The Bibliography of the Jack Ginsberg Collection on Artists' Books

compiled by

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with a digression on working with electronic databases

On Quoting Authorities

Unless you've read it with your eyes
Set nothing down, nor ought surmise.
Imagination leads to lies
In Bibliography. The wise
Know well this golden rule to prize.
But if a beaten path you tread,
(You surely must if much you've read)
And needs must say what has been said,
Give your Authority — be terse —
Quote Author, Title, Chapter, Verse
That each one to the fountainhead
At once and surely may be led
And read himself what you have read.

Catena Librorum Tacendorum by Pisanus Fraxi [the pseudonym of Henry Spencer Ashbee] (p488).
Volume 3 of Index Librorum Prohibitorum, first published in London in 1877.
Taken from the facsimile edition published by Charles Skilton, London, 1960.

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I have collected artists' books almost since the "creation" of the genre in the late 1960's and have always been particularly interested in the literature on the subject, at first relatively scarce, but proliferating alarmingly in recent years. As time has passed and as my memory deteriorates in tandem with the volume of information becoming available, I have long wanted to compile a bibliography on the subject of artists' books primarily as an aid to my memory but also as a useful reference to others interested in the subject, even where they do not have access to my collection. There are many anthologies with essays by multiple contributors and publications with interesting introductions etc. by contributors other than the author and a good cross-index is needed to find these easily. I have often spent hours searching for an article that I know I've seen but can't find.

The foremost problem of any compilation of this sort is what to include and what to exclude. As this is principally the bibliography of a personal collection, I have included all items which, I believe, are about or have a bearing on artists' books. Although the genre "Artist Book" is of relatively recent origin, there are books that provide background to the subject which may have been published before the term itself gained credence. In a field named "Item Type" I have called these publications *Precursors.* This field is probably the most difficult to classify correctly as a personal decision must be made. I have nevertheless tried to classify – in a word or phrase – the essence of the work although this can be rather arbitrary as one publication often crosses lines and may fit into several categories.

Early on I decided to exclude all artists' books themselves unless they also had a bearing on the *subject* of artists' books. (There are a number of publications on artists' books, sometimes using unusual formats, which could themselves be considered artists' books). The most difficult choices were those where a distinction had to be made between publications about *Artists' Books* and *Private Press Books*. Had the latter been included, this bibliography would have been too large and unwieldy and, besides, there is already a large body of work on Press Books. Nevertheless I have included several publications that fit into both categories – e.g., *inter alia*, those dealing presses such as The *Janus Press* and the *Perishable Press* that straddle both genres.

An arena in which a huge amount of information on artists' books, as on other topics, is increasingly available, is the internet. This can typically be rather ephemeral, however, but there are continuing databases or archives of great interest. Peter Verheyen, the Listowner of the Book Arts List (Book_Arts-L) has been central in advancing this process. I

have included one printed example (publication 309) of the kind of dialogue possible in this medium. This he titled: *Definition of the Artist's Book, What is a Book, BSO's (Book Shaped Objects), Art vs. Craft and much more.* A Discussion held on the Book_Arts-L listserv March 1998. [Note: This discussion and much more is also available on the listserv archive at http://www.philobiblon.com as individual postings which have not been edited but only compiled into one file. Non-related postings were removed.]

The most comprehensive historical introduction to the literature on artists' books to date is *Artists Books – A Critical Survey of the Literature* by Stefan Klima[1]. The bibliography in this title (p86 –109) is here referenced as "SK" throughout. The bibliography, in which Ed Ruscha is emphasised (23 of 430 items), is uneven in parts, including some duplication, but is nevertheless the most comprehensive to date and is especially strong on journal articles. The survey itself is unsurpassed.

I have long been interested in the rather esoteric field of bibliography and enjoy the vicarious reading of bibliographies and bibliographical theory as others might enjoy cookery books rather than cooking or even eating! For many years I kept a simple card index (bibliography) of my collection but, only since the ubiquitous availability of computers, have I attempted the conversion to an electronic database making searches so much easier and the publication of bibliographies such as this feasible. When first contemplating this change, in about 1998, I was surprised that no off-the-shelf program seemed to exist for my specific requirements. It took me some years to acquire sufficient knowledge of the databases available for my requirements but I eventually succeeded using Microsoft products. Although I was assured that Microsoft Access was the program to use (which sounded sensible being a dedicated database program), at first I persevered in the use of Microsoft Excel together with Microsoft Word (Mail Merge) with which I am reasonably proficient. I found Excel easier to use and printing was certainly less complicated than when I first began to use Access. Eventually, however, I found that, as the database grew in size, Excel could not provide me with the printouts I required and somewhat reluctantly switched to Access. But soon afterwards I discovered a proprietary program called *ResourceMD* marketed by LogosFlow, www.lflow.co.za, developed by Peter Dennis and widely used in South Africa. It is sufficiently comprehensive and flexible for my purposes with a few deficiencies resulting from MS Access rather than the ResourceMD program itself.

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[1] Granary Books, New York,1998

Because I found there to be a relative dearth of information on compiling electronic bibliographies, I decided to describe in some detail the process I have used to compile this bibliography using *ResourceMD* hoping that this might be of some help to others with similar needs. Many colleagues are more interested in these aspects of bibliography than in artists' books! Rather than attempting to write an account of the methodology used in the abstract, the use of an actual example is more intelligible. Those uninterested in these technicalities should skip those sections and those uninterested in artists' books should skip the bibliography! I nevertheless believe that this bibliography will be more valuable to users if the rules of compiling it are understood. A relational database necessitates using logical processes which never arose with a typed card index, or even Excel.

The advantages of using a database are now self evident in that it is relatively easy to use the captured information for a multitude of purposes (such as in the preparation of indices) without having to re-compile the information. Searching across the database or searching within specific fields (often using drop-down boxes) is the major attribute of any database. In addition, although most printed bibliographies are listed in author sequence, a *Title Index* or a *Publisher Index* is easily extracted from the same database. Statistics such as the number of items (records), authors, catalogues and even relatively useless information such as the number of publications (or even pages!) in the bibliography are easily determined.

I begin by describing the information shown in this bibliography and then describe some of the technical aspects used to produce it.

The sequence by which this bibliography has assumed its present form on the internet has tracked the development of the technology. The beginnings of the collection predated the advent of computers during which time I used a simple card catalogue system where two cards were created for each publication: the main one was filed in title sequence with all details and the other with the author's details referring to the main card. This was essentially just a simple alphabetical title and author index with no way of searching for other details.

With the advent of computers, I converted the card index into electronic form. Almost from the beginning this had the huge benefit of allowing electronic searches, not just on title and author but on any aspect of the record. Over the years I was able to convert this electronic record from a

basic text first to Excel and then to Access without having to retype the records. Each upgrade however, allowed me to refine the entries and to add information so that records could conform to exact specifications. Much like writing a thesis, however, the job is never done and the finessing and checking can go on forever. One of the reasons I have decided to share this bibliography on the internet is that my records, having been created over such a long period of time, are in different stages of completion and I hope that the interested audience will help me identify mistakes and omissions on which they are more informed than I am. Certain fields such as "Item Type" still need a good deal of work in order to make the bibliography more user friendly and to bring some consistency to ideas which developed over more than forty years and which were originally never intended to be shared.

This is the preliminary (first?) internet edition of this Bibliography. I have produced printed copies in the past but they are not sufficiently dynamic as the collection is constantly changing. By consigning the internet edition to the world, I hope to receive feedback, and suggestions for improvements in subsequent, more comprehensive, updates. I would appreciate your comments to my email address: jackg@cjpetrow.co.za. Should you have duplicates of items missing from this bibliography, I would be interested in exchanging my duplicates or purchasing yours.

Note: Databases use **fields** to contain information on each entry, item or **record**. Here the records are publications. The word "book" was not used as "publication" is wider and may include such items as magazines, pamphlets, periodicals, catalogues, and electronic items such as CDs, DVDs and videos.

The *ResourceMD* database used to compile this bibliography has several advantages over others I have seen:
1. It allows for subdivisions (say, essays) within a publication (anthology) where the details of the titles and authors of the essays are identified and as easily searchable as the title and author of the anthology.
2. Many "producers" may be described; not only the author: e.g. the book artist, binder, essayist, curator, photographer, illustrator, editor, the name of the author of a preface, introduction etc with the "relationship" appearing in brackets after the producer's name.
3. As the bibliography is sorted into alphabetical order in its printed form, allowance is made for preceding characters which will appear with the printed title but will be ignored in the alphabetical sequencing. e.g. *the, a, an* (and foreign equivalents: *il, das, le*) and punctuation characters such as quotes, brackets or ellipses: " (…

Each publication or record takes the form shown below although there are instances where certain fields are omitted where they do not exist. Where field names are used in the bibliography, they are shown in **bold italics**. Thus, for example, the ***title*** will be shown without the word "*Title*" as this will be self-evident; but the ***edition*** will be shown with the word "*Edition*" as a guide, viz: *Edition: #253/300* (i.e. field name followed by the field contents).

#	Field
a.	Title
b.	Subtitle
c.	Producer(s) (relationship)
d.	Publisher Place Date
e.	Item ID: <<Item ID>> *Size:* <<Size>> *Page:* <<Page>>
f.	Edition: <<Edition>>
g.	Sequencing (such as ISBN or ISSN or Vol# or Cat#)
h.	Inscription: <<Inscription>>
i.	Notes: <<Notes>>
j.	Item Type: <<Item Type>>
k.	Articles

Commenting individually on each line of the record:

a. Title
The ***title*** of the publication appears alone on the first line.
e.g. *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*
Where a ***title*** incorporates the name of an author, an entry is shown for this author followed by "(title)" in the author index.
e.g.
In the <u>main entry</u>:
If the ***title*** were: INTERVIEW WITH BETSY DAVIDS

This would result in an <u>author entry</u>:
Producer: Betsy **Davids** (title)
This enables in a search for the author under either title or author.

b. Subtitle
Appears on the second line.

c. The producer(s)
The producer information comprises three fields:
  i. the ***first name***(s) and/or the initials
  ii. the ***surname***
  iii. a description of the relationship, if any
    (each is shown alone on a separate line).

e.g. Joe **Bloggs**

e.g. Joe **Bloggs** (introduction by)

e.g. Joe **Bloggs** (curated with an introduction by)

d. Publisher   Place   Date

All three fields are shown on one line

The ***publisher*** followed by the ***place*** of publication (imprint) followed by the ***date*** of publication.

e.g. Oxford University Press   London   1984

e.g. University of Johannesburg   Johannesburg, RSA   2006

e. Item ID   Size   Page

The ***Item ID***, ***size*** and ***page*** are on one line.

The ***Item ID*** is unique and ranges from 0001 to 9999.

Size (spine height) of the publication. If the width is greater than the height, the word "oblong" follows the ***size***, which is always shown in millimetres (mm).

This is followed by the ***page*** indicating the number of pages in the publication. The last numbered page sequence(s) are shown. If there are no page numbers, this field is marked "unpaged".

e.g. *Item ID: 0022*   *Page:* viii, 286pp   *Size:* 225mm

e.g. *Item ID: 2137*   *Page:* 311pp   *Size:* 105mm, oblong

e.g. *Item ID: 0982*   *Page:* unpaged   *Size:* 47mm

f. Edition

Where the size of an ***edition*** is indicated in a publication, this is shown.

e.g. *Edition: #12/125*

(this indicates that the publication has been allocated a specific number, in this case 12, which is specified together with the total ***edition*** size, in this case 125).

e.g. *Edition:* One of 100 copies

(this indicates that there is an ***edition*** size without a specific number indicated).

g. Sequencing

This may be an ISBN or ISSN number or it may indicate a volume or issue or catalogue number.

e.g. *ISBN: 0-87905-207-4*

e.g. *ISSN: 1834-1225*

e.g. *Vol: 17*

e.g. *Issue: 5*

e.g. *Catalogue: 44*

h. Inscription

> e.g. *Signed by the author and the illustrator*
>
> e.g. *Inscribed by the author to Joe Bloggs*

i. Notes

All other pertinent information on the publication.

If there is an SK number it will appear here. SK refers to "Artists Books – A Critical Survey of the Literature by Stefan Klima".

j. Item Type

> e.g. *Bookseller's Catalogue*
>
> e.g. *Bibliography*
>
> e.g. *Precursor*
>
> e.g. *Thesis*
>
> e.g *Periodical article*
>
> e.g. *Exhibition catalogue*   etc.

This category has not been fully developed and will be refined (standardised) as time allows.

k. Articles

Articles or Essays or any subdivisions in a publication with the page number on which they begin and with their own Title and Producer(s).

> e.g.
> p27   Book Art
> SK 241
> Richard Kostelanetz (essay by)
>
> p31   The New Art of Making Books
> Ulises Carrion (essay by)
>
> [p27 means page 27, 27pp means 27 pages]

Short bibliography on bibliographies:

- Introduction to Bibliography. Ronald B. McKerrow. Oxford at The Claredon Press, Oxford, 1951. Latest edition: 1995.
- Simple Library Cataloguing. Susan Grey Akers. American Library Association, Chicago, 1954. 4th edition.
- Principles of Bibliographical Description. Fredson Bowers. Russell & Russell, New York, 1949, reissued 1962.
- Bibliography. Derek Williamson. Clive Bingley, London, 1967.
- Authors & Titles. James A. Tait. Clive Bingley, London, 1969.
- A New Introduction to Bibliography. Philip Gaskell. Oxford University Press, London, 1972, reprinted 1974.

- Function of Bibliography. Gower Publishing Co Ltd, Aldershot, UK, 1982. A Grafton Book. Second edition. First published by Andre Deutsch Ltd in 1969.