
Statements by the Jurors

Alexander Campos

New York has a fantastic, diverse, and beautiful landscape. From the Hudson River to the Greater Niagara, from the Finger Lakes to the Adirondacks, and from the Thousand Islands to the Catskills, areas that once thrived with vitality and commerce, creating communities.

Today, many of these regions are economically challenged. However, organizations like Bright Hill Press & Literary Center of the Catskills continue to further the cultural richness of these communities. Thus, as executive director and curator of The Center for Book Arts, the first organization of its kind, I am honored to have been by invited by Bertha Rodgers, founder of Bright Hill Press, to co-jury and organize its 25th Anniversary exhibition on book arts.

The entries for this exhibition allowed Bertha and me to showcase a variety of artworks that through their breath and creativity complement the progressive programming at Bright Hill Press. The insightful perspectives shared through this exhibition can only strengthens this community for Bright Hill. The Center, along with its numerous educational workshops and literary presentations, is a great and good gathering place.

Bringing artworks together from Ohio, Vermont, Washington, Illinois, Alabama, California, and Canada demonstrates the richness of artists employing book arts to make important commentary on contemporary culture and societal issues. The exhibition, befitting Bright

Hill Press's important mission and work, underscores the need for all to continue exploring new voices.

A few works that demonstrate this quality include Nikki Thompson's *Dodger Blues*, wonderfully structured so that the pages unfold to mimic baseball diamonds; the book recounts the ongoing struggles of women who wish to enter the male-dominated sport of baseball, and discusses the preconceived notions about young women and how they are discouraged from pursuing athletic careers.

Diane Stemper's *Backyard Ornithology*, Susan Viguers' *The Opossum*, Richard Reitz Smith's *Haiku Elephant Zoo*, Jennifer Vignone's *Howard Beach*, and Ginger Burrell's *Metamorphosis* bring attention to the environment and the ongoing concerns of ecological systems being destroyed.

Other works—Kristine Bouyoucos's *My Mother's Hands*, Mary Ashwood's *To Do*, and Tara Bryan's *Making Bread* deal with loss and memory of family and friends—exposing our societal need to remember those no longer with us, as well as activities that build communities.

Sarah Bryant's *Figure Study*, Ginger Burrell's *Giftschrank*, Carolyn Shattuck's *Resilience*, and Karen Hanmer's *1984Now* examine taboo issues—unjust politics, health difficulties, economic plights, and population growth—that need to be addressed collectively to improve mankind overall yet are

championed by only a few. There are also amusing and witty works such as Emily Martin's *All Sorts*, Cristina de Almeida's *Letterforms and Latinisms*, and Barbara Henry's *Seaweed Journal*, all using typography to discuss communication, or the lack thereof, and the ongoing sexism, race, and cultural differences in our society.

Overall, this exhibition aims to unite diverse voices with a common thread—unity, hope, and understanding through creativity, a hallmark of Bright Hill Press & Literary Center when founded and still at 25!

Bertha Rogers

Book Arts 2017 is Bright Hill's ninth book arts exhibit and as such, it is a perfect representation both of Bright Hill's mission, which is to seek out, study, and collect the work of early and contemporary writers, storytellers, and artists, and to publish, disseminate, and present that work through publications and educational and public programs for the larger community. The Word & Image Gallery's aim is to show and produce works that integrate the visual and the literary.

The books in this exhibit were developed and crafted by artists from throughout the US and Canada, and they represent not only many different ideas and theories about the world in which they find themselves but also varied approaches to the art of the book—traditional bindings with text and image, pop-

ups, tunnels, accordions, flags, and sewn and slipcased bindings. Besides being altogether fascinating, these works represent a dedication to craft; they are a feast in so many ways.

The subjects of the books vary greatly; some, like Kristine Bouyoucoucos's *My Mother's Hands* and *Friends Forever* take as their topic home and relationships. Tara Bryan examines this always-compelling topic as well in her *Making Bread (Not Bombs)* and *Henry and Rose*. Their books are joined by Mary Ashwood's boxed book *To Do* and Peter and Donna Thomas's miniature accordion *Sixty* (in honor of Donna's 60th birthday). Jennifer Vignone also explores subjects close to home and heart with *Maintaining* and *Howard Beach*; and she is joined by Valerie's Carrigan's elegant *The Walk*.

The artists move on; Sarah Bryant, working with detailed demographic information, examines population in *Figure Study* while Wendy Fernstrum considers numbers and their power in *One is the Holiest Number*. Cristina de Almeida, in *Divide Sort Understand* and *Letter Forms Latinisms*, is interested in language and its power, as is Barbara Henry, who, in her *Seaweed Journal*, has devised a vivid new language; in her and with *Puzzles*, explores shapes and communication.

Emily Martin plays with color and Shakespeare's ever-new language in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* and *Ha Ha Funny Peculiar*. Her book *All Sorts* fairly explodes off the shelf, so vivid is its color and so movable are its units.

Carolyn Shattuck joins in the fun with her *Resilience Series #2*, a book that opens to origami koi swimming upstream. Diane Stemper brings nature into the discussion with *Universal Sample, Backyard Ornithology: Still Wild*, and *Waggle* while Margot Fagan plays with a seemingly simple form and ordinary materials that take the viewer beyond shape.

Karen Hanmer uses the flip book, that most playful form, to study the terrifying future in *Orwell's 1984Now*; and Ginger Burrell offers the malicious *Giftshrank* along with a book box holding several smaller books, *Metamorphosis*; while Nikki Thompson creates a baseball metaphor, complete with red thread, in *Dodger Blues* and then moves the reader to a more frightening world in *Blue Book*.

Susan Viguers performs word and shape magic in *Riddle Me This*, then moves back to a traditional binding of the mysterious yet omnipresent *The Opossum: A Specimen Book*. Richard Reitz Smith offers a children's book of words and images in traditional bindings, in *Haiku Elephant Zoo*. Craig Jobson, like several of the artists in this exhibit, collaborates with writers and artists and printers, assembling all into the meticulously crafted, traditionally-bound books *Professional Development* and *Wells & Sonne*.