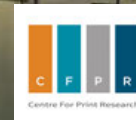


The lives of artists' books in UK libraries and collections

library

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Associate Professor for Artists' Books /
Programme Leader MA Multidisciplinary Printmaking
Centre for Print Research, UWE Bristol, United Kingdom

Book above: *AN (OTHER) LOOK AT THE SPECIAL COLLECTION*,
Marianne Paasche, Pedro Vasquez & Ola Søndena, 2022. Made for
the SABPP, on its way into Bower Ashton Library Special Collections.



Artists' books

Books made or conceived by artists.

What are artists' books?

Artists' books are books made or conceived by artists.

Artists' books that maintain the traditional structure of a book are often known as book art or bookworks, while those that reference the shape of a book are known as book objects.

"Artists' books are books or book-like objects, over the final appearance of which an artist has had a high degree of control; where the book is intended as a work of art in itself." (Bury, 1995, p.1). Bury, S. (1995) Artists' books : the book as a work of art, 1963-1995. Aldershot: Scholar Press.

Find artists' books

UWE Bristol's collection of artists' books is located in filing cabinets in the main part of [Bower Ashton Library \(City Campus\)](#). The books can be looked at in the library only during library staffed hours (Monday – Friday 08:30 – 17:00).

Search artists' books >

Most art colleges and universities with art & design courses have collections of artists' books within their libraries and archives.

UWE Bristol has two collections of artists' books:

c.1,300 in Special collections at Bower Ashton Library and c.1,500 in the Centre for Print Research archive.

These are used as teaching, study and research resources and are open for public or study visits.

A Series of Small Admissions by Hazel Grainger

For her work A Series of Small Admissions, Hazel Grainger took an unbroken roll of unused cinema admission tickets and printed a small admission on the reverse of each one.



Watch on YouTube



Greetings from Norway by Imi Maufe

In Greetings From Norway, Imi Maufe presents a series of blue, black and white screen-printed images forming a ten day hut to hut ski tour in Norway. The colours and feel of the book reflect the colours of the mountains and 1930's graphics from the tour guides found in the huts.



TATE Search Shop [BECOME A MEMBER](#)

ART AND ARTISTS WHAT'S ON PLAN YOUR VISIT

ARTIST BOOK SUMMARIES

At Tate and elsewhere artist books are typically catalogued in terms of core bibliographic details (place of publication, size of edition etc.), but these catalogue entries rarely provide a sense of what the books are like and often do not assist users who might wish to search a collection thematically.

As part of the 'Transforming Artist Books' Research Network, Tate piloted the writing of five descriptive texts that combined bibliographic details with descriptive and interpretive commentary similar in tone and format to the summaries written about artworks in Tate's collection. Some of the texts contain artist-generated information and all have suggestions for further reading. New photographs of the books help show their physical complexity.

Edward Ruscha
'Twentysix Gasoline Stations' 1963
'Twentysix Gasoline Stations' is an artist book by Edward Ruscha

Simon Cutts
'Poinsettia' 1975
'Poinsettia' is an artist book by Simon Cutts

Stuart Mugridge
'from Sowtontown' 1999
'from Sowtontown' is an artist book by Stuart Mugridge

Mette-Sofie Ambeck
'6 degrees of separation' 2000
'6 degrees of separation' is an artist book by Mette-Sofie Ambeck

Hilary Judd
'Shoe Box' 2006
'Shoe Box' is an artist book by Hilary Judd

National UK collections of artists' books include:

BRITISH LIBRARY Catalogues & Collections Discover & Learn What's On Visit [Busin](#)

Collection guides

Artists' books and fine press

My Mackerel Lover by Carolyn Trant, (Shellmark: HS.74/1793) used with kind permission of Carolyn Trant.

We collect artists' books and fine press publications from the UK. Our collections also include many important works from the Americas and Europe.

About the collection

UK

These collections reflect the growth and innovation in artists' books over the past 50 years. We hold extensive collections of published works by Ken Campbell, Carolyn Trant, Ron King, Christine Tacq, Ian Tyson, Natalie d'Arbeloff, D R Wakefield, and many others.

Our fine press collections date from the late 19th century to the present day, including the Hogarth Press, Old Stile Press, Circle Press, and Enitharmon Editions. We have extensive collections of visual poetry and concrete poetry, including more than 500 publications from Writers' Forum.

We have the largest collection in the world of UK illustrated books, including children's literature and books produced by the Folio Society.

Americas and Europe

Our collections are particularly strong for the Americas, including works by Ulises Carrión, Enrique Chagoya, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Barbara Hodgson, Sol LeWitt, Angela Lorenz, Edward Ruscha, Cecilia Vicuña and Kara Walker. We also hold a selected sample of miniature books containing publications by Peter and Donna Thomas, Irene Chan, and Midnight Paper Sales & Flaming Cat Press, among others.

The Library holds a large selection of independent fine press books from the Americas, including the Arion Press, Heavenly Monkey, Yolla Bolly Press, Nawakum Press, Ninja Press, The Moving Parts

Tate Britain

Visit us What's on Collections Learn Join & Support Shop

Artists and the Book

Highlights Features

What happens when an artist approaches the format or concept of the book, not simply to document or illustrate their work but as an art practice in its own right? Artists' books, in this sense, take many forms, from luxury letterpress volumes with original prints to duplicated pamphlets, 3D constructions and 'altered' existing books. The V&A holds a very large and varied collection of artists' books, all of which can be accessed in the National Art Library, here at the V&A South Kensington.

Where to find this collection
National Art Library

Download a map

Explore the Collections

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V&A Museum



The British Library ARTIST'S BOOKS NOW public talks series curated by the book artists and researchers Egidija Čiricaitė and Sophie Loss and the librarians Jeremy Jenkins and Richard Price. Each event explores an aspect of the contemporary through a selection of books, presented in an accessible and enjoyable style by artists and commentators.



Stevie Ronnie's infectious enthusiasm as he describes how he employs a range of objects in the creation of an artist's book.
Photo: British Library blog.



John McDowall displays an opening from his artist's book *Atramentum*.
Photo: British Library blog.

The British Library
<https://www.bl.uk>



Front cover of *Thames to Dunkirk*



Thames to Dunkirk in the British Library Writing Exhibition, 2019

'The British Library holds several of Liz Mathews' works in our artists' books collection, including *Thames to Dunkirk*. During the past weeks, we have been working with Liz to create a new short film that shows this work reflects on the events of the evacuation of British soldiers from Dunkirk in May and June 1940.'
Photo: British Library blog. <https://blogs.bl.uk/english-and-drama/artists-books/>



How do artists' books get to the library?

Direct purchasing from the artists at fairs: Bristol Artist's Book Event (BABE), Small Publishers Fair (London), Booked (Helsinki) Malmö Artist's Book Biennial, Volumes Zurich, Pages (Leeds), Super Books (Munich), Bergen Art Book Fair, Miss Read (Berlin), Vienna Art Book Fair...



HG Makes / Philippa Wood & Tamar MacLellan at BABE, UK



Guy Bigland at Malmo Artists' Book Biennial 2022



Hazard Press at the Small Publishers Fair, London



Booked at at MUU Helsinki

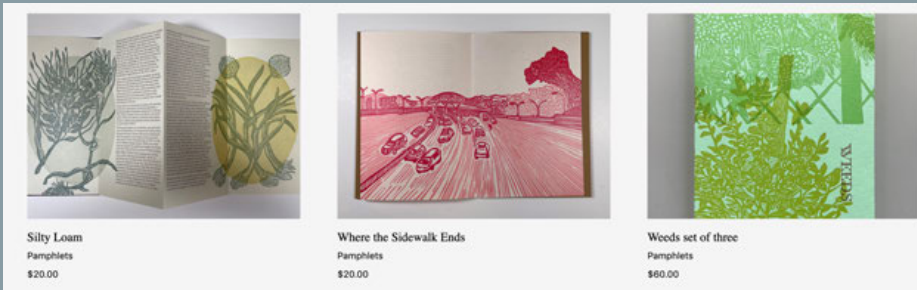


Posted/Unposted at Bergen Art Book Fair

How do artists' books get to the library?

From artists and small publishers websites:

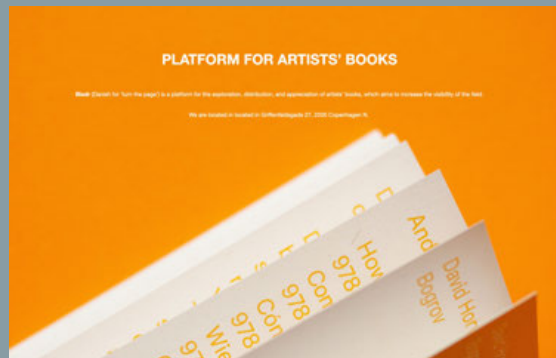
Timglaset, Kurt Johannessen, Negative Press, Sarah Nicholls, Corinne Welch, Uniformbooks...



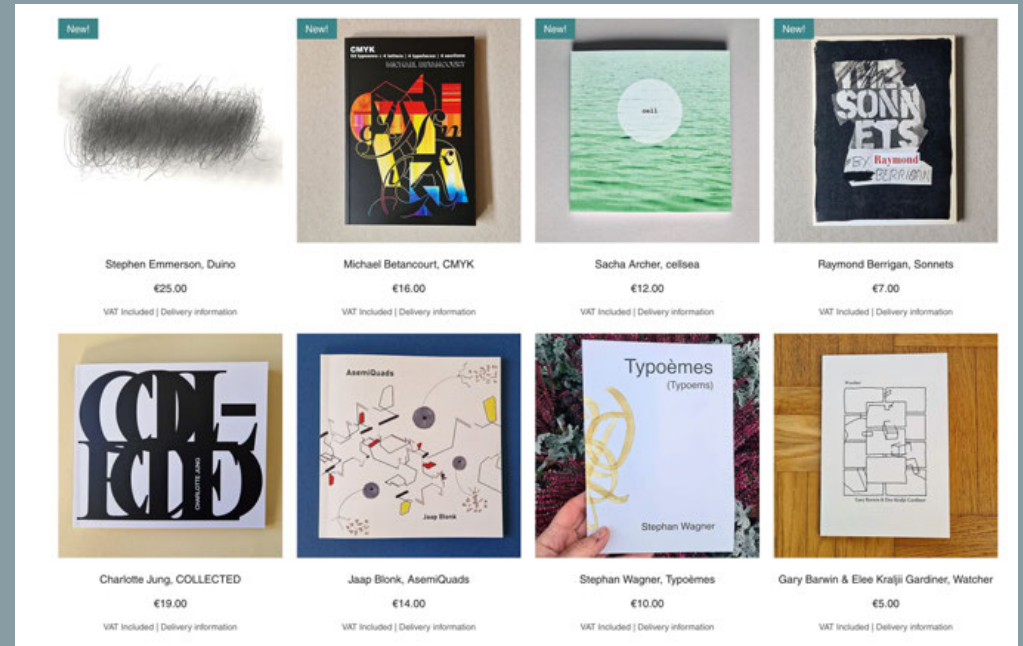
<https://www.brainwashingfromphonetowers.com>



<https://www.neg-press.com>



Bladr – Copenhagen <https://www.bladrbladr.net/>

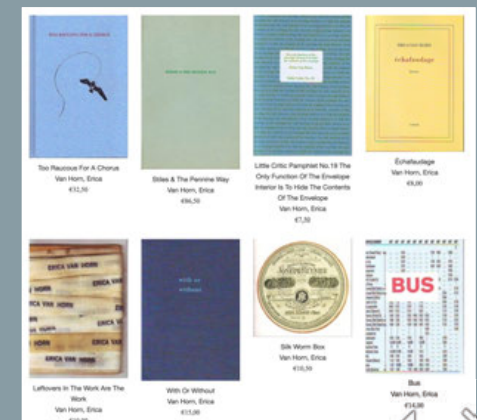


<https://www.timglaset.com>

From artists' books stores:



bookartbookshop in London



Boekie Woekie in Amsterdam
<https://boekiewoekie.com>

Artists' books on display in the show cases at Bower Ashton Library





Artists' books by Theresa Easton, on display in, and commissioned for the exhibition *Queer Between the Covers*, responding to works held in the collection at Senate House Library, London, UK, 2018. Photo: Theresa Easton. <https://theresaeaston.wordpress.com>





A walk around a book in the La Trobe Reading Room at the State Library Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.

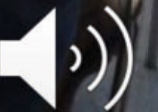
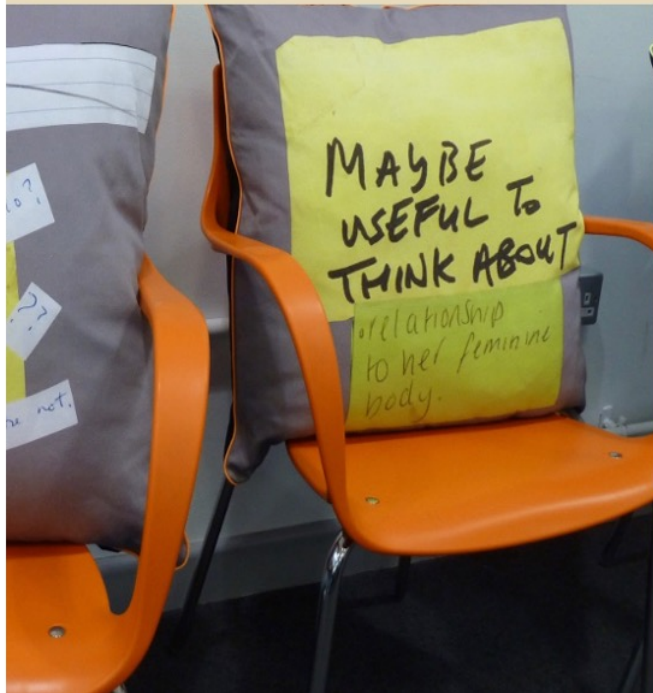
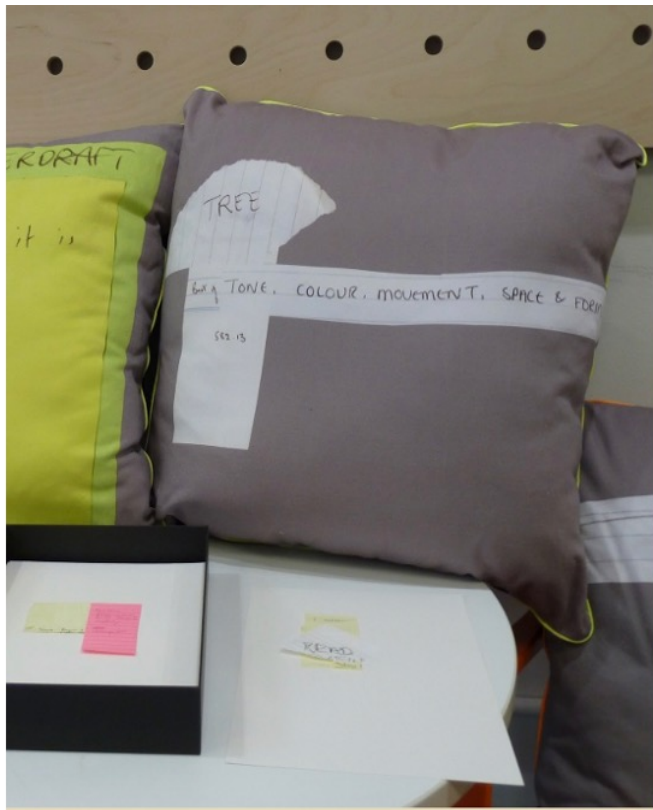
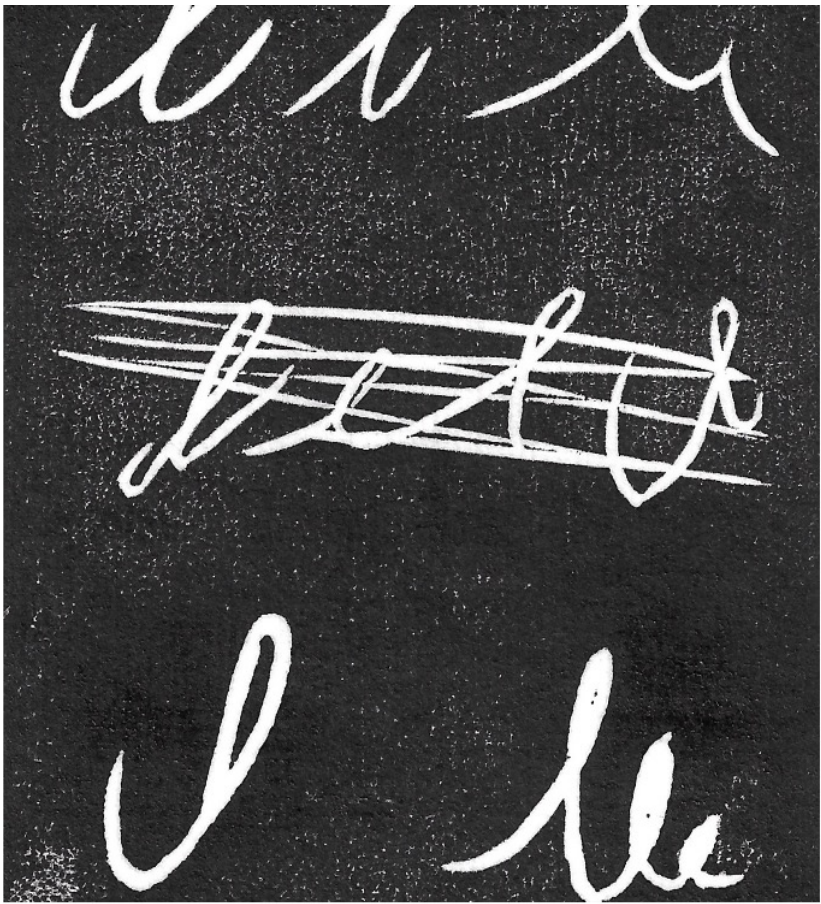
Gracia Haby & Louise Jennison, *Looped* installation view and detail images from their artists' books, 2017 onwards.

Photo: Gracia Haby & Louise Jennison. <http://gracialouise.com>



Space, Line, Colour an exhibition curated by artist Julie Johnstone on display alongside her solo show: *ON A CLEAR DAY – Book works and poem objects responding to Agnes Martin*





Artists' Books Partnership, exhibition Programme (ABPP) – artists' books escaping the archive:

The programme has been running for 14 years, and has loaned works for 85+ exhibitions, workshops, educational and community classes and events to universities, collections, schools, social and mental health workshops, prisons, libraries, galleries, clubs and bookshops around the world.

The programme lends artists' books from the archive at CFPR, on a no fee basis – to set up projects, workshops, clubs, exhibitions and events promoting artists' books to the wider community.

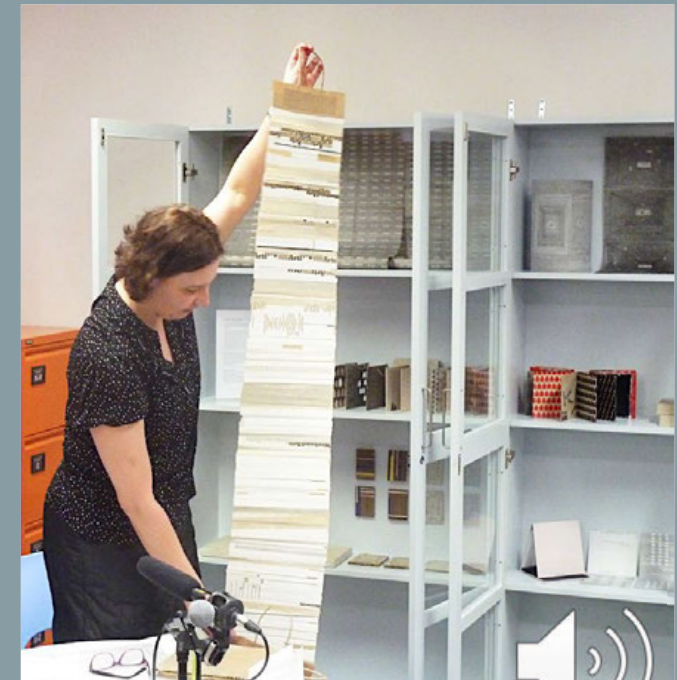
<https://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/abpp/>





Bower Ashton Library exhibitions - Left: Tim Hopkins show & tell of Half Pint Press books with Angie Butler for *Print in Conversation* talks, November 2019;

Right, Katerina Kyselica, *For Me, For You, For Me and You*, March 2020

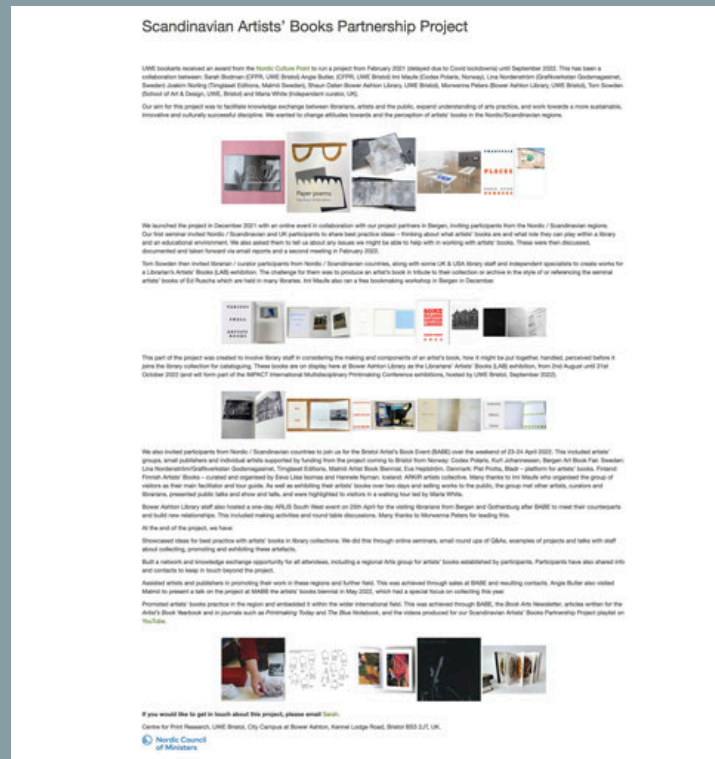


Scandinavian Artists' Books Partnership Project

A collaboration between: Sarah Bodman (CFPR, UWE Bristol) Angie Butler, (CFPR, UWE Bristol) Imi Maufe (Codex Polaris, Norway), Lina Nordenström (Grafikverkstan Godsmagasinet, Sweden) Joakim Norling (Timglaset Editions, Malmö Sweden), Shaun Oaten Bower Ashton Library, UWE Bristol), Morwenna Peters (Bower Ashton Library, UWE Bristol), Tom Sowden (Royal College, London) and Maria White (Independent curator, UK). 2021 – 2022 Supported by the Nordic Culture Point



Exhibitors: Eva-Liisa Isomaa and Hannele Nyman | Galleria Duetto (Finland) at BABE 2022. Photo: Niamh Fahy



Watch a series of videos and find out more on the project archive page:
<https://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/sabpp/>

Project collaborator Imi Maufe shows artists' books created by members of Codex Polaris (Norway and the Nordic countries) at BABE 2022. Photo: Niamh Fahy



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Please do get in touch if you have any questions, want to find out more about our projects or loans or join the Book Arts Newsletter mailing list:



<https://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk>



Sarah.Bodman@uwe.ac.uk



[@SarahBodman](https://twitter.com/SarahBodman)

