87] I take a number of artists from the post-war period (1945–1970) such as Dubuffet and Twombly as references because they were inspired by Heidegger and Sartre philosophies that attempted to understand the realities of political oppressions. As a result, they would take special attention to embody in the word pure and authentic values. Evoking primal and archaic forms of writing, these artists work on creating a slippage between gesture and surface.

In the next two sub-sections I will provide more context by analysing a number of historical and contemporary artworks that compose the roots of the connections between the text and the page. Through this I aim to see how language is dismantled, articulating and embodying a strong sense of visuality.

5.2.1 SIGNS



22 LE ROUÉ VERTUEUX.

les Furies

puiſſent

que dis-je !

l'honneur

Non

CHANT PREMIER. 23

l'Amour

allons

volons

ſon ſein paternel

Figure 51. Coqueley de Chaussepierre, *Le Roué Vertueux. Poëme en Prose en Quatre Chants, Propre à Faire, en Cas de Besoin, un Drame à Jouer Deux Fois par Semaine (*1770)

Absent and present,

saying and silent,

on the page or invisible.

The text itself or the absence of it, lives in the page. As discussed in Chapters 1 and 3, its trace structures the page and directs our reading and time through the folds. In this section I am interested in analysing how we read pages that contain very little of text, traces that open up a reflection around the significant value of the void, the blank spaces and the cavities of language.

Several artists have been interested in exploring these voids understood as relevant spaces in between words and lines. What is this void saying and why do some artists prefer to omit than to speak?[88]

Early typographic inventions show a few examples of ‘silent pages’ that aim to foster the possibility of different readings. Coqueley de Chaussepierre (Charles-George Doucet, 1676–1754) published in 1770 *Le Roué Vertueux. Poëme en Prose en Quatre Chants, Propre à Faire, en Cas de Besoin, un Drame à Jouer Deux Fois par Semaine*.[89] This book was important because it was the first book to be illustrated using the aquatint technique, and also because the author left out most of the words in the text. Punctuation marks and blank spaces are the only traces remaining but generating possibilities of different readings and interpretations and leaving the reader to fill in the rest.

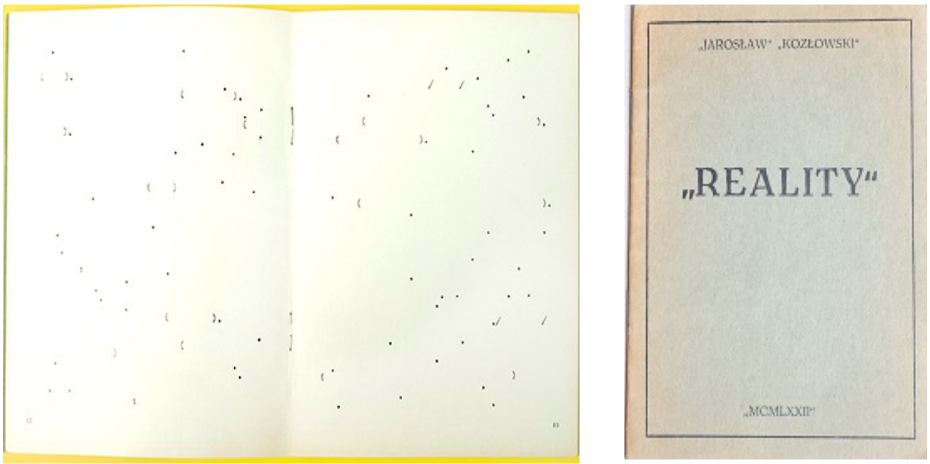


Figure 52. Jarosław Kozłowski *Reality.* (1972)

Another and more contemporary example is *Reality* (1972)[90] by Jarosław Kozłowski. According to an X Marks the Bökship review part of ‘Publication as

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[88] Part of the research done for this section was done through the second display of artists´ books at the Chelsea Library. Please see Appendix 8.

[89] Link to the complete book: http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k10568643/f35.image

[90] ‘Reality’ by Jarosław Kozłowski is an off-set printed artists’ book first published in 1972 by the Association of Polish Artists and Designers (Związek Polskich Artystów Plastyków, ZPAP). Matt’s Gallery and X Marks the Bökship, London co-published the third edition of

Practice' series, *Reality* is based on Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. It is a precise copy of the third sub-chapter of 'The Transcendental Power of Pure Judgement' (Analysis of Principles) from *Doctrine of Elements* (X Marks the Bökship, 2014). Polish conceptual artist Kozłowski creates books marked by a critical discourse with art and the mechanisms of perception and the building of correlations between the grammar of the artistic language and the sphere of meaning. Other books such as *Lesson* (1973) and *Exercise of Aesthetics* (1976)[91] reflect also in the presence of a text.

Although the book is abstract because it escapes a formal interpretation of the original text, this piece uses punctuation marks to connect with representation. These notations have no external meaning to themselves while, simultaneously, not being completely empty they constitute a metalinguistic reality. They are traces; ruins that still structure the rhythm and breath of a previous text's existence. The pages conform a landscape where the interline is the only possible text. It is like a desert of silence that allows for only read intuitions.

This piece connects with a series of works by Dieter Roth called *Stupidogramms (1962)*. These are grids of printed commas on small pages with random looping pencil lines intersecting and connecting in a sort of absurdist experimentation[92]. Each sheet was entirely covered in rows of typed commas, where Roth drew little circles, marks or drawings. As in *Reality*, we only have the representational element of the comma and some drawings that connect a group of them. These small drawings make the reader try to form associations to find some sort of meaning, however, the significance is totally abstract. Roth experiments with every element of the book by decontextualising it. *Stupidogramms* were first exhibited as single prints in gallery walls and years later recuperated in a book format. The reading of that work changes depending on how it is presented. In book form, this piece becomes a reproduction, it gains narration, the prints become pages and the reader can spend time studying and reading each composition and appreciate the

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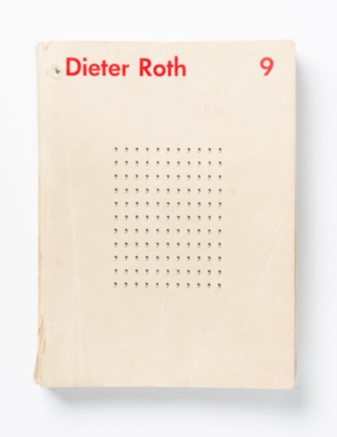
the book to accompany the exhibition *Fragmentation of Time and Space* at the Matt's Gallery, London in 2014.

[91] *Lesson* (1973) and *Exercise of Aesthetics* (1976) as well as *Reality* (edition of 2014) have been studied at the Chelsea Special Collection.

[92] The originals were 300 works on paper exhibited at the Arthur Köpcke gallery in Copenhagen in 1963 and then collected in the Volume 9 of *Collected Works* (1975).

gesture, colours, traces of the drawings.[93] In the Arthur Köpcke gallery space, more than 200 original pieces were displayed covering the entire walls. The effect must have been impressive, and it would have become more abstract as the connection with the page and the book became less obvious.[94] Using Richard Hamilton's words, 'the book for Roth is a plastic entity which can be entered from back or front – it can accept the limitation of attachment of sheets along common edge or not. (…) The work of Dieter Roth must be placed in this context of type as a medium of high art'.

Dieter Roth develops a similar idea in *Ideograms* (1974), which is part of *Collected Works* Volume 2.[95] This work is an example of concrete poetry experimentation by the artist. The cover shows four little books or sketchbooks that helps us to predict the four parts structure of the book creating a book container for four books.[96]



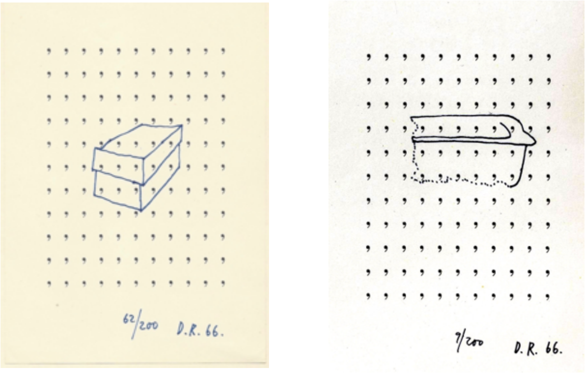

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Figure 53 (left). Dieter Roth, cover of Volume 9 *Collected Works* (1975).
Figure 54 (middle and right). Dieter Roth, *Stupidogramms* (1962).

A range of approaches can be seen in this eclectic artist book: repeated punctuation marks arrangements, compositions and constructions of fixed groups of letters to make words or blocks of words and use of typographic elements to emulate a landscape, amongst many other arrangements. Monotype lettersets allowed him to orient single types and to exercise his interest in mirroring and symmetry by using characters such are ‘d’, ‘b’, ‘p’ and ‘q’ to make visual games with inverse and reverse. In this piece, Roth divorces language from its meaning and creates compositional abstractions guided for aesthetics rather than linguistic value. He photocopied the original material to make this volume, and the quality of the printing system part of the piece, which adds materiality and visual texture to the surface of pages.

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[93] Volume 9 of *Collected Works* (1975) was studied from the Chelsea Special Collection.

[94] I studied a selection of *Stupidogramms* from an original source of material displayed part of the exhibition *Order/Disorder* (29th April–30th June, 2017) at the Carolina Nitsch Project Room, New York

[95] Volume 2 of *Collected Works* (1974) was also studied from the Chelsea Special Collection.

[96] According to Sarah Suzuki, *Ideograms* is conformed by *bok 1956-59, smaller works 1957* and *material 1959* (2013, p. 12) and it was influenced by Gomriger's concrete poetry.

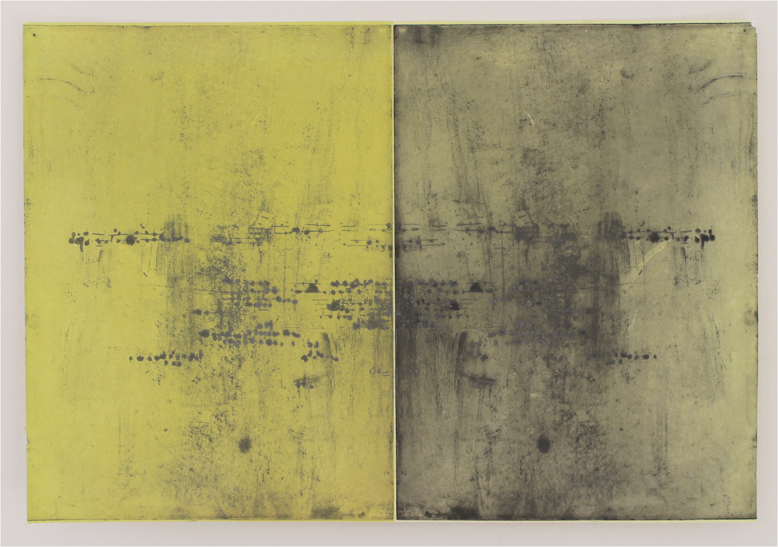
These aren’t the only examples as there are many contemporary artists that create works with the aim of suggesting through the absence of text. A further example would be Joëlle Tuerlinckx’s exhibition at the Arnolfini Gallery in Bristol in 2014, *WOR(L)D(K) IN PROGRESS?*, where the artist revisited new ways of presenting pages and written language using pictographic rhetoric as a way of making the abstract ordering of elements in texts, images and graphic forms explicit. Also, the Spanish artist Mar Arza investigates with her poetic approach the blank spaces, the interlines and silence and the typographic traces of the text, especially in her works *Desiertos Cicatriz* (2012) and *Entrelineas* (2008).

These artworks show how these methods of suggesting text generate a perceptual tension for the reader with two layers: the page itself and the drawing. They generate complexity by perceptually opening up the pictorial space within the image. The employment of materiality and the deconstruction of written language attempts to generate a type of image that may sit at the precipice of our perceptual understanding of illusion and representation. These ways of constructing an artwork enable the visual image to sit just within reach of our understanding and visual reading.

5.3 SUGGESTING SIGNIFICANCE: PERSONAL EXPERIMENTS

Since the beginning of this research, my art practice has embraced an interest in textual references by using certain appearances and fragmenting their characteristic elements. The artworks *Against Syntax* (2016), *[Distance]* (2017) and *Signs of Resistance* (2018), deliberately employ the strategy of suggesting a visual reading by playing with the generation of new meaning through visual interruption structures.

When working on *Against Syntax*, I made a series of smaller prints and tests. One of these was *Mirrored Conversations*. My intention with this piece was to experiment with the notions of echo and mirroring but also to create ambiguity and suggestion.



AGV 48. *Mirrored Conversation_V* (2016).

In this print, there is no conventional written element, however it is full of rhetoric figures such as metonymies, repetitions and metaphors. I produced the print with the idea of creating a visual language that could recall a familiar language, but it was also my purpose to create a gap between communication and interpretation.

In the place where we normally find text, I used a pictographic language that attempts to imitate linguistic elements or forms to conceptualise information into a visual environment. I wanted to create an encounter with a familiar sign, a reminiscence of a previous existence to generate a dialogue between the artwork and the reader by creating a code. A code, which aims to stay away from language, we are familiar with. Although I am aware that readers always inherit conceptual assumptions related to perception, my purpose was to bring these into dialogue with my own work.

To configure this dialogue, I had to develop research in the studio. The process of intaglio played a fundamental role, providing the platform where I could question further how surface might evoke perceptions and new readings within an image. The marks and shades were the product of accidents and the several immersions in acid, producing enigmatic but suggestive prints that resist the tension between reality and fiction. I experimented with the printing processes, playing with effects such as: use of colour, repetition, layers, shin-collés, controestampas (see Chapter 4 4.3) and roller printing. The processes were used to enhance the meaning of the work, creating echoes, folds and reflections.

For *Mirrored Conversations* and the series of experiments for *Signs of Resistance*, I combined subtle and deep incisions on the steel plates that I then printed using a special hand-made ink, mixing graphite powder with medium oil and extender.[97] The graphite powder gives a slight shining and metallic effect to the work as well as bringing a connection to handwriting with pencil.

The use of graphite in the inking led me to experiment with the direct drawing on the surface of the print using graphite or carbon. I even printed some plates making a frottage directly on the metal (see *Against Syntax* and *Signs of Resistance*). This action was important to reflect the tactile touch and contact with the making. The drawing brings more texture and demands closer inspection of the surface. This also generates a split in the viewing of the work in terms of distances. Firstly, the distance required to see the print in its entirety, and secondly, the proximity required to see the drawing detail. The reader is captured in some sort of communication experience, in a similar way that Marcel Broodthaers implied the reader using rectangular marks in his version of *Un Coup de Dés*. The artist not only placed visual elements into the space where readers were expecting text, but he also gave form to the words by ‘drawing’ bars that imitated the shape of the words.

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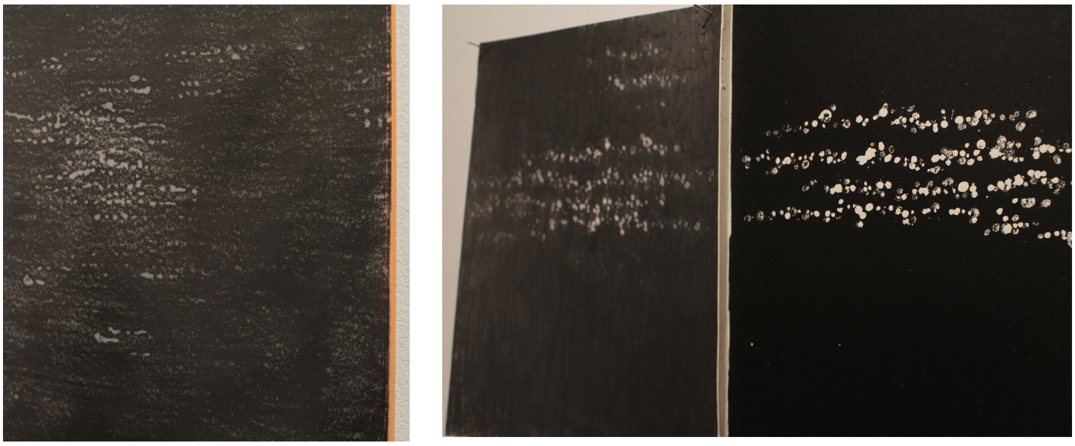
[97] Medium oil is added to the printing ink when it's too thick or stiff to obtain the right consistency and viscosity to print. Extender is a transparent white medium that reduces the colour strength of the ink without adding any white colour to it, which is useful to create transparencies or if the pigment of the ink is very tinctorially strong.

My idea was to develop this further and demonstrate that through the abstraction and synthesis of a complex language system, we can create a structure of language that is much broader, profound, instinctive and primary to establish a communication.



AGV 49 and 50. Detail. Proofs and work in progress for *Signs of Resistance*.

My work in *Mirrored Conversations* as well as *Signs of Resistance* pieces were an important for this research in exploring how and why certain configuration of visual language only communicates through the evocation of reader’s own experience with books and written material?

Although I have used here a few examples of work, this experimentation has been present throughout the whole research period. Through repetitive marks, often organised in lines and creating paragraph-like structures, I try to generate references with something that we know well: text. Simultaneously, I also try to eradicate topological references with suggestions of the presence of writing. This argument was initiated by Johanna Drucker’s *Figuring the Word: Essays on Books, Writing, and Visual Poetics* (Granary Books, 1998). Drucker analyses the structure, meaning, layout and many other elements related to book arts and text-based art practices. Unlike Eco, Drucker centres her investigations in the word itself rather than analysing the whole text as a structure. Her ideas are rooted by Ferdinand de Saussurre’s (1857–1913) theories and his queries on the nature of language and writing. Saussurre established a role for the sign that linked the visual arts and language, stating that if the written sign consisted of something typographic, then the word, the letter, had the same materiality than the visual arts (Saussurre in John Earl, 2012, p. 73). As I mentioned in previous sections, Saussurre established a role for the sign that linked the visual arts and language, stating that if the written sign consisted of something typographic, then the word, the letter had the same materiality than the visual arts (Saussurre in Drucker, 2014, p. 57).

In my work, I try to take the inherent duality of writing (the quality to manifest itself through the phenomenal presence representation and to perform the signification of language) but to also create a visual contradiction to generate a new perceived space. I want to produce a rupture between a recognisable structure and a distant exterior world.

In the next section I have selected the work of two artists Jane Bustin and Ian McKeever, that have helped me to unpick different strategies to engender duality, materiality and also site-specificity.

5.4 THE MATERIAL PAGE: JANE BUSTIN AND IAN MCKEEVER

To explore how the double page can be read and operate within different spaces and surfaces, I offer a new interpretation of a number of projects by two different artists. Through this analysis of their artworks, my aim is to show how the double page is articulated and suggests meaning through the use of duality, echo, and the notion of fold.

Although these two artists approach art from different perspectives, they share similar attitudes and positions towards painting. They both create what I call 'material pages' and look for create tension between literal and metaphorical signification.

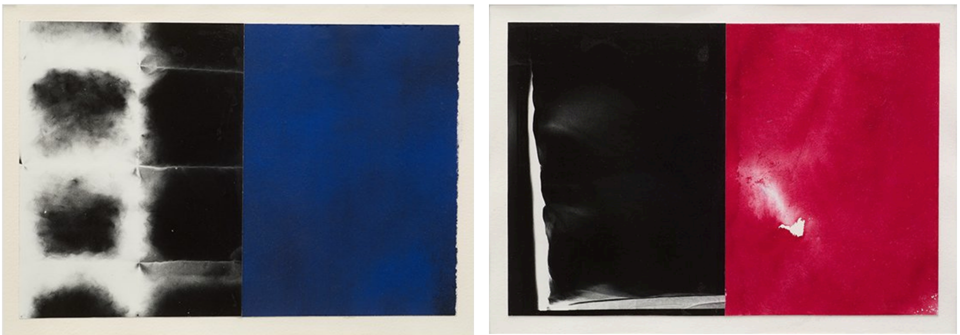


Figure 55 and 56. *Eagduru Study III and V,* Ian McKeever *(*2014).

The first two (and connected) artworks I would like to consider are *Against Architecture* (2013–2017) and *Eagduru* (2013) by Ian McKeever.[98] In both sets of artworks, the artist uses the element of the light to draw a time-line within suspended surfaces and photographic details. In a recent lecture at the Slade Contemporary Art Lecture Series, McKeever reflected on the notion of time describing how he started *Against Architecture* series. Taking fragments of old paintings, McKeever re-worked his own 'abandoned' paintings and activated new pieces by adhering old fragments onto wooden panels and combining them with photographic elements.

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[98] Ian McKeever (1946) is a British abstract painter who started to work as an artist in 1969 after studying English Literature. His early work grew out of a conceptual interest in landscape, but from 1988 his artwork became significantly more engaged with abstract language associations with the human body and architectural structures.

McKeever´s intention in this series is not to depict a place, but to use the diptych form as a dialectical device to create tension between reference and abstraction. The concept of time is implicit in the temporal analogies of the elements used in both the photographic element as well as the canvas mounted on a plywood panel. This precisely configuration and juxtaposition of media[99] is what I would like to analyse further.

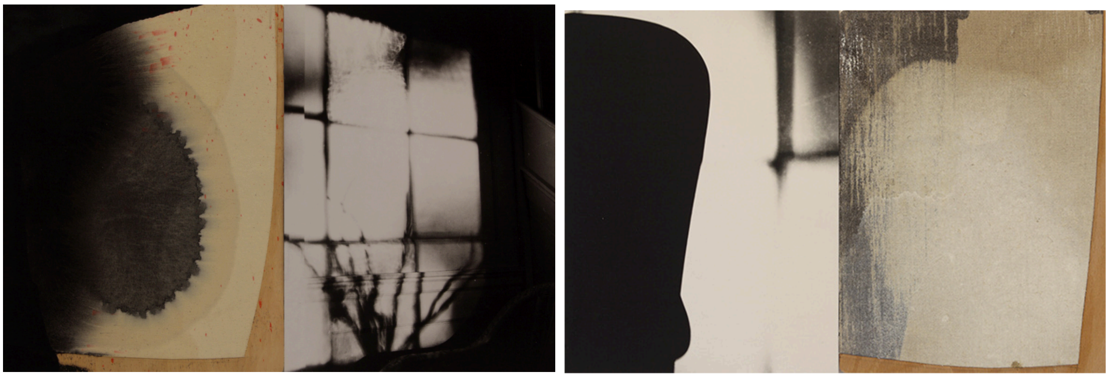

Figure 57 and 58. *Eagduru I and V,* Ian McKeever (2013).

McKeever reused old paintings and pieces of canvas that he had to cut and stuck to the plywood. In this process, he decided to cut the canvas in specific shapes, smaller than the panels and use the exposed plywood as a dynamic visual element. It poses the question, why didn't he cover or paint the whole surface of the panels?

In the majority of the pieces, the artist deliberately left small areas of bare wood on at least one of the four edges of each panel. Through that opening showing the wooden panel texture, McKeever explores a different type of light that contrasts with the travelling light coming from the centre of the image. It is constant, opaque and transmits a hinge of reality through its tactile dimension. These gaps drive the readers' attention out of the painting and back inside making them more aware of the painter's own process of creation. This configuration also relates to the title *Eagduru* as according to Magnus Thoro Clausen in *Voyage Around a Room*, 'eagduru' is the old English word for window and literally means eye-door. McKeever defines a window as a 'door for the eye' which implies a more physical understanding of the act of looking (Galleri Susanne Ottesen, 2014, p. 3).

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[99] According to Thoro Clausen, many of the photographs used for this series come from, or have a strong connection with *Hartgrove Photograps* (2007–2011), a set of pictures of domestic interiors of his own house in Dorset.

The use of contrast is another of McKeever's strategies: black and white and colour; visual and tactile textures; interior and exterior; horizontal and vertical; light and surface. The element that structures them all is again that opening or raw stripe. The openings are like cropped grids that intend to frame the work as if we were looking through a window, reinforcing the sense of fragmentation and dematerialization of the surface.

This effect is even more pronounced in his series of *Eagduru* made in print (2016). In 2015, McKeever started to work at Thumbprint Editions with a series of studies made of silver gelatine photographs and gouache on paper.[100] The prints follow the same structure as the paintings: two panels, one photographic in black and white and one abstract in colour. The non-photographic side is made using multiple plates created with exposed washes and then printed using paper stencils. These masked areas are fragments of a plate containing a wooden texture and the shapes resemble the exposed wood of the panels of his previous works.

As established through the theoretical research and writings about the notion of mirroring (see 3.1.2, especially Umberto Eco's ideas about mirrors and the absolute congruence), there is a fundamental difference between the image referent and our perceptive interaction with it. This idea is evident in McKeever's prints. The way the artist presents material, shows alterations in the model of thinking about composition. The artist seems to question the natural approach of reading rhetoric relations of graphic forms. The way he composes the images isn't linear, inviting the reader to find a way to get into the work by discovering gaps and openings within the structures. Here is when the echo and the fold play an important role.

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[100] Ian McKeever is one of the artists represented by the Alan Cristea Gallery (London), who has published a number of portfolios and prints since 1998. *Eagduru* (2016) is his most recent set of prints, proofed and printed by Peter Kosovizc at Thumbprint Editions. Each print is made of three photopolymer plates using three different colours and stencils. I had the possibility to be involved in the proofing and printing process of this project due to my job as a printer at Thumbprint Editions.

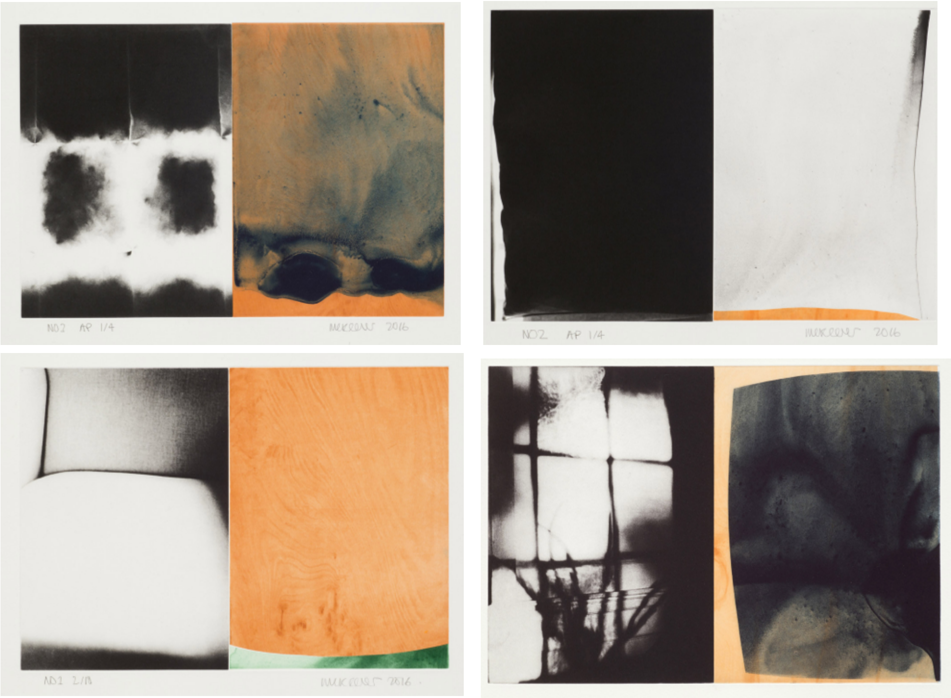

Figure 59. *Eagduru I and V,* Ian McKeever (2013).

To continue exploring this idea, through Jane Bustin's[101] work, where the use of materiality has a very specific function. The artist balances the fragility of millimetre thin ceramic, fabric and pale tones with hard edges, metal and vivid colour[102].

Reflection is inherent in Bustin's work through the use of polished metal plates that recur in her compositions. Moreover, it is also present in how she makes in the edges of her works, reflecting light of carefully chosen colours and finishes to extend the composition onto the wall.

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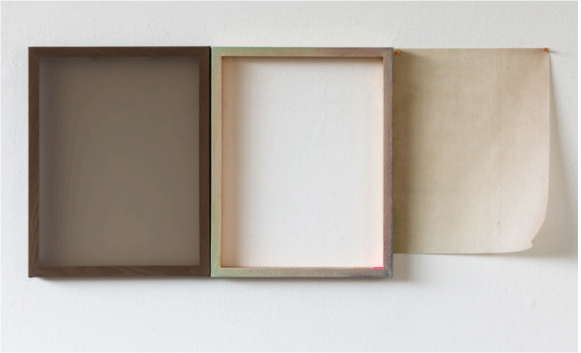
[101] Jane Bustin (1964) is a British artist based in London. She works within an expanded understanding of painting, mixing fresco techniques with oil washed aluminium, acrylic panel painting with ceramic and glazes, mirrored copper with latex, polyurethane and woven cotton. Her main objective is to create a resonance within the work that goes beyond its material properties.

[102] I could analyse some of her work from original sources visiting her exhibition *Rehersal* at the Copperfield Gallery in 2016 with the MA Book Arts Reading Group. Please see Appendix 7.



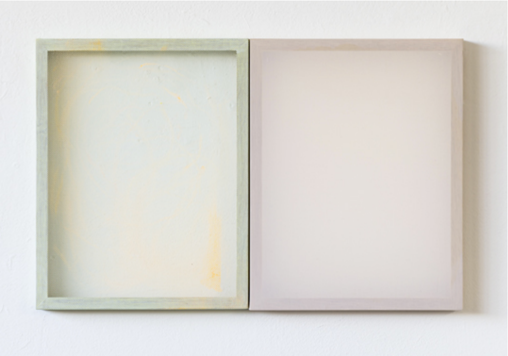
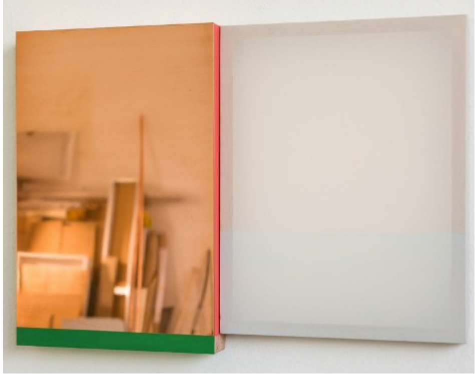


Figure 60 (left). *Tabitha,* Jane Bustin (2014).
Figure 61 (right). *Nijinsky I* Jane Bustin (2015).

For her series *Nijinsky,* Bustin was inspired by the Russian dancer Nijinsky, who established a personal and revolutionary use of symmetry and sensual expression leading to a new era for modern ballet. In her own practice, Bustin explores the effects of balance, placement and dimension, but what intrigues her most about the dancer is his obsession with the idea that the audience 'could feel him'. This connects with Bustin's eagerness to raise the emotional encounter with the artwork beyond the ideas associated with the rational aims of Minimalism and Modernist Geometric Abstraction. In this sense, *Nijinsky I* and *Rehearsal* connect with the audience through materiality, pointing their crucial interaction to activate the meaning of each piece. Another example of this is the use of mirrors or polished and reflecting metals like in *Rose* (2015) or *Nijinsky's Window* (2015), where the audience can see the space and their own image reflected. *Rose* particularly, draws our attention further towards the problems of construction as the work impacts on the viewer through a sense of co-existence.



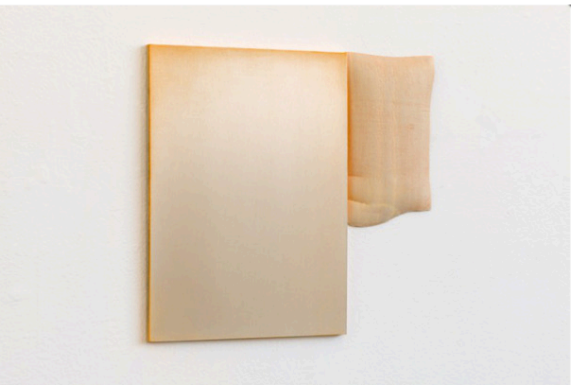
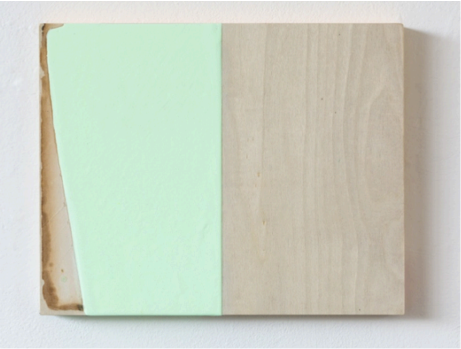


Figure 62 (left). *Rose*, Jane Bustin (2015).
Figure 63 (right). *Nijinsky's Window,* Jane Bustin (2015).

Two panels form each artwork, one is semi trans lucid, calm, grey the other is made of polished cooper, reflecting movements from outside of the picture. Its visual power echoes both the temporal vulnerability and the movements of the dancer. The sizes of the paintings aren't arbitrary. They often refer to human proportions. *Nijinsky's Window* and *Faun*, are hung at the same height as Bustin's son, who is also a dancer. The width and high of each panel correspond to the measurements of his arms, torso and other parts of his body. These relations and modes of arrangement in the space provide a personal and human scale.

These artworks, like McKeever's pieces, are full of subtitle details that help us to discover traces of the ideas behind the artworks. For example, Bustin's panels usually have different depths, which are then painted to enhance the separation between them. In other works, the panels are made of different material or have different length, however, the artist makes them interact through colour and different mirror strategies. She configures them into pairs that can´t function without each other, and invariably have a suggestion of being able to close like a book.



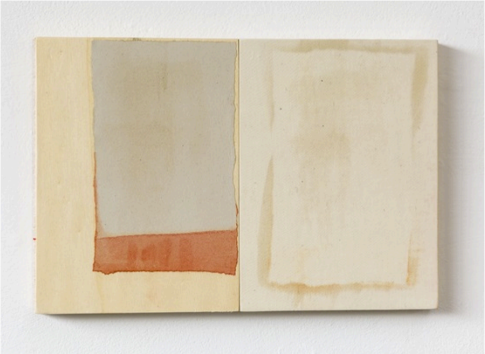


Figure 64. *Tablet II*, Jane Bustin (2014).
Figure 65. *Cloth,* Jane Bustin (2014).

The series *Tablets* provide another example of that way of working. These works were inspired by Paul Celan's poems, and through them she investigates the notion of 'looking at something that isn't the subject of what it is'. She uses different materials like acrylic, wood, linen, porcelain and paper. *Tablet II* features torn out pages from blank notebooks. In each panel, the paper has been flattened and smoothed, evoking a polished stone or an e-reader screen, playing with the idea of recording and memory. In an interview for *This is Tomorrow*, the artist explains that the colours she used are related to 'the words that made up the various neologisms, resulting in paintings that were not unlike visual equivalents of the words'. The paintings function as visual equivalents of the words, which seek to evoke in the viewer similar thoughts and sensations as those evoked by Celan's poems. Bustin engages with the notion of extended visuality, suggesting a language made of traces and enhancing a thoughtful reading.

Bustin's work, which recalls Ad Reinhardt's Black Paintings only reveal their delicate surfaces and distinctive visual quality through meditative viewing. This extended act of observing and discovery is something that the artist encourages through her monochrome panels. She wants her viewers to live with her work and to develop a relationship with it over time.

It is interesting to see the similarities between Jane Bustin and Ian McKeever. They both work with individual panels that then are arranged in pairs. In both cases, they play with 'openings' that extend the work in the space, either painting the edges and projecting light or leaving strips of raw wood at the verge of the panel. They both also use the 'openings' as a way of connecting the two halves of the piece, so even if they are contrasting or are made using different mediums, they still talk and complement each other. They both 'paint with time'.

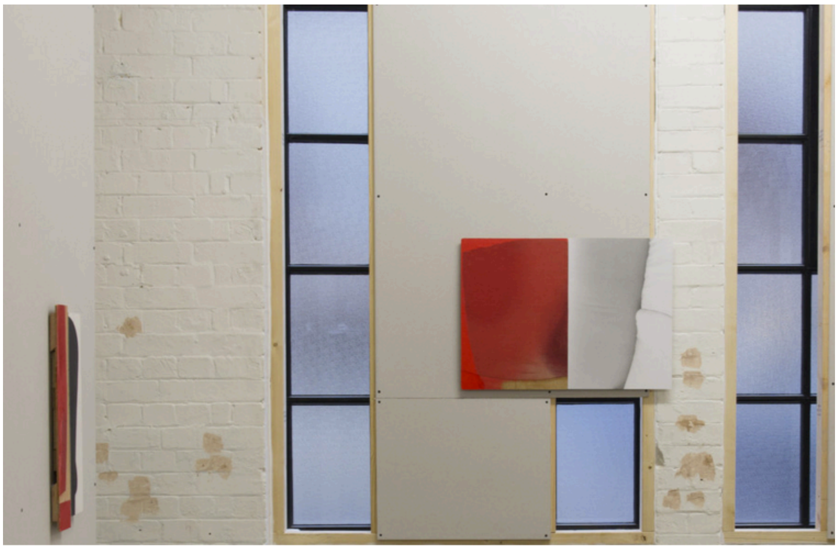


Figure 66. *Eagduru/Against Architecture*, Ian McKeever exhibition at Matt Gallery, London (2017).

Like doors, the artworks function both as thresholds that we are invited to pass through, and as walls, leading the eyes back towards the surface. Both artists complete their work by extending the work's physicality into the surrounding space and investigating the relationship between the artwork and space. As an example, one of the latest McKeever's exhibitions at Matt's Gallery, proposes a literal extension of the artwork. In the exhibition *Against Architecture* (2018), the artist positioned a series of wooden and plasterboard panels using the whole space of the gallery. He hung the works on both sides of the temporary walls, as well as on the undecorated walls of the gallery, drawing the visitors through some sort of maze in order to activate the gallery space. The various more or less provisional surfaces and planes, on which the works were hung, reflected the layers, colours and the way the works themselves were made.

Thoro Clausen uses the term 'reading' when referring to McKeever's works, which returns us to the importance of time in his work. In *Against Architecture*, as well as in *Eagduru*, the artist not only opens the doors of his paintings, but he is opening a new dimension of reading the works.

CONCLUSION

The aim of my research has been to open up an enquiry about the elements that are bonded to the symbolic image of the opened book and how these concepts can be unmasked to become a material support and a discursive space to express visual ideas within a fine art context. The fundamental subject of enquiry of this investigation has arisen as a direct result of the use of the printed image and the dual form of the page within my art practice, which has been maintained throughout the textual research and writing. This practical side has served in two ways. Firstly, to visually question various aspects of the theoretical and critical issues and concerns, which have arisen as central to my own art practice; and secondly it has also proposed new significant questions to the research and directed the thinking and arguments I have unfolded.

This thesis has been organised in five chapters that try to balance historical, theoretical and critical discussions with visual reflections and practice. To summarise: in Chapter 1, I mapped out the historical and theoretical context of the research, analysing how the double page originated as well as how it developed connotations that condition the way we read and absorb meaning. This showed the need of defining and frame the notion of perceptual reading in order to apply it and help me to narrow and define this research. The creation of *Unmasking Perceptions* (Chapter 2) revealed key visual effects and perceptual strategies identifying the page's bonds with the book form and in generating original material that shaped new concepts ratifying the investigation. In Chapter 3, I explored the double page not only as a component of the book but alongside the analysis of a number of artist's works, selected to visually demonstrate and substantiate my argument that the double page spread is an autonomous entity that can be considered an independent piece of art itself. Chapter 4 focused on my own artwork, the practical research where I placed my work into the context of the overall research argument. The final chapter aimed to answer and reflect on a number of questions that emerged from my practice such as the role of the text and especially how the suggestion of it can generate a specific reading of the page.

Towards the beginning of the investigation, reflection upon how books are displayed in galleries and museums played a crucial part in forming a research argument. Books are usually exhibited either showing the cover or opened exposing only one of the spreads and although readers can see the rest of the pages, they are able to start unfolding associations to the characteristics of the book. The idea that the 'opened book' could be a suggestive image became central; and linked to the questioning of the parameters between single and double-page in my own practice, enabling me to set out the research questions.

Understanding how readers perceive the book and the page was crucial to establish the boundaries of this investigation, which has been explored through the study of the historical development of the book but also considering different theories about the concept of 'reading'. I have highlighted that there is evidence of the way that readers engage with the text but also in the way information is presented. The investigation of the development of the codex, the artists' books and more specifically the case study of Mallarme's *Un Coup de Dés* revealed how the physical nature of book production, the changing layout and the materiality of the pages play a significant role in the perception of the double-page spread. Through the analysis and reinterpretation of Mallarmé´s poem, including Marcel Broodthaers' interpretation, I have been able to redefine the term 'reading', which I associate with a reader's predisposition and cultural background.

This notion has emerged significantly throughout the research, thus becoming a theoretical tool to sustain my arguments. The theories analysed, including Cixous, Barthes and Adorno, coincide that reading promotes intuition, creates experiences, and associations. They defend the openness in the reading of signs and the absorption of meaning. What I propose here is that the notion of 'perceptive reading' as a tool to analyse artworks, connects the process of reading with the perception of mirroring, reflection, echo and fold. This concept roots with the idea that humans develop a learnt response, and engages with that predisposition. Readers have inclinations to create associations with their own experience and knowledge, which affects the way they perceive and unfold the physicality of the processes that structure the format of the double-page spread. Perceptive reading is reflected, for example, in the way the double-page projects connotations and activates, through mirroring, the 'pretention of closing'.

This concept becomes both a practical and theoretical tool to analyse artworks and to understand why materiality is crucial in the formulation of ideas. It connects the physicality of the form of the artwork with the ideas behind it, inviting the reader to take part and be active in the appreciation of the piece of work.

What has been revealed through the research and especially through art practice, is to what extent the materiality of the manufacture of the double page is evident in the resulting aesthetic of the image. How the making and the physical and material process visibly uncover themselves by configuring not only the structure of the double page, but also shaping a reader's receptiveness to engage with it. After analysing how the double page was created historically and discussing Morris and Crane's contributions to integrate text with the compositional environment (layout), I was able to put forward an argument regarding what the double page might mean. We have inherited an attitude towards the function and form of the page that marks a predisposition conditioning our experience to reading. This predisposition, that involves certain connotations, is what was revealed from the historical and conceptual research of this thesis. The study of Mallarmé´s *Un Coup de Dés* was crucial to establish that the object and materiality in which information is presented becomes the reader's experience. The contemporary interpretations of this poem revealed that the double-page spread is not only a component of the book, it is also an autonomous and self-functioning entity that can or cannot be linked to a narrative sequence part of a larger piece.

What has also emerged as significant throughout the research has been how the visual elements that compose the material presence of the double page as an independent piece of art itself, play a crucial role in the way we perceive it. I studied the notions of opening, duality, mirroring, echo and fold both through my own work as well as through the work of artists such as Jasper Johns, Dieter Roth and Anish Kapoor. What this has highlighted is a specific expressive potential offered through the experience of both making and perceiving the double page spread. The works analysed, such as the series *Corpse and Mirror* or the *Copley Book,* with Umberto Eco's writings about the notion of mirrors in written language, have offered significant insights into the way the notion is explored and on questions of perception and response. The question of the fold has also arisen and it is important to generate both a critical process as well as to embody reading.

Therefore, I have also been able to claim the double page as a unity and as a place to develop site-specific art. The works of various contemporary artists have been used as key references to support the idea that the page is not only a component of the book, but can work as an autonomous entity. The study of these artworks, together with the research done through my own projects, have shown how the structures of the double page, composed by the fold, mirroring and reflection, echo and duality, provide a particular space, a territory with its own physiognomies. That site can also extend and create associations within different contexts, which is what I express through my installations.

The practical work has been a central and fundamental part of the research. My art practice has been the instigator of the research project and has since been maintained as a constant test bed of all the issues and theories which have emerged throughout its undertaking.

Through practice, I started questioning the parameters between single and double page. This examining established a background and constituted the preliminary material to start an enquiry on the perception of the double page. Printmaking processes have been at the core of my practice, especially at the beginning of the research, this way of working has deepened my understanding, through the use of paper and the folds, the elements of the page. Through experimentation and a developing knowledge of the techniques, I have been increasingly engaging with the printmaking processes, making them visible in the final artworks and placing them at the core of the installations. This engagement embodies the dual nature of the print practice by unmaking the processes of duality to the readers.

The idea of the suggestion of text generates the question of the transparency of communication. The concept aims to unmask one of the most important conventions associated to the page: the text. I have analysed how artists, such as Roth or Kozlowsky dismantle the language, articulating and embodying a strong sense of visuality. Communicating through the page but without using any word, establishing a delicate balance between illusion and representation. Through my artwork, I also create a plastic language that can be read only through perception generating visual disruptions and contradictions.

This investigation brings closer the fields of the book arts and the fine arts re-evaluating the notion of the double page spread. I claim the distinctiveness of this concept because it embodies both an inseparable cultural background and a place to develop art practice. This notion generates a new perceived space between something familiar (the book or the page) and the illusory, predisposing the reader with a different attitude towards the perceptual reading of artwork. The reading of the double-page encourages the reader to be active, to be a dynamic part in the process of communication.

The concept of double-page enables me to contextualise my practice through the symbolism of the book. It manifests the expressive potential of visual conflicts: the lack of conventions associated to the book and the perception of elements that prompt associations with the page. This visual ambiguity between two languages is the creative tension that co-exists in the space of the double-page. A tension and complexity that at the same time becomes a tool to complement and open up interpretations of artworks by providing broader theoretical and historical contexts. The notion of the double-page spread offers new points of view to better understand and analyse how artists develop visual strategies and transmit ideas.

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Abigail Reynolds: Lost libraries (2017). Rokeby Gallery, London.

Abigail Reynolds: The Universal Now and further episodes (2018). PEER Gallery, London. 26th April–23rd June 2018.

Abigail Reynolds: Double Fold (2013) [performance]. South Bank, London.

Anish Kapoor (2015). Lisson Gallery, London. 25 March – 9 May 2015

Anish Kapoor (2018). La Caja Negra Gallery, Madrid.

Editions and Acquisitions 2015 (2016). Alan Cristea Gallery, London. 7th–30th January 2016.

Davide Balula: A Light to Repeat [] on the Wall (2015). Alison Jacques Gallery, London. 10th July–8th August 2015.

Designing English. Graphics on the Medieval Page (2018). Bodleian Library, Oxford. 1st December 2017–22nd April 2018.

Dieter Roth. Diaries (2013). Camden Arts Centre, London. 17th May–14th July 2013.

Eduard Krasinski. Solidarity Avenue (2015). Flat Time House, London. 9th October–29th November 2016.

Fiona Banner, Stamp Out Photographie (2015). Whitechapel Gallery, London. 9th December–8th March 2015.

Franciszka & Stefan Themerson. Books, Camera, Ubu (2016). Camden Arts Centre, London. 24th March–5th June 2016.

Ian McKeever: Against Architecture (2017). Matt's Gallery, London. 9th February–19th March 2017.

Imprint 93 (2016). Whitechapel Gallery, London. 19th March–25th September 2016.

Irma Blank: To Be (2014). Alison Jacques Gallery, London. 17th October–15th November 2014.

Jean Bustin: Rehersal (2016). Copperfield Gallery, London. 16th March–20th May 2016.

Jean Bustin: Faun (2018) [performance and exhibition]. Artnight London County Hall, London. 16th October 2018.

Kader Attia. Continuum of Repair (2015). Whitechapel Gallery, London. 26th November–23rd November 2014.

Leah Carless, Ruth Claxton, Silvia Giambrone, Yelena Popova, Natalie Reusser: Left to Right (2016–2017). Copperfield Gallery, London. 24th November 2016–18th February 2017.

Marking Language (2013). The Drawing Room Gallery, London. 10th October–14th December 2013.

Mira Schendel (2013–2014). Tate Modern, London. 25th September 2013–19th January 2014.

Oscar Santillan: To Break a Silence into Smaller Silences (2015). Copperfield Gallery, London. 26th March–9th May 2015.

Palindromes (2015). Flat Time House, London. 2nd April–17th May 2015.

Rana Begum, The Space in Between (2016). Parasol Unit, London. 30th June–18th September 2016.

Shelagh Wakely. A View from a Window (2014). Camden Arts Centre, London. 13th July–28th September 2014.

The American Dream: Pop to the Present (2017). British Museum, London.

9th March-18th June 2017

What is an Artist Book? (2015). Palacete del Embarcadero, Santander. 14th August 2014–8th January 2015.

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 (See Chapter 2)
Sketches and proofs for Chapter 2.

Appendix 2 (See Chapter 3)
Anish Kapoor's proofs and working notes.

Appendix 3 (See Chapter 3)
Interview with Peter Kosowizc.

Appendix 4 (See Chapter 3)
Windows and Mirrors

Appendix 5 (See Chapter 4)
Early artworks

Appendix 6 (See Chapter 4)
Review of exhibition *PLECS* by Professor Rosalía Torrent

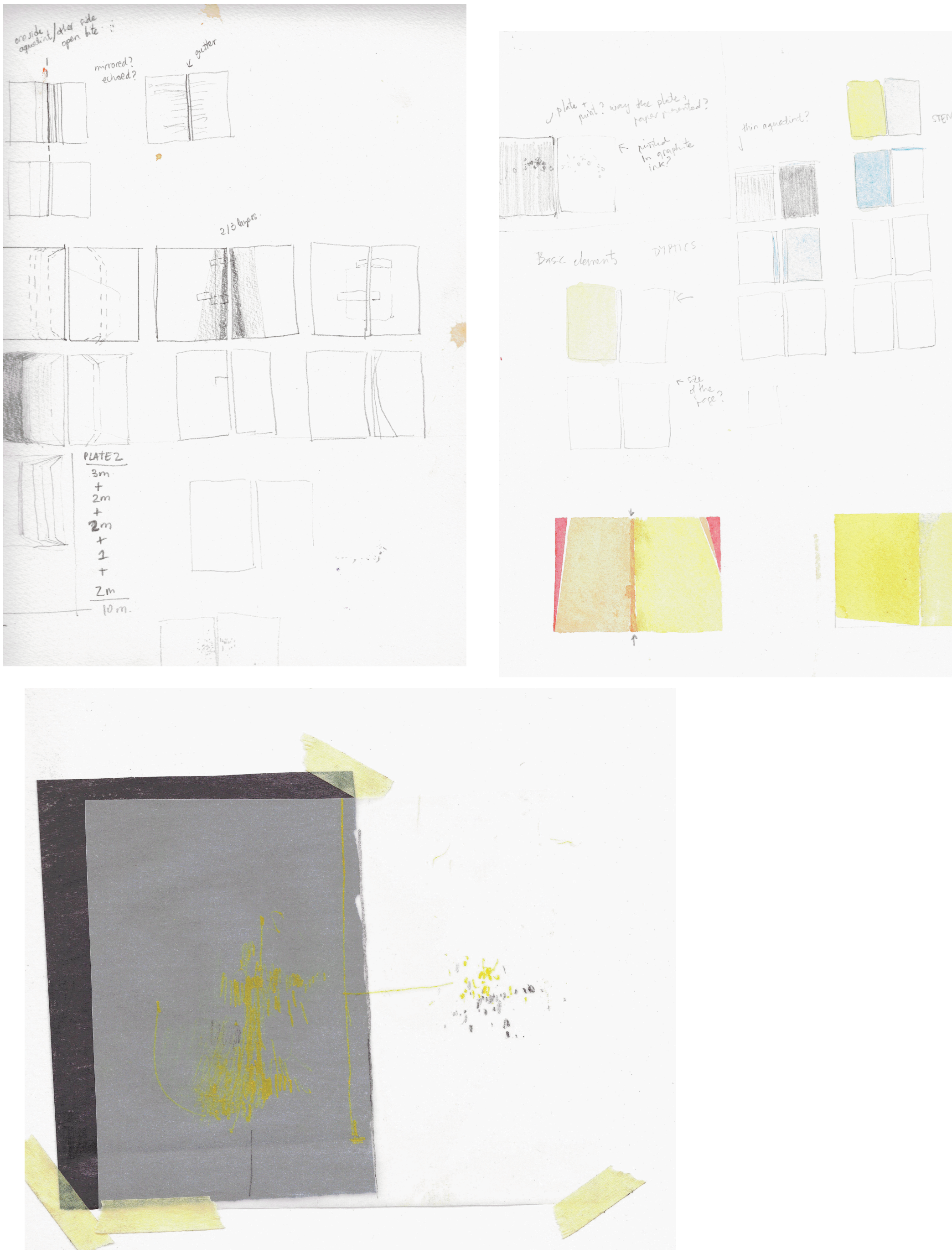
Appendix 7 (See Chapter 4 and 5)
Workshop Design for MA Book Arts Reading Group

Appendix 7 (See Chapter 4 and 5)
Documentation of Reading Group projects and exhibitions at the Chelsea Old Library

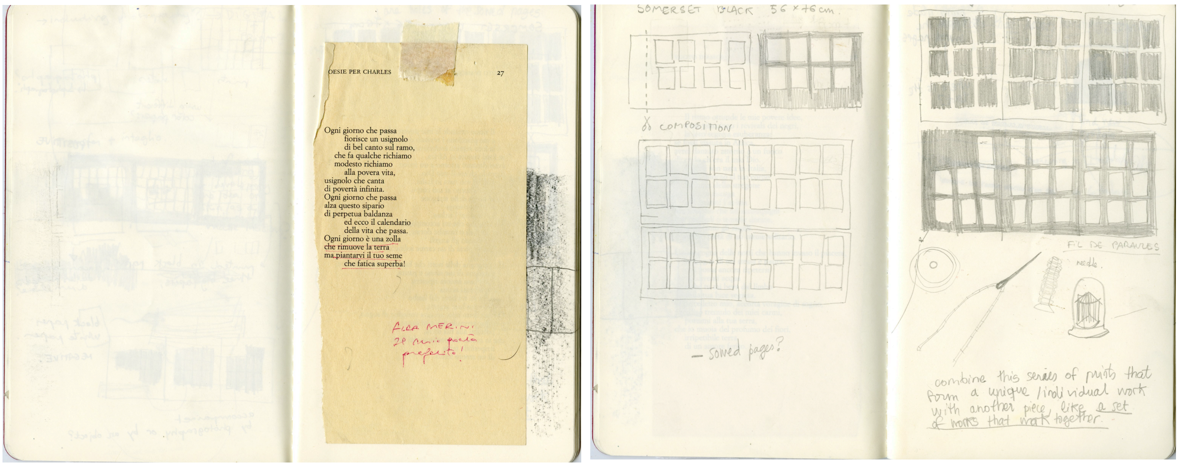
Appendix 8 (See Chapters 3 and 4)
Curated material from the Chelsea Special Collection.

APPENDIX 1

SKETCHES AND PROOFS FOR CHAPTER 2


one side aquatint/other side open bite
mirrored? echoed?
gutter
2/3 layers
PLATE 2
3m
+
2m
+
2m
+
1
+
2m
10m.
plate + print? way the plate + paper presented?
printed in graphite ink?
thin aquatint?
STEN
Basic elements
DYPTICS
size of the page?

A. 1 and 2. Sketches and notes related to chapter 2
These studies show planning on structure, size, colour, texture and contrast between pages.

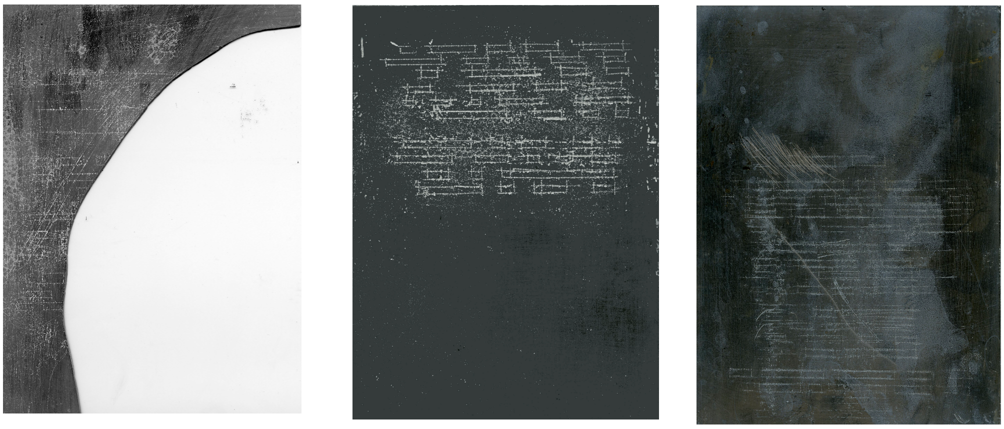


OESIE PER CHARLES 27

Ogni giorno che passa
fiorisce un usignolo
di bel canto sul ramo,
che fa qualche richiamo
modesto richiamo
alla povera vita,
usignolo che canta
di povertà infinita.
Ogni giorno che passa
alza questo sipario
di perpetua baldanza
ed ecco il calendario
della vita che passa.
Ogni giorno è una zolla
che rimuove la terra
ma piantarvi il tuo seme
che fatica superba!

Alda Merini
Il mio poeta preferito!
SOMERSET BLACK 56 x 76 cm.
COMPOSITION
— sowed pages?
FIL DE PARAULES
needle.
combine this series of prints that form a unique / individual work with another piece, like a set of works that work together.

A. 3 and 4. Sketches and notes

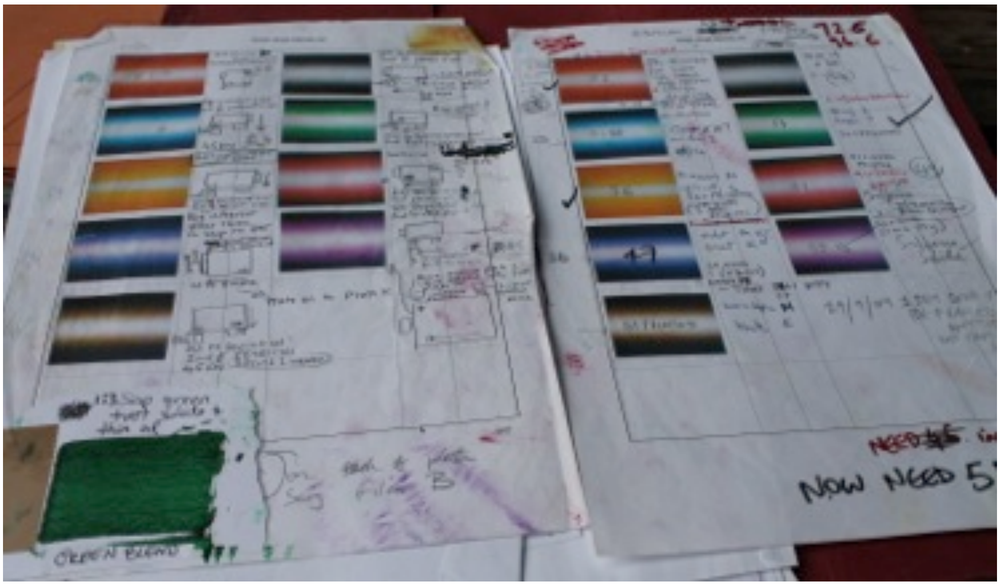


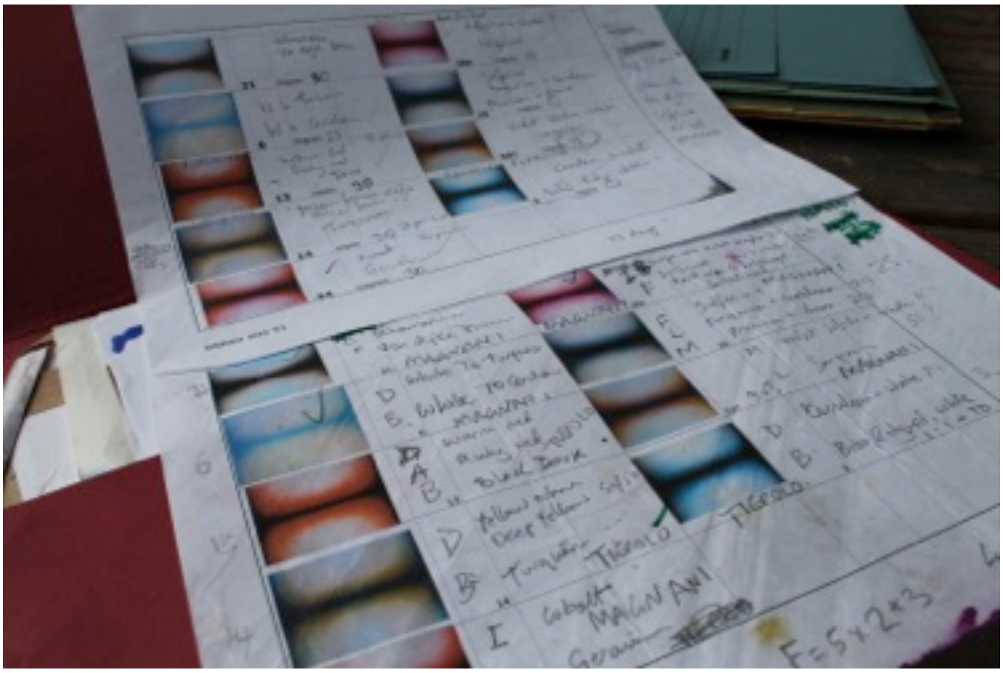
A. 5. Tests of scanned plates

A. 6. Colour tests.

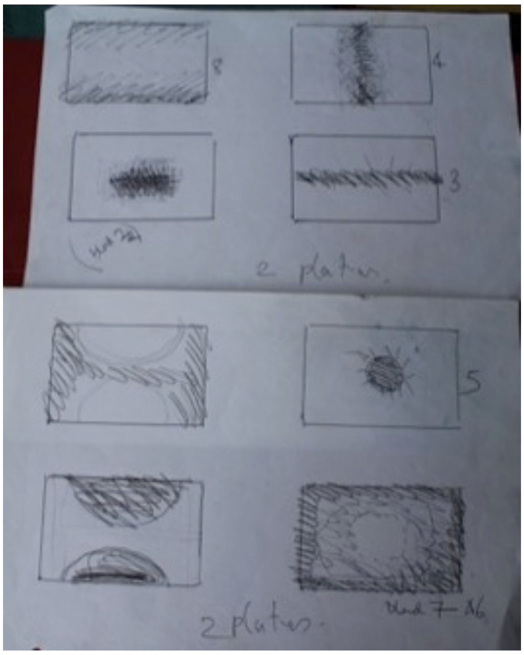
APPENDIX 2

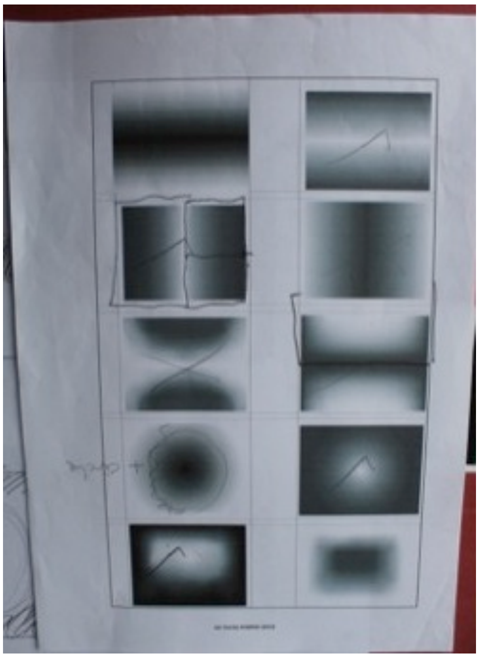
ANISH KAPOOR'S WORKING PROOFS AND PRINTING MATERIAL



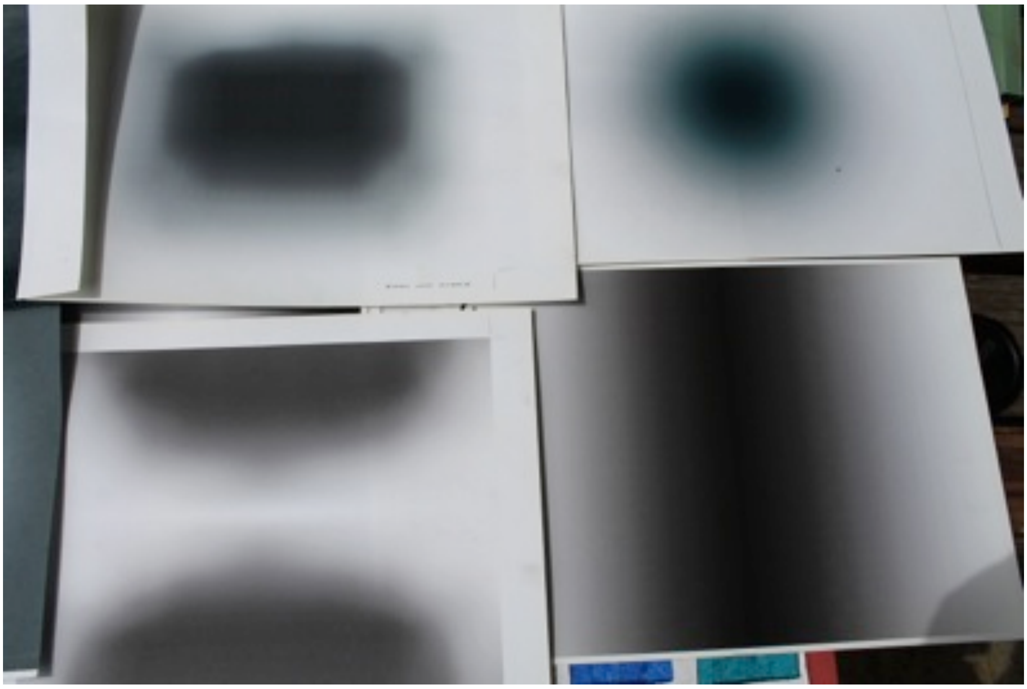


A.7 and 8. Proofing sheets for *Shadow III* (2009) above, and *Horizon Shadow* (2010) below. These notes indicate the colours used in every proof as well the plates and order in which have been used.

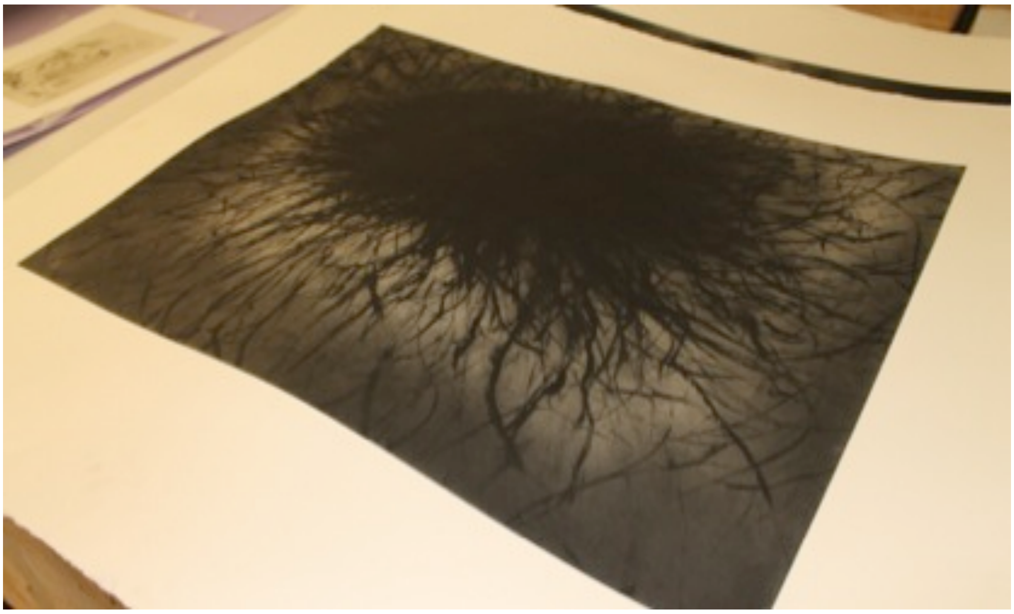


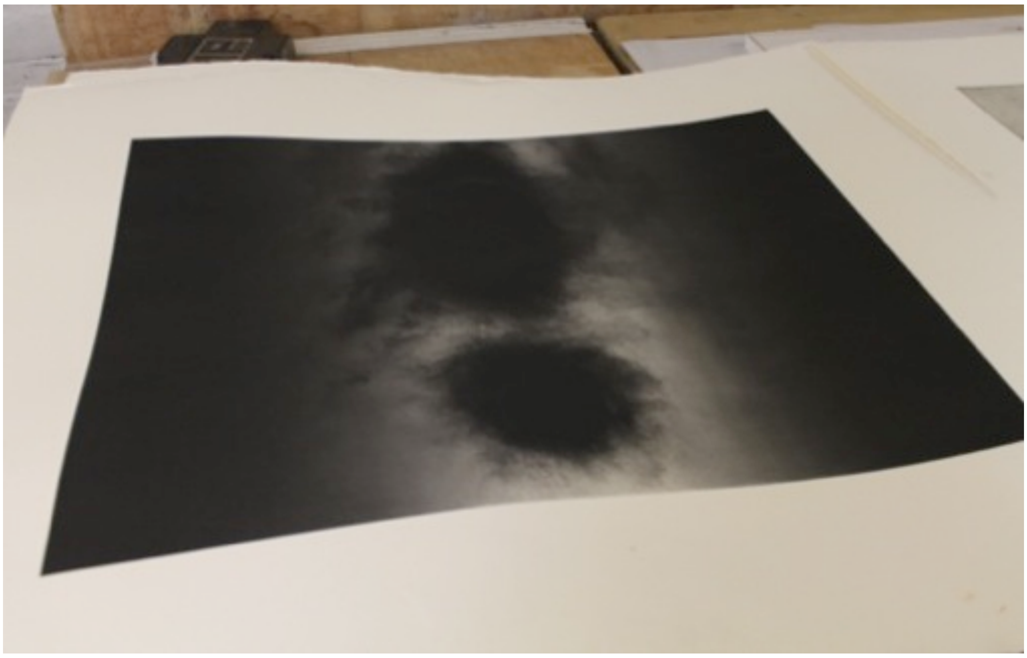


A. 9 Sketches (left) made by Peter Kosowizc during a meeting with Anish Kapoor around 2005 before starting the series *Shadow* (2007).
A. 10 (right) Sketches made files. These show the shape of the plates.

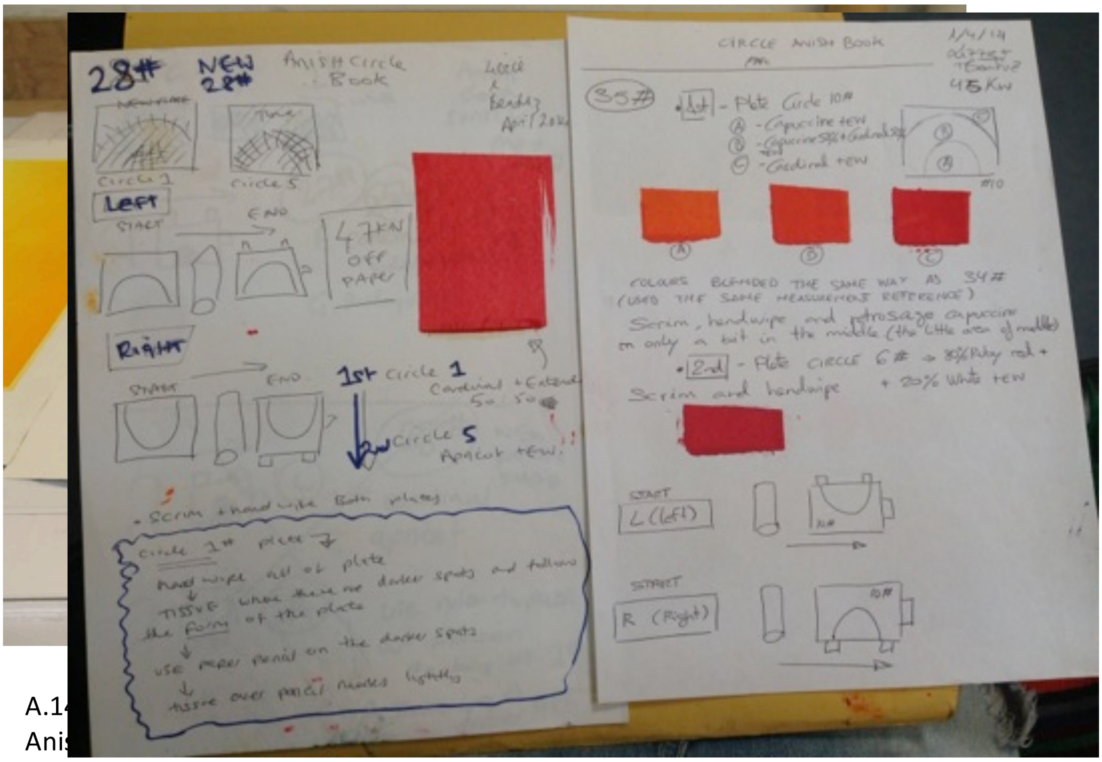


A. 11. Final printouts of the files, ready to be converted in films. We can see the files for (from left to right) *Shadow V* (2012), *Shadow II* (2009), *Horizon Shadow* (2010) and *Shadow* (2007).





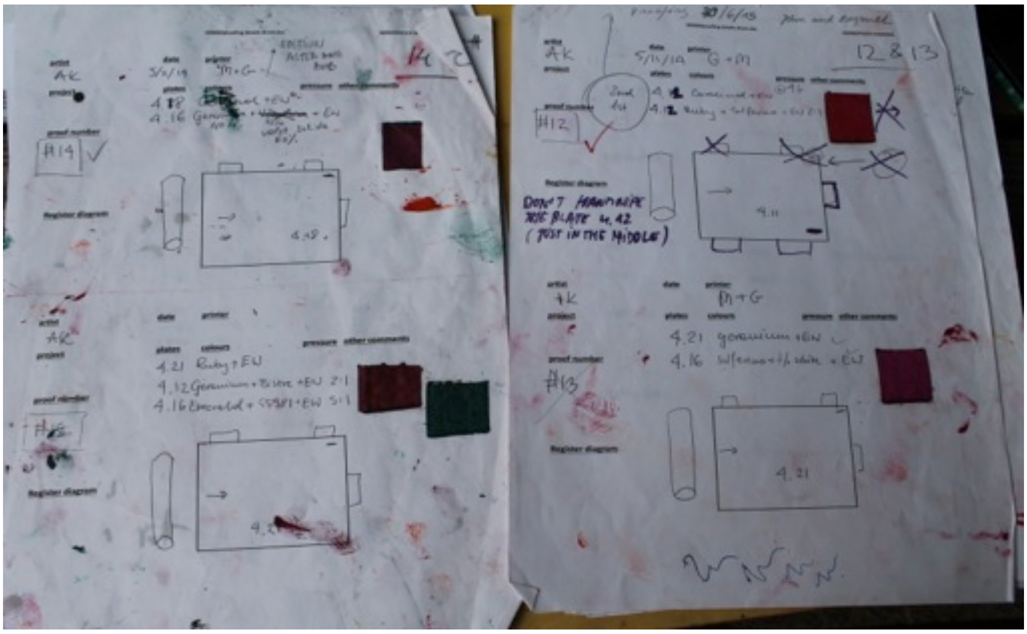
A. 12 and 13. Proofs for the series *History* (2007). This series was a transition project that combined painted films with photopolymer plates. As can be appreciated in the pictures, some of the plates used for *History* as backgrounds, were used again for the series *Shadow* on their own.


28# NEW 28# Anish Circle Book
Circle 1
Circle 5
LEFT
START END
47KN OFF PAPER
RIGHT
START END
1st Circle 1 Cardinal + Extender 50 50
Circle 5 Apricot +EW
- Scrim + hand wipe Both plates
Circle 1# plate ↓
hand wipe all of plate
↓
TISSUE where there are darker spots and follows the form of the plate
↓
use paper pencil on the darker spots
↓
tissue over pencil marks lightly

CIRCLE ANISH BOOK
1/4/14
45Kw
35#
1st - Plate Circle 10#
Ⓐ - Capuccine +EW
Ⓑ - Capuccine 50% + Cardinal 50% +EW
Ⓒ - Cardinal +EW
#10
Ⓐ Ⓑ Ⓒ
COLOURS BLENDED THE SAME WAY AS 34# (USED THE SAME MEASUREMENT REFERENCE)
Scrim, handwipe and petrosage capuccine on only a bit in the middle (the little area of middle)
• 2nd - Plate CIRCLE 6# → 80% Ruby red + 20% White +EW
Scrim and handwipe
START
L (Left)
10#
START
R (Right)
10#

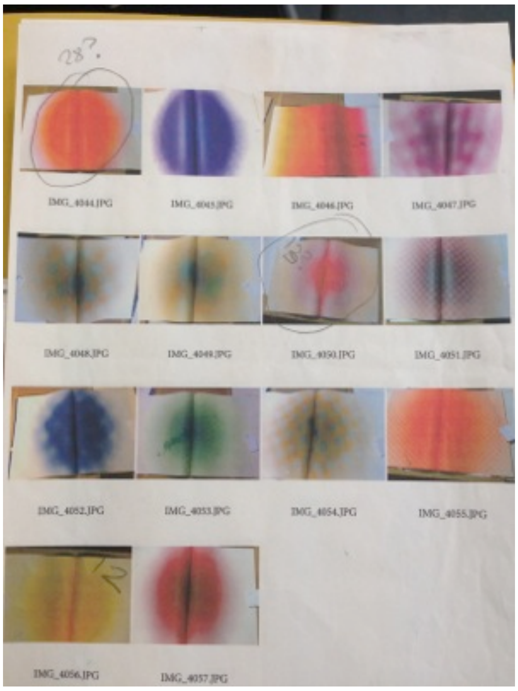
A.14
Anis
effects.

A. 15. Proofing sheets for *Folds*. These are the notes made by the printers during the proofing process. In them, the printers write everything relevant for the printing and the variations between proofs: number of the proof, number of plates and order to be printed, colours, pressure, diagram for registration, type of paper and way to be soaked, way to be inked up and hand wiped and any other important information.


AK
3/x/14
M+G
EDITION ALTER DOES BUG
4.18
4.16
#14 ✓
4.18
AK
4.21 Ruby + EW
4.12 Geranium + Bistre + EW 2:1
4.16 Emerald + ... + EW 5:1
4.2

20/6/15
AK
5/11/14
G + M
12 & 13
2nd 4th
#12
DON'T HANDWIPE THE PLATE 4.42 (JUST IN THE MIDDLE)
4.11
AK
M + G
4.21 geranium + EW
4.16
#13
4.21

A. 16. Proofing and printer’s notes for *Moiré* (2015).


28?
IMG_4044.JPG
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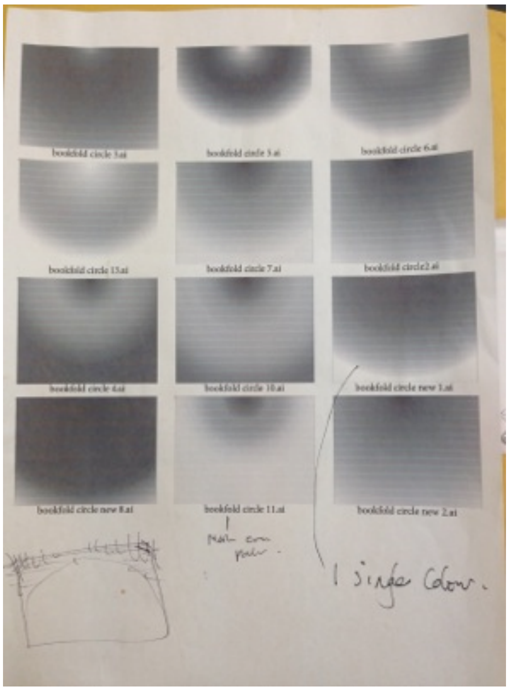
bookfold circle 3.ai
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bookfold circle 13.ai
bookfold circle 7.ai
bookfold circle2.ai
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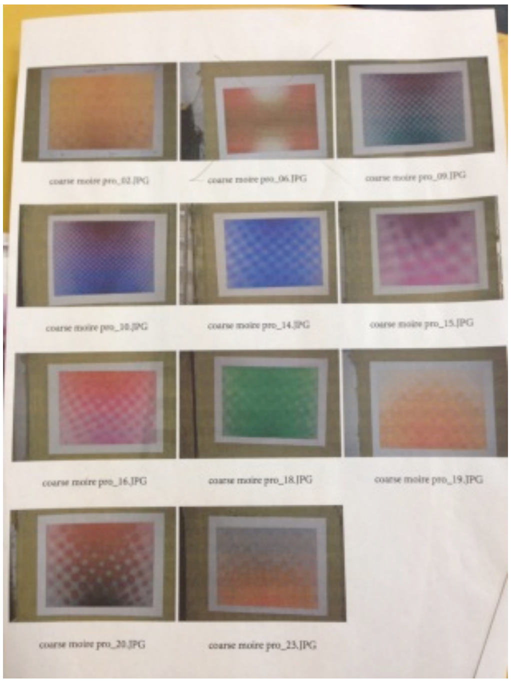
bookfold circle new 2.ai
1 single Colour.


coarse moire pro_02.JPG
coarse moire pro_06.JPG
coarse moire pro_09.JPG
coarse moire pro_10.JPG
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coarse moire pro_15.JPG
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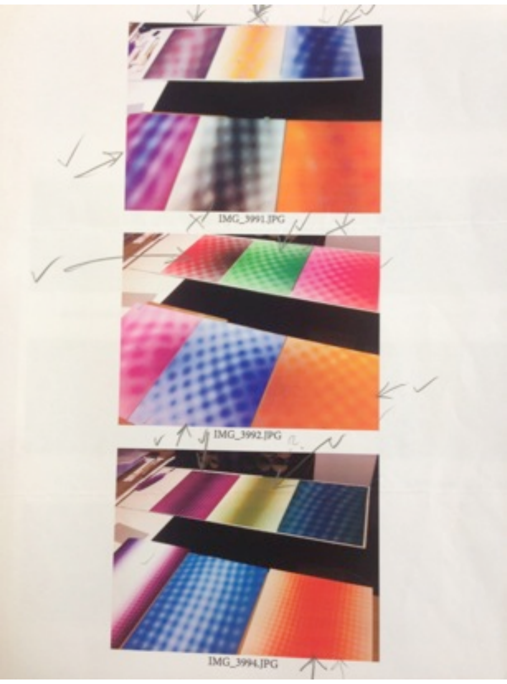
coarse moire pro_23.JPG


IMG_3991.JPG
IMG_3992.JPG
IMG_3994.JPG

A. 18 and 19 (above). Proofing sheets of the first proofing of *Folds.* In early stages, the folds had a moiré texture. In this printout of the different proofs, we can see *Fold I* and *Fold II* selected.

A. 20 and 21. Patterns and forms of the different drawings during the film and plate making of *Folds*. In this printout we can see the variety of films needed to create the blends, The combination of them create the textures seen in the final prints.

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW TO PETE KOSOWIZC

ANISH KAPOOR AND HIS APPROACH TO PRINTMAKING

Anish Kapoor is an Indian born and London-based artist represented by the Lisson Gallery in London and the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York. Although his is well known for exploration of sublime and space through reflections and colour in his sculptures and installations, since the late 1980s the artist started to experiment and develop a significant body of work in print.

Thumbprint Editions, located in South London, is one of the most important and experienced printmaking studios of Europe. It works with publishers and galleries such as Alan Cristea Gallery, White Cube, Flowers, ICA or The Paragon Press amongst others. Peter Kosowizc is the founder of Thumbprint Editions, and since 1989 has been working with Anish Kapoor. Together, they have developed a very particular language, investigating into new ideas and innovative approaches to printmaking.

Altea Grau: When was your first encounter with Anish Kapoor?

Peter Kosowizc: The first project with Anish Kapoor was two prints published by King's Fund, a charity working with hospitals. They were doing a project commissioning artists to create prints. That was in 1989, at the very beginning of Hope (Sufferance) Press, so we were still very young and working hard gaining experience and building reputation. It was a big deal for us, it was we who created two very interesting spit-bite[103] etchings. Probably it was Charles who advised him to contact us.

These first two-plate prints were very painterly, like his drawings and works on paper, although then they become sculptural and three-dimensional as well.

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[103] Spit-bite aquatint is a very particular technique because the artist bites the plate unevenly by painting the acid directly over the prepared aquatint surface. Spit-biting gives an effect similar to watercolour washes, and the different tones vary depending on how strong is the acid solution and how much time the artists leaves the acid on the plate.

AG: When did you start working with Anish Kapoor and the Paragon Press developing larger projects?

PK: The first project we developed was *15 Etchings* in 1994. He used to come to the studio and get his hands dirty, he would come in and paint on the plates to create the spit-bite. He had an incredible touch painting with the acid, a real sculptural feeling for the materials, for the metal and the action of the acid on the metal. We would have two or three plates ready for him, and he was constantly working the plate. He wouldn't just make a mark on the plate and leaving it, he would work on it constantly for a while.

AG: Do you think he had a special or different approach to printmaking?

PK: It is always very nice to work with sculptors, because they tend to have a different approach with materials. They are used to handling different types of materials, and in this case, Anish was very familiar working with steel and cooper.

AG. Do you remember if Anish Kapoor would come to the studio with a set plan, like other artists who want to do a particular project without changing a millimetre? How was the process of working with him?

PK: No, he didn't have a particular plan. Even if he was working a lot with archetypal motives, he liked to improvise, and consider every plate as a new drawing or work, revisiting his ideas and notions with the new media, so new forms and designs would come up.

He used to spend quite a lot of time in the studio, not only working and painting on the plates, but also supervising the proofing. With the first two series, *15 Etchings* and the plates made with the spit-bite technique are very variable and sensitive, the tone or the amount of ink can vary enormously depending on the way they are printed, and therefore the proofing process is very important.

AG: Although the first set '15 etching' was created using traditional techniques like aquatints and spite bites, in the following projects, you started to experiment with new materials and photographic processes. How did you approach these changes? Where you very experienced with new technologies?

PK: The first step was the combination. He was still coming into the studio and doing some spit-bite plates on the *History* series or *12 Etchings*. And as a way of working, it seemed suited him to start experimenting with true grain as well. So he started to experiment painting on films, and some of them would be combined with the spit-bites and other would just be printed as polymer plates.

And regarding working with the computer, Illustrator and the new photographic processes, at the time it was all new technology. And the artist, as sculptor, he was very interested using and inventing new ways of manufacturing objects. I wasn't very experienced with all that at the time which is why we started with the simplest effects, like blended circles or lines.

The first set we developed using only photographic films and polymer plates was *Shadow*, a project published in 2007. The films were created by drawing two boxes with illustrator, filling one of them with a gradient from white to black and then duplicate it, like a mirror, so the plate was composed by two identical parts, one side reflecting the other. At the beginning we started to work that way, until we did *Shadow II* (2008).

AG: Since that first project, it seems that Anish Kapoor changed his way of working, starting to develop a very particular language. How was that process?

PK: Since then, it was always about combining two or more plates and building up colour. With the earlier hand-drawn works, *15 Etchings* and *12 Etchings*, although there was colour in them, it was more about form, drawing, painting, manipulating and experimenting with materials. In the *History* set, because it was in black and white, it was a bit more sculptural, about form and texture.

At that time, we started to create the *Shadow* plates, and at the same time, experimenting to create the 1*2 Etchings*. Actually, many of the *Shadow* plates were used for *12 Etchings* as well. In that series, the colour started to be more important, playing a central role. And from my point of view, since then, Kapoor started to get away from drawing, centring his attention in pure colour and perception.

AG: And was it then when you discovered, or came across the moiré effect[104]?

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[104] Moiré effect is a visual perception that occurs when viewing a set of lines or dots that is superimposed on another set of lines or dots, where the sets differ in relative size, angle, or spacing. The moiré effect can also be generated by a photographic or electronic reproduction, either deliberately or accidentally.

PK: Yes, it was a little surprise that came about from printing two plates one on top of the other. And that happened since the first set, straight away, since the first time we printed the plates. And that happens because the texture of plates, the registration and then obviously the stretching of the paper exaggerates that effect making it more organic.

Later on, the artist took that effect to the extreme with the *Moiré* series (2015), focusing completely on bringing up that effect in particular. We used a much grainier half-tone screen, deliberately extremely coarse, with the idea to create visual effects. The outcome was fascinating, when sometimes combining two colours would create a completely unexpected third colour, as an optical illusion.

AG: What about working in sets of prints? Does the artist plan a particular number of prints in advance? Or is it something that comes up during the process?

KP: Anish Kapoor doesn't plan the number of prints that will make up the series. It is very much process based, he's open to see how the idea develops and unfolds. I think he likes to work in sets, because Kapoor's ideas and experiments have much more sense seen as a set. They are much more powerful, much more than some of their parts, the hammering colour builds up as a *crescendo*, and the blends create and expand in the space.

AG: Shifting a little bit the argument, I would like to know more about the relationship or the influence that artist, publisher and master printer apply to each other.

PK: The relationship with the artist is very different, with Anish in particular, it is the publisher who sets up the context and conditions of the work. In this instance, Charles Booth-Clibborn (Paragon Press) has always been prepared to put a lot in to the project, to take risks. He would decide the artists he wants to work with, and then he would make a choice about what kind of studio or workshop would suit the artist best. He would then visit them to see if everything felt right and he would be very hands off, he would say 'You guys get on with it'. He wouldn't mention anything about money; he would just trust that it is a good artist and a good workshop, so something good would surely come out at the end. So, you have a lot of freedom to explore ideas, and that way the artists can find their real and personal relationship with the media and come up with very specific results.

So, the publisher is always crucial, putting people together and creating the right setting, and to make things happen.

AG: After all these years of collaboration, I believe you are one of the persons who know more closely, even intimately, Anish Kapoor's print body of work. From your point of view, do you think there is a specific or key project that made him change or shift the way he was working or his approach?

PK: During the time we were working with the *12 Etchings* and the *Shadows*, I think it was simultaneously as a few plates were used for both projects. I remember a particular meeting I had with Anish Kapoor. Talking about those projects, he decided to concentrate on colour through very simple forms instead of being involved in drawing or making plates. So he sketched out very simple ideas.

One of the beauties of this is that since then, the work started to make itself. So, it is not that 'I'm making work for him, it is just what it will be', and follow and accept the process along the way. Then you get marks on the film, the moiré effect, interactions between two colours, etc. And this process is all completely organic, it is created itself. And since then, is what we've been working on during the last ten years.

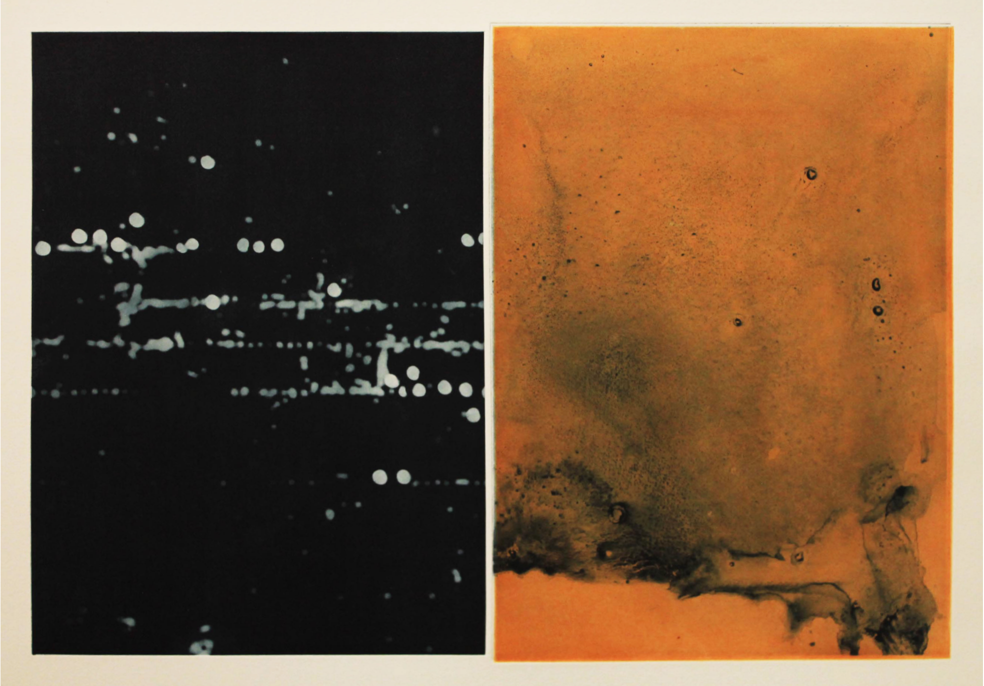
AG: And now, when you look at his installations or sculptures, can you recognise specific effects or similarities that he also explores in his prints?

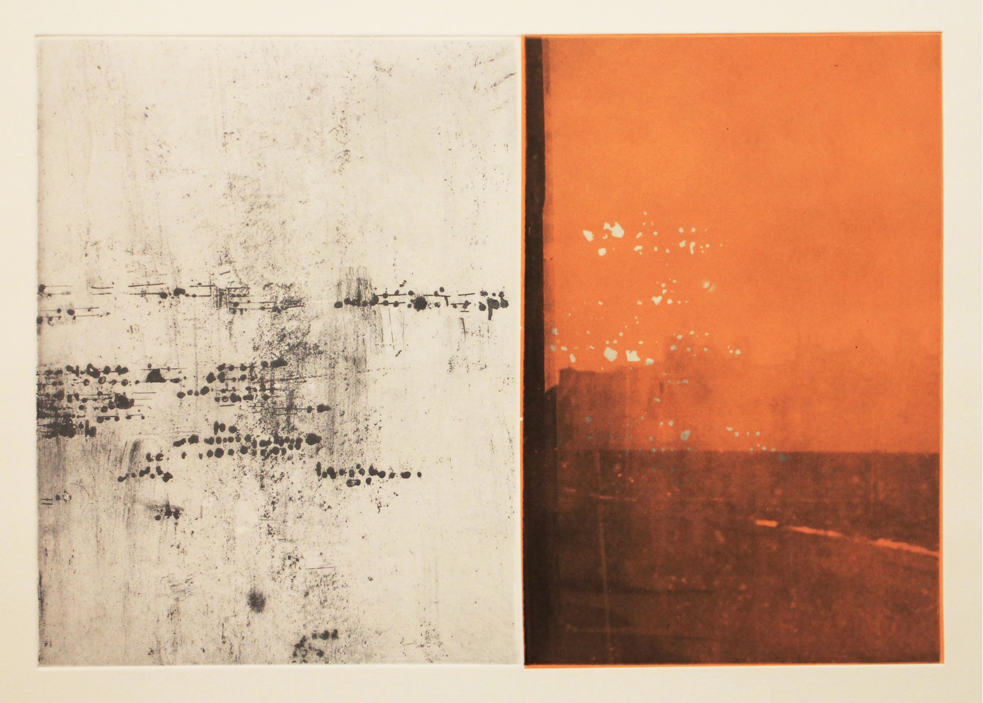
PK; Yes, definitely. For example, in his mirror pieces, one has the feeling of losing your bearings, or getting overwhelmed. And I think his prints are similar, especially with the moiré series and its optical illusions. One feels they fuse your brain if you look at them too closely. One of the key elements in his work is about the void and space, and especially *Shadows*, are about empty space, or the creating visual illusions.

APPENDIX 4

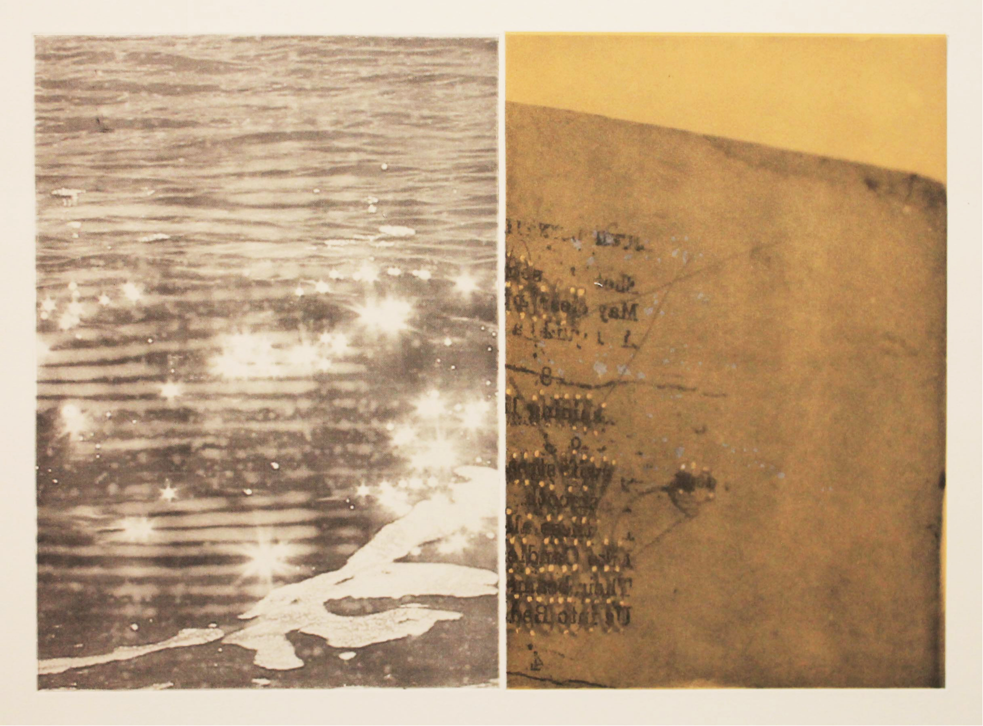
Windows and Mirrors (2017)

Set of 3 prints.





A 22. *Windows and Mirrors*. Fold.
A 23. *Windows and Mirrors*. Echo

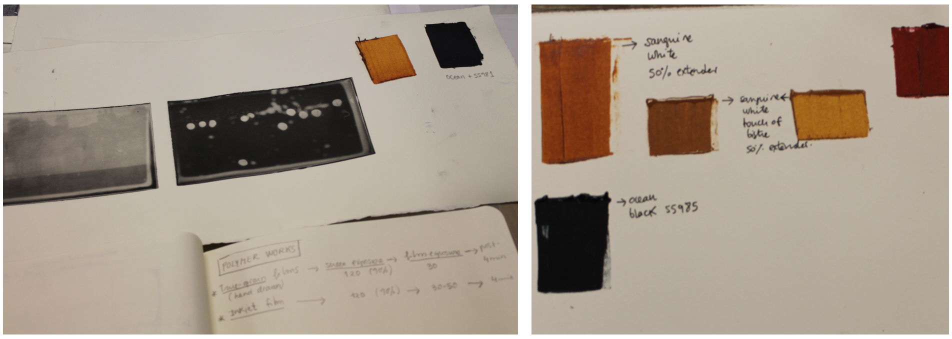


A 24. *Windows and Mirrors*. Reflexion

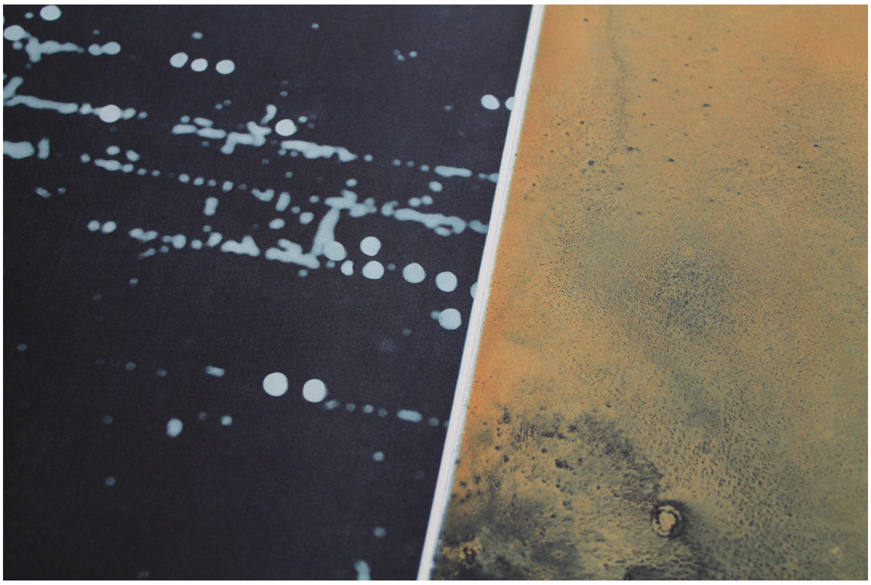
Process of work:

A 25. Process of proofing. Print drying on boards.

A 26. Proofing trying different plate combinations. Alterations in the order and transparency.


POLYMER WORKS
* True-grain films (hand drawn) → screen exposure 120 (90%) → film exposure 30 → post- 4min
* Inkjet film → 120 (90%) → 30-50 → 4min
→ sanguine white 50% extender
→ sanguine white touch of bistre 50% extender.
→ ocean black 55985

A 27. Proofing during platemaking process and colour tests.

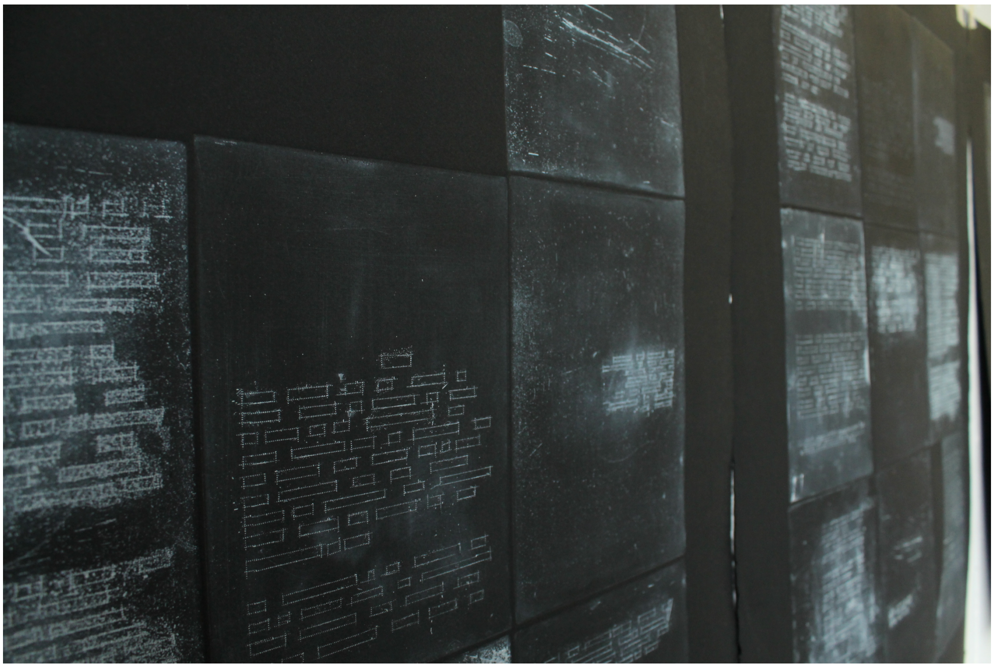


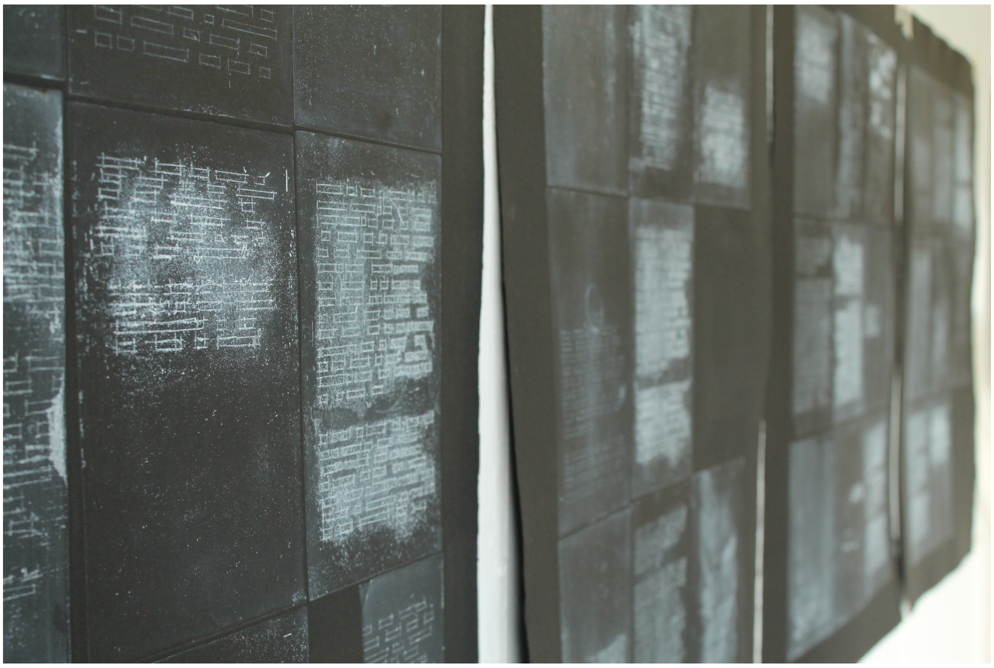
A 28. Detail of the combination of textures.

Appendix 5

EARLY ARTWORKS

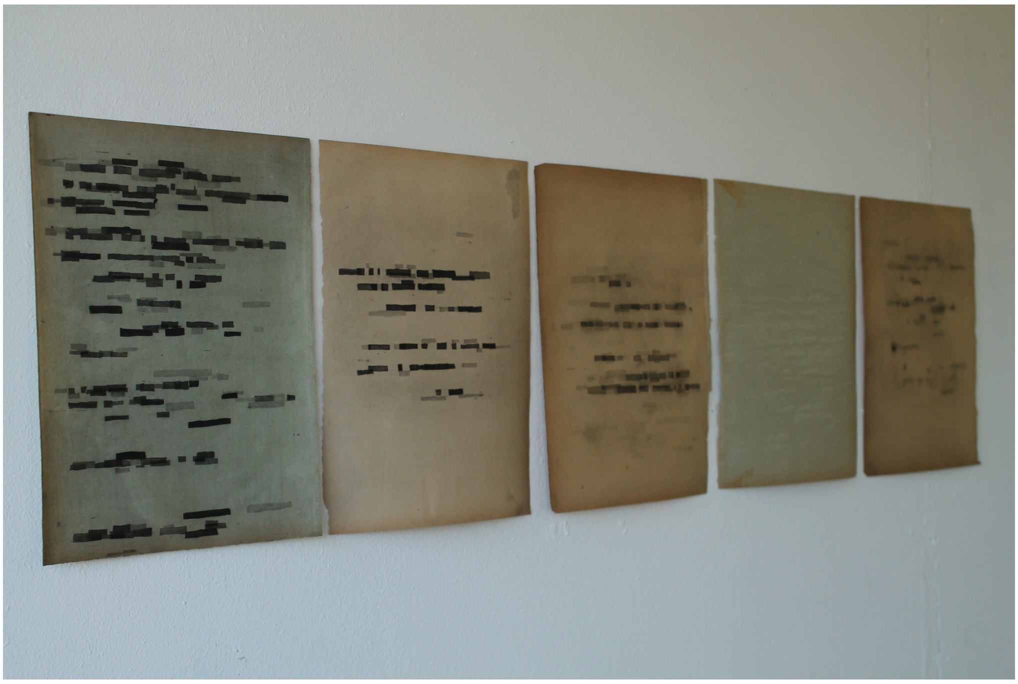
Wordscape (2013)

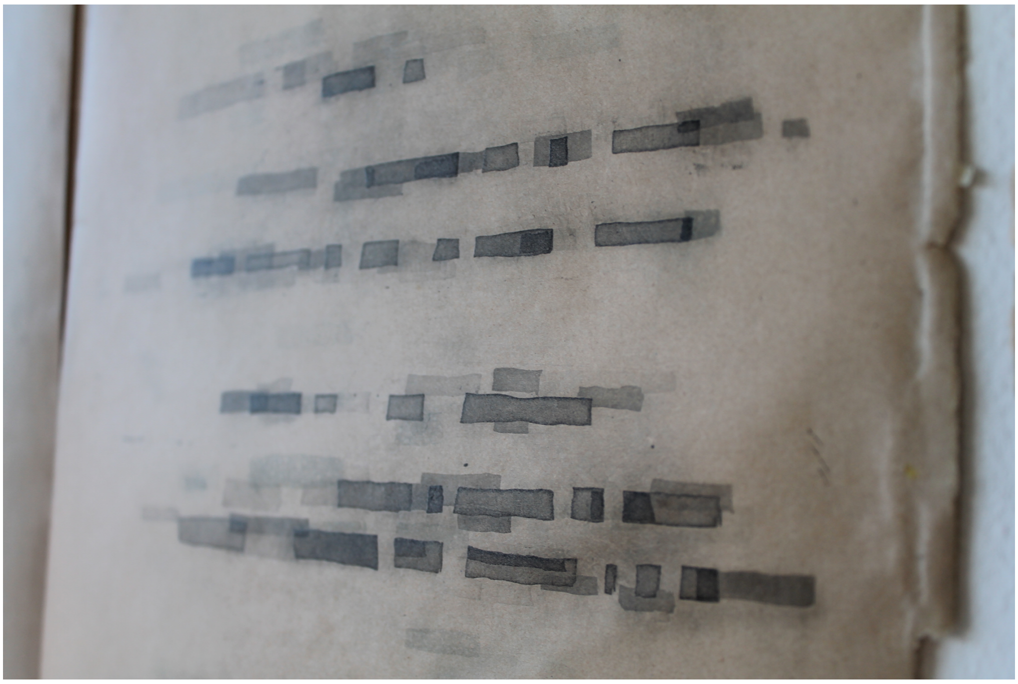




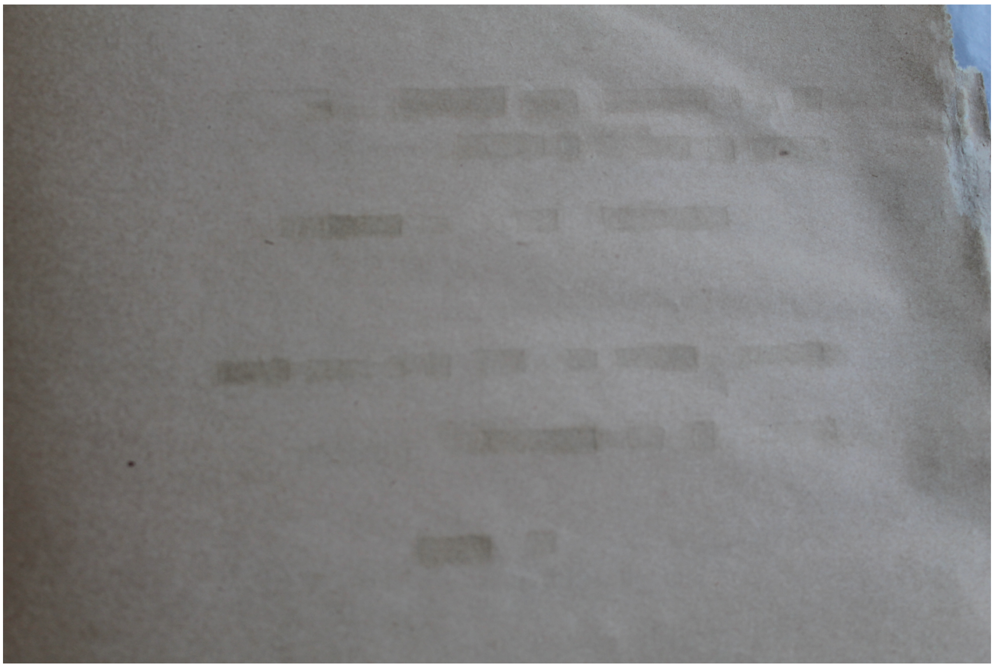
A. 29 and 30. *Wordscape* (2013).

Rewriting verses (2013)





A. 31 and 32. *Wordscapes*.



A. 33 Test of subtile print using transparent ink and oil.
A. 34. Example of plate for *Rewriting Verses.*

APPENDIX 6

Review for my exhibition *#PLECS: Metàfores d'una veu.*
Rosalía Torrent. Professor in Aesthetics at the Universitat Jaume I Castelló and Director of Museum of Contemporary Art of Vilafamés.

ORIGINAL TEXT IN SPANISH

Entremos ahora con la obra de Altea, una obra que, hoy por hoy, se mueve en la confluencia del arte y la escritura. No sabemos qué otros derroteros tomará una artista tan joven, pero actualmente está desarrollando un proceso en el que el libro, sus páginas y las palabras escritas en esas páginas, le sirven de base para su experimentación. Porque, la obra que tenemos aquí, parte del concepto de libro. Ahora veremos de qué modo.

El libro siempre ha atraído a los creadores. Son muy conocidos los denominados "libros de artista", que contienen dibujos o pensamientos de sus autores, convirtiéndose en una especie de diario creativo. Otra cosa serían los llamados "libros-objeto", que son como obras de arte autónomas con forma de libro. Se dice que fue André Breton, el padre del movimiento surrealista, el que formuló la idea de estos libros. Una noche, tal como él mismo confiesa, soñó que estaba en un mercado, y encontró en él un extraño libro cuyo lomo tenía la forma de un gnomo y cuyas páginas eran de gruesa lana negra. Al despertarse, lamentó no poder adquirir, en un mercado habitual, un objeto como éste. Por ello impulsó al grupo surrealista a crearlos, y no solo libros, sino todos aquellos objetos extraños que solo la imaginación alcanza a producir.

La experimentación sobre el libro en la base del trabajo de Altea. En concreto, y en esta ocasión, la artista ha querido explorar, como ella misma nos dice, dentro del concepto del libro (cito): "la dualidad, el eco, el reflejo y la noción de pliego, ideas ligadas íntimamente al concepto de página". Efectivamente, si analizamos las obras de la exposición vemos que son como las páginas desplegadas de un libro. Pero entre página y página de un libro hay un pliegue. Cuando abrimos un libro de par en par hay un espacio central, un espacio anónimo, al que nosotros no hacemos caso, que a veces incluso nos incomoda por no poder abrir el libro lo suficiente. Pero Altea ha querido partir de este pliegue para definir su trabajo.

Vemos así que todas las obras están divididas por un eje central, que es ese lugar en el que el libro se pliega. Ese eje separa la página derecha e izquierda del libro.

Y al igual que en un libro –llamémosle "normal"– hay una continuidad, una relación entre páginas, aquí también la hay. Si os fijáis, en muchas ocasiones la imagen representada en ambas páginas es la misma, pero en posición invertida, bien espacialmente, o jugando con el negativo y el positivo que le permite la técnica calcográfica con la que trabaja.

Porque nos encontramos ante grabados. Hablando con Altea el otro día comentaba que la técnica, para ella, es parte innata del propio proceso creativo. Los resultados de la calcografía no pueden preverse de manera exacta, juega en ella cierta dosis de azar, y esto parece divertir a la autora, porque a ella misma, a veces, pueden sorprenderle las consecuencias de su experimentación.

Pero seguramente lo que más atrapa de estas obras es su sentido poético y sugerente. Porque Altea parte de las páginas de un libro, pero en esas páginas no hay palabras. Han desaparecido. No hay palabras, pero hay líneas que nos dicen que alguna vez las palabras estuvieron allí. Líneas que, de lejos, nos invitan a acercarnos y leer porque creemos que hay algo escrito, pero no lo hay. Lo hubo, pero ahora no. Lo que hay son ritmos. Líneas cortas, en las que intuimos puntos y aparte, líneas más largas en las que parece que se inicia un discurso prolongado. Pero estas líneas están hechas básicamente a través de incisiones, borrando lo que antes hubo.

Altea no concibe (de momento) la obra de arte sin la escritura. Hasta la época de la vanguardia, la relación del arte y la escritura no siempre ha sido fácil. Dice Isabel Carrasco, que ha estudiado en su tesis esta relación, que, hasta que llegaron los movimientos de vanguardia «… la irrupción de las letras sobre la pintura se percibía como un modo de ensuciar el estatus puro, mudo y autónomo de la imagen». Esa obra "pura" del Renacimiento no podría aunarse a la palabra. Pero Altea es una artista que recoge las fórmulas experimentales de la vanguardia. Y se atreve, como ella, a mezclar géneros. Es valiente, creo que sabe muy bien lo que hace y que tiene por delante un futuro espléndido.

Decíamos antes que sus obras tienen gran poder de sugerencia. Además de las líneas, yo veo pentagramas en estos grabados; y también una especie de construcciones de ladrillos, a modo pequeñas arquitecturas... también veo paisajes (que por otra parte me consta que los hay, procedentes de su estancia artística en la costa británica) y pueden intuirse muchos más elementos que la imaginación de cada cuál pueda añadir.

TRANSLATION TO ENGLISH

Altea Grau´s artwork is placed in the confluence between art and writing. We don´t know what other pathways this young artist is going to take, but currently she is developing a process in which the book, its pages and the written words, conform the bases for her experimentation. The point of departure of the work on display is the book, however, now we are going to see in what way.

The book has always attracted artists' practitioners. We call artist´s books to those volumes that contain drawings, thoughts and stories, becoming sometimes a creative diary. Then we have the object-books, which are more autonomous forms of books. It is known that artist André Breton, father of the Surrealist movement, formulated the idea of this type of books. Apparently, one night, he dreamt that was in a market and found a very strange book, which its cover was covered in black wool. When he woke up realised that he wouldn´t be able to buy such a special and unique book in a normal market. That´s why he encouraged the surrealist group to start creating them, and not only books, but also all sort of weird objects only conceivable by the imagination.

The experimentation with the book is in the bases of Altea´s artwork. In this specific case, the artist has founded her investigation within the notion of the double-page spread using the duality, reflection, echo and the notion of fold. If we analyse the exhibition artworks, we can se how each piece unfolds like when we open a book. Each double page has a central space, an anonymous space, where we don´t normally pay attention, which sometimes it is even awkward because it doesn´t allow us to open the book properly. Altea takes that fold, or that gutter, to define her work.

The majority of the artworks are divided by a central axis, which is the place where the book is folded. That axis separates the right and left pages of the book. And although that represents a separation, there is also a continuity, a similarity, a connection between pages. Altea plays with those connections: repeating the same image, playing with the positive and negative, with the inversion or mirrored images of the same plate. The core of the exhibition is formed by prints. The artist takes the process as something intrinsic to the creation of artworks. Using intaglio processes, Altea embraces chance, and unexpected results consequence of the experimentation.

However, what is more interesting in this exhibition is the poetry of the artist´s work. Because although the point of departure for these works are the pages of a book, here we can´t find any word. They have disappeared. There aren´t words, but there are lines that say that perhaps there might have been at some point. Lines that invite us to step forward, and look at the pieces from closer and see if we can read anything. There are short lines, we can see there are dots, commas, some more longer lines, perhaps the traces of a longer discourse. Lines made of incisions, erasing the traces of something written in there before.

There is something in Altea´s work related to writing. In Until the avant-garde practices, the relationship between art and writing hasn't always been easy. Professor Isabel Carrasco, who has studied this phenomenon in her research, affirms that 'writing was perceived by artists as a way to degrade painting, to turn something that it was pure and autonomous into something dirty'.

Altea recovers some of the experimental formulas of the avant-garde. She is brave and dears to mix genres because has a deep understanding of the context of her work. Her artworks have a great power to suggest, opening the significance of each piece to be completed through the imagination of each of the visitors.

APPENDIX 7

WORKSHOP DESIGN FOR MA BOOK ARTS READING GROUP

The reading group was a platform organised between course leader Susan Johanknecht and myself within the MA Visual Arts (Book Arts) curriculum at Camberwell College of Arts. The aim of the reading group was to complement the Book Arts course by introducing different theories and critical analysis of specific texts.

In order to allow a better focus of analysis, Susan and I discussed that it would be interesting to set a specific theme each year. That way, all proposed texts would share links and ideas. For example, the first year the theme was 'the extended page', where we would discuss the changing nature of the page; the second year it was 'the fold' and the third year the theme was 'the suggestion of text'. The main idea behind these themes was to complement and interrogate important areas related to this thesis, as well as opening dialogue about the cross-disciplinary subject of book arts, to gain a broader understanding of the different historical and contemporary practices.

The discussion of texts was complemented with visits to different relevant exhibitions, such as Jane Bustin´s *Rehersal* and with sessions held at the Chelsea Special Collection. Both the exhibitions as well as the material from the Special Collection complemented the analysis of texts by actively researching from original material from the archives. Being hands on, the students could appreciate for themselves many of the ideas discussed in the analysis of texts.

The design of these seminars aimed firstly, to contribute to the MA Book Arts curriculum by showing new perspectives to the subject of book arts and encouraging students to be more critical. Secondly, to create a program that allowed both my research and the students to revise and discover certain theories, ideas and artists and to open up informed discussions and formulate new thought. Finally, the Reading Group functioned as an active research platform that contributed to provide a broader and dynamic context to the MA Book Arts curriculum and became a valuable perspective to my own research.

APPENDIX 7A

EXAMPLES OF TEXTS FOR 2016 AND 2017 COURSES

2016

02/03/16 12,30pm- Book arts/print studio

Text: **Sigridur Arnar, A.** "Stephan Mallarmé on the democratic potentials of the fin-de-siècle newspaper" in *Writing Turned Image* by. Edited by Sabine Folie in Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2008

Additional texts:

- Rancière, J. "The space of words: from Mallarmé to Broodthaers. In *Writing turned image: an alphabet of pensive language*. Exhibition catalogue, edited by Sabine Folie. Vienna: Generali Foundation, 2008
- Sigrídur Arnar, A. "Paradigms of reading." In *The Book as Instrument. Stéphane Mallarmé, the Artist's Book and the Transformation of Print Culture*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2011

16/03/16 12,30pm- Book arts/print studio

Text: **Conley, Tom**. "Folds and Folding" in *Gilles Deleuze. Key Concepts*. Edited by Charles Stivale in Durham: Acumen, 2005

Additional texts:

- Rancière, J. "The white concern." In *The Politics of the Siren*. London: Continuum, 2011
- 'Writing and voice' and '"Our life have been in the clay"' in *Place, Writing, and Voice in Oral History* Edited by Shelley Trower. Published by New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 4-8, 94-103

13/04/16 12am- Meet at Copperfield Gallery, 6, Copperfield Street SE1 0EP

Texts: 'Gaps' in *Minima moralia: reflections from damaged life* by Theodor Adorno. Published by London: Verso, 2005, pp. 80-81

*Please read Jane Bustin's exhibition review:
http://www.copperfieldgallery.com/jane-bustin.html

Additional texts:

- Reynolds, D. "Reflections in black and white: Mallarmé and the act of writing". In *Symbolist Aesthetics and Early Abstract Art: sites of Imaginary Space*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995
- Rowley, Alison and Pollock, Griselda. "Painting in a 'Hybrid moment'." In *Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Painting: Hybridity, Hegemony, Historicism*, edited by Jonathan Harris. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2003

27/04/16 12,30pm- book arts/print studio

Text: **Rancière, J**. "The duty of the book." In *The Politics of the Siren*. London: Continuum, 2011

Additional texts:

- During, E. "Art" in Alain Badiou: key concepts. Edited by A.J Barlett & Justin Clemens. Durham: Acumen, 2010

2017

18/01/ 17. 12,30pm-Book Arts/Print Studio

- Texts: **Phillpot, Clive**. 'Booktrek: the next frontier' in *Booktrek*, Zurich: JRP Ringier, 2013

Additional texts:

Drucker, J. 'A critical metalanguage for the book as an artform' in *Talking the Boundless Book. Art, Language and the Book Arts*, edited by Charles Alexander in Minneapolis: Minnesota Center for Book Arts, 1995

15/03/ 2017. 12,30pm - Meet at Chelsea Space (Chelsea College of Arts)

Exhibition: '**Kit Poulson: *Mutter*'.** This exhibition by artist and writer Kit Poulson, shows the outcomes of a library residency during 2016/17 through a collaborative new commission platform initiated by Book Works with Chelsea College of Arts Library and CHELSEA space.

- Text: **Siegelaub, S** (2013). ‘Interview, April 11, 2013’. Interview with Seth Siegelaub. Interviewed by Michalis Pichler in *Books and Ideas after Seth Siegelaub*, New York: The Centre for Book Arts, Sterbnberg Press, 2016

15th March 2017. 12,00pm-Meet at Chelsea Special Colection.

- Texts:

Rendell, J (2009) ‘Site-writing’ in Doherby, C (ed.) *Situation. Documents of Contemporary Art*. London: Whitechapel Gallery

Kreider, Kristen (2014) ‘The Page as Site: A Creative and Critical Performance of Emily Dickinson's Later Manuscripts’ in Kreider, K *Poetics and place the architecture of sign, subjects and site*. London : I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd

23rd May 2017. 12,30pm - Book Arts/Print Studio

- Texts: **Weber, M** (2006) ‘Justice is beautiful: expanding the paradigm of the artist’s book’ *The Blue Notebook* Vol1 (Num1) pp 7-11

Additional texts:

Wesker, A (1976) ‘Introduction’ in Wesker, A *Words as definitions of experience*. London: The Writers and Readers Publishing Cooperative

APPENDIX 8

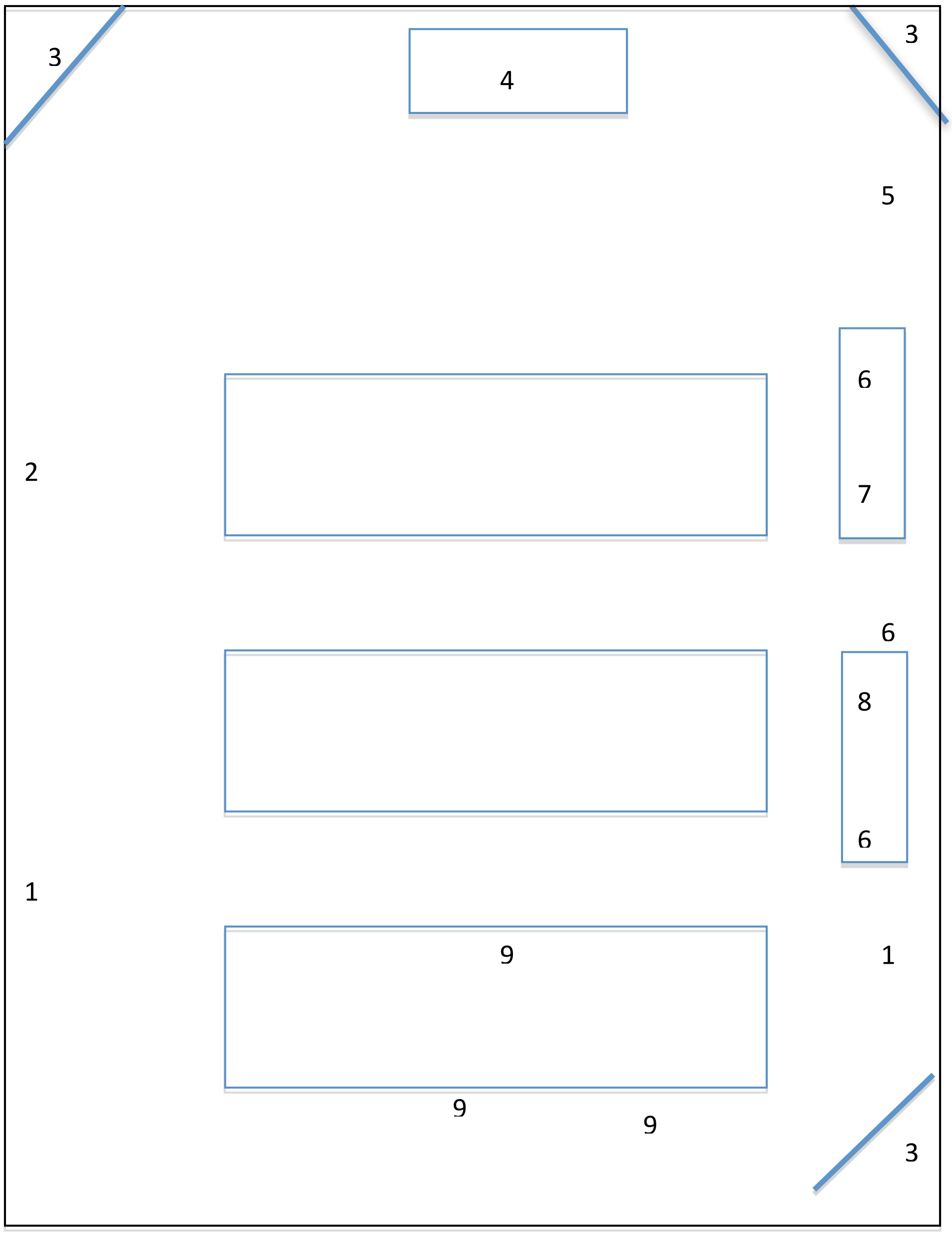
DOCUMENTATION READING GROUP EXHIBITIONS.

#1// UNMASKING SPACE: THE EXTENDED PAGE

11th–22nd May 2015

How do we account for the page as a material support and a discursive space in an exhibition context? With the growing culture of e-books and digital publications, we are losing the traditional double spread, therefore our perception and interaction with it is changing. With this exhibition, MA Book Arts Reading Group aims to explore the intrinsic and connotative properties of the double page and expand its notion.

Disconnecting the page from its ‘natural shell’ (the book) and extending the boundaries of the pages, the works on display try to change the conventional focus and context of analysis by considering the double page as a piece of art itself. The historical building of the Old College Library offers a particular setting that informs and draws the way the works are read and seen. Surrounded by old, rare and precious books, the artworks evocate a different dialogue with the reading and the engagement of the page: questioning its linear narration, form, qualities or display. The purpose is to generate meaning through symbolic signification, enhancing the material qualities, substrates, signs and traces of the verbal messages, to challenge the attempts of reading; to explore the meaning that emerges of the engagement with the visual, spatial, material and suggestive properties of the double page.



ARTISTS AND ARTWORKS

1. Danqing Huang. *Untitled,* laser print

2. Fox Irving. *Awkward Victory (Bookcase*) and *50 / 50* (Window). Acrylic on newsprint

3. Sandhya Kaffo. *Who is this “I”*--- ?. Mirrors and ink on Japanese paper

4. Barbara Lima. *Untitled*. Digital print on tissue paper

5. Ziyan Lu. *Unfolding Shadow*. Cyanotype print on paper

6. Saemi Jeon. *Untitled*. Laser print on paper and book

7. Katarina Kelsey. *Iove Raisin*. Silicone and pearlescent paper

8. Altea Grau. Monoprint and drawing on Japanese paper

9. Caroline Penn. *Art in Theory*. Three inkjet prints.

2 // FOLDS AND FOLDINGS

An oceanic line without beginning or end, an oceanic line that turns and bumps about diagrams.

The fold is a concept that drifts between Foucault and Leibniz's ideas and books…a notion that is always difficult and complex to define. However, in this exhibition we are taking Deleuze's notion of the fold as to define one's relation to oneself.

During our reading group sessions, we have been analysing and connecting ideas between the reader, audience and the gaps between creativity and message. However, we really pointed out how, through the form of the double page, ideas can be transmitted engaging with new forms of sensory practices of reading. And what is the double page made up of? It is as simple as a folded paper?

Using the concept of the fold as the smallest unit of matter as an inspiration, we are presenting a display that explores the relationship between the fold of the page and the theory of the Deleuze's fold to think creatively about the production of subjectivity. Through that idea we discover connections between different principles: open-ended and inexhaustive, non-exclusive and unlimited, exterior and infinite.

List of artists:

Xiao Yu Dong. *One Day*. Inject print on tracing paper and thread

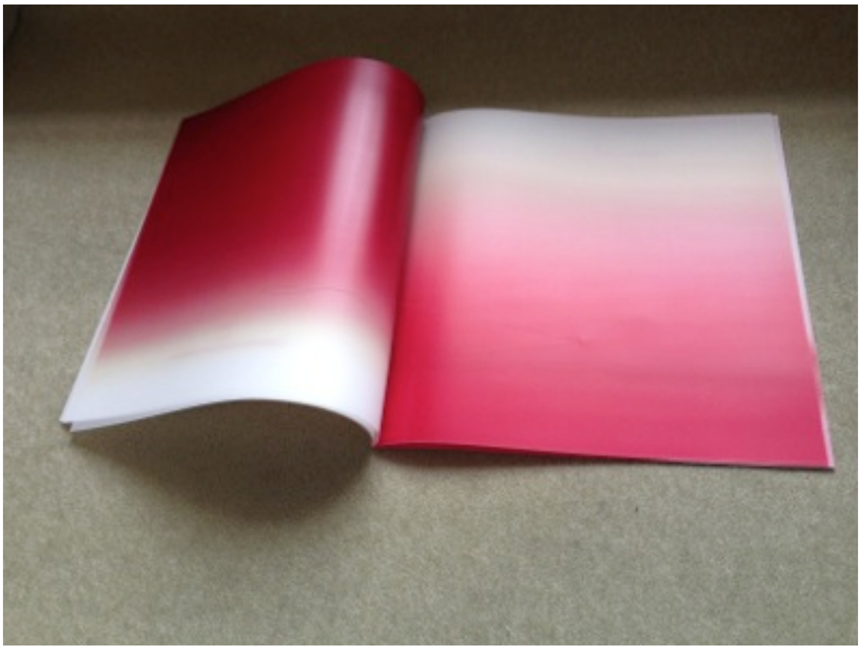
Ling Li. *Two Sides of a Body*. Inkjet print, single pages

Charlotte Rimmer. Fragments of *I'm Not Really a Tea Drinker*. Transferred images from wall to paper

Hui Zhang. *Tides End*. Spray paint on tracing paper and book covers

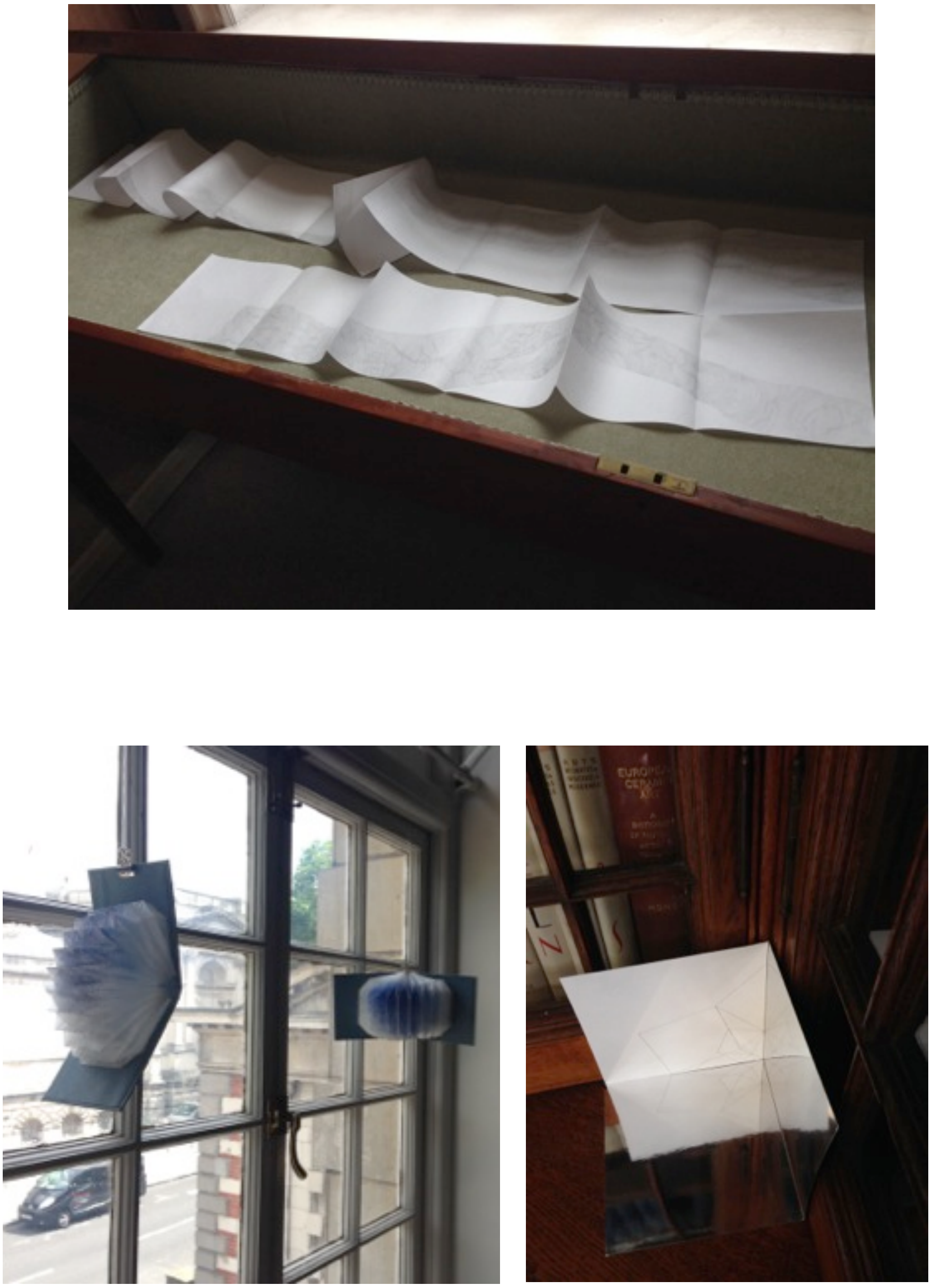
Lena Wurz. *Propositions of Folding*. Drawing on tracing paper

Rita Byon. *Untitled*. Paper clay



A 35. Xiao Yu Dong. *One Day*. Inject print on tracing paper and thread.

A 36 and 37. Charlotte Rimmer. Fragments of *I'm Not Really a Tea Drinker*. Transferred images from wall to paper.



A 38 and 39. Hui Zhang. *Tides End*. Spray paint on tracing paper and book covers.

A 40 and 41. Lena Wurz. *Propositions of Folding.* Drawing on tracing paper.

A 42. Ling Li. *Two Sides of a Body*. Inkjet print, single pages.

#3 // PARTS OF A FOLD

ARTISTS:

1 and 6. *Joint Synesthesia*. Tinglin Liu

2. *I've Come to Show You a Book*. Charlotte Rimmer. Lasercut on perspex

3. *Interfuit*. Caitlin Akers. Photocopy printed booklet

4. *I feel like shit*. Ke Xu. Digital print on paper

5. *Untitled*. Ling Li. Artist book

7. *Murmuring (book) & Mute (video)*. Yishen Chen

Digital print on paper and 2 min black and white video

8. *Stuck in Paradise*. Caroline Fraser

Digital scans and long stitch-bound book

9. *The Day Before Deadline*. Ming Cheng. Folded paper

10. *Archaeology of Knowledge*. Elisabeth Morgan

Found book, digital scans and inkjet print on encyclopaedia pages

11. *Crack*. Jianqing Kang. Grey board and paper

12. *Sat May 13 18:54:31 BST 017*. Klara Vith

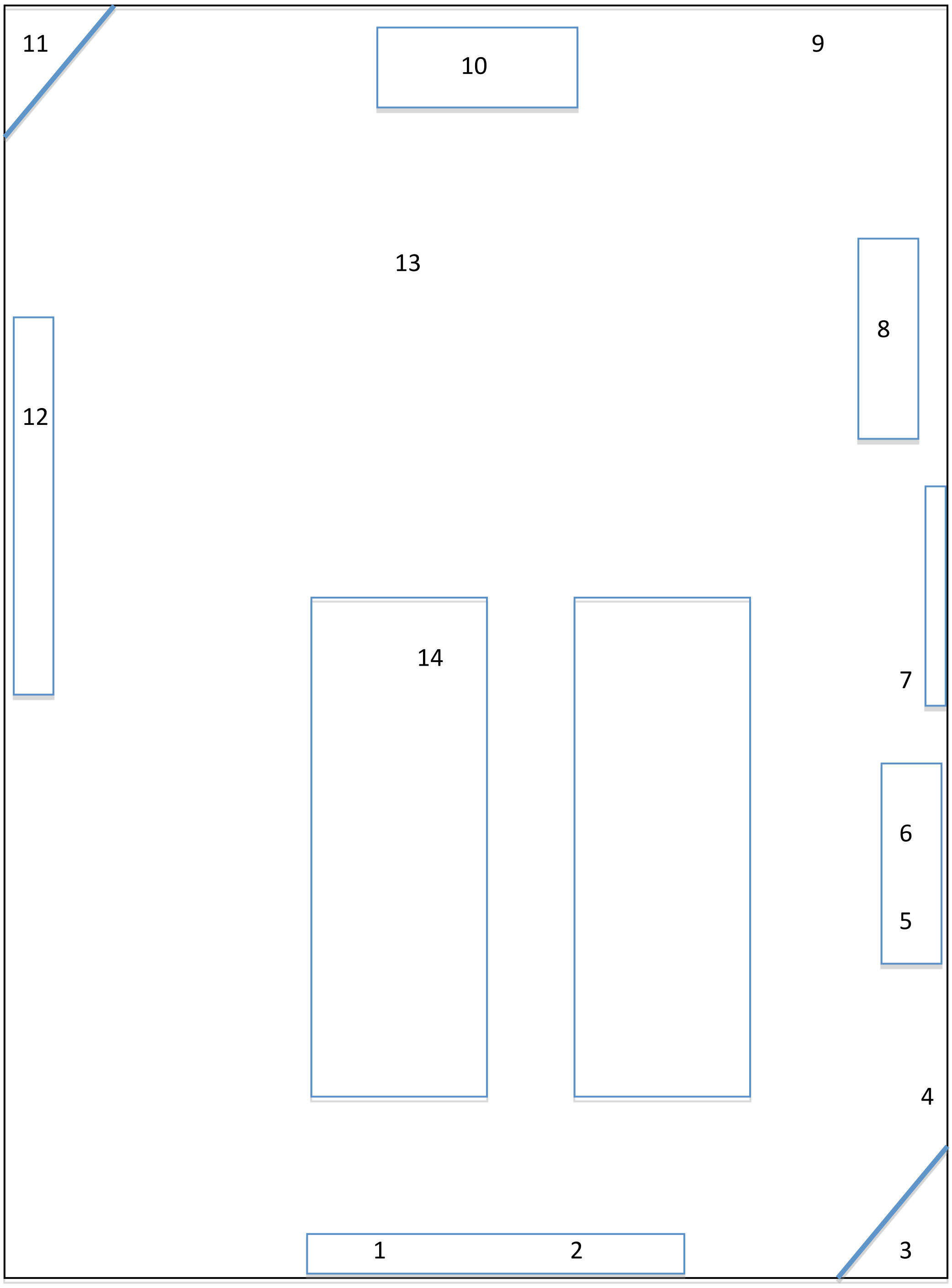
Monoprint and digital print on bible paper

13. <->. Lena Wurz

Carbon paper transfer on newsprint and wooden photocopy

14. *Untitled*. Nora Schmel

Photocopies and cut-outs



A 43. Session at the Chelsea Special Collection with Gustavo Grandal-Montero and a group of students from the MA Book Arts course.

APPENDIX 9

CURATED MATERIAL FROM THE CHELSEA SPECIAL COLLECTION

DISPLAY 1. UNMASKING SPACE: THE EXTENDED PAGE. June 2016

Big cabinet:

***Ruscha, E**. (2005). *Then & Now: Hollywood Boulevard 1973–2004*. First edition. Göttingen: Steidl

***Ruscha, E.** (1967). *Thirty-four Parking Lots in Los Angeles*. Los Angeles: Ruscha

***Douglas, H and T. Strokes** (1987). *Real Fiction*. New York: Visual Studies Workshop Press in conjunction with Weproductions

Long cabinet:

* **Nauman, B.** (1968). *Burning Small Fires*. San Francisco: Nauman

*July/August Exhibition (1970). London: Studio International in association with Seth Siegelaub

***Snow, M**. (1975). *Cover to Cover*. Halifax: Nova Scotia College of Art and Design

***Roth, D.** (1968). *246 Little Clouds*. With an introduction by Emmett Williams. New York: Something Else Press

DISPLAY 2 SUGGESTING TEXT June 2017

Long cabinet:

*__Roth, D.__ (1965). *Quadrat Blatt: Quadrat Print. (Enlargements from Daily Mirror Book)*. Hilversum: Steendrukkerij de Jong & Co

* **Broodthaers, M.** (1989). *Le cadran s(c)olaire*. Berlin: Berliner Künstlerprogramm des Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienstes in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Rainer Verlag

Small cabinet:

*__Broodthaers, M.__ (1969). *Un Coup de Dès Jamais N'abolira le Hasard: Image*. Antwerp: Galerie Wide White Space

Big cabinet:

*__Roth, D.__ (1971). *Ideogramme: Bok 1956–59*. Hellnar: Edition Hansjörg Mayer

*__Kozlowski, J.__ (1972). *Reality*. Poznan: ZPAP

*__Roth, D.__ (1971). *Kleinere Werke (1.teil): Veröffentlichtes und bisher unveröffentlichtes aus den Jahren 1953 bis 1966*. Hellnar: Edition Hansjörg Mayer

*__Schraenen, G.__ (ed.) (1994). *Metamorphosen des Schreibens*. Bremen: Neues Museum Weserburg Bremen (exhibition catalogue)