

# THE COVER OF A BOOK IS THE BEGINNING OF A JOURNEY

**EXHIBITION GUIDE**

**22 NOVEMBER 2008 - 18 JANUARY 2009**

This exhibition explores a specific tendency in artists' bookworks to generate an energetic series of events and activity. Focusing on books that either offer sets of instructions to the reader, or are themselves derived from instructions, the books look to unsettle the usual distinctions between writers and readers, artists and audiences, and act as prompts to their readers to go beyond the conventions of reading. Much of this kind of work has roots in the practices of the 1960's Fluxus artists and two seminal books from this period, *Grapefruit* by Yoko Ono and *An Anthology of Chance Operations...* edited by LaMonte Young are included in the exhibition.

The title of the exhibition, **The Cover of a Book is the Beginning of a Journey**, was provided by the artist Jonathan Monk after enacting his book *Meeting #13*. This publication reads as an invitation to meet at the Eiffel Tower at midday on the 13th October 2008. A folder of documentation from this meeting is available to view at the central desk, along with a new book by Jonathan Monk entitled *Selected Meetings Selected*, produced especially for this exhibition and available to buy for £1. Please ask a steward.

You are welcome to view the books on display suspended in the centre of the exhibition space. A full bibliography is included on the reverse of this guide. Please ask a steward to unhook the book you wish to see. They will provide you with a set of handling guidelines and white cotton gloves to wear.

The books themselves are drawn from the collections in both Arnolfini's archive and The University of the West of England's Centre For Fine Print Research. Many of them date from the 1960s and 1970s, and include a whole range of publications by renowned and emerging artists including: Sophie Calle, Melanie Carvalho, Don Celender, Douglas Huebler, Susan Hiller, Boem Kim, Ed Ruscha, and Lawrence Weiner, amongst many others.

The plywood Display Station in the corner of the exhibition space has been made following templates by artist Alan Wexler laid out in *The Paper Sculpture Book*. Pages from the book are designed to be used to build sculptures which can then be displayed on the Display Station - a sculptural object in its own right. If you would like to build one of the sculptures from the book, please follow the instructions found on the Display Station.

Inspired by George Macunias' design for the title pages of *An Anthology of Chance Operations ....* the large graphic text-collage on the wall is made up from instructions found within various books in the exhibition. The wall colour is also the result of another instruction, specified as Pantone 1788 PC and included in Angela Bulloch's *Rule Book*.

On the top of the piano is a folder containing pieces for performance composed by Fluxus artists which you are welcome to perform. Many Fluxus artists are composers and performers, as well as visual artists.

On the adjacent wall to the text collage, you can find *The Library*, a participatory artwork by Steven Paige. You may join *The Library* by filling in the form provided and handing it to a steward, including details of books you would like to see in the library collection. Every week the artist will update the bibliographies, and new books will be added to *The Library*. If you decide to become a member, you are welcome to return to the exhibition to see your books displayed on the shelves.

At the central desk you can use the computer terminal to download, print and make your own copy of Duncan Speakman's book *for every step you take I take a thousand*, to take away. This unlimited edition publication is based on a performance in 2007, following a walk the artist made from Nether Stowey to Arnolfini. This book has an accompanying soundtrack available on the website to be played whilst reading.

If you have access to a motor vehicle, and would like to join in a 'do-it-yourself', multiple location performance of *Motor Vehicle Sundown Event* on the 10 January, you are able to download, print and make a set of instruction cards required to participate. Beginning in unison, in a place of their choosing, performers follow a set of 22 instructions drawn from a pack of 44 shuffled cards, whilst in their motor vehicle.

In keeping with the spirit of the exhibition, the Bristol-based Performance Re-enactment Society, a collective of Arnolfini 'We Live Here' Associate Artists, are inviting visitors to take part in a series of

enactments in response to the book works in the exhibition. Over five occasions they will carry out a selection of instruction-based works with visitors, realising other people's art and also creating original versions. Drop in and join them for this series of free events. Over the duration of the exhibition the remnants and documentation from some of these events will accumulate in the exhibition space, with some additional works being displayed which visitors will be able to contribute to.

ACT 1: Friday 21 November 6pm: PRS will carry out Douglas Gordon's *Three Steps to Heaven*. At this opening event spread a rumour about the following meetings (Stephen J. Kaltenbach).

ACT 2: Saturday 29 November 2pm: Meet at Arnolfini. Once there await further instruction.

ACT 3: Saturday 13 December 2pm: Bring a large piece of material (something textile, a blanket, sheet, etc.) to Unfurl (Alison Knowles).

ACT 4: Saturday 3 January 2pm: Cut out question marks from newspapers and affix them to things you want to question. Bring pictures of where you placed them (Julius Koller).

ACT 5: Saturday 10 January 2pm: Write an instruction for other people to carry out, and bring anything they'll need to do it (Hans Ulrich Obrist).

On Saturday 17 January there will be screenings of film versions of the artist book *Crackers: Premium* by Ed Ruscha and *Chinese Crackers* by Jonathan Monk, as well as Emily Wardill's *Basking in what feels like 'An Ocean of Grace' I soon realize that I'm not looking at, but rather I am it, recognising myself*. At 3pm there will be a performance by members of the Cube Orchestra using Yuri Suzuki and George Wu's book *50 Hands* described, as an orchestra in a book'.

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