

Introduction

*Right now we are in a moment of revitalization of the book,
it becomes ever more a unique piece,
precisely because of PDFs and Kindles,
I believe that we are now experiencing the Renaissance of the book.*
Irma Boom¹

As book designer Irma Boom suggests, we are experiencing a “Renaissance of the book.”² This is all the more true within contemporary art. In the last decades, the book has exerted a strong fascination on contemporary artists who have increasingly implemented it within their practices. It has done so by being an object (i.e. a physical entity with distinctive characteristics), a medium (i.e. a means by which something is communicated or expressed), and an instrument (i.e. a necessary tool for accessing a body of knowledge that allows one to go beyond the very tool itself).

As the work of artists as diverse as Nancy Holt (1938-2014), Hanne Darboven (1940-2009), Sophie Calle (b. 1953), Pipilotti Rist (b. 1962), Yto Barrada (b. 1971), Serena Vestrucci (b. 1986), Dieter Roth (1930-1998), Ed Ruscha (b. 1937), Lawrence Weiner (b. 1940), Victor Burgin (b. 1941), Martin Kippenberger (1953-1997), Thomas Demand (b. 1964), Tobias Rehberger (b. 1966), Matthew Barney (b. 1967), Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967), Steve McQueen (b. 1969), and Paul Chan (b. 1972), to name but a few, attests, the fascination toward the book has been trans-geographic as well as trans- and intra-generational.

Since the 1960s the book has played an unprecedented role within the domain of art and its dissemination. During the 1960s and 1970s, the so-called pioneers of the artist’s book, among which Roth and Ruscha are particularly

¹ Andrea Anselmo and Chiara Federico, “The Architecture of the Book: An Interview to Irma Boom,” *Burrasca*, no. 4 (July 2016): 39.

² Anselmo and Federico, “The Architecture of the Book: An Interview to Irma Boom,” 39.

representative examples, elected and implemented the book as a primary means of their artistic practice. Books started to embody and diffuse art instead of its representation: transcending timely and geographical restrictions, they have become exhibition sites in which and through which everybody, everywhere could potentially, directly *access* art.

From the 1990s onwards, the book – especially in the format of exhibition catalogue – has assumed an even more complex role because it has become an interrelated instance of the realization of artworks which are not only characterized by their time-based (media) dimension but also by a constitutive intermediality. Their strong installative character commands their in-situ experience. Moreover, the logic of the art market and legitimization strategies of art restrict the access to these artworks which are hardly accessible through different formats. Given the limited physical accessibility of these works, the book offers a form of accessibility that is global in principle and that, building on the authority of this medium, object, and instrument, takes advantage of the infrastructures through which it circulates (the interplay of different infrastructures - those overtly market-driven and oriented, but also those related to knowledge, its construction, and diffusion).

The theoretical reflection on the relevance of the book within art since the 1960s has concentrated until recent years almost exclusively on the so-called artist's book. To the artist's book, its definition and scope, a very broad bibliography was produced between the 1970s and mid-1990s.³ This bibliography was revised and slightly updated in the early 2010s.⁴ Within this discourse, the artist's book has often been considered as a privileged key to access and experience contemporary art,⁵ if not "the quintessential 20th-century artform."⁶

³ See Stephen Klima, *Artists Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature* (New York: Granary Books, 1998); Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste 1960-1980* (Paris: Jean Michel Place/Bibliothèque nationale de France, 1997), 18-58; see also § 2.3.

⁴ See, inter alia, Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, 2nd rev. ed. (Marseille/Paris: le mot et le reste/Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2012); Clive Phillpot, *Booktrek: Selected Essays on Artists' Books (1972-2010)* (Zürich and Dijon: JRP | Ringier and Les presses du réel, 2013).

⁵ See Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*.

⁶ Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artist's Book* (New York: Granary Books, 2004), 1.

Meanwhile, in the 1980s the debate about another tool intensified – in terms of importance and presence – exponentially: the exhibition catalogue. This debate, developed in the wake of isolated reflections which had appeared in previous decades, reached its peak in the late 1980s. The role of the exhibition catalogue, up to that time considered by most as a mere tool of documentation, started to be largely recognized both by art professionals and the general public. The formers (e.g. curators, librarians, academics) emphasized its relevance for the art making and the writing of art histories, while the latter contributed to the market success of this typology of art publications. A growing number of artists had approached and embraced this tool already since the late 1960s, triggering its ontological transformation and at the same time emphasizing its strategic importance within the art and its domains. It is no coincidence that precisely in 1987, enquiring about the growing presence and importance of art publications in general, the art historian Francis Haskell produced *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, his seminal study on the origins of the art book.⁷

For the generation of artists that formed themselves as artists during these years of reflection on the art book, the artist's book, and the exhibition catalogue, i.e. artists that began to produce work during the 1990s, the book took on a new role: not only regarded as a tool for research, education, and divulgation (common-sense understanding of the art book), not exclusively intended and produced as an autonomous work of art (mainstream definition of the artist's book), nor even conceived of as a document of the exhibition (traditional characterization of the exhibition catalogue): i.e. not a by-product of actual artworks but rather an interrelated instance of their realization.

This new way of working with the book differs from the production of the *canonical* artist's book because it implies a different organization and division of labour that is reflected in the inflation of museums, galleries, and more generally of exhibition spaces together with the inflation of exhibitions therein organized which has taken place from the 1970s onward. It is to this phenomenon that the changes and reorganization of the artist's studio during

⁷ See Francis Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1987).

the 1990s and 2000s correspond.⁸ These shifts have been accompanied by a more conscious exploitation of the infrastructure of the information society, within which information and communication has become faster and increasingly virtual. In this context, the book has paradoxically gained renewed relevance and new functions.

The first part of the present study aims at relativizing the distinctions based on the paradigm of the artist's book (as it has been constructed, theorized, and institutionalized between 1960s and 1980s), and suggests facing the book, as a medium, as an object, and as an instrument, retracing the mutual influence and the historical relevance of what, in the framework of this research, are considered as the three main typologies in which and through which it articulates, i.e. the art book, the artist's book, and the exhibition catalogue.

These three typologies are contextualized and discussed both historically and critically, while focusing on the processes that brought their creation and diffusion as well as on the contexts in which they have been theoretically conceptualized and debated. A corresponding chapter is dedicated to each typology. They inform the first part of the research in which I have aimed to trace a historical and critical arc that, starting from the *birth* of the art book in the 18th century, comes to the ubiquitous presence of art and artists' publications in the 1990s-2010s, thus allowing the understanding of the historical necessities which transformed this multifaceted domain in the last decades.

⁸ See Wouter Davidts and Kim Paice, (eds.) *The Fall of the Studio: Artists at Work* (Amsterdam: Valiz, 2009). In this respect, the studio of Olafur Eliasson (Olafur Eliasson Studio) is a paradigmatic example. On Eliasson and the logics behind the organization and operative modes of his studio, see Caroline A. Jones, "The Server/User Mode," *Artforum International* 46, no. 2 (October 2007): 316-324 and Philip Ursprung, "Narcissistic Studio," in *The Fall of the Studio*, 163-182. As the artist himself recalls, in the mid-1990s he ran it with the help of "four or five people", by 2008 it was already a "small business" with about thirty skilled employees that in 2012 were already more than forty. Olafur Eliasson, Anna Engberg-Pedersen, and Philip Ursprung, *Studio Olafur Eliasson: An Encyclopedia* (Köln: Taschen, 2008), 365, 366. See Alex Coles, *The Transdisciplinary Studio* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 61-76. Note that, if in the early 1990s at the beginning of his career Eliasson was sceptical *vis à vis* art publications, by the mid-2000s he had even internalized their production within his studio, and in 2009 he went so far as to dedicate an exhibition (and the related publication) to the whole of his books (at the time more than fifty in thirteen years of activity). *Mediare l'esperienza: i libri di Olafur Eliasson*, Bologna, Biblioteca Universitaria, September 19 – October 3, 2009. See Olafur Eliasson, *TYT [Take Your Time], Vol. 2: Printed Matter*, ed. Luca Cerizza (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2009).

The first chapter revolves around three technological and intellectual innovations that began and that characterize the instrument of the art book. These are: the birth of the art book – which is presented and discussed mainly within the framework of art historian Francis Haskell's *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*;⁹ the advent of photography and its implementation within the pages of art (historical) publications – that is thematized mainly by referring to art historian Geraldine Johnson's perceptive study on the visual historiography of art history '(Un)richtige Aufnahme': *Renaissance Sculpture and the Visual Historiography of Art History*;¹⁰ and the mass diffusion of art publications – a factor and at the same time a symptom of the ontological mutation which art has traversed during the 20th century, that is discussed in the context of art critic Harold Rosenberg's *Art Book, Book Art, Art*.¹¹ A fourth innovation, the e-book or, more in general, digital publishing, is briefly addressed at the end of the third chapter in the subchapter *Going Digital?* (§ 3.5). Spanning three centuries, this chapter offers an overview of the historical necessities that lie behind the birth, development, and diffusion of the art book, up to becoming one of the main instruments to *read* and *access* art.

Chapter two is dedicated to the so-called artist's book. Its advent is briefly contextualised in the framework of the changes within the definition of art which shook the 1960s. The main features of the socio-political and media setting in which the phenomenon emerged are taken into account. Attention is focused on its reception and institutionalization, with the aim of intellectually framing its characteristics and scope. Within the large amount of research devoted to this domain, three different positions in the debate around its definition, that is, that of art scholars Barbara Bader,¹² Anne Mœglin-Delcroix,¹³ and Cornelia Lauf,¹⁴ are presented and discussed at some length, in order to

⁹ See Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*.

¹⁰ See Geraldine A. Johnson, "'(Un)richtige Aufnahme': Renaissance Sculpture and the Visual Historiography of Art History," *Art History* XXXVI, no. 1 (February 2013): 12-51.

¹¹ Harold Rosenberg, "Art Books, Book Art, Art," *Partisan Review* 27, no. 1 (Winter 1960): 137-142.

¹² See Barbara Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things. A Museography of Books by Artists* (Saarbrücken: Südwestdeutscher Verlag für Hochschulschriften, 2010).

¹³ See Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique Du Livre d'Artiste 1960-1980*; Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*.

¹⁴ See Cornelia Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," in *Artist/Author*, eds. Cornelia Lauf and Clive Phillpot, 66-79 (New York: D.A.P. and The American Federation of Arts, 1998).

better situate the scope of this research *vis à vis* the age-old discussion around the artist's book's definition, status, and understanding.

Addressing these different understandings and definitions of the artist's book allows us to question their theoretical presuppositions. The analysis of Bader's, Mœglin-Delcroix's, and Lauf's approach shows that a narrow and normative understanding of the matter biases their theories. Challenging the definition of artist's book in its historical, theoretical, and critical dimensions, the exemplary analysis developed in this second chapter allows me to highlight a central aspect of the methodology that guides the entire research: I firmly believe that the intention that makes of an artefact (in this case a book) an artwork must be analysed in its empirical context, without assuming either an ideological horizon (Mœglin-Delcroix) nor reducing it to its psychological aspects (Lauf).

The third and main chapter of the first part of this study is dedicated to the exhibition catalogue, a typology of art publication which shares most of the features of the art book, and that since the late 1960s has increasingly started to incorporate some of the distinctive features of the artist's book. Since the late 1940s, the exhibition catalogue has been the subject and object of continuous transformations, performing an increasingly essential role; its popularity and relevance within the field of art and its related disciplines has in fact grown exponentially. Without attempting to establish a conclusive genealogy or to fully reconstruct the history of this instrument, within this chapter the peculiarities of the exhibition catalogue are problematized by lingering on some representative moments of its history, on its scope and operation modes, as well as on some of the most interesting ways through which artists have interfaced with it, incorporating and recognizing it as an essential tool of contemporary art making.

Four events that took place in 1988 have been selected as starting points to articulate the critical study on the exhibition catalogue developed here. 1) The institution of the *Prix Minda de Gunzburg*, i.e. an annual prize honoring the best exhibition catalogue on the basis of the scientific merit of the publication, is mentioned in order to stress the recognition of this instrument and to introduce a few remarks of its theoretical understanding. 2) The publication of the first

autonomous number of *Catalogus*,¹⁵ a magazine entirely dedicated to exhibition catalogues is taken here as a pretext with which to retrace and deepen the evolution of this typology of publication since the 1940s. 3) Examining some of the papers presented at *I cataloghi delle esposizioni*, i.e. the European convention of the art libraries of the International Federation of Library Association and Institution (IFLA) which occurred in Florence at the end of 1988,¹⁶ I discuss some of the multifaceted issues related to the definition, cataloguing, and diffusion of exhibition catalogues, as well as on their conservation and accessibility for future generations. 4) Art historian Pierre Rosenberg's lecture *L'Exposition et l'histoire de l'art*¹⁷ is discussed at some length because the arguments therein presented allow clarification of the role and scope of this instrument as well as its relevance within modern and contemporary art.

Expanding on Rosenberg's contribution, another relevant text on the critical definition of the exhibition catalogue and its scopes by philosopher and semiotician Louis Marin is taken into account.¹⁸ In 1975 Marin defined the exhibition catalogue as an instrument functioning *en acte* (i.e. guiding one within the actual exhibition space) and as *document* (i.e. embodying, making manifest, and narrativising the immaterial elements of an exhibition, e. g. the institutional powers that shape it). Marin's categorization allows me to address a new category, namely that of the *catalogue-document/monument*. Though the lens of this new category it is possible to embrace some of the central aspects of the exhibition catalogue of the 1990s-2000s.

The second part of the chapter focuses on the relationship between artists and exhibition catalogues. Especially since the late 1960s artists have rarely missed the opportunity to produce books within the framework of their exhibitions, often *replacing* the traditional catalogue or *reinterpreting* its

¹⁵ See *Catalogus: Bulletin bibliographique trimestriel illustré de récents catalogues d'art contemporain*, no. 1 (Autumn 1988).

¹⁶ Giovanna Lazzi, Eve Leckey, and Artemisia Calcagni Abrami, eds., *I cataloghi delle esposizioni: atti del terzo Convegno europeo delle biblioteche d'arte, IFLA: Firenze, 2-5 novembre 1988* (Firenze: Casalini libri, 1989).

¹⁷ See Pierre Rosenberg, "L'Apport des Expositions et de leurs Catalogues à l'Histoire de l'Art," *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne*, no. 29 (Automne 1989): 49-56.

¹⁸ See Louis Marin, "La Célébration des oeuvres d'art: notes de travail sur un catalogue d'exposition," *Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales* 1, no. 5-6 (Novembre 1975): 50-64.

traditional features. This practice has been endorsed by the institutions and the entire art system that has benefited not only from the auratic quality of the artistic gesture but also from the cultural authority as well as the communicative efficiency and effectiveness of the book as an object, as a medium, and as an instrument.

Anne Mœglin-Delcroix was among the first scholars to explore the theoretical and ontological problems related to the complex relationship between exhibition catalogue and artwork. In her view, the plethora of publishing activities that accompany exhibitions led to the loss of the critical strength that she deems constitutive of artists' publications. Trying to formulate an alternative vision to that theorized by Mœglin-Delcroix in her essay *Du Catalogue comme oeuvre d'art et inversement*,¹⁹ publications of the years 1960s and 1970s (such as *Dieter Roth: Bücher*,²⁰ *Dieter Roth: Boeken*,²¹ and the *Kassettenkataloge* published by the Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach between 1967 and 1978 under the aegis of its director Johannes Cladders) are exemplarily analysed with different degrees of depth in order to show how ambivalent Mœglin-Delcroix's "échelle subtilment graduée, qui relie la publication scientifique à l'œuvre autosuffisante"²² (i.e. the scale that ascends from the exhibition catalogue – even if created by an artist – to the artist's book) could be.

Lothar Baumgarten's and Michael Oppitz's book(let) *T'e-Ne-T'e*²³ is taken as an example of artists' publications which are able to demolish what for Mœglin-Delcroix remains an essential normative theoretical dichotomy between artist' book and exhibition catalogue. Going beyond the time-space frame of the specific exhibition in the framework of which it was created, *T'e-Ne-T'e* reflects and communicates the coordinates of Baumgarten's and Oppitz's artistic gesture, permitting one to understand how the work and the show it

¹⁹ See Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," *Les Cahiers du Musée national d'art moderne*, no. 56/57 (Été/Automne 1996): 95-117.

²⁰ See Dieter Roth, *Dieter Roth: Bücher* (Hannover: Kestner Gesellschaft, 1974), offset, glue-bound, 20,5 x 20,5 cm, 156 pp., n.p. Print run: 3000.

²¹ See Dieter Roth, *Dieter Roth: Boeken* (Stuttgart: Hansjörg Mayer, 1975), offset, staple-bound, 33,5 x 23,5 cm, 16 pp., n.p. Print run: 2000 (numbered).

²² Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 98.

²³ See Lothar Baumgarten and Michael Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e: eine mythologische Vorführung* (Düsseldorf: Konrad Fischer, 1974), offset, glue-bound, 21 x 14,8 cm, 48 pp., n.p. Print run: unknown.

stands for operate, thus not becoming an autonomous work of art per se, but rather an integral part of a complex, expanded, and networked artwork.

Analysing some of the most representative publications orchestrated by Seth Siegelaub in the late 1960s and early 1970s, attention is then brought to his publishing commitment and bibliographical approach, showing how his activities contributed to establish the book as a vehicle of ideas, as a tool perfectly suited to the information society at the dawn of a widespread globalization, changing forever the modalities of accessing and experiencing art and artworks so that, in the 1980s, when the works of art *returned* to be considered (mainly) for and in their aesthetic dimension, did not want to give this tool up.

The chapter then presents a reflection on the exhibition catalogue as an integral instrument of art and its production in the 1990s and 2000s, stating that the diffusion of the art book, the advent of the artist's book, and the transformation of the exhibition catalogue are occurrences that cannot be addressed separately. As the second chapter does not aim to formulate a conclusive definition of the artist's book, this third one does not aim to formulate one of the exhibition catalogue. Both stress the necessity of avoiding monolithic discrimination, highlighting various aspects of the relationship between artists, books, and exhibition catalogues since the 1960s, shedding light on the relevance of this multi-faceted partnership in contemporary art.

The third chapter analyses the instrument of the exhibition catalogue for the first time in such a historical and theoretical amplitude. Considering the epistemological relevance of this tool, it is striking to notice how little reflection (and literature) has been produced to comprehend its features and scopes. Showing that the exhibition catalogue is not a tangential but rather an essential instrument for the *making* of contemporary art, for its legitimation and historicization as well as for the practice of most contemporary artists, this chapter is a first attempt to fill this gap.

The second part of the research is entirely dedicated to Matthew Barney's book production. Taking the work of artist Matthew Barney as an exemplary case study, this part of the study aims at highlighting some of the modalities through which he has made of the book – especially in the format of

exhibition catalogue – an essential tool of his artistic language. Barney is one of the most representative artists of his generation whose artistic output encompasses a great variety of means, such as sculpture, photography, video, film, installation, performance, and the book. His work proves to be an interesting case study not only for the density of his imaginary, which can be approached only within a specific system of knowledge, but also for its multi-layered intermedia nature. The artist has been fascinated by the book since the beginning of his artistic career, and has made of it a key element through which his work articulates in all its medial complexity. However, despite the large number of studies and criticism produced on his work, Barney's confrontation with this object, medium, and instrument has until now been largely neglected both inside and outside the academia.

Until recently, very few scholars holistically addressed the relevance of the book within contemporary artists' intermedia production. Prominent scholars such as Mœglin-Delcroix, Johanna Drucker or Giorgio Maffei consider the book as an artistic genre.²⁴ The present study questions this approach in order to really understand the operating modes of this object, medium, and instrument. In the first part of the research it is shown how this formalistic approach does not help to understand the pivotal role that the book has gained within contemporary art. Focusing on Matthew Barney's book production, the second part of the research proposes a different approach which could be aligned with the one proposed by the pioneer work by artist Albert Coers.²⁵ Putting the book in relation with the multiplicity of the medial iterations which characterizes the work of Barney, it emerges that it is not only an artistic genre among others. Therefore, it cannot be understood within the paradigms of a specific genre but rather as an instrument that like a multifaceted map enables the reader to enter and navigate the artist *œuvre*, permitting one to experience it in all its medial, aesthetical, and conceptual complexities.

²⁴ See, inter alia, Anne Moeglin-Delcroix, Liliana De Matteis, Giorgio Maffei, and Annalisa Rimmaudo, *Guardare, Raccontare, Pensare, Conservare: quattro percorsi del libro d'artista dagli anni '60 a oggi* (Mantova: Casa del Mantegna, Corraini, 2004); Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artist's Book*.

²⁵ See Albert Coers, *Kunstkatalog-Katalogkunst: Der Ausstellungskatalog als künstlerisches Medium am Beispiel von Thomas Demand, Tobias Rehberger und Olafur Eliasson* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2015).

Barney's book production is characterized by a number of features that are addressed in the fourth chapter through the overlapping of descriptive and analytical layers. Initially, the context in which he formed himself as an artist and within which his career was launched is presented, making sure of highlighting the key tenets of his artistic vision; then, through the exemplarily analysis of the early publication *Matthew Barney: New Work*,²⁶ (see the folded visual index of the publication inserted at the end of the present study) the attention is brought on his book production.

Matthew Barney: New Work is the first monographic volume that appears in the complete bibliography of the artist. Despite being one of his lesser-known publications, it is to be considered as the matrix of the compositional, material, and editorial strategies that the artist will improve in *his* subsequent volumes. This is why what could be defined as a *recursive analytical description* of the book(let)'s visual and textual apparatuses represents the backbone of this chapter. The exemplary analysis of this publication allows us to consider its peculiar features (whether material and/or conceptual), to stress the artist's attitude towards the instrument of the book and towards its constitutive peculiarities as an object and as a medium as well as to sketch the strategic role played by this tool at the early stage of his career. It also enables us to shed light on some of Barney's early works which are as yet barely studied, to introduce some of the characteristics of his practice, and to exemplarily articulate reflections on the ontological and bibliographical status of this publications.

Starting from the *recursive analytical description* of *Matthew Barney: New Work* and making specific reference to subsequent publications, reflection is developed on the fruition of Barney's books. Expanding from the analysis of *Matthew Barney: New Work*, reference is made to other publications in the artist's bibliography and to *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*,²⁷ the book that,

²⁶ See *Matthew Barney: New Work* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992), offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) 52 pp, n.p. Print run: 2500 (price \$15).

²⁷ See *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, ed. Mamie Tinkler (New York/Brussels: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 2016), offset, hardcover, 20,9 x 28,6, 200 pp. Print run unknown* (price 65\$/49,90€).

reworking and expanding on the former publication, closes the timespan of this research period.

Within the artist's practice, the book proves to be a congenial tool with which to express and communicate the different temporal structures at play in his intermedia work. Through photography, but especially by a calculated implementation of the installation view, Barney understands the book as a mnemotechnic instrument in which the pictures do not function as place holders for memories or past experiences but rather as maps through which the artist guides the reader's imagination.

Within the chapter, *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*,²⁸ the monumental volume issued on the occasion of the cycle's comprehensive exhibition organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 2002²⁹ is exemplarily discussed at some length to highlight how the book, as an instrument of imagination, operates at the threshold of the physical and the imaginary world. Physically, but above all epistemologically embodying the *architecture* of the cycle and of its (main) exhibition, this lavish publication is the tool through which the artist, in close collaboration with the curator of the survey (Nancy Spector) and the graphic designer who had been entrusted with the task of *realizing* its related publication (Abbot J. Miller), could systematize, map, and comprehend his protean creature. It is on this occasion that Barney explicitly presented for the first time ever, not by chance in a book publication, his storyboards.

The chapter draws to its end by discussing and reconsidering storyboarding as a foundational activity within the artist's practice and *œuvre*. Storyboarding, understood as an attitude of mapping, plastic visualizing and thinking as well as initiating, guiding, summarizing, and communicating his

²⁸ Nancy Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum/Harry N. Abrams, 2002; Köln/Ostfildern-Ruit: Ludwig Museum/Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), offset, embossed cover, plastic jacket, 23,5 x 32,5, pp. 529. Print run: unknown* (price: hardcover \$65; softcover \$45; German edition 78€).

²⁹ *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, Cologne, Ludwig Museum, June 6 – September 1, 2002; Paris, Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, October 10, 2002 – January 5, 2003; New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, February 14 – May 11, 2003. Note, that due to the financial problems that the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum was going through at that time the exhibition was first presented in Cologne and Paris in 2002; it finally reached the Guggenheim in 2003.

projects is the backbone of Barney's practice. The book, as an object, as a medium, and as an instrument is the privileged, material and imaginary space through which the artist puts *at work* the storyboards of his different projects, as well as the very logic behind the activity of storyboarding.

Against the background of the historical, theoretical, and critical reflections conducted in the first part of the study, the considerations developed within the analysis of Matthew Barney's book production allow us to outline a new understanding of the role and relevance of the book within contemporary art which goes beyond the normative understanding of the ostensive categories of the art book, the artist's book, and the exhibition catalogue. This research proposes that these books indeed have a pivotal relevance within art and its domains. Travelling as what sociologist Bruno Latour labels "immutable mobiles"³⁰, they embody a crucial tool for accessing, experiencing, and understanding the artist's work and *Weltanschauung*. According to Latour, immutable mobiles are fixed and thereby unalterable diagrammatic representations that are able to circulate and transmit knowledge bridging geographical, cultural and historical distances. Since artworks nowadays are not only tangible entities but kaleidoscopic intermedia constellations that revolve around complex imaginary worlds, books assume a unique role as aesthetical instruments of knowledge.

³⁰ See Bruno Latour, "Les 'Vues' de l'esprit," in *Sociologie de la traduction: textes fondateurs*, eds. Madeleine Akrich, Michel Callon, and Bruno Latour, 33-69 (Paris: Presse de l'école des mines, 2006); published in English as "Visualization and Cognition: Drawings Things Together," *Knowledge and Society*, VI (1986): 1-40, http://www.persee.fr/doc/reso_0751-7971_1987_num_5_27_1322.

PART I

La terminologia è il momento poetico del pensiero.

Giorgio Agamben³¹

³¹ Giorgio Agamben, *Che cos'è un dispositivo?* (Roma: Nottetempo, 2006), 5.

1. Art Book

Les humanités sans les techniques, ce ne sont que des babouineries...

Bruno Latour³²

The term *art book* is commonly considered an all-encompassing term to categorize a “book of which art or an artist is the subject.”³³ Under this label one finds publications that have very different characteristics, targets and scopes: manuals of history of art, monographic studies dedicated to specific artists or themes, volumes issued in the frame of special research, as well as exhibition projects, which can all be categorized as *art books*. Despite their variety, the publications that fall under the label *art book* share a common origin, several constitutive features and present some theoretical problems that will be introduced in the following.

Art books are characterized by the presence of text and image. Within their pages artworks are translated into bi-dimensional pictures that are easily presentable, combinable, commensurable, comparable, readable, communicable, and transportable.³⁴ Furthermore, thanks to the interaction of image and text, art books present one or more artworks and artistic positions in a context of knowledge.

Art books are loved as objects and valued for the quality of their design, illustrations, and print. They are crafted objects which haptic, and more generally, aesthetic qualities play a determinant role: they appeal to the perception of the reader suggesting the authority of their content. Compared to a *merely* textual book, an art book’s subject and object are one or more artworks that on the one hand, exist beyond its pages, but on the other can be accessed through its pages, thus allowing the readers to grasp their qualities, histories, and meanings.

³² Bruno Latour, *Cogitamus: Six lettres sur les humanités scientifiques* (2010), 2nd ed. (Paris: La Découverte, 2014), 59.

³³ Clive Phillpot, “Definitions by Clive Phillpot,” *Art Documentation* 1, no. 6 (1982): front cover; reprinted in *Booktrek*, n.p.

³⁴ See Latour, “Les ‘Vues’ de l’esprit.”

Art books are valued as collectibles. They can be signed and eventually dedicated, thus gaining a renewed authenticity together with an enhanced economic and, probably, emotional value. They can be placed on (coffee) tables, bookcases and shelves to be exhibited as aesthetical, epistemological, and educational artifacts. This happens in private premises, where it underlines the cultural (sometimes professional!) background and ambitions of the host/s, but it is particularly evident entering public and private art organizations. Bookshops welcome and say good-bye to the visitors of museums and related institutions, while well-stocked bookshelves are current features in commercial galleries. Especially in profit oriented businesses, the art books as well as the shelves they colorfully inhabit serve as a basic tool to promote artists, their work and the related knowledge, while at the same time enhancing and dignifying the propulsive role of the institutions, as well as the cultural status of art.³⁵

Art books are tools, instruments that embody the cultural capital of art and grant *access* to the artworks, to the networks in which they are created, presented and communicated as such, as well as to the horizons of meaning from which they originate and which they contribute to originate. Art books are neither substitutes of the works of art, nor byproducts of their mechanical reproduction.³⁶ The true issue at stake is not related to the creation of a mere substitute of the artwork but to that of a tool, an instrument, in the true sense of the word.³⁷

³⁵ In this context, one could cite the initiative of the competitive Gagosian Gallery which in the Fall of 2012 transformed the window of one of its New York locations (the one on 980 Madison Avenue) into a giant art-bookshelf. The photographic enlargement of a shelf full of art books, mainly one-person monographs produced by the gallery, or with its support, was applied to the main shop window, covering it entirely.

³⁶ See Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1988), 217-251; first published as "L'Œuvre d'art à l'époque de sa production mécanisée," *Zeitschrift für Sozialforschung* V, no. 1 (1936): 40-66. Following Antoine Hennion and Bruno Latour's understanding of Benjamin's essay, it seems reasonable to affirm that his preoccupations about the destiny of the work of art in the age of its mechanical reproduction were (and are) a pseudo problem. See Antoine Hennion and Bruno Latour, "How to make mistakes on so many things at once – and become famous for this," in *Mapping Benjamin: The Work of Art in the Digital Age*, eds. Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and Michael Marrinan (Redwood City, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003), 91-97.

³⁷ The Symbolist poet, theorist, and teacher Stéphane Mallarmé referred to the book as an "instrument". Stéphane Mallarmé, "Le Livre, instrument spirituel," *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Bertrand Marchal, 2 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1998-2003), 2, 224-228. Art historian Anna Sígurdur

The name *instrument* comes from the Latin verb *instruere* (to construct, to equip). Within the pages of an art book, arguments are visually and verbally constructed; art works and the visions which underlie and go beyond their creation are contextualized and put in relation in order to be envisioned, presented, compared, interpreted, and discussed. Through the exploration of the content of an art book the readers are equipped with some of the conceptual and visual tools through which they can have mediated access to the objects and the practices they are willing to observe and autonomously further elaborate.

Without the pretension of being exhaustive, this first chapter of the study revolves around three *technological* and *intellectual* innovations that started and characterize the instrument of the art book.³⁸ These innovations are: the birth of the art book, the advent of photography and its implementation within its pages, and the mass diffusion of art publications. A fourth innovation, namely the e-book, and more generally digital publishing, will be discussed at the end of the first section (§ 3.5).

The coming to light of the art book, i.e. the first innovation, is introduced by mainly referring to Francis Haskell's text *The Painful Birth of the Art Book* (1987).³⁹ With his clear-headed art historical descriptive attitude, Haskell (1928-2000) recognized the art book as an autonomous "genre"⁴⁰. Referring to a too often taken for granted but never truly questioned definition of the art book, his seminal study on its origins sets the parameters of its definition, dating its birth back to the eighteenth century.

The second innovation, that is the determining role played by photography outside and above all within the pages of the publications that have fostered and accompanied the development of the history of art as a discipline, is highlighted

Arnar has devoted an in-depth cultural study to Mallarmé's engagement with the book as a literary endeavor and crafted object. According to her, Mallarmé intended the book as "a tool of engagement", "a vital medium that could occupy the center of daily civic life, providing sustenance and creative freedom for a diversified public in the modern democratic age." Anna Sigrídur Arnar, *The Book as Instrument: Stéphane Mallarmé, The Artist's Book and the Transformation of Print Culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011) 10, 2.

³⁸ These innovations are strongly linked to what Bruno Latour has termed "technologies intellectuelles", that is, those refined mechanisms that allow one to develop abstract knowledge from concrete activities as well as from the interaction with concrete objects, thus increasing one's expertise and capabilities. See Latour, *Cogitamus*, 124-141.

³⁹ See Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*.

⁴⁰ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 5.

by referring to the perceptive studies by the art historian Geraldine A. Johnson. She is one of the very few scholars who has devoted constant attention to, as well as systematic research on, the motivations behind *how* and *why* works of art have been photographed and then reproduced, thus providing commendable examples of what might be called the *visual historiography* of art history.⁴¹ In her long essay '(Un)richtige Aufnahme': *Renaissance Sculpture and the Visual Historiography of Art History* (2013),⁴² Johnson focuses on the photography of Italian Renaissance sculpture to explore implications which are not restricted to this geographical center, period of time, and artistic medium. The circumstance that "while art historians ostensibly study *things*, in practice, they often look at *images* of things more than at the things themselves"⁴³ is in fact a central feature of the discipline.

The third innovation, i.e. the mass diffusion of art publications is discussed in the frame of Harold Rosenberg's *Art Books, Book Art, Art* (1959-1960).⁴⁴ In this far-reaching article, Rosenberg (1906-1978) did not question the definition of the art book but rather uses the term on a normative level. Analysing the functions the art book addressed within his contemporary society, he explored its exponential success and implementation, recognizing in this phenomenon a reflection of the mutated ontology of art as well as its transformed role within society.

The e-book, the fourth and last innovation, is generally considered "*an electronic version of a printed book* that can be read on a computer or handled device designed specifically for this purpose."⁴⁵ Beside the fact that, as its definition suggests, the key conceptual features of the printed book are not fundamentally altered by its electronic transposition, one has also to note that this new medium has not yet made it big in the field of the art book. Nevertheless, as already anticipated, some remarks on this tool and on digital

⁴¹ See Johnson, "'(Un)richtige Aufnahme'" *Renaissance Sculpture and the Visual Historiography of Art History*"; Geraldine A. Johnson, "Using the photographic archive: On the life (and death) of images," in *Photo Archives and the Photographic Memory of Art History*, ed. Costanza Caraffa, 145-156 (Berlin/München: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2011); Geraldine A. Johnson, ed., *Sculpture and Photography: Envisioning the Third Dimension* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), especially 1-19.

⁴² See Johnson, "'(Un)richtige Aufnahme'".

⁴³ Johnson, "'(Un)richtige Aufnahme'," 13.

⁴⁴ See Rosenberg, "Art Books, Book Art, Art".

⁴⁵ *Oxford Dictionary*, 12th ed., s.v. "e-book." Italics by the author.

publishing will be developed at the end of this first section of the study mainly in the framework of philosopher and cognitive scientist Roberto Casati's book *Contro il colonialismo digitale: istruzioni per continuare a leggere* (2012).⁴⁶

In order to discuss these innovations, this first chapter briefly sketches their history and epistemic relevance. Above all, it sets the parameters through which I can begin to show how and why the art book has gained so much importance within art and its related disciplines. In so doing, I aim to highlight the key role played by this instrument for the advent of another protagonist of 20th century art, the so-called artist's book (see chapter 2). Moreover, most of the features which characterize the art book are the same as those of the exhibition catalogue, a typology of art publication that will prevail during the mid-to late 20th century, almost replacing the *traditional* art book in the 1980s and, since the late 1960s, gradually incorporating some of the distinctive features of the artist's book (§ 3.4). It is within this context that an entire generation of artists, amongst whom Matthew Barney, the case study of this research, formed themselves. They will inaugurate a new way to understand art and artists' publishing, making it one of the constitutive elements of their multifaceted artistic production.

1.1 Illustrated Book or Art Book? A Very Thin Line of Demarcation

In 1987 the art historian Francis Haskell was invited to deliver the 19th Walter Neurath Memorial Lecture.⁴⁷ As a speaker asked to contribute to a series of lectures to honor the memory of the founder of Thames & Hudson, a publishing house renowned for the quality of its art books and for its pioneering endeavors in improving the genre, he decided to focus his lecture on the origins of the art book. "We are now so used to the presence of magnificently illustrated art books – sometimes on our shelves, as well as on our coffee tables and in

⁴⁶ See Roberto Casati, *Contro il colonialismo digitale: istruzioni per continuare a leggere* (Bari: Laterza, 2012). Although it contains the same core arguments, the book has been slightly expanded and partly rewritten in view of the French edition: *Contre le colonialisme numérique: Manifeste pour continuer à lire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2013).

⁴⁷ The Walther Neurath Memorial Lectures are a series of lectures given annually since 1969 on subjects reflecting the interests of Walther Neurath (1903-1967), the founder of the publishing house Thames & Hudson.

shop windows – that there is a tendency to take their existence for granted as an integral part of our culture,”⁴⁸ stated Haskell as a premise to his analysis. Identifying the so-called *Recueil Crozat* (vol. I, 1729; vol. II, 1742)⁴⁹ as the first art book ever produced, he traced the history of its publishing venture in order to underline “some of the implications of the prevalence of such books for our appreciation and understanding of art itself.”⁵⁰

The *Recueil Crozat* is a large-size volume in two tomes mainly originating from the joint venture between Pierre Crozat (1665-1740), a financier and passionate collector of Italian art and treasurer to the king in Paris, Claude Philippe de Tubières Count of Caylus (1692-1765), an engraver and antiquarian, and Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694-1774), an art connoisseur and print dealer. It represents the only accomplished and published part of a much more ambitious project that, at its beginnings, aimed to present the most eminent Italian paintings conserved in the French royal collections as well as in those of the duke d’Orleans and Crozat himself, but was soon expanded to an international, “many-volumed, lavishly illustrated history of world art.”⁵¹

Along with the extraordinary quantity of the paintings and drawings that were to be presented within the tomes, another noteworthy characteristic of the project is the unprecedented attention put into action in assuring the highest quality of the large-size engravings created to represent them in order to allow the distinctive traits of a specific painter or school to be recognized.⁵² Moreover, breaking with the tradition of the past, the prints were not produced to be sold individually or as a collection,⁵³ but were conceived to be published in a book, accompanied by an art historical apparatus especially written by Mariette.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 5.

⁴⁹ See Pierre-Jean Mariette, *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus beaux tableaux et d'après les plus beaux desseins qui sont en France dans le Cabinet du Roy, dans celui de Monseigneur le Dux d'Orleans, et dans d'autres Cabinets. Divisé suivant les différentes écoles avec un abrégé de la Vie des peintres et une Description Historique de chaque Tableau*, 2 vols. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1729-1742).

⁵⁰ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 5.

⁵¹ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 54.

⁵² Crozat, who did not like the engravers working on drawings or copies of the original paintings, contravened a royal law to make sure that they could achieve their matrices directly in front of the original works. See Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 16.

⁵³ The *Recueil* is thus considered as the book that broke the tradition dominated by the circulation of reproductions of works of art through single prints or collections of prints mainly

Mariette wrote the text after the images were achieved, focusing on the art of engraving and its advantages with respect to the painted copies; with slightly variable formats it provides a brief life of the artists whose work is presented in the *Recueil*, together with “a description of each picture, its present whereabouts, its exact dimensions and an account of the support [...] on which it was painted.”⁵⁵ Instead of concentrating on the subjects of the works in question, he discussed the specific qualities of their authors and styles, writing in French to attract the interest of a wide, non-specialized audience. To remain faithful to this principle, Crozat rejected the practice of providing Latin translations of the names and subjects of the artworks represented through the engravings and, given the great interest showed by the venture’s British supporters he even thought of releasing an English-version.⁵⁶

According to Haskell, the *Recueil Crozat* is to be considered the first art book ever published mainly for two reasons: it was “designed to be a book and not just a collection of related illustrations”⁵⁷ and it was created as an educational tool “for art lovers and connoisseurs rather than for antiquarians and scholars.”⁵⁸ What characterizes Haskell’s understanding of art book is, on the one hand, the close interrelation between images and texts (“the art book, as I understand it, combines text and illustration”⁵⁹) and, on the other, the added educational value that originates from it: “art books [...] are certainly illustrated books, but quite obviously illustrated books are not necessarily art books—even illustrated books which reproduce significant works of art are not always art books for my purposes. [...] The line of demarcation is very thin indeed.”⁶⁰

Returning to Haskell’s account, one can say that an art book is not a book that simply illustrates one or more works of art, but a book that, through the

created to glorify the belongings of a sovereign and diffused by the monarch himself as luxury gifts. See Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 16-17.

⁵⁴ Even if Mariette is not explicitly acknowledged as the author anywhere “there can be little doubt that he was.” Benedict Leca, “An Art Book and its Viewers: ‘The Recueil Crozat’ and the Uses of Reproductive Engravings.” *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 4 (Summer 2005): 623-649, 645.

⁵⁵ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 24.

⁵⁶ See Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 43-44.

⁵⁷ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 45.

⁵⁸ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 44.

⁵⁹ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 7.

⁶⁰ Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 7.

interaction of images and textual information, presents one or more artworks that are worthy of the readers' interest. Furthermore, what characterizes the art book above all, "the line of demarcation", is its educational potential, the opportunity to learn something from it, something about the art works presented but also something about art in general.

In his study on the *Recueil Crozat* art historian and curator Benedict Leca has particularly stressed the importance of its visual apparatus, emphasizing that through the high-quality reproductive engravings "Crozat and Mariette clearly hoped that their book would foster a type of reflective, comparative viewing of images."⁶¹ In this respect, he notes that Mariette's text provides the readers with different perspective, leading them "to the very edge of the visual."⁶²

Besides bolstering the importance of the visual dimension of "the first fully illustrated survey in the history of art"⁶³ which Leca suggestively defined as "a mostly visual roadmap to the canon of Western art history,"⁶⁴ at least two other aspects of his in depth analysis should be mentioned here *to thicken* Haskell's *very thin line of demarcation*. Both these aspects refer to the added-values that an authoritative, high-quality, and relatively accessible art book such as the *Recueil* could assure, granting the possibility of reaching unknown or stored in inaccessible collections artworks, as well as providing its owners with a representative selection of the best of them. Crozat and Mariette recognized and largely leaned on these two important features. In presenting the *Recueil*, Crozat, a businessman, who viewed economic sustainability and pedagogy as mutual partners, emphasized the fact that, through the *Recueil*, numerous superb paintings "qui restent ensevelis dans leurs Cabinets, et dans un espece d'oubli"⁶⁵ could finally return to life and reach the book's subscribers as well as their *entourage*. For his part, from the pages of the literary gazette *Mercure de France*, Mariette tickled the desire of the different actors that gravitated around

⁶¹ Leca, "An Art Book and its Viewers," 624.

⁶² Leca, "An Art Book and its Viewers," 634.

⁶³ Leca, "An Art Book and its Viewers," 631.

⁶⁴ Leca, "An Art Book and its Viewers," 631.

⁶⁵ Crozat quoted in Leca, "An Art Book and its Viewers," 630, 647; Leca affirms having quoted Crozat from the pages of the July 1728 edition of the French academic journal *Memoires pour l'Histoire des Sciences & des beaux-Arts* (also known as *Journal de Trévoux*). See "Article LXXIII, Nouvelles Litteraires, Arts," *Memoires pour l'Histoire des Sciences & des beaux-Arts* (July 1728): 1379-80. Unfortunately, this quote is not to be found in the 1728 article.

a flourishing print market, promoting the aesthetical and educational role of an *inexpensive* publication that allowed its subscribers to form “un Cabinet complet.”⁶⁶

To its contemporary readers, the *Recueil* embodied the unprecedented advantage of enabling its owners to dispose of an extraordinary collection of eminent artworks in “the full spectrum of graphic media (engraving, drawing and painting).”⁶⁷ The engraving, declined in its multiple techniques, served as a common denominator across different media. Through it, the observers could approach: the medium of painting (i.e. the eminent *tableaux* of the Roman and Venetian schools whose characteristic features were rendered mostly through burin in the first case and through the etching needle in the second);⁶⁸ the medium of drawing (for Crozat and Mariette “drawing underpinned the affinity among the graphic media and abetted a systematic arrangement according to individual manner and collective school styles;”⁶⁹ that is why for every artist presented in the *Recueil* at least one drawing was chosen to present the style of his *disegno*); and, of course, the medium of engraving itself, of which its relevance as an art, in addition to its quality as a vehicle of information, was radically reevaluated in the first half of the eighteenth century also thanks to this particular book and its reception.⁷⁰

Even if the *Recueil*'s original project was never fully accomplished, it nevertheless proved to be a very influential publication in various respects, one of which is particularly important in the context of this study: it inspired other authoritative art books published later in the eighteenth century,⁷¹ thus setting

⁶⁶ Mariette quoted in Leca, “An Art Book and its Viewers,” 631, 648. See “Nouvelles litteraires des Beaux-Arts, &C.,” *Mercure de France* (May 1728): 1003.

⁶⁷ Leca, “An Art Book and its Viewers,” 642.

⁶⁸ See Leca, “An Art Book and its Viewers,” 640.

⁶⁹ Leca, “An Art Book and its Viewers,” 631.

⁷⁰ See Leca, “An Art Book and its Viewers,” 631. Already at the end of the 17th century, the art theorist Roger De Piles had underlined the multi-faceted pedagogical relevance of the reproductive prints, in the XXVII chapter (“De l'utilité des Estampes, & de leur usage”) of his influential *Abrégé de la vie des Peintres* (1699). See: Roger De Piles, *Abrégé de la vie des Peintres, Avec des reflexions sur leurs Ouvrages, Et un Traité du Peintre parfait, de la connoissance des Desseins, & de l'utilité des Estampes* (Paris: François Muguet, 1699), 74-92. On the influence of De Piles' thoughts on Crozat, on his publishing venture, and on the changing status of the art of engraving, see: Leca, “An Art Book and its Viewers,” 636-9.

⁷¹ Haskell reports that the *Recueil Crozat* almost undoubtedly inspired the *Recueil Julienne* (1723-1735), Jean de Julienne's (1686-1766) celebrated corpus of engravings of Antoine Watteau's paintings and drawings (even if in this case the prints were sold also unitary); see

the parameters of the art book (that is, a book in which text and illustration collaborate to transmit knowledge on artworks and thus on art at large), contemporarily attesting a shift into the epistemic importance that the domain of the image has acquired since the eighteenth century.⁷²

1.2 Photography and the Art Book

Almost three centuries have passed since “the painful birth of the art book.”⁷³ Meanwhile, the advent of photography (1839) has changed the rules of use and reception of artworks, expanding the range of critical and historical-speech about art in comparison with the much more limited distribution of prints in the past. In her compelling studies, art historian Geraldine A. Johnson has clarified the aesthetical and theoretical issues of this gradual but relentless shift, highlighting that “scholars and curators did rely more and more on photographs in their teaching and research from the 1850s onwards, especially as photography became increasingly stable from a technical point of view and decreasingly expensive.”⁷⁴ This transition was long punctuated by the skepticism of the detractors of photography. Providing slightly different arguments and motivations, they were all convinced that it could not do justice to what bibliographer and art historiographer Wolfgang M. Freitag defines as “the discrepancy between form and intention”⁷⁵ which is characteristic of every

Haskell, *The Painful Birth of the Art Book*, 54; and Florence Raymond, “Le «*Recueil*» Julienne,” in Marie-Catherine Sahut and Florence Raymond, *Antoine Watteau et l'art de l'estampe* (Paris: Le Musée du Louvre/Le Passage, 2010) 35-39, 36. Another very ambitious publication which was inspired by the *Recueil Crozat* is the *Recueil d'estampes d'après les plus célèbres tableaux de la Galerie Royale de Dresde* (Dresden: Christian Heinrich Hagenmüller, 1753; 1757).

⁷² According to Leca, the *Recueil Crozat* attests the fact that “eighteenth-century European readers of books had increasingly become viewers of images.” Leca, “An Art Book and its Viewers,” 624. Accordingly, Leca interprets the *Recueil* as an eighteenth century exemplification of what W.J.T. Mitchell has referred with the term “pictorial turn”, that is “a postlinguistic, postsemiotic rediscovery of the picture as a complex interplay between visibility, apparatus, discourse, bodies, and figurality”. W.J.T. Mitchell “The Pictorial Turn,” *Artforum International* 30, no. 7 (March 1992): 91. See also W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), 11-34.

⁷³ In the title of his study Haskell uses the adjective “painful” to underline the hard knocks that Crozat’s publishing venture had to bypass in order to start, survive, and be accomplished, even in a diminished form.

⁷⁴ Johnson, ““(Un)richtige Aufnahme”, 20. On the shift from engraved reproductive prints to reproductive photographs (with an accent on the print and its far reaching domain), see the chapter *Révolution dans le monde des images* in Germain Bazin, *Histoire de l'Histoire de l'Art* (Paris: Albin Michel 1986), 394-409.

⁷⁵ Wolfgang M. Freitag, “Early Uses of Photography in the History of Art,” *Art Journal* 39, no. 2 (Winter 1979-1980): 118.

work of art. Furthermore, the fact that cheaply printed photographs did not transmit the same quantity of information and did not have the same aesthetic quality of engravings also supported their distrust in photography.

Analysing the passage from graphic to photographic reproduction of Italian Renaissance sculpture, Johnson has showed that nevertheless, the terms of the question were often paradoxically inverted. Charles C. Perkins volumes on Italian Renaissance sculpture (1864 and 1868) are a representative example of this trend.⁷⁶ In fact, already in the frontispiece of his books, the Bostonian intellectual announced with pride that the illustrations one can find within their pages are derived “from original drawings and photographs.”⁷⁷ According to Johnson, the fact that etchings and engravings started to be created from photographs is a demonstration that within a couple of decades after its appearance “photography had already revolutionized the viewing conventions and expectations of visual completeness, accuracy and objectivity in art-historical publications even before photomechanical reproductions could be printed cheaply and satisfactorily on the pages of journals and books.”⁷⁸

Although photography of artworks continued to be relatively rare in art-historical publications until the mid-to late 1880s for technical and financial reasons, the art historian Marcel Reymond was able to stress the importance of visuals for a sound art historical and critical discourse already toward the end of 1890s, stating that “dans un livre d’art il est encore plus essentiel de montrer les oeuvres que d’en parler. Les progrès de la photographie et de la photogravure ont complètement transformé les conditions critique de l’art et la manière d’éditer les livres.”⁷⁹ By the end of 1880s advances in printing technologies had radically renewed the publishing of illustrated books, allowing for the print of better quality images along with the typographical characters of the text.⁸⁰ This contributed to the proliferation of art historical journals and a

⁷⁶ Johnson, “(Un)richtige Aufnahme,” 25.

⁷⁷ Charles C. Perkins, *Tuscan Sculptors: their Lives, Works, and Times* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts & Green, 1864); Charles C. Perkins, *Italian Sculptors: A History of Sculpture in Northern, Southern, and Eastern Italy* (London: Longman, Green & Co, 1868).

⁷⁸ Johnson, “(Un)richtige Aufnahme,” 25.

⁷⁹ Marcel Reymond, *La Sculpture florentine*, 3 vols. (Firenze: Alinari, 1897), 1, 1. See also Johnson, “(Un)richtige Aufnahme,” 23, 35.

⁸⁰ See Massimo Ferretti, “La Documentazione dell’arte,” in *Gli Alinari, Fotografi a Firenze, 1852-1920*, eds. Wladimiro Settimelli and Filippo Zevi, 115-147 (Firenze: Alinari, 1977), 140.

wave of new publications devoted to the works of individual painters and sculptors.⁸¹ Many of these books, often appearing in series with titles that stressed the *geniality* of the artist such as *The Great Masters*, *Les Grands artistes*, or *Künstler Monographien*, were abundantly illustrated and complemented by texts commissioned to prominent scholars: printed in small formats and sold at accessible prices, they were destined to a mass market more and more eager for knowledge via images.⁸²

While connoisseurs were not willing to replace the examination of the original works of art with the observation of their photographs (which lack color, scale, texture and the handling of painting), Bernard Berenson, one of the masters of connoisseurship, confessed that “on the pretext of having to see certain works of art and to see them where they grow, I make costly tours and give them time that in deepest conscience I suspect being unnecessary. For the task in hand, the time could have been better spent in the library, with books and photographs.”⁸³

Notwithstanding the profusion of eminently illustrated scientific and educational publications as well as the increasing availability of photographs of works of art (especially of sculpture, a favorite subject of photography since its advent),⁸⁴ already at the end of 19th century influential art historian Heinrich Wölfflin complained about the difficulty of finding images able to embody what contemporary sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand had defined “*eine Ansicht [...]*, welche analog dem Bilde oder Relief die ganze plastische Natur der Figur als

⁸¹ Johnson, ““(Un)richtige Aufnahme’,” 36.

⁸² See Johnson, ““(Un)richtige Aufnahme’,” 36; Ferretti, “La Documentazione dell’arte,” 141-142; Ilaria Masi, “L’editoria d’arte Alinari (1894-1928),” in *Gli Alinari Editori: il contributo iconografico degli Alinari all’editoria mondiale*, eds. Claudia Becherini and Maria Augusta Possenti, 89-104 (Firenze: Alinari, 2002).

⁸³ Bernard Berenson quoted in David Alan Brown, *Berenson and the Connoisseurship of Italian Painting* (Washington: National Gallery of Art, 1979), 44. Berenson abundantly relied on photography to study and classify the objects of his studies but he was convinced that one can enjoy a work of art only through its unmediated experience. Brown, *Berenson and the Connoisseurship of Italian Painting*, 45.

⁸⁴ On this topic, see, among others Rainer Michael Mason and Hélène Pinet, *Pygmalion Photographe: La sculpture devant la camera 1844-1936* (Genève: Musée d’art et d’histoire, 1985); Michel Frizot and Dominique Pâni, eds., *Photographie/Sculpture* (Paris: Centre National de la Photographie/Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1991); Geraldine A. Johnson, ed., *Sculpture and Photography*; Roxana Marcoci, *The Original Copy: Photography of Sculpture, 1839 to Today* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2010); Francesca Valentini, “Can Light Write Art? Some reflections on the Relationship between Photography and Sculpture,” in *Mack: Kinetik/Kinetics*, eds. Susanne Titz and Jee-Hae Kim, 116-121 (Düsseldorf: Richter, 2011).

einheitlichen Flächeneindruck darstellt und zusammenfaßt.”⁸⁵ In three articles which appeared in the *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* in 1896-1897 and 1915, Wölfflin explicitly discussed the importance of photography for the comprehension, study and transmission of sculpture, with particular reference to classical sculpture but overall to early Renaissance art, two areas on the study of which the discipline of art history has been mainly founded.⁸⁶ According to him, such sculptural artifacts are to be understood within the formal categories of clarity and frontality. They need to be photographed avoiding any painterly effect and on a neutral background, allowing for the intentionality of the artist and that of the work of art to shine through. However, as shown by Johnson in her analysis of Wölfflin’s understanding of *unrichtige* and *richtige Aufnahme* (incorrect and correct photograph), the Swiss art historian reasoning was based on an inherent ambiguity: he “judged the ‘correctness’ of a photograph of an early Renaissance sculpture in light of the formal characteristics he associated with early Renaissance art in general, characteristics that, in turn, were defined precisely by the types of photographs of individual artworks he favoured.”⁸⁷

Although it is not possible to exactly retrace and quantify the influence of what Johnson has termed the “‘Wölfflinian’ photographic norms”⁸⁸, she argues that their impact “may have had an even more sustained influence on art historians, one that continued long after Wölfflin’s stylistic categories [the ones he articulated in writings such as the *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe*] ceased

⁸⁵ Adolf von Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der Bildenden Kunst* (Strasburg: Heitz&Mündel, 1893), 77-78. The essay has been translated into English as: “The Problem of Form in the Fine Arts,” in *Empathy, Form, and Space: Problems in German Aesthetics, 1873-1893*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikononou, 227-279 (Santa Monica, CA: Getty Center for the History of the Humanities, 1994). See also Megan R. Luke, “The Photographic reproduction of space: Wölfflin, Panofsky, Krakauer,” *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 57/58 (Spring/Autumn 2010): 339-343.

⁸⁶ See Heinrich Wölfflin, “Wie man Skulpturen aufnehmen soll,” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, 7, no. 1 (October 1895): 224-228; and 8, no. 1 (October 1896): 294-297; Heinrich Wölfflin, “Wie man Skulpturen aufnehmen soll? (Probleme der italienischen Renaissance)” *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, 26, no. 1 (1914-1915): 237-44. The three essays have been translated into English as: “How One Should Photograph Sculpture,” trans. Geraldine A. Johnson, *Art History* XXXVI, no. 1 (February 2013): 53-71. As underlined by Johnson, one should note that Wölfflin complained about the scarce availability of what he defined good photographs of sculpture until the end of his career. See Johnson, ““(Un)richtige Aufnahme,” 27 and especially Heinrich Wölfflin, “Über Abbildungen und Deutungen,” *Gedanken zur Kunstgeschichte: Gedrucktes und Undgedrucktes* (1940), 66-82 (reprint, Basel: Schwabe, 1947).

⁸⁷ Johnson, ““(Un)richtige Aufnahme,” 30.

⁸⁸ Johnson, ““(Un)richtige Aufnahme,” 38.

to be used systematically by most scholars.”⁸⁹ Proof of this would be the fact that for a long time Renaissance sculptures have been photographed head-on and not from the bottom up as they were seen by their contemporary users and beneficiaries due to their original locations. The first decades of the twentieth century saw the growth of what Johnson calls “‘scientific’ and [...] psycho-aestheticizing close-ups”⁹⁰. Setting aside the formal and spatial coordinates of the artwork as a whole and unitary entity, these dramatized close-up photographs aim, on the one hand, to describe and show all its details, even the remote and less visible ones, and on the other, to enhance the genius of the artist while clearly communicating the aesthetic vision of the photographer who immortalized them. Before this attitude reached the apotheosis in the art historical publications of the second half of the century, from the 1930s onward, another significant photographic strategy took hold in the wake of the increasing influence of the filmic medium. Art publications, in fact, started to offer increasingly more multiple views of the same sculptures. According to Johnson, these “stop-motion” series of photographs of single artifacts presented on facing or succeeding pages, shifted “questions of style and attribution from single, static silhouette to an approximation of a filmic encounter experienced over time.”⁹¹

At the turn of the 1940s and 1950s, French author, government minister, and cultural organizer André Malraux overturned the Wölfflinian position. In his *Le Musée imaginaire* (1947)⁹² but also in the *Le Musée imaginaire de la sculpture mondiale* (1952-54),⁹³ Malraux implemented photography explicitly for its capacity of separating sculpture, and also other types of artworks, from their original context. Once, as the author famously stated, the history of art becomes

⁸⁹ Johnson, “‘(Un)richtige Aufnahme’,” 32. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Kunstgeschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (München: F. Bruckmann A.-G., 1915).

⁹⁰ Johnson, “‘(Un)richtige Aufnahme’,” 37.

⁹¹ Johnson, “‘(Un)richtige Aufnahme’,” 38.

⁹² See André Malraux, *Psychologie de l'art: Le Musée Imaginaire* (Gèneve: Skira, 1947), published in English as: *The psychology of Art: Museum without Walls*, trans. Stuart Gilbert (New York: Patheon Books, 1949). *Le Musée imaginaire* is the first volume of the trilogy *Psychologie de l'art*, 3 vols. (Gèneve: Skira, 1947-1949). Malraux soon revised and reorganized these texts for the book *Les Voix du silence* (Paris: Gallimard, 1951).

⁹³ See André Malraux, *Le Musée imaginaire de la sculpture mondiale*, 3 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1952-54).

“l’histoire de ce qui est photographiable”⁹⁴, the artworks which are part of this history are definitively isolated from their material features. As Johnson underlines, “while Wölfflin had insisted that the formal qualities of actual sculptures must be ‘correctly’ captured in photographs, and connoisseurial and monographic publications implicitly relied on the apparent indexicality of photography as a medium for their intellectual legitimacy, the link between style and substance was severed in Malraux’s volumes. Now style, as captured in photographs, existed as a completely dematerialized entity in its own right.”⁹⁵

Important here is that, in addition to the implementation of the photographic medium and the increasing relevance played by photography in the making of art history and within the pages of art books, the graphic design of such books has also further improved since the 1950s to correspond with increasing awareness its aesthetical, educational and cognitive potentials. In the last decades the resources offered by new technologies in the fields of art and aesthetics, have been constantly challenged to find new applications and innovative solutions to expand their related knowledge while providing a better understanding. However, as will be considered at the conclusion of the first part of the study, when an innovation such as the e-book will be introduced and further discussed, even if technological improvement and digital devices have started being implemented to replace bound sheets of paper, the conceptual and cognitive features of the art book seem to have remained the same as those inaugurated by the *Recueil Crozat*.

1.3 The Art Book and the Mass Distribution of Art Publications

In 1949, when Walter Neurath founded his pioneering publishing house with its headquarters in London and New York (which explains the name Thames & Hudson), a new era for the press and the publishing industry was beginning.

⁹⁴ Malraux, *Psychologie de L’art: Le Musée Imaginaire*, 32. This short passage has been often quoted. It is worth noting that these words come from a longer sentence in which the author starts by imposing a limit to the statement to come: “L’histoire de l’art depuis cent ans, *dès qu’elle échappe aux spécialistes*, est l’histoire de ce qui est photographiable.” Malraux, *Psychologie de L’art: Le Musée Imaginaire*, 32, italics by the author. As highlighted by Johnson and stressed above, as well as it will be discussed further below, it seems that Malraux’s statement was and is true even for specialists.

⁹⁵ Johnson, ““(Un)richtige Aufnahme”,” 39.

After the end of World War II, a growing desire for visual information spread on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, fostering an increase in the production of printed matter. Lavishly illustrated press and publishing found the favors of a public looking for reassurances of the war's aftermath as well as for images that could satisfy their curiosity for the whole spectrum of culture and entertainment.⁹⁶

It was within this climate that art, especially modern and contemporary art, which had been long banned as *Entartete Kunst* in most European countries, found new vigor, being promoted as a universal means of expression that could make important contributions to renewing a society brutalized by the war, contributing also towards people's lives being made richer and more worth living.⁹⁷

The "veritable fringale de peinture"⁹⁸ that took possession of the increasing audience of art in the aftermath of WWII was accompanied and fostered by the "veritable fébrilité"⁹⁹ that traversed the cosmos of art publishing during the decade of 1950-1960. Thanks to the improvement and the wide spread of the offset, a flexible and relatively cheap printing technique, to the sustained activities of art institutions, which necessitate the support of the publishing sector to diffuse their achievement, and the diffusion of the practices of the co-edition and co-publication,¹⁰⁰ the numerous specialized publishing houses

⁹⁶ See Uliano Lucas, Tatiana Agliani, *L'immagine fotografica 1945-2000*, in *Storia d'Italia. Annali*, vol. 20, *L'immagine fotografica 1945-2000*, ed. Uliano Lucas (Torino: Einaudi, 2004), 5.

⁹⁷ See Alfred H. Barr, *What is Modern Painting?* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1943). Through the pages of this pamphlet, which by the end of the 1950s already consisted of 7 editions for a total of 125.000 copies, Alfred H. Barr Jr. (1902-1981), the first director of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, aimed to "demistify modern and abstract art for the public" by stressing its different aesthetical, pedagogical, political, and social values. Harriet S. Bee and Michelle Elligot, eds., *Art in Our Time. A Chronicle of The Museum of Modern Art* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2004), 80.

⁹⁸ Lucie Mazaauric in Christiane Moatti, "Le Voix du Silence: Notice," in André Malraux, *Écrits sur l'art I (Œuvres complètes, IV)*, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié, 1287-1366 (Paris: Gallimard, 1989-2010), 1324. Lucie Mazaauric, at the time curator at the Louvre, described in those terms the public's enthusiastic reception at the reopening of the Louvre and of other Parisian museums after the Liberation.

⁹⁹ Moatti, "Le Voix du Silence: Notice," 1328.

¹⁰⁰ A co-edition project is initiated by a publisher who curates the formal and intellectual features of the book while looking for international publishers willing to share the production costs of the venture (upon payment of an additional percentage). The books thus produced share the same layout, illustrations and text, the latter translated in different languages depending on the countries in which the volume will be distributed. In a co-production project the involved publishers share the tasks to produce the volume. One is in charge of the lay-out, the other of the illustration, the other of the text and so on. The copyrights are shared between

founded around those years could grow and expand. With the promise of being a tangible object through which to spread and access the positive values of art and embodying the potential of allowing virtually the whole of humanity a chance to encounter art, the art book found particular fortune in those years.

Struck by the exponential growth that the consumption of art books had in the 1950s, art critic Harold Rosenberg outlined some perceptive reflections in his article *Art Books, Book Art, Art*.¹⁰¹ Rosenberg opens his text mentioning a new series of handy art books dedicated to the work of international contemporary artists, which had recently appeared in Paris under the title of *Cahiers du Musée de Poche*.¹⁰² In his opinion, this new editorial product has to be interpreted as a supplement of André Malraux's *musée imaginaire*, the powerful device that Malraux had theorized and sampled in the first volume of his trilogy *La Psychologie de l'Art*.¹⁰³

According to Malraux's metaphysical aesthetics, the modern museum is the physical space where every artifact, put outside its functional context, becomes an object of contemplation, a pure work of art, a masterpiece among other masterpieces. This gathering poses a fundamental issue: the museum is not a

all the actors of the venture. As underlined by Philippe Schuwer, the art book has been the editorial product that has assured the most success to the co-edition and the co-publication from the beginning of these practices. See Philippe Schuwer, *L'Édition internationale: coéditions et coproductions* (Paris: Éditions du Cercle de la Librairie, 1991), 21-25.

¹⁰¹ Rosenberg, "Art Books, Book Art, Art." It is noteworthy to underline that a great portion of this text had already appeared in the April 1959 issue of the literary magazine *Encounter*. The 1960 version was reprinted entirely, after a slight revision, in Harold Rosenberg, *The Anxious Object. Art Today and Its Audience*, 197-202 (New York: Horizon Press, 1964).

¹⁰² Rosenberg, "Art Books, Book Art, Art," 137. Rosenberg refers to a new series of monographic art books dedicated to the work of contemporary international artists which started to be published as a trimestral magazine in Paris in March 1959 on the initiative of the writer and publisher Georges Fall. In 1955 Fall had already launched a series of handy art books dedicated to painters and sculptors of the 20th century under the rubric of *Musée de Poche*. Given the success of his publishing venture, he launched the new series *Cahiers du Musée de Poche* to present the work of younger international artists. Only four issues of the *Cahier du Musée de Poche* were published, the last in May 1962. The *Musée de Poche*, of which a handful of titles were also published in English by the publisher Golden Griffin in the series *The Pocket Museum* had folded by the mid- 1960s. Within a relatively short time, Fall had in fact lost the support of his American partners who were, apparently, increasingly eager to deliver the U.S. art scene from the European, and more specifically from the French cultural hegemony. The publisher Barney Rosset (who had bought the rights to release an English version of a dozen titles), the gallerist Leo Castelli (who had sponsored the publications of two issues dedicated to the work of artists Jasper Johns and Robert Rauschenberg), as well as the bookstore of The Museum of Modern Art, New York (which had offered the books to the American public) all ceased to support Fall's publications. See Georges Fall, *Chronique nomades* (Paris: Archibooks/Sauterau éditeur, 2007), 63-125.

¹⁰³ André Malraux, *La Psychologie de l'Art: Le Musée imaginaire*.

place for contemplation; it is a place for confrontation. It implies an intellectualized relation with art, a relation which calls to mind all the artworks that are not or that can not be physically part of the actual confrontation:

là où l'œuvre d'art n'a plus d'autre fonction que d'être œuvre d'art, à une époque où l'exploration artistique du monde se poursuit, la réunion de tant de chefs d'œuvre, mais d'où tant de chefs-d'œuvre sont absents, convoque dans l'esprit tous les chefs-d'œuvre. Comment ce possible mutilé n'appellerait-il pas tout le possible...¹⁰⁴

In facing this contradiction, Malraux turned to what he termed *musée imaginaire*, that is the conceptual device through which the “universal world of art”¹⁰⁵ can be made intelligible and all confrontation is possible. However, given the inconstancy of intellect and visual memory the *musée imaginaire* needs a technological discovery such as photography, to improve its conceptual features and, in so doing, make it more resourceful, manageable, and serviceable. According to Malraux, thanks to photographic reproduction and illustrated publishing: “un Musée imaginaire sans précédent s’est ouvert, qui va pousser l’extrême l’intellectualisation commence par l’incomplète confrontation des vrai musées; répondant à l’appel de ceux-ci, les art plastiques ont inventé leur imprimerie.”¹⁰⁶

Rosenberg links the “frantic expansion”¹⁰⁷ of the art books to the globalization of art that resulted from two interrelated phenomena: on the one hand the dilatation of the notion of art, the domain of which had been inflated, even including artifacts that were never meant to be; on the other, the unprecedented cultural significance gained by art within all strata of society. Through text and images, art books have assured the “transmutation of substance” necessary to permit everyone (professionals included) everywhere to keep pace with the works of art which are “dug out of different times and places [each year], to say nothing of the increasing generation of new works on

¹⁰⁴ Malraux, *La Psychologie de l'Art. Le Musée imaginaire*, 16.

¹⁰⁵ Derek, Allan. *Art and the Human Adventure, André Malraux's Theory of Art* (Amsterdam and New York: Faux Titre, 2009), 231.

¹⁰⁶ Malraux, *La Psychologie de l'Art. Le Musée imaginaire*, 17.

¹⁰⁷ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 137.

all continents.”¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, art books have been implemented to feed the huge increasing audience of art that “through cultural programs in all nations [...] discover[s] in art pleasures not unrelated to the picture stories and treasures of childhood. While the actual audience of painting and sculpture is still pitifully small, [...] the potential audience of art, or at least of the art idea, includes nothing less than the whole humanity.”¹⁰⁹

As Rosenberg explicitly stresses, if one compares original art-objects with their visual transmutated substance as it appears within the pages of a book, all the limits and the contradictions of the art book emerge: “the art in an art book is a collection of substitute images. [...] The picture plates lack the scale, materiality, surface, aging, environment, etc., of their originals – their color, even at the very best, is inevitably, off.”¹¹⁰ The fundamental question the American art critic poses to himself and to his readers is thereby not centered on the visual and mimetical qualities of the medium of the book, but on its intellectual ones: “Is it as a poor substitute that the public of the art book accepts the work in it? Or is it the ‘imaginary museum’ of reproductions more suited to its tastes and its needs than the original paintings?”¹¹¹

One’s confrontation with the art book can not compete with one’s experience of the original artwork but “art-book art has the one overwhelming advantage over the raw product of the studio: *it appears in a context of knowledge*.”¹¹² An art book does not permit one to experience the artworks but to *place* them. Through photographic reproductions and other visual resources, as well as textual apparati such as critical texts, historical chronologies, and additional bibliographies, one “know[s] more; perhaps most important, [one] know[s] what [one] know[s].”¹¹³ Therefore, art books present organized constellations of elements to their readers that permit them “to *read* a work of art.”¹¹⁴ Rosenberg

¹⁰⁸ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 137.

¹⁰⁹ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 137.

¹¹⁰ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 137.

¹¹¹ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 138.

¹¹² Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 138.

¹¹³ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 139.

¹¹⁴ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 138. Given that this article focuses on the art book, one could argue it is not surprising to find here that the work of art is equated to text and metaphorical references connected to the domain of language. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy to mention that Rosenberg seems here to have already and very receptively internalized in his

is convinced that, since the work of art has ceased to be connected with clearly identifiable figurative and narrative elements, those constellations which comprehend the efforts to retrace the intention of the artists as well as the references they had on hand, have become indispensable. Artworks seem then “to belong in a book.”¹¹⁵

Furthermore, an increasing number of exhibitions reiterate the book model, embodying not only its scientific and educational potentials but also its architecture. Instead of having the artworks at their core and letting their interpretation arise from their physical reciprocity, exhibitions always become more the illustrations of interpretations which are formulated *a priori*, in which the artworks appear to be shown as “enlargement[s] of [...] [their] own reproductions.”¹¹⁶ It seems then that “the actual work becomes [...] simply the mold from which handier copies have been made: its fate is either to serve the various uses of the museum or to be collected as a relic of the artist’s person.”¹¹⁷ Once a show comes to its end, only the art book produced in its context – the so-called *exhibition catalogue* to which the third chapter of the first section of this study is dedicated – survives, and with it the constellation in which the artworks have been inserted.¹¹⁸

criticism the new meaning of work of art as language and text which characterizes Happening and Fluxus with their text based performance notations, instruction, and scores.

¹¹⁵ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 138.

¹¹⁶ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 139-140.

¹¹⁷ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 140.

¹¹⁸ See Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 140. In addition to Rosenberg’s account, one should stress also the fact that, within the pages of an exhibition catalogue the artworks and their meaning are crystallized in a precise interpretative context which, given the extent of the efforts necessary in organizing an exhibition, can hardly be questioned again within the same contingencies. Among the recent efforts in this direction, one can mention as an example the reenactment of the legendary exhibition *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form: Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information*. Originally organized by art historian and curator Harald Szeemann at the Bern Kunsthalle in 1969, it was recreated in 2013 in Venice by art historian and curator Germano Celant in dialogue with architect Rem Koolhaas and artist Thomas Demand on the baroque premises of the Prada Foundation at Ca’ Corner della Regina. On the 1969 exhibition, see Christian Rattemeyer, ed., *Exhibiting the New Art: ‘Op Losse Schroeven’ and ‘When Attitudes Become Form’ 1969* (London: Afterall Books, 2010); see also § 3.2.2.3, footnote 390. On the 2013 show, see Germano Celant, ed., *When Attitudes become Form: Bern 1969/Venice 2013* (Milano: Fondazione Prada, 2013). Celant refers to the 2013 show in terms of “historical reconstruction” (Canadian Art, “Germano Celant on When Attitudes Become Form | Reel Artists Film Festival 2014,” YouTube video, 1:00:23, April 16, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=15U5LFodrBw>, last access June 30, 2015) but it seems more appropriate to describe it in terms of *reenactment*. For an early assessment of *reenactment* in contemporary art (mainly focused on performance) see Sven Lütticken, “An

Lingering on the fact that through the art book, art extends “its influence beyond the material environment of the work,” becoming “culture” and acquiring a value also for “a public unable to prize it as a possession,” Rosenberg reserves the same reproach to those that stigmatize the expansion of the art book and its prevalence over art works as a direct consequence of “the breakdown of ‘organic’ experience [...] and its replacement by knowledge or by mere illusion of it,” typical of the mass society, as well as to those that interpret this phenomenon as a positive sign arising from a society in which taste and the faculty of discernment are improving.¹¹⁹ They are both off track because the key point of the question is completely different: it is “art’s relation with society [that] has been changed and thereby the character of art itself, past and present.”¹²⁰ Since art has entered the vast domain of culture, it has become “a document”¹²¹ of culture itself. As a document, art has nothing to do with contemplation, but rather with study and interpretation.

Given this new ontological status of art, Rosenberg asks himself and his readers whether the increasing of art knowledge is directly proportional to the relevance of art in contemporary life. His answer is negative: the growing presence and prominence of art books and exhibition catalogues does not lead to a greater importance of art in society but, on the contrary, it is the emblem of the “coalescence of art and comment.”¹²² In art books one finds art’s (over-)interpretation rather than art itself.¹²³ In the art critic view, in order to render justice to art it is necessary “to restore the balance between the work of art and the creation of the printing presses.”¹²⁴

Arena in Which to Reenact” in *Life, Once More: Forms of Reenactment in Contemporary Art*, ed. Sven Lütticken, 17-60 (Rotterdam: Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, 2005).

¹¹⁹ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 140.

¹²⁰ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 141.

¹²¹ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 141.

¹²² Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 140

¹²³ A few years later, in 1963, also artist, critic and novelist Brian O’Doherty (b. 1928) recorded the fact that in those years art was being “overinterpreted, overcriticized, and overdocumented in a strangling undergrowth of verbal redundancies.” O’Doherty quoted in Lisa Pasquariello, “Ed Ruscha and the Language That He Used,” *October*, no. 111 (Winter 2005): 86. See Brian O’Doherty, *Object and Idea: An Art Critic’s Journal 1961-1967* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1967).

¹²⁴ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book Art, Art,” 142.

2. Artist's Book

*There is no escape from matter.
There is no escape from the physical nor is there any from mind.
The two are in constant collision course.*

Robert Smithson¹²⁵

The new generation of artists who began to work from the late 1950s faced, either directly or indirectly, the numerous concerns discussed by Rosenberg at the time both implied and generated by the massive implementation of art books. The globalization of art has highlighted as never before the manifold challenges involved in the mediation of art, in its communication, diffusion, and fruition. Originally implemented for educational purposes to allow the readers to develop their own knowledge of art autonomously, art books became the very place of art's knowledge, as well as the medium through which art seems to conquer "the ubiquity."¹²⁶ Furthermore, the "sensual [...] attractiveness of books" – physical objects loaded with the authority accorded by centuries of intellectual history which embody, communicate, and disseminate knowledge, – was widely acknowledged in the collective imagination.¹²⁷ It is in this context that an unprecedented interest in the book arose among the young generation of artists, especially in Europe and in North America. If art has become so easily transmutable into the means of its communication such as the book, why not invert the balance?

¹²⁵ Robert Smithson, "Fragments of an Interview with P.A. [Patsy] Norvell 1969," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, ed. Jack Flam (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 1996), 194.

¹²⁶ The term is taken from Paul Valéry, "La Conquête de l'ubiquité (1928)," in *Œuvres, II, Pièces sur l'art*, 1283-1287 (Paris: Gallimard, 1960).

¹²⁷ Yilmaz Dziewor, "Reading Ed Ruscha," in *Reading Ed Ruscha*, ed. Yilmaz Dziewor (Bregenz: Kunsthhaus Bregenz, 2012), 18. According to Dziewor, books can be a tangible "sign" of the symbiotic relationship between high and pop culture. One of the visual references he stresses to substantiate his argument is Eve Arnold's 1955 picture of sex symbol (and bookworm) Marilyn Monroe reading James Joyce's *Ulysses*. See Dziewor, "Reading Ed Ruscha," 18. In the wake of Dziewor's interpretation one could also refer to a picture of Marilyn reading an art book on Goya to provide a visual reference to the fact that also art books play a fundamental role within the tension between high and pop culture. The picture in question was taken around 1953, probably by Alfred Eisenstaedt. See Marilyn Monroe, *Fragments: Poems, Intimate Notes, Letters*, eds. Stanley Buchthal and Bernard Comment (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010), 70.

Even if in the course of art history it is possible to find several examples of artists who have experimented with the book and other allied printed matters,¹²⁸ it was not until the 1960s that artists “consciously employed the [...] book as a [...] vehicle for art,”¹²⁹ facing it not as “a secondary medium” but rather as a “primary object of their practice.”¹³⁰

Most of the artists who worked following and shaping new attitudes within art and its practice, attitudes that had been legitimized and labeled as pop art, body art, process art, land art, conceptual art, performance art,¹³¹ found in the book – relatively light, compact, multi-faceted, easy and cheap to produce as well as to diffuse – an ally through which art could be accessed and experienced potentially by everybody in a tangible and portable dimension, possibly without the mediation of a second or a third part, thanks to self-publication and self-

¹²⁸ The list of examples could start with William Blake’s illuminated books (1788-1794) and proceed with Stéphane Mallarmé’s poem *Un Coup de Dés Jamais N’Abolira Le Hazard* (first published in the March 3, 1897 issue of the magazine *Cosmopolis* and re-published posthumously in the form of a book in 1914), as well as his legendary unaccomplished project known as *Le Livre*. It could include the *livres de peintre* published by the Parisian art dealers Ambroise Vollard and Daniel Henry Kahnweiler who, at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, commissioned artists such as Picasso, Rouault, Derain, among others, to illustrate literary classics as well as contemporary texts. It could add the books published by the artists of the historical avant-gardes in the frame of their manifold activities and include the books by the multifaceted sculptor, painter, film maker and designer Bruno Munari as well as the publications issued in the 1950s by Concrete poets such as Ian Hamilton Finlay or the founders of the Swiss art magazine *Spirale*, Eugen Gomringer, Dieter Roth, and Marcel Wyss. On William Blake’s illuminated painting and books, see Joseph Viscomi, *Blake and the Idea of the Book* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993) and Robert N. Essick, *William Blake Printmaker* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 136-164; on Mallarmé and his engagement with the book, see Arnar, *The Book as Instrument*; on Vollard and Kahnweiler’s *livres de peintre*, see François Chapon, *Le Peintre et le livre, l’âge d’or du livre illustré en France 1870-1970* (Paris: Flammarion, 1987), 51-129; on the book produced by the artist of the the historical Avant-gardes, see Drucker, *The Century of Artist’s Books*, 45-67; Giovanni Lista, *Le Livre Futuriste, de la liberation du mot au poème tactile* (Modena: Editions Panini, 1984); Margit Rowell and Deborah Wye, *The Russian Avant-Garde Book 1910-1934* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2002); Alan Bartam, *Bauhaus, Modernism and The Illustrated Book* (London: British Library, 2004); on Munari’s books, see Giorgio Maffei, *Munari’s Books* (Mantova: Corraini, 2009); on the concrete poetry and the book, see Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste: Une Introduction à l’art contemporain*, 63-101.

¹²⁹ Clive Phillpot, “Some Contemporary Artists and their Books,” in *Booktrek*, 122; first published in *Artists’ Books: a Critical Anthology & Sourcebook*, ed. Joan Lyons, 96-132 (Layton, UT: Gibbs M. Smith Inc., Pergrine Smith Books/Visual Study Workshop, 1985).

¹³⁰ Dieter Schwarz, “Learn to Read Art: Lawrence Weiner’s Books” in Lawrence Weiner, *Books 1968-89: Catalogue Raisonné*, ed. D. Schwarz (Köln/Villerbanne: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König/Le Nouveau Musée, 1989), 122.

¹³¹ On the *specific* nature of this nomenclature, see Thierry de Duve, *Kant After Duchamp* (Cambridge MA: MIT Press, 1996), 199-271, especially footnote 42, 233-234.

distribution.¹³² Mainly through graphics, language, and photography books started to embody and transmit art instead of its representation and, transcending geographical locations and opening times of public and private exhibition spaces, used as exhibition sites.¹³³

The growing heterogeneity of books by artists produced in the 1960s as well as the belief that a rupture of sorts took place during this decade, fundamentally altering and redefining artistic practices including those involving books, are widely acknowledged in the copious literature on the “phénomène «livre d’artiste»”¹³⁴ just as in the history of art. Diverse interrelated factors are usually stressed to illuminate the specific implementation of the book within the general redefinition of artistic practices: upheavals in the definition of art, socio-political issues, as well as the unprecedented importance that mass media and information started to gain within the economy and society.

In the following, the *advent* of the artist’s book will be briefly contextualized in the framework of the changes within the definition of art which shook the 1960s. Subsequently, the main features of the socio-political and media environment in which the phenomenon emerged will be taken into account. Attention will then be focused on the reception and institutionalization of the phenomenon, with the aim of intellectually framing the so-called artist’s book. The debate around its definition within the large amount of research devoted to

¹³² The most representative example in this direction is, without doubt, artist Ed Ruscha and his intensive book production of the years 1962-1972 and 1978. In those years he worked on 17 book projects, 3 of which in collaboration with other artists. Almost all were anonymously self-published or published under Ruscha’s own imprint *Heavy Industry Publication*. See Edward Ruscha, *Editions 1959-1999: Catalogue Raisonné*, ed. Siri Engberg, 2 vols. (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 1999), 1, 78-121; 2, 123-126. Clive Phillpot, “Sixteen Books and Then Some,” in Ruscha, *Editions 1959-1999*, 58-79; reprinted as “Ed Ruscha: Sixteen Books and Then Some” in *Booktrek*, 208-233. Recognizing the book as a key instrument through which he could freely develop and strategically communicate his artistic vision, Ruscha stated: “when I start on one of these books, I get to be the impresario of the thing, I get to be the *mayordomo*, I get to be creator and total proprietor of the whole works.” Ed Ruscha quoted in David Bourdon, “Ruscha as Publisher (or All Booked Up),” *ArtNews* 71, 2 (1972): 32; reprinted in Ed Ruscha, *Leave Any Information at the Signal: Writings, Interviews, Bits, Pages*, ed. Alexandra Schwartz, 40-45 (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2002). Note, that Ruscha’s publishing practice exemplifies art critic Lawrence Alloway’s understanding of the book as a “one person control situation.” Lawrence Alloway, “Artists as Writers, Part Two: The Real of Language,” *Artforum* 12, no. 8 (April 1974): 14.

¹³³ The first experiment in this direction is Douglas Huebler, *Douglas Huebler*, ed. Seth Siegelaub (New York, Seth Siegelaub, 1968). See § 3.4.1.3.

¹³⁴ Leszek Brogowski, *Editer l’Art: le livre d’artsite et l’histoire du livre* (Rennes: Les Editions de la Transparence, 2010), 342.

this domain is illustrated through the positions of the art historian Barbara Bader, the philosopher and scholar of art Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, as well as the art historian Cornelia Lauf. These will be discussed at some length in order to better situate the scope of this research *vis à vis* the age-old discussion around the artist's book.

2.1 Upheavals in the Definition of Art

Already in 1971, art historian, critic and curator Germano Celant (b. 1940), the author of the text which is considered the first attempt to analyse as well as to provide a critical frame to the new international attitude of the "book as artwork," developed his reflections and interpretations, highlighting the impact of mass-media on society and art practice.¹³⁵ He contextualized the implementation of the book within the transformations that interested the domain of art between 1956 and 1963 which he describes in terms of a dialectical polarization between what he named *informale caldo* and *informale freddo*. The term *informale* is considered the European equivalent of the U.S. *abstract expressionism* and refers traditionally to the non-figurative attitudes in painting and sculpture that characterized most of the art of the 1940s and 1950s. Adopting media mogul Marshall McLuhan's terminology, Celant differentiates two tendencies within *informale*, indicating them with the adjectives *caldo* (hot) and *freddo* (cold). McLuhan had previously employed them to distinguish media depending on the degree of information they imply and transmit, that is the degree of participation they demand to their receiver to

¹³⁵ See Germano Celant, "Book as Artwork 1960-1970" *Data* 1, no. 1 (July 1971): 35-49. The same article appeared in English (slightly reduced, probably simplified in the task of translating from Italian, but with an augmented bibliography compiled with Linda Morris) to accompany the exhibition *Book as Artwork 1960-1972*, Nigel Greenwood Inc. Ltd., London, September 20 - October 14, 1972. In the same year, it was also translated in French as "Le Livre comme travail artistique 1960-1972," *VH 101* 3, no. 9 (Autumn 1972): 5-28. A German translation, with augmented bibliography, was published as "Das Buch als Kunstform 1960-1970," *Interfunktionen* no. 11 (1974): 80-107. Both the Italian version and the English translation were reprinted in 1977 in Germano Celant, *Off Media: nuove tecniche artistiche: video, disco, libro*, (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1977), 106-173. Note, that in this case the bibliography was updated to 1977. The English and the French translations (without bibliographical apparatus) were included in the catalogue of the travelling exhibition *Books by Artists* (1981-2); see *Books by Artists*, ed. Tim Guest, (Toronto: Art Metropole, 1981), 85-126. The text was recently reprinted as *Book as Artwork 1960-1972* (New York: 6 Decades Books, 2011).

fully grasp their message: hot media require a lower degree of participation because they transmit a vast range of data and information and vice versa.¹³⁶

According to Celant, the years between 1948 and 1956 were the years of *informale caldo*, when artists such as Pollock, Klein, Fontana, Dubuffet, Fautrier, and Wols, among others, experimented with traditional media (i.e. painting and sculpture) to emphasize “human and material aspects.”¹³⁷ The following years (1956 to 1963) witnessed the dialectical confrontation of *informale caldo* and *informale freddo*, characterized by the fact that “attention was transferred from the human and material elements to the relationship between man and his media.”¹³⁸ It is in the work of artists such as Klein, Manzoni, Kaprow, Rauschenberg, Reiner, Beuys, and the Fluxus group, among others, that Celant identifies the tension towards *informale freddo*. These artists did not refuse to work with traditional media but they made use of them “to achieve a very different end, the exaltation of the medium as significant itself [...] in its everyday and non artistic uses; [...] a form of mass media united with other mass-media.”¹³⁹

Celant indicates 1956 as the pivotal year in which the progressive bias towards *informale freddo* begins. This year coincides with the year of death of Jackson Pollock, an event that had a great impact on the artistic community, especially in the U.S. From the pages of the October 1958 issue of the U.S. art magazine *Artnews*, Allan Kaprow, – a graduate in art history and teacher of the subject who was also active as an artist and had recently taken part in John

¹³⁶ Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extension of Man* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1964) 24-35. It would be interesting to do research on the historical motivations behind the implementation of the dichotomy cold/hot in the humanities and to verify the degree of correlation with the political events of the time and the language used to describe them (see for example the term *Cold War*, coined by George Orwell in his article “You and the Atomic Bomb,” *Tribune*, October 19, 1945, <http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0300011h.html#part33>, last access August 15, 2015). Before being popularized by McLuhan in the field of media studies, the dichotomy was used by Levi-Strauss in *Tristes Tropiques* (1955) to differentiate dynamic societies with a high degree of acceptance and accentuation of change and transformation (“sociétés chaudes”) from societies which tend to freeze the flow of the events, that is to freeze history (“sociétés froides”). Note, that cold societies produce very little *disorder*. Interestingly, Levi-Strauss borrows the concept of *entropy* from the thermodynamics, a notion that would be particularly attractive for artists working in the 1960s, most notably Robert Smithson. See Claude Levi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques* (Paris: Plon, 1955), 478 and Georges Charbonnier, *Entretiens avec Claude Levi-Strauss* (Paris: Plon, 1961), 38.

¹³⁷ Germano Celant, *Book as Artwork 1960-1972* (London: Nigel Greenwood, 1972), 3.

¹³⁸ Celant, *Book as Artwork 1960-1972*, 3.

¹³⁹ Celant, *Book as Artwork 1960-1972*, 4.

Cage's experimental music composition class¹⁴⁰ –, stressed the *dilemma* that the death of Pollock presented to the artists of the new generations, that is, to take a position between two alternatives: to continue in Pollock's "vein," focusing on painting and making what might be relevant "near-paintings," or "to give up with the making of paintings entirely."¹⁴¹ In this regard, Kaprow's position was very clear. Convinced that Pollock's major innovation was the new kind of space generated by his paintings, a space within which the observers cease to be passive spectators and become active participants, he stated:

Pollock [...] left us at the point where we must become preoccupied with and even dazzled by the space and objects of our everyday life, either our bodies, clothes, rooms, or, if need be, the vastness of Forty-second Street. [...] Objects of every sort are materials for the new art. Not satisfied with the suggestion through paint of our other senses, we shall utilize the specific substances of sight, sound, movements, people, odors, touch.¹⁴²

Kaprow's statement conveys the impatience of the new generations of artists towards painting and the canons that legitimated its primacy, that is medium-specificity, *flatness*, as well as the absolute prevalence of the sense of sight (or *opticality*). These canons were at the time, and especially in the following decade, epitomized by the influential criticism of Clement Greenberg (1909-1994) and eventually of his epigone Michael Fried (b. 1939).¹⁴³

As exemplarily demonstrated by art historian Thierry de Duve, the new generation of artists who set out to undermine Greenberg's canons, ended up

¹⁴⁰ After having attended the High School of Music and Art, New York (1942-45), Allan Kaprow (1927-2006) studied painting at the Hans Hoffman School of Fine Arts in New York (1947-48). In 1952, he graduated in History of Art under the guidance of Meyer Schapiro at Columbia University with a study entitled *Piet Mondrian: A Study in Seeing*. He was an active member of the New York art scene, where he started exhibiting at the beginning of the 1950s. From 1953 and 1961 he taught art history at Rutgers University and in 1957-1958 he took part in John Cage's weekly class of experimental music composition at The New School of Social Research. See Paul Schimmel, "'Only memory can carry it into the future': Kaprow's Development from the Action-Collages to the Happenings," in *Allan Kaprow: Art as Life*, eds. Eva Meyer-Hermann, Andrew Perchuk and Stephanie Rosenthal, 8-19 (Los Angeles, CA: The Getty Research Institute, 2006); Annette Leddy, "Chronology," in *Allan Kaprow*, 92-340, especially 93-147.

¹⁴¹ Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," in Kaprow, *Essays on the Blurring of Art and Life*, ed. Jeff Kelley, 1-9 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1993), 6.

¹⁴² Allan Kaprow, "The Legacy of Jackson Pollock," 7-8.

¹⁴³ See Clement Greenberg, *The Collected Essays and Criticism*, ed. John O'Brian, 4 vols. (Chicago, IL /London: The University of Chicago Press, 1986-1994), especially vol. 3, *Affirmations and Refusals 1950-1956* (1993) and vol. 4, *Modernism with a Vengeance 1957-1969* (1994); Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood, Essays and Reviews* (Chicago, IL/London: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

paradoxically, even if to a large extent unconsciously, to recur to some of their tenets to legitimize their *new art*.¹⁴⁴ The paradox of the question lies in the tension between modernism and formalism, which are strictly interrelated but find their respective difference in the way they involve aesthetic judgment:

modernism – contrary to both premodern and non-modernist tendencies within modern art – ascribes the aesthetic judgment not to imitation, expression, or imagination, but to the state in which artists leave the conventions they have inherited after having tested them. Whereas modernism simply appears as a tendency, to which works belong or not, formalism involves the way in which the aesthetic judgment, moved (or unmoved) by the *content* of a given modernist work, is compelled to approve (or disapprove) of the *form* in which the work remodels its historical conventions.¹⁴⁵

In modernism the aesthetic judgment concerns the degree to which the artists have been able to rework and bring forward the specific conventions of the mediums they have inherited, purifying them from unnecessary frills. Within the tendency of modernism, formalism stresses the importance of the *content* (or quality) of an artwork which, according to Greenberg, “*is affect*.”¹⁴⁶ Content is *a call* directed both to the artist and the public who are required to decide (aesthetically) if the form which implies the content is appropriate to the content itself. Given as an affect, a feeling, content can not be verbalized; its communication relies on the medium and the form that embodies it which thus become the elements on which the aesthetic judgment can be based.

The generation of whom Allan Kaprow and the other representatives of the *informale freddo* were part, claimed for a new alliance between art and life, reproaching the artists, the critics, and the institutions that fostered the teleology of the modernist (formalist) approach to be “elitist and socially irresponsible”.¹⁴⁷ Practicing and promoting pure and self-referential art, they failed to engage with issues and problems of the contemporary world, of mass society and everyday life, putting the meaning of art outside history and society.

¹⁴⁴ See De Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*.

¹⁴⁵ De Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, 211.

¹⁴⁶ Clement Greenberg, “Seminar One,” *Arts Magazine*, no. 48 (November 1973): 45.

¹⁴⁷ Walker, John A. “Formalism,” *Glossary of Art, Architecture and Design Since 1945*, 2nd ed. (London: Clive Bingley, 1977), 136. Among the institutions that internationally promoted the Formalist approach towards art and its history, The Museum of Modern Art, New York is the most representative example.

Saturated by Greenberg's criticism and theories which were hugely widespread within the artistic community,¹⁴⁸ this generation of artists wanted to overcome the "Greenbergian standard"¹⁴⁹ (i.e. the conditions of possibility of art it defended), that is the fact that "medium-specific art prescribed the limits of what was possible to express."¹⁵⁰ It is in this context that the specific medium of the book (as well as other unconventional mediums such as movement, sound, film, photography, video, language) was brought to enter the general domain of art. The book, as well as other printed matter, such as the magazine and the pages that compose it, turned out to be particularly congenial to the artists working inside of what, from the mid-1960s, is increasingly perceived as "the informational 'Global Village'".¹⁵¹

2.2 Socio-political Issues and the Unprecedented Importance of Mass Media and Information

Clive Phillpot is one of the most authoritative voices on the relationship between artists and printed matter, as well as one of the intellectuals who through his work as a librarian at the Chelsea School of the Art in London (1969-1977) and as Director of the Library at The Museum of Modern Art in New York (1977-1994) has significantly contributed to shaping, as well as theoretically and historically framing this relationship.

Lingering on the material culture in which the book started increasingly to be implemented as a viable artistic medium, Phillpot has stressed that within the social, political, and military tensions that traversed the 1960s

¹⁴⁸ As De Duve pinpoints, "Greenberg's *Art and Culture* became a bestseller among artists as soon as it came out in 1961. And his best known essay 'Modernist Painting,' also published in 1961 instantly became a sort of aesthetic Organon for a whole generation of artists, even for those who rejected it." De Duve, *Kant after Duchamp*, 201; see also Clement Greenberg, *Art and Culture: Critical Essays* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1961).

¹⁴⁹ Lucy R. Lippard, ed., *Six Years: The Dematerialization of The Art Object* (London: Studio Vista, 1973), 6.

¹⁵⁰ Mel Bochner, "For translucence, against transparency: an account of conceptual art and its medium," Triple Canopy, February 19, 2010, http://canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/the_medium_and_the_tedium, last access August 12, 2015.

¹⁵¹ Celant, *Book as Artwork 1960-1972*, 5. See Gwen Allen, *Artists' Magazines: An Alternative Space for Art* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 1991).

a climate existed in which many people were hungry for news and information, which the general media did not provide, and consumed a great deal of more pertinent printed communication. Underground publishing, political publishing, minority publishing of all kinds thrived as more and more groups catered to their own needs and those of others like themselves.¹⁵²

Furthermore,

the evident importance and ubiquitousness of paperbacks as carriers of ideas at this time, whether in the form of text by Mao or Marcuse visible in the street as physical accouterments, or as components of domestic do-it-yourself pantheons of past and present thinkers and writers, flowed over into hopes for artists' publications.¹⁵³

Phillpot has also stressed some fundamental issues which have previously been discussed within the context of Rosenberg's remarks on the unprecedented cultural significance gained by art:

art books had become plentiful. Color illustrations had also become a commonplace, not only in art books, but also in illustrated histories and biographies. Photography books also multiplied. Most people, including artists, experienced more art through books, magazines, and reproductions than in the original. Perhaps it is not surprising that artists should take over the art book, so long the domain of the critic, use it for their own ends, and make a secondary medium suddenly primary.¹⁵⁴

The fact that the majority of the people, including art professionals and speculative vanguard collectors accessed and *experienced* more art through the mediation of photography and printed matter rather than *in the original* did not remain unreflected by artists.¹⁵⁵ Recalling the 1960s, Mel Bochner has stated:

one day [Robert] Smithson and I were bitching about how impossible it was to get dealers to come out to our studios. They all say the same thing: 'just send me some slide of your work.' We started speculation on that if slides were all anyone wanted to see, and since they were already a form of reproduction, was there any need to

¹⁵² Philpot, "Some Contemporary Artists and their Books," 97.

¹⁵³ Clive Philpot, "Booktrek: The Next Frontier," in *Booktrek*, 135; first published in *Books by Artists: Spiring Catalogue*, 2-4 (New York: Printed Matter, 1990). In their *The Medium is the Massage* (1967) McLuhan and Fiore celebrate the Xerox duplicating machine as the technology through which, circumventing and making copyright obsolete, one can "custom-make" books by photocopying different sources. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore, *The Medium is the Massage* (New York: Simon&Schuster, 1967), 123.

¹⁵⁴ Clive Philpot, "Some Contemporary Artists and their Books," 97-98.

¹⁵⁵ See Celant, *Book as Artwork 1960-1972*, 5.

make actual works? In other words, why bother with production when you could go directly to reproduction?"¹⁵⁶

Already in 1965 Dan Graham created works for magazine pages, thus inscribing his creations from the very beginning within the channels through which they would inescapably be received and experienced. Soon other artists, such as Smithson and Bochner, did the same.¹⁵⁷ Art historian Alexander Alberro has affirmed that the reconfiguration of public space reflected in Graham's magazine pieces as well as in other artists' pieces which made of reproduction and distribution "the works' point of departure" was informed by the practices of pop artists of the early 1960s, in particular by Edward Ruscha's book production.¹⁵⁸ Ruscha's books, of which *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* (1962) and *Every Building on the Sunset Strip* (1966) are probably the best known examples, are however not only characterized by reproduction and distribution as their *point of departure*. According to art historian Beatrice von Bismarck, Ruscha's

"notion of the book is one of 'presentationality' – a reflection on the relation between presenting and being presented. It functions as an esthetic, social and economic spatial structure, within which and by means of which, he is able to address the conditions of art's exposure to the public, under conditions he himself has defined [...] [becoming] a means for advertising, but also a site of social interaction, an agent for an aesthetic forging community."¹⁵⁹

Although von Bismarck stresses the amplitude of the notion of *presentationality*, one should remember that the new generation of artists of which Ruscha was part developed a special sensitivity not only for the language of advertising, but also for the notion of self-branding (both 'sectors' of primary

¹⁵⁶ Mel Bochner, "For translucence, against transparency: an account of conceptual art and its medium," Triple Canopy, February 19, 2010, http://canopycanopycanopy.com/contents/the_medium_and_the_tedium.

¹⁵⁷ See, for example, Mel Bochner and Robert Smithson, "The Domain of the Great Bear," *Art Voices* (Fall 1966): 44-51.

¹⁵⁸ Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 2003), 190, footnotes 43, 44. Graham, Smithson, and Bochner could be part of the group of artists mentioned by Celant (Morris, Le Witt, Judd, Andre, Barry, NE Thing Co., Prini, Huebner, Merz, Dibbets, Nauman, Kosuth, Burn and Ramsden) as the representatives of what comes after *informale freddo* in the years 1963-1970. See Celant, *Book as Artwork 1960-1972*, 5.

¹⁵⁹ Beatrice von Bismarck, "Exhibitions, Agents, and Attention – In the Spaces of Ruscha's Books," in Dziewor, *Reading Ed Ruscha*, 67, 74.

relevance within the regime of advanced capitalism that began to be established after the economic boom of the 1950s). In this respect, it is revelatory that Ed Ruscha, as well as many other artists who after him produced books, were trained as commercial artists or had working experience as graphic designers.¹⁶⁰

From the 1960s onwards the book has been considered a key instrument of *artistic* visibility. In 1977 Lucy R. Lippard described it as “considered by many the easiest way out of the art world into a broader audience.”¹⁶¹ Indeed and in the opposite direction, it was a very effective instrument to enter the art world and gain visibility. Again, Ed Ruscha’s practice is a telling example in point. Already at the beginning of 1964, relying on some sort of progressivism, he published an advertisement on *Artforum* to publicize the fact that his book *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* was rejected on the 2nd of October 1963 by the U.S. Library of Congress, communicating the availability of copies for \$3 each, both in Los Angeles and in New York (figure 2.1).¹⁶² In publicizing this failure, he could present himself as an anti-systemic vanguard artist.

2.3 The Intellectual Frame of the *Artist’s Book*

¹⁶⁰ After being awarded the first prize in graphic design by the Oklahoma City Chamber of Commerce at the age of eighteen (1956), Ed Ruscha moved to Los Angeles to study fine art and graphic design at the Chouinard Art Institute (later California Institute of the Arts). During college he apprenticed for 6 months at Platin Press. Here he learned to handset type, developed and interest in book printing, as well as a sensibility for layout and the tactile qualities of paper. After graduation, while his pictorial language was already characterized by the combination of color and graphical elements, he worked full time as a layout artist at the Carson/Roberts Advertising Agency in Los Angeles. See Edward Ruscha, *Catalogue Raisonné of the Paintings, Volume One: 1958-1970*, ed., Pat Poncy, 5vols (New York/Göttingen: Gagosian Gallery/Steidl Verlag, 2003), 1, 341-343. As an example, one can mention, among others: Joseph Kosuth, who attended the Toledo Museum School of Design, Toledo, OH, from 1955 to 1962; Giulio Paolini, who graduated in 1959 at the Giambattista Bodoni State Industrial Technical School of Graphics in Turin, Italy; Sol LeWitt, who in his mid-twenties pursued his interest in design at *Seventeen* magazine before working as a graphic designer in the office of the architect I.M. Pei for one year in the mid-1950s.

¹⁶¹ Lucy R. Lippard, “The Artist’s Book Goes Public,” *Art in America* 65, no. 1 (January-February 1977): 41.

¹⁶² Edward Ruscha, “Rejected-Advertisement,” *Artforum* 2, no. 9 (March 1964): 55. The book had been reviewed by Philip Leider on *Artforum* the year before. Leider described it as “so curious and so doomed to oblivion that there is an obligation of sorts, to document its existence” and compared the feelings its reading elicited to the irritation and annoyance provoked by Duchamp’s urinal before it became a masterpiece. Philip Leider, “Books,” *Artforum* 2, no. 3 (September 1963): 57.

In the last decades a great amount of research has been devoted to what is by now called (or better so-called, as it will become clear in the following) artist's book. Together with other unconventional and new mediums, i.e. video and television, since the beginning of the 1970s, especially in Europe and in North America, this has been recognized, analysed, and established through a variety of means. These means, which could be also regarded as the interrelated factors that have led to the structuration of the *phenomenon* itself, include: dedicated exhibitions in institutional as well as *independent* spaces; the production of related literature and pertinent criticism (which began to increase considerably at the turn of the 1970s and the 1980s when specialized journals appeared followed by scholarly publications); the launch of "[publishing and] distribution agencies"¹⁶³ which helped to arouse the interest of private as well as institutional collectors and, in turn, that of the art market (but also vice-versa).¹⁶⁴ Furthermore, the creation of often artists-run, generally non-profit organizations and archives played a fundamental role in the preservation and valorization of artists' books and other artists' publications, sometimes becoming artistic endeavors as such.¹⁶⁵ The establishment of dedicated publishing houses, increasing considerably in the 1980s, also represents an important factor in this sense and could be related to the expansion of what Phillpot describes as "the double-edged phenomenon of public funding and subsidy in Europe and North America"¹⁶⁶.

¹⁶³ Clive Phillpot, "Twentysix Gasoline Stations that Shook the World: the Rise and Fall of Cheap Booklet as Art," in *Booktrek*, 159; first published in *Art Libraries Journal*, 18, no. 1 (1993): 4-13. Phillpot uses this expression to refer to profit and non-profit organizations such as Printed Matter (New York, since 1976), Art Metropole (Toronto, since 1974), Other Books & So (Amsterdam, 1975-1989). On Printed Matter and Art Metropole see Julie Ault, AA Bronson and Lucy R. Lippard, "Printed Matter, New York," in *Artist-Run Spaces: Nonprofit Collective Organizations in the 1960s and 1970s*, eds. Gabriele Detter and Maurizio Nannucci, 50-83 (Zürich and Dijon: JRP | Ringier and Les presses du réel, 2012); Peggy Gale and Fern Bayer, "Art Metropole, Toronto," in *Artist-Run Spaces*, 202-225. On Other Books & So., the multifaceted bookstore and later archive run by writer and artist Ulises Carrión, see Isabelle Schwarz, *Archive für Künstlerpublikationen der 1960er bis 1980er Jahre* (Köln: Salon Verlag, 2008), 221-250.

¹⁶⁴ Writer, art critic, activist and curator Lucy R. Lippard has reported that in the 1970s: "dealers used them [artists' books] as freebies—bait to throw in collectors to buy the big stuff." Julie Ault, AA Bronson, and Lucy R. Lippard, "Printed Matter, New York," 204.

¹⁶⁵ See Schwarz, *Archive für Künstlerpublikationen der 1960er bis 1980er Jahre*; Detter and Nannucci, *Artist-Run Spaces*.

¹⁶⁶ Clive Phillpot, "Twentysix Gasoline Stations that Shook the World: the Rise and Fall of Cheap Booklet as Art," in *Booktrek*, 160.

The specific case of the U.S. (in many ways similar to other European cases like the British or the French) could be a good example in shedding light on what Phillpot means when he refers to *public funding and subsidy* as a *double-edged phenomenon*. In the second half of the 1970s, funding and subsidy sustained the activities of non-profit organizations in the field,¹⁶⁷ single events such as exhibition projects on the subject,¹⁶⁸ or the building of institutional collections of artists' books,¹⁶⁹ thus indirectly helping to establish the field itself. When in 1981 the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) introduced "artists' books" as a funding category in its own right, grants started being awarded also for the production of books. The ontological vagueness of the artist's book as well as the fact that funds were allotted on a democratic basis, had at least a twofold consequence: on the one hand, more artists were enabled, if not given incentives, to produce work without counting on the eventual support of potential buyers or commercial galleries. On the other hand, their multifaceted productions contributed to exponentially and inexorably augment the vagueness and indeterminateness of the entire field. With greater means at their disposition, artists produced ever more multi-faceted and refined publications, which have been increasingly absorbed by the market depending on the fortune and the recognition of their authors, and soon legitimized within the *genre* they themselves legitimized.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁷ As it is the case of Martha Wilson's Franklin Furnace in New York. Founded in 1976 with the mission of exhibiting, cataloguing, preserving artists' books (which in Wilson's broad vision could be anything that an artist considered as such), Franklin Furnace received its first public founding by the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) and the National Endowment of the Arts (NEA) that same year. See Thomas Padon, "Interview with Martha Wilson," in Cornelia Lauf and Clive Phillpot, *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books*, 108-124 (New York: D.A.P. and The American Federation of Arts, 1998). See also Barbara Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 125. Note, that this publication corresponds to Bader's PhD dissertation in History of Art (2007) written under the guidance of Martin Kemp at the University of Oxford.

¹⁶⁸ As is the case, for example, of the exhibition *Bookworks* curated by Barbara London at The Museum of Modern Art, New York, March 17 - May 31, 1977. See "Bookworks," in *MoMA*, no. 2 (Spring, 1977): 6. See also, Barbara London, *Bookworks* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1977).

¹⁶⁹ As is the case of the Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago which in 1979 launched its artists' books collection thanks to a grant from the NEA and a gift from the Museum's Men's Council. Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 125.

¹⁷⁰ For a more detailed chronological discussion which encompasses, in the order, exhibition and catalogues, independent presses and alternative spaces, private collectors, institutional collectors, govern subsidies and the art market, see Barbara Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 103-131.

Within this framework, writers and professionals from different disciplines such as history of art, art criticism, philosophy, bibliographical studies, librarianship have attempted to differentiate and trace the ontological borders between the artist's book and the so-called "sub-genres of the book arts."¹⁷¹ As the numerous terms used to give name and circumscribe this phenomenon attest – artist's book, bookwork, artist's books, artists' books, artist books, artists books, represent just selection of the appellations and spellings one can find in the literature (note that in some cases they seem even ungrammatical to avoid the univocal sense of belonging implicated by the genitive) –, the debate around the definition of what should be called and considered an *artist's book* as the most widely used appellation reads, is far from a definitive systematic conclusion.¹⁷² Despite its ontological vagueness, this spectrum of the artistic production is already considered a "genre"¹⁷³ with its specialists, its collections, its dealers and fairs as well as its secondary and even tertiary (if not quaternary!) bibliography,¹⁷⁴ not to mention the archives, the databases and the online platforms.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷¹ Duncan Chappell, "Typologising the Artist's Book," *Art Libraries Journal* 28, no. 4 (April 2003): 12. See also, Artur Brall, *Künstlerbücher, Artists's Books, Books as Art: Ausstellungen, Dokumentationen, Kataloge, Kritiken. Eine Analyse* (Frankfurt am Main: Kretschmer und Grossmann, 1986); Stefan Klina, *Artist's Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature* (New York: Granary Books, 1998); Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*.

¹⁷² There is no agreement on the spelling of the term. The first time the term *artists books* emerged in an English speaking context, was on the occasion of the exhibition *Artists Books* at the Philadelphia Moore College of Art and at the University Art Museum Berkeley in 1973. See Diane Perry Vandelp, ed., *Artists Books* (Philadelphia, PA: More College of Art, 1973). The year before, art historian Renato Barilli and Daniela Palazzoli had used the term *libro d'artista* in *Il libro come luogo di ricerca*, the essay in which they presented the homonymous show they organized at the XXXVI Venice Biennial. See Daniela Palazzoli and Renato Barilli, "Il libro come luogo di ricerca," in *XXXVI Esposizione Biennale Internazionale d'Arte Venezia*, ed. Archivio Storico d'Arte Contemporanea, 21-29 (Venezia: Stamperia di Venezia 1972). Its plural *libri d'artista* appeared in the name of one of the sections of the international exhibition *Contemporanea* that took place in Rome during the winter of 1973-74. The section in point was entitled *Libri e dischi d'artista/Artist's books and records*. See Bruno Mantura, *Contemporanea* (Roma/Firenze: Incontri internazionali d'arte/Centro Di, 1973). This is not the place to engage in a theoretical reflection on the conceptual aspects implied by the different above-mentioned linguistic formulations. For the purposes of this study it is sufficient to bear in mind that *artist's book* will be used in the singular and *artists' books* in the plural.

¹⁷³ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, 399-401.

¹⁷⁴ See Arnaud Desjardin, *The book on books on artists books* (London: Everyday Press, 2013). This book is the second expanded edition of Desjardin's homonymous volume released in 2011 by the same publishing house. Considering the fact that it also encompasses books which aim to critically discuss the literature on the artists' books, such as, Brall, *Künstlerbücher, Artists'*

The need to define and typologize the realm of the artist's book often goes hand by hand with its historicizing and vice versa. The (hi)stories developed around it start from different chronological points and unfold slightly different perspectives, even though they all roughly share the same narrative. They all acknowledge the increasing heterogeneity of books produced by artists since the 1960s, the fact that this phenomenon continued to expand in the 1970s, parallel with the beginning of its institutional recognition, and that, in the 1980s, it *evolved* in a number of *uncontrollable* multifold directions. Whether the narratives are synchronically or diachronically developed, they stop at some point in the 1980s, when the realm of the artist's book seems to be so expanded, internationalized, and diversified that no more categorization applies.

Attempting to describe *the state of the art* at the beginning of the 1990s, Phillpot registered the multifold diversity that characterizes the field. With a hint of malice but also of bitter resignation (he would soon stop writing extensively on this theme and retire from his position at The MoMA), he depicts the situation as follows:

lurid and ostentatious unique and limited-edition hand-crafted books and fine press books [...] [which] in tandem with the rise of Reaganism and Thatcherism, and the interest in microwaved expressionism in painting [...] [had considerably] gained importance during the 1980s, coexist with] the long and honourable tradition in subversive publishing.¹⁷⁶

In this context very few books are “as cheap as a ticket to the movies, which is how Sol LeWitt characterized the cost of artists’ books in the 1970s.”¹⁷⁷ According to Phillpot, this is not only due to “a more accurate pricing of the

Books, Book as Art and *Klima, Artists’ Books*, one can get to affirm that the literature has gone beyond the tertiary level.

¹⁷⁵ If updated, (the last news go back to 2010) artists-pub.eu could be a good example of website in point. It is the first internet platform created to communicate and network the activities and events related to artists’ publications. It has been (or maybe it would be better to say it was) cooperatively built up by the Research Centre for Artists’ Publications, Weserburg Museum of Modern Art Bremen, the MGLC – International Centre of Graphic Arts, Ljubljana and CNEAI – Centre national de l’édition et de l’art imprimé, Chatou, in the framework of the European Commission founded project Living Memory – Artists’ Publication in Europe. artistsbooksonline.org is an online repository of artists’ books facsimiles as well as metadata and criticism related to the field of artists’ books. It was funded in 2004 under the direction of writer and visual theorist Johanna Drucker and hosted at the University of Virginia. Even if it was updated only until 2008, it provides still accessible and useful information.

¹⁷⁶ Phillpot, “Twenty-six Gasoline Stations that Shook the World,” 160-162.

¹⁷⁷ Phillpot, “Twenty-six Gasoline Stations that Shook the World,” 161.

costs of producing each book and to a much greater use of color printing with its inevitably higher costs," but also to the fact that artists pay much more attention to "the durability of their art in book form and [...] to such things such as paper quality and binding."¹⁷⁸

As Phillpot admits, starting from the 1980s "the dreams of many for accessible art were rudely shattered"; by then it was clear that "some ingredients of this dream had never been very realistic."¹⁷⁹ The problematic *ingredients* he mentions could be resumed as: the utopia that, as famously stated by art critic Kate Linker, the book could be an "alternative space" for art;¹⁸⁰ the related diffused myth that such books could be cheaply printed in potentially unlimited quantity in order to circumvent the reification logic of the art market;¹⁸¹ as well as their supposed democracy, by which they could, for example be found and bought cheaply in daily contexts such as that of an ordinary supermarket (as notably stated by Lucy R. Lippard).¹⁸²

Furthermore, a 2004 statement by Lippard, one of the founding members of Printed Matter (the seminal non-profit institution founded in 1976 in New York

¹⁷⁸ Phillpot, "Twentysix Gasoline Stations that Shook the World," 161.

¹⁷⁹ Phillpot, "Twentysix Gasoline Stations that Shook the World," 160. See also Germano Celant, ed., *The Small Utopia: Ars Multiplicata* (Milano: Fondazione Prada, 2012).

¹⁸⁰ Kate Linker, "The Artists' Book as an Alternative Space," *Studio International*, 195 no. 990 (1980): 75-79. As Dieter Schwarz has reasonably stressed, "the concept of an alternative space is [...] problematic because it postulates an autonomy that is not even available to marginal activities. Marginality and the autonomy attendant upon it are defined in relation to currently prevailing positions and participate in them; [...] It is therefore erroneous to insist on the fiction of an alternative space since it does not do justice to the demand for a radically reorganized production and distribution of art objects." Schwarz, "Learn to Read Art," 120-121. Note, that already in the mid-1970s, philosopher Cornelius Castoradis pointed out that the critique of social institution itself had always had the effect of creating other institutions. See Cornelius Castoradis, *L'Institution imaginaire de la société* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1975).

¹⁸¹ Given the fact that the most visible artists' books had been published by dealers and art magazines, it seems ridiculous to claim that they would circumvent the gallery system and the market. To print a relatively simple and 'cheap-looking' artist's book, artists often necessitated a relatively important budget. The most controversial example in this regard would be the well-known and so-called *Xerox Book*. The book is constituted of works by Andre, Barry, Huebler, Kosuth, LeWitt, Morris, and Weiner. They span onto 25 pages each (standard U.S. letter size paper) and were especially conceived for the occasion to be multiplied through photocopy. The *Xerox Book* was published in 1000 copies by dealers Seth Siegelau and John Wendler in 1968. However, given the high cost of Xerox reproduction and despite the name with which it went down in history, it was printed offset. See Seth Siegelau, ed., *Carl Andre, Robert Barry, Douglas Huebler, Joseph Kosuth, Sol LeWitt, Robert Morris, Lawrence Weiner [Xerox Book]* (New York: Seth Siegelau and Jack Wendler, 1968), offset, gluebond, 21,3 x 28,8 cm, 307 pp. (n.p.), print run: 1000.

¹⁸² See Lippard, "The Artist's Book Goes Public," 48.

City to support, distribute, and promote artists' publications)¹⁸³ stresses a related but very rarely addressed fundamental issue, that is the phantom of accessibility:

browsing recently at Printed Matter [...], I realized how the definition of an artist's book has morphed. Now on sale are catalogues, books about artists, fiction and poetry by related art folks. [...] Once the artist's book was conceived, [it] immediately began to grow branches, to influence other genres. [...] In the 60s and 70s, however, we had a pretty strict definition of [...] artist's book: it should include no texts not written by the artist(s); it should be a unique artwork by the artist, not collected reproduction of other artworks; it should be mass-produced and accessible. Yet even then, I think we knew that accessibility was a pie in the sky. Very little contemporary art is truly accessible, though much of it is attractive enough to appeal to a non art-audience.¹⁸⁴

Already in 1977 Lippard had acknowledged a key aspect of the realm of artists' books, that is the mix-up of the characteristic of the medium (cheap, portable, apparently accessible) with those of the actual contents, which Phillpot would describe as "arcane" or "all too often wildly self-indulgent or so highly specialized that they appeal only to an elite audience."¹⁸⁵

2.3.1 Aesthetic and Information Modes

In *Modernism and the Order of Things, A Museography of Books by Artists* (2010), Barbara Bader studied Modernist epistemologies, focusing on books produced by artists in the 1960s and 1970s and on their reception by museums and libraries in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁸⁶ Analysing and questioning the logic of the collection policies as well as of the archival systems of three major and pioneering institutions in the field, namely The Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Tate in London, and the Départements des Estampes et de la Photographie at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France in Paris, she examines the origins and implementation of the concept of the artist's book, arguing that "the

¹⁸³ See Ault, Bronson, Ault, and Lippard, "Printed Matter, New York".

¹⁸⁴ Lucy R. Lippard, "Double Spread," in *Put About: A Critical Anthology on Independent Publishing*, ed. Maria Fusco with Ian Hunt, 83-88 (London: Book Works, 2004), 83-84, 86.

¹⁸⁵ See Lippard, "The Artist's Book Goes Public." Clive Phillpot, "Books by Artists and Books as Art," in *Booktrek*, 193; first published in *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books*, eds. Clive Phillpot and Cornelia Lauf, 30-55 (New York: D.A.P. and The American Federation of Arts, 1998).

¹⁸⁶ See Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*.

homogenous category called 'artist's book' is a Modernist error," based on "the tacit understanding that they belong together by virtue of their shared medium."¹⁸⁷ According to Bader, it was libraries and museums which importantly contributed to "the establishment of books by artists as a distinct category. Libraries did so first and foremost by way of adjusting their bibliographic tools in order to be able to embrace and deal with this new type of publication. [...] Museums, on the other hand, accelerated and reinforced the institutionalization process simply by way of collecting books by artists. [...] Museums made books by artists recognizable as Art."¹⁸⁸

Instead of a misleading medium-based categorization, she proposes differentiating between two antithetical operative modes leading to the production of books by artists in the 1960s and 1970s, which she terms "aesthetic mode" and "information mode."¹⁸⁹ Accordingly, the artists operating in the "aesthetic mode" privileged "the *a priori* condition of the medium of the book,"¹⁹⁰ thus transferring the strive for purification from the mediums of painting and sculpture to that of the book. Bader refers to the works produced in this mode as "*bookworks*."¹⁹¹ George Brecht's *Book* (1964)¹⁹² is mentioned

¹⁸⁷ Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 13, 193.

¹⁸⁸ Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 123-124.

¹⁸⁹ Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 13.

¹⁹⁰ Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 17.

¹⁹¹ Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 14. The term *bookwork*, apparently a conflation of Celant's *Book as Artwork*, was introduced by Martin Attwood in 1975 in the framework of the touring exhibition *Artists' Bookworks: A British Council Exhibition*; see Attwood, ed., *Artists' Bookworks: A British Council Exhibition* (London: British Council, 1975). According to Attwood, *bookworks* are mechanically produced/reproduced books in "the largest possible printing for the least possible expense" which "contains entirely original art works that materially exist nowhere else but in the[ir] pages". Attwood, *Artists' Bookworks*, 60, 62. Since 1975 the term has been implemented various times, to indicate (slightly) different things. Without going into historical and etymological research, it is sufficient to provide here some representative examples of the freedom with which it has been implemented. In 1977 Barbara London, at the time curator in the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books of The Museum of Modern Art, New York, used it to entitle the homonymous show of "mass-produced, under-\$25 books conceived and designed entirely by artists in the last fifteen years" which she organized that same year at the Museum. "Artists' 'Bookworks' to be shown in Museum Exhibition," The Museum of Modern Art, press release, March 17, 1977, https://www.moma.org/momaorg/shared/pdfs/docs/press_archives/5485/releases/MOMA_1_977_0024_23.pdf?2010, last access August 11, 2015; see also Barbara London, "Bookworks." MoMA, no. 2 (Spring 1977): 6. In 1980 Ulises Carrión used the term to refer to "books in which the book form, a coherent sequence of pages, determines the conditions of reading that are intrinsic to the work." Carrión, "Bookworks Revisited," *The Print Collector's Newsletter* 11, no. 1 (March-April 1980), 8. Clive Phillpot similarly did so at different stages of his career to describe "a work of art in book form." Phillpot, "Books: Clive Phillpot on *Real Lush*," *Artforum* 20, no. 9 (May 1982): 77-79, 77; Phillpot, "Twentysix Gasoline Stations that Shook the World: the rise

among more recent specimens as a quintessential example of this mode, to which the books by Edward Ruscha and Dieter Roth also belong, even if with a less connoted status, given the social and political issues they raised.¹⁹³

On the contrary, the artists working in the “information mode” operated beyond the ontological nature of the book as a medium in itself, as “a cohesive thing.”¹⁹⁴ In line with the linguistic turn of the moment, they focused on the performative features of the book as an instrument: “the question is no longer morphological, hence what a particular matter ‘*should be*’ to quote Georges Bataille, but what it *can do* for the artist.”¹⁹⁵ In Bader’s view, the “information mode” reflects the fact that different forms of signifiers can potentially convey the same signified, that is, as posed by art historian Liz Kotz, that “a ‘general’ template or idea generates multiple ‘specific’ realizations, which can take the form of performed acts, sculptural objects, photographic documents, or linguistic statements.”¹⁹⁶

and fall of cheap booklet as art,” 147. The term has been recently reintroduced, but in a completely different understanding, by Garrett Stewart to indicate artworks in which the book is implemented “as ‘study’ rather than as functional object: the book as approximation, heuristic double, or [...] piled with (and shut tight by) so many others like that there’s no way in. Appropriated but dysfunctional, the used book appears in this case under condition of disuse. Either way, reclaimed or fabricated, the demediated book-work [...] is a conceptual object: not for normal reading, but for thinking about.” Stewart, *Bookwork: Medium to Object to Concept to Art* (Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2011), XIV.

¹⁹² George Brecht, *Book* (1964) (Köln: Michael Werner, 1972), offset, hardbound, 30,5 x 21,6 cm, 28 pp. (n.p.). Starting from the cover, on which one can read “This is the cover of the book,” every page of *Book* presents *nothing* but words related to the function of the specific page within the instrument of the book as a whole, i.e. “This is the title page of the book,” “This could be about the middle page of the book,” etc. Note, that while the cover of *Book* is laid out horizontally (and one flips its pages accordingly), its *content* is printed vertically.

¹⁹³ Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 18-21. On Ruscha’s and Roth’s books see respectively: Phillpot, “Ed Ruscha: Sixteen Books and Then Some;” Sarah Suzuki, ed., *Wait, later this will be nothing: editions by Dieter Roth* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2013). According to Bader, in contrast to Brecht’s *Book*, Ruscha’s and Roth’s *bookworks*, played an active role in the artistic and extra-artistic debate of the 1960s and 1970s because they do not lack “the kind of criticality which goes beyond self-criticality.” Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 21.

¹⁹⁴ John Coplans, “Concerning ‘Various Small Fires’ – Ed Ruscha Discusses His Perplexing Publications,” in *Artforum* 3, no. 5 (1965): 24. Explaining his artistic aim to Coplans, Ruscha affirms: “not that I had an important message about photographs, or gasoline, or anything like that – I merely wanted a cohesive thing.” Coplans, “Concerning ‘Various Small Fires,’” 24; reprinted in Ruscha, *Leave Any Information at the Signal*, 23-27.

¹⁹⁵ Barbara Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 24. For the reference to Bataille, see Georges Bataille, “Materialism,” in *Documents no. 3* (1929), 170; reprinted in *Oeuvres complètes*, ed. Denis Holler et al., 12 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 1970-1988), 1, 180.

¹⁹⁶ Liz Kotz, “Language Between Performance and Photography,” *October* no. 111 (Winter 2005): 3.

The substantial difference between books produced in the *aesthetic mode* and the ones produced in the *information mode*, is that the former are works of art that correspond to the very pillar of modernism, that is medium-specificity, depending on and redefining the medium of the book within its specific qualities, while, in the latter case, books, embodying information, that is concepts and ideas, are just one of the possible equivalent mediums for communicating the work.¹⁹⁷ Bader refers to the books produced in the *information mode* as “*conceptual artist’s books*,”¹⁹⁸ among which *Statements* (1968) by Lawrence Weiner is listed as a paradigmatic example.¹⁹⁹

Discussing the ontological status of books by artists in the extensive essay that accompanies the catalogue raisonné of Lawrence Weiner’s books, Dieter Schwarz states that certain books, such as the ones produced by Weiner, do not embody artworks but offer possible contexts through which art can be

¹⁹⁷ Thus reflecting what art historian Rosalind Krauss refers to as “post-medium condition.” Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea: Art in the Age of Post-Medium Condition* (London/New York: Thames&Hudson, 1999).

¹⁹⁸ Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 14. Implementing the term *artist’s book* she is borrowing the wording used by Clive Phillpot to define “a book of which an artist is the author” Phillpot, “An ABC of Artists’ Books Collection,” *Art Documentation* 1, no. 6 (December 1982): 169. However, preceding it with the adjective *conceptual* she wants to designate a different meaning.

¹⁹⁹ Lawrence Weiner, *Statements*, ed. Seth Siegelaub (New York: The Louise Kellner Foundation/Seth Siegelaub, 1968), offset, softbound (adhesive binding), 17,8 x 10,1 cm, 64 pp. (n.p.), print run: 1.025 (price: \$1.95). It presents 24 linguistic statements typeset in small lower-case letter in Royal Type-writer face, printed on odd pages and paginated in order to occupy a small rectangular portion of the lower half of the page, often breaking words arbitrarily. The enunciations, all in past participles, are divided in *General Statements*, e.g.:

a rectangular canvas and stretcher
support with a rectangular removal f
rom one of the four corners sprayed
with paint for a time elapsure

and *Specific Statements*, e.g.:

one hole in the ground approximately
one foot by one foot by one foot
one gallon water base white paint po
ured into this hole

All the statements are all characterized by a degree of indeterminacy that does not permit the readers to understand if they articulate possible actions, score multipliable actions or describe something that took place in the past. According to the Weiner’s statement of intent (1. The artist may construct the piece; 2. The piece may be fabricated 3. The piece need not to be built; Each being equal and consistent with the intent of the artist the decision as condition rests with the receiver upon the occasion of receivership). Each linguistic statement per se as well as the book that transmits them, are just subsidiary to the work of art which depends completely on “the receiver upon the occasion of receivership,” that is to the readers faculty to read the statement and build the work through their understanding of the statement itself. Lawrence Weiner, “Statement of intent,” in *January 5-31, 1969*, ed. Seth Siegelaub, n.p. (New York: Seth Siegelaub, 1969).

transmitted as well as experienced. Taking inspiration from one of Weiner's works, namely *Note on a Table* (1988),²⁰⁰ he argues that the book should be considered as the support of the work: "the book is not the work [...]; it is its plinth."²⁰¹ Through his artistic endeavors, Weiner declares irrelevant the modernist discussions around the issue of the plinth; if one eliminates the plinth "the function of supporting the work is assumed by the space of presentation [...]. Therefore, a plinth, a support has to be found to present the work without establishing a binding relationship with it. The relationship between work and supports is neither formal nor moral; it is a matter of specific use."²⁰²

Bader finds the interpretation of the book as the *plinth* of a work the perfect theoretical frame in which to situate and give an account of the relevance of the "faux- or make-shift category"²⁰³ of *conceptual artist's books*.

It seems, nonetheless, that the *plinth theory* and Bader's category (as well as conceptual art and its definition of "art as idea as idea"²⁰⁴) underestimate the aesthetic and the stylistic problems concerned with presentation. Ideas cannot be experienced without the means of their transmission, or as artist Robert Smithson has posed: "There is no escape from matter. There is no escape from the physical nor is there any from mind. The two are in constant collision course."²⁰⁵

²⁰⁰ Lawrence Weiner, "Note on a table, 1988" in *Lawrence Weiner: Works from the Beginning of the Sixties towards the End of the Eighties*, ed. Wim Breen (Amsterdam: Stedelijk Museum, 1988), 7.

²⁰¹ Schwarz, "Learn to read art," 143.

²⁰² Schwarz, "Learn to read art," 143.

²⁰³ Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 32. Bader underlines that the category of conceptual artists' books serves only the scope of sustaining her argument, namely that there are "books by artists to which the book form is essential and those to which it is non-essential." Ibid.

²⁰⁴ See Joseph Kosuth, *Titled (Art as Idea as Idea)* [water], 1966. Photostat on board. The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York. See also Joseph Kosuth, "Art after Philosophy (1969)," in Kosuth, *Art After Philosophy and After: Collected Writings, 1966-1990*, ed. Gabriele Guercio, Writing Art 1 (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), 13-32, 30.

²⁰⁵ Robert Smithson, "Fragments of an Interview with P.A. [Patsy] Norvell 1969," 194. On the promises of so-called 'dematerialized' art, see Michel Gauthier, *Les Promesses Du Zéro* (Genève: Les Presses du réel, 2009) and Francesca Valentini, "Tino Sehgal's «constructed situations»: The Tension of Immaterial Production," in *You Were Not Expected to Do This: On the Dynamics of Production*, eds. Daniel Blanga-Gubbay and Elisabeth Ruchaud, 256-267 (Dusseldorf: Dusseldorf University Press, forthcoming).

2.3.2 Informed Formed Form

Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, who since the 1980s has tirelessly explored the field of artists' books to recognize and valorize their constitutive characteristics, but overall to circumscribe their domain, does not believe in a non-binding relationship between context and content. Professor emeritus of the philosophy of the art at the Sorbonne and responsible for the collection of artists' books at the Bibliothèque nationale de France (Département des Estampes et de la Photographie) from 1979 to 1994, she is considered the maximum expert in this field in the French-speaking world.

In the pages of her *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste 1960-1980* (1997)²⁰⁶ she has drawn a theoretical frame which allows for a unitary, even if multifaceted, category called the artist's book (in French, *livre d'artiste*). In her view, the books produced by Dieter Roth from the mid of the 1950s and by Ed Ruscha from the beginning of the 1960s set the paradigm of the artist's book. Accordingly, artists' books should share a fivefold lowest common denominator which implies:

²⁰⁶ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste 1960-1980*. Here Mœglin-Delcroix develops some of the arguments she had already sketched in *Livres d'artistes* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou/Édition Herscher, 1985) but with an important difference. In the book published on the occasion of the homonymous exhibition at the Centre George Pompidou, Paris, June 12 - October 7, 1985) the scholar had presented artists' books as a twofold domain. She had in fact differentiated between artists' books which implement the book as a support (presented in the first and wider section *Le Livre comme support* which gather together multiple artworks, generally industrially printed in numerous copies, not signed or numbered), from those which reflect the object-qualities of the book (essentially unique works of art in form of a book or interventions on the book format, presented in the second section *Le Livre comme objet*). By 1997 she definitively abandons what she had in 1985 defined and accepted as "une acception élargie de cette dénomination" of artists' books: the *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste 1960-1980* in fact encompasses only books that could fit in the first section of the 1985 publication (and exhibition). Mœglin-Delcroix, *Livres d'Artistes*, 11. Note, that this twofold *broad interpretation* was the one that was pushed forward in a dedicated section entitled *Metamorphose des Buches* at documenta 6 in 1977. See Rolf Dittmar (and Peter Frank), "1. Metamorphose des Buches, 2. Konzept-Bücher" in *documenta 6*, ed. Joachim Diederichs, 3 vols (Kassel: Paul Dierichs KG & Co., 1977), 3, 295-366. More research needs to be done on this section of the 6th edition of the international kermesse. Apparently, more that a profound curatorial challenge on its theme, the exhibition was a compromise between two curators (actually a lawyer, collector and gallerist based in Wiesbaden, Rolf Dittmar and an art historian, critic and curator based in New York, Peter Frank) with very different agendas and opinions on the subject (this might be the reason why Dittmar appears as the only author of the essay in the catalogue). See Peter Frank, "Confessions of a Professional Bookie," *Art-Rite* 14 (Winter 1976/77): 51.

[1] le rôle prédominant [...] de la reproduction photographique, en offset, sur un papier commun [...] [2] l'emprunt de la forme du livre ordinaire, [...] [pour] [3] passer par les circuits habituels de commercialisation des livres et par là d'atteindre un public étranger aux galeries d'art [...] [4] le rôle prépondérant, voire exclusif, de l'artiste à toutes les étapes de la réalisation du livre. L'artiste assume totalement la conception du livre dont il ne partage pas la responsabilité intellectuelle avec un écrivain.²⁰⁷

Furthermore, there is a fifth condition that is particularly dear to Mœglin-Delcroix: the book must be “une création,” or in other words, it should not be “le moyen de reproduction d’une œuvre pré-existante”²⁰⁸ but a totally new work.

Lingering on the reflections that Foucault articulates in his *L’Archeologie du savoir* (1969), namely on the fact that every book has a double unity, a “unité matérielle” and a “unité discursive à laquelle il donne support”²⁰⁹, she introduces a third unity, namely a “unité formelle”.²¹⁰ This *unité formelle* has nothing to do with “la «forme (du) livre», forme qui l’autonomise comme objet, mais qui n’est jamais que l’ensemble des caractéristiques universelles du livre comme unité physique.”²¹¹ On the contrary, Mœglin-Delcroix’s *formal unity* finds its meaning in the “correlation *singulière* établie entre les deux premières pseudo-unités, matérielle et discursive.”²¹² It is the singular correlation that characterizes their reciprocity which confers on them the effective unity that they do not have in themselves.²¹³ Thanks to the theoretical device of the *formal unity*, the French scholar states “l’importance discriminante reconnue à la forme et le refus du formalisme”²¹⁴ thus claiming that a form which is totally independent from what it informs does not exist. In her view, aesthetically speaking, the artist’s book is a formed form, a medium which ontological meaning should be understood in the frame of a conflation of Wittgenstein’s and McLuhan’s thought: “The medium is the use.”²¹⁵ Therefore, for the artists

²⁰⁷ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste 1960-1980*, 26-28 (23-26). The reference in brackets refers to the second revised and augmented edition of the book. See Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste: Une Introduction à l’art contemporain*.

²⁰⁸ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste 1960-1980*, 51 (52).

²⁰⁹ Michel Foucault, *L’Archeologie du savoir* (Paris: Gallimard, 1969), 34.

²¹⁰ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste 1960-1980*, 347 (401).

²¹¹ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste 1960-1980*, 347 (401).

²¹² Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste 1960-1980*, 347 (401).

²¹³ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste 1960-1980*, 347 (401).

²¹⁴ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste 1960-1980*, 347-348 (401).

²¹⁵ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d’Artiste 1960-1980*, 120 (129). Mœglin-Delcroix borrows the expression from the title of the homonymous article by Jan Groover on the ontology

working in the *information mode*, among whom Weiner is a paradigmatic example, the book is not considered the artwork, but for its readers, that is for its users, the book is not just a support, but what permits the artwork to be perceived, that is to exist “socialement, intellectuellement, objectivement, et comme dans nul autre «contexte», visuellement.”²¹⁶

Fiercely reviewing the book published in the framework of the travelling exhibition *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artist's Books* (1998),²¹⁷ a show and a publication project on which it will be necessary to come back in the following, Mœglin-Delcroix has implicitly stressed her theory of the artist's book as a formed form affirming that

on ne peut [...] juger ces livres de l'extérieur, selon le genre éditorial dont ils semblent révéler, mais dont souvent ils jouent et sous lequel ils se masquent, ou dont ils se servent. Il faut plutôt les examiner en remontant à l'intention artistique qui leur donne véritablement sens et permet seule de les analyser comme les évaluer. C'est en effet la prise en considération du projet artistique qui fait reconnaître une oeuvre dans ce qui, par exemple [...], publié à l'occasion d'une exposition, n'est pas pour autant un catalogue [...] ou dans ce qui, se présentant comme un recueil de documents, n'est pas pour autant un livre documentaire. Or, l'intention artistique n'est compréhensible qu'à la condition de réinscrire les livres dans l'ensemble du travail des artistes.²¹⁸

Mœglin-Delcroix's normative approach seems to offer a broader frame through which one can analyse and do justice to the multifold domain of the artist's book by taking into account the singular or collective artistic intentions behind the formation of their forms. However, her paradigm seems not only to be strongly linked to the precise historical context of what she refers as the first generation of the artist's book, that is the one of the “pionniers”²¹⁹ of the 1960s and 1970s

of photography. See Groover, “The Medium Is the Use,” *Arforum* 12, no. 3 (November 1973): 79–80.

²¹⁶ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, 200. One has to note that for Mœglin-Delcroix Weiner is the conceptual artist par excellence, the one who “nous apprend que l'art conceptuel peut être aussi un art offert aux sens, c'est-à-dire un art.” Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, 200.

²¹⁷ See Lauf and Phillpot, eds., *Artist/Author* and § 2.3.3.

²¹⁸ Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, “Une exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme,” in Mœglin-Delcroix, *Sur le livre d'artiste. Article et écrits de circonstance (1981-2005)* (Marseille: Le mot et le reste, 2006), 561; first published in *Nouvelle de l'estampe*, no. 164 (May-June 1999): 72-75.

²¹⁹ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Une exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme,” 558.

but more importantly, ideologically calibrated to the modes of production, distribution, and fruition of that period.

In 2012 a revised and augmented edition of her *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste* was released. This time, the title is deprived of its time stamp but complemented by the subtitle *Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*.²²⁰ Given that almost all the artists that have contributed to shaping the identity of contemporary art have experimented with the book during the course of their careers and that since the 1960s this *genre* has played an increasing relevance in the field, the new subheading makes clear to the readers that the book should not only be read as a specialized study on the aesthetic of the artist's book, but also as a general introduction to contemporary art.²²¹

If the first edition (published in 1997, but mainly written between 1992 and 1994) was accomplished to recognize, define and valorize the hitherto apparently neglected artist's book, instituting it as a well-rounded artistic genre,²²² the second one (published in 2012, but slightly revised and augmented during 2010-2011) has been prepared with a much more ambitious scope in mind: to defend contemporary art from "le zèle de ses adeptes."²²³

With the wording *its adepts* Mœglin-Delcroix refers to the art critics, the art historians, and the philosophers who, from the beginning of the 1990s, contributed to the mediatization of art.²²⁴ According to her, in fact,

en [...] intégrant [l'art] au monde du divertissement, et de la consommation, de la publicité et de la spéculation financière, en faisant du marché la principale instance du jugement des œuvres [...], ils ont tragiquement détourné ses deux aspirations véritablement fondatrices [...]: d'une part, ils ont réalisé la disparition de l'art dans la vie rêvée par Fluxus, mais dans sa version mercantile et consumeriste ; d'autre part, ils ont réussi la dématérialisation de l'art prôné par les conceptuels, mais sous sa forme monétaire et spéculative.²²⁵

²²⁰ See Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*.

²²¹ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, X.

²²² A selection of the materials discussed in the 1997 publication was presented in the exhibition *Livres d'artistes. L'invention d'un genre 1960-1980*, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, May 29 - October 12, 1997.

²²³ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XI.

²²⁴ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, X.

²²⁵ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XI.

All of this, which has had an important impact also on the domain of artists' books, has happened with the connivance of the museums, ever more concerned with their economical survival rather than with their constitutive tasks and missions, and has been given incentive by the work of superficial and self-serving specialized and non-specialized journalists.²²⁶

Since the 1990s, says Mœglin-Delcroix, artists' books have suffered what she describes as "une bibliophilisation venue de l'extérieur" and "une bibliophilisation venue de l'intérieur".²²⁷ The former reflects the fact that they have been increasingly exhibited or presented along with other books of bibliophiles and thus assimilated to these precious publications,²²⁸ while the latter registers a change at the level of production, that is the increment of books published in artificially limited editions, often numbered and signed, as well as characterized by elaborated design, sophisticated packaging, fine paper, as well as increasingly impressive and extravagant formats.²²⁹ Echoing Greenberg's 1939 well-known essay *Avant-garde and Kitsch* she updates his thesis, stating that "le kitsch n'est plus le privilege du *low art* recyclant à ses propres fins les acquis de l'avant-garde, mais est une tentation de l'art cultivé."²³⁰

The French scholar is convinced that the artist's book is historically opposed to the bibliophilic tradition. Its pioneers implemented the book for its being an ordinary and unassuming instrument through which to exercise their artistic autonomy while the great majority of the contemporary artists tend to delegate it, not only to their team of assistants, but also to the figure of the editor who performs a role which is comparable to that of the curator of an exhibition. Furthermore, most of the artists coming after the pioneers have renounced themselves to the critical and utopic potential of art to create easily

²²⁶ See Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XI.

²²⁷ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XIII-XVI.

²²⁸ A paradigmatic example of this practice would be Riva Castelman's exhibition *A Century of Artists Books*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, October 23, 1994 - January 24, 1995. This was Castelman's last exhibition before she retired from the position of Director of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, a position she held from 1976 to 1995. See Riva Castelman, ed., *A Century of Artists Books* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1994).

²²⁹ Elena Foster and Rowan Watson's *Blood on Paper* (London: Ivory Press/V&A Publishing, 2008) reflects this trend in both its content and form.

²³⁰ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XI. See also Clement Greenberg, "Avant-garde and Kitsch," *Partisan Review* 6, no. 5 (Fall 1939): 34-49.

reifiable products able to (economically) satisfy not only themselves but also their publisher/s and buyer/s.²³¹ Mœglin-Delcroix affirms that the younger generations of artists tend to implement the book because they are fascinated by its status of a cultural object as well as by the “aura artistique” of the first artists’ books, rather than by “les possibilités du livre en tant que médium”.²³²

It is undeniable that the books of the pioneers have been captivating a lot of contemporary artists.²³³ However, as outlined in § 1.3 and at the beginning of this chapter, one has yet to acknowledge the fact that also and especially the pioneers were strongly fascinated by the book as a cultural object. It therefore seems necessary to relativize the constitutive role of what Mœglin-Delcroix refers to as the possibilities of the book as a medium, that is “diffusion, circulation, accessibilité, polyvalence des contenus”.²³⁴

Commercial strategies such as the artificially limited edition prevent the generous diffusion and circulation of a book, but also the opposite happens. Paradigmatic examples in point are the first books by Ed Ruscha. Unpretentious in format and materials, relatively cheap, printed in large quantities and in some cases reprinted more than one time, they are now a rarity: due to their obsolete

²³¹ See Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XIV-XV.

²³² Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XVIII.

²³³ The books by Ed Ruscha are a paradigmatic example in point. See Jeff Brouws, *Various Small Books, Referencing Various Small Books by Ed Ruscha* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2013). Mœglin-Delcroix, who had conducted an initial investigation about the fascination exerted by Ruscha’s books on younger artists in the framework of the exhibition *Guardare, raccontare, pensare, conservare: quattro percorsi del libro d'artista dagli anni '60 ad oggi* (Casa del Mantegna, Mantova, September 7 - November 28, 2004), recently returned to this topic. In her talk *(D')après Ruscha: sur l'équivoque postérité des livres d'artiste d'Edward Ruscha*, delivered on March 12, 2015 at the international symposium *Ed Ruscha: History* (Centre Pompidou, Paris and Centre de Création Contemporaine Olivier Debré, Tours; March 11-13, 2015), she remarked on the subject, pivoting around Brouws’ above-mentioned publication. Despite Ruscha’s books almost immediately becoming the subject of attention, reinterpretation, and appropriation by other artists (see, for example, Bruce Nauman, *Burning Small Fires*, 1968 which somehow pirates Ed Ruscha’s *Various Small Fires and Milk*, 1964), this phenomenon started to be noticeable at the beginning of the 2000s (note that in 2004 the dedicated section of the Mantua’s exhibition counted only 7 examples in this direction) while it took a real surge in the second half of the 2000s. Mœglin-Delcroix sees this trend as negative because she thinks that most of the books produced in this vein fetishistically parasite Ruscha’s books rather than provide an original reinterpretation. However, she also stresses that the standardization of the genre of the artist’s book has a numbing effect and does not leave enough free space for a practice that could be truly revolutionary, as it was at the dawn of the *genre*.

²³⁴ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XVIII.

appearance and content, many of the specimens have often simply been thrown away.²³⁵

It is not clear what Møglin-Delcroix intends when she accuses the majority of contemporary artists of not commending to the *polyvalence of the contents* potentially offered by the book. Probably, this has to do with her conviction that to be an artwork which *informs* the form of the book, the *œuvre d'art* must also be *informed* by the book, not only as a form but also as a medium. The work of art should gain some kind of aesthetic advantage from the fact of being a book and not something else.²³⁶

As of the last of the possibilities offered by the book as a medium, that is accessibility, Møglin-Delcroix seems to undervalue a very important fact. As already stressed before through the words of Phillipot and Lippard, the claimed accessibility of artists' books is a boogeyman. Most of contemporary art is not easily and immediately accessible. It is not sufficient to rely onto the versatility of the book as an instrument to ensure it a viral influence and the effective spread of its most critical and perhaps utopian values.

Quoting artist Ugo Rondinone (b. 1964), who has defined himself and his peers as a generation of artists operating under the profound influence of the pioneers of the 1960s, Møglin-Delcroix stresses the necessity of a wider historical distance and perspective in order to be able to distinguish among the artists who "restent le prisonniers (parfois avec talent) d'une tradition récemment établie et ceux qui l'assimilent pour la poursuivre à leur manière et en faire quelque chose de vivant."²³⁷ However, the too little historical distance that she mentions seems to be just a pretext. The scholar is not slow to claim the necessity of another study to closely examine the changes in the artistic and ideological context and produce analyses as precise as the ones conducted in her book for the first two decades.²³⁸

²³⁵ Barbara London in conversation with the author, New York City, October 16, 2012.

²³⁶ Møglin-Delcroix seems here to embrace a formalist conception of the artist's book although it must be stressed that she emphasizes with particular attention the biunivocal relationship between form and content and their equal responsibility in the face of aesthetic judgment.

²³⁷ Møglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XXI.

²³⁸ See Møglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XXI.

As Phillpot and Lippard already did by the mid-1990s, when, together with other authors who had written on the subject they recognized the inherent difficulties of intellectually framing the increasingly multifaceted phenomenon of the artist's book, Mœglin-Delcroix recognizes the complexity of this task, which she declares enhanced by their extremely international proliferation in the last few decades. Given the lack of clearly distinguishable artistic movements, groupings or trends, she stresses the necessity of establishing specific criteria to "ne pas céder à la pensée paresseuse de l'éclectisme à la mode, lequel, sous prétexte que l'art est actuellement hybride, incertain, éclaté prône *a priori* l'équivalence de tout, renonce à juger la réalité par l'idée et fait le lit de tous les opportunismes."²³⁹

Yet, she does not proceed in this direction.²⁴⁰ On the contrary, she addresses the great majority of the contemporary creations as "une caricature néo-libérale, singulièrement accommodante, de la subversion des hiérarchies chère aux années soixante", laconically stating that "en dehors de contingences particulières à ce temps, il est de toute façon impossible que le livre d'artiste, une fois entré dans les usages, garde intacte sa position initiale de franc-tireur

²³⁹ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XXI.

²⁴⁰ Someone might argue that she attempted to do that in the international exhibition *Guardare, raccontare, pensare, conservare* which she curated together with Turin based gallerist Liliana Dematteis and bookdealer Giorgio Maffei, as well as with art historian and librarian Annalisa Rimmaudo in Mantua in 2004 (see footnote 230). However, as the trilingual catalogue of the ambitious exhibition testifies, under the pretext of the inherent difficulty of writing the history of the artist's book after the 1980s, the curators limited themselves to "stress connections between generations" and organized the over 400 objects on show in four sections: guardare (looking), raccontare (telling), pensare (thinking), and conservare (translated as collecting). These sections stand for the "functions of the book [that] have been remarkably constant since the origins of the artist's book, whatever the uniqueness of the artistic projects and despite the changing historical context [...] and artistic context [...] that separate the generations of the pioneers of the 60s and the 70s from that of their followers." Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, "1962 and After Another Idea About Art," in *Guardare, raccontare, pensare conservare*, 39. Despite the wide and ambitious scope of the exhibition and the eminent international group of people who assisted the four curators in the selection of the books on show, one noted a consistent quantitative disproportion between the artworks produced in the 1960s and 1970s and the ones created from 1981 to the present (2004). The latter represent about the 45% of the books fully listed in the exhibition catalogue. A list of 22 books which were apparently part of the show "to be consulted freely" and are not illustrated in the related publication is to be found at the end of the catalogue. Mœglin-Delcroix, De Matteis, Maffei, and Rimmaudo, *Guardare, raccontare, pensare conservare*, 318. These titles, all published after 1980, bring the above-mentioned percentage to around the 48%.

de l'art, l'intégrité de sa distance critique, et bien sûr son statut de nouveau medium."²⁴¹

Mœglin-Delcroix's normative approach gives priority to the artistic project as well as the artistic intention which lies behind their *formed forms*. Nonetheless, she seems not to want to consider the possibility of accepting a paradigm of the artist's book that would break away from the mode of production, distribution, and fruition of the years on which her aesthetic of the artist's book is concentrated (1960-1980). She seems thus to misrecognize some of the more contemporary creations.

Before considering Mœglin-Delcroix's definition of artists' books together with the one implicitly provided by Cornelia Lauf and Clive Phillpot in the framework of *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books* – the exhibition and publication project they curated in 1998, attempting to analyse and broaden, not only chronologically, the field of the artist's book –, it is necessary to briefly linger on the concept of artistic intention.

Art historian Michael Baxandall (1933-2008) dedicated some important pages to this concept.²⁴² Usually, since artworks are made by human beings, one of the elements inherent to their "causal field"²⁴³ would be someone's will, that is what is traditionally considered someone's *intention*. According to Baxandall, however, artistic intention is much more linked to the historical object produced than to the individual who is considered as its creator. Intention does not correspond to the aim of the artist responsible for the production of a determined artwork: "intention is the forward-leaning look of things. It is not a reconstructed historical state of mind, then, but a relation between the object and its circumstances."²⁴⁴ It is something that primarily involves the artwork which, in itself, reveals an intention, a kind of internal and historical necessity.

Seemingly based on the concept of artistic intention described by Baxandall, Mœglin-Delcroix's paradigm of the artist's book is actually calibrated on the relationship between the art object and its historical circumstances

²⁴¹ Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, XXI.

²⁴² See Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention: On the Historical Explanation of Pictures* (New Heaven, CT and London: Yale University Press, 1987).

²⁴³ Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, 41.

²⁴⁴ Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, 41.

typical of the 1960s (and to a lesser extent of the 1970s) which she declares as failing in the coming years because of the enslavement of artists to the consumerist society proper of capitalism. However, it seems necessary to interpret what she considers as the consumerist enslavement of the *genre* as something which has happened in strict rapport of causality with the developments of the 1960s and 1970s rather than suddenly born because of capitalist perversion.

Even if the artists' books of the pioneers, many of them spokespersons of conceptual art and related attitudes, were created to criticize and overcome the (social, artistic, economic...) values pushed by the unbridled, multinational, and soon deregulated capitalism, they were born precisely within this system. As the art historian Alexander Alberro has demonstrated in analysing the activities of art dealer and exhibition catalyst Seth Siegelaub as well as the work of the artists he favored (Joseph Kosuth, Douglas Huebler, Lawrence Weiner, and Robert Barry), the *art of information* is the child of a progressively *informatized* society.²⁴⁵

2.3.3 The Artists' Books Rhetoric

In the light of these arguments, it is now time to present and discuss the understanding of artists' books embodied by the publication *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books* (1998), as well as presented through the homonymous exhibition which travelled to six U.S. art museums between 1998 and 1999, and of which the above-mentioned publication is now the most accessible material evidence.²⁴⁶ As already anticipated, Mœglin-Delcroix heavily

²⁴⁵ See Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*; Kynaston L. McShine, ed., *Information* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1971); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA & London: Harvard University Press, 2000). In the chapter *Postmodernization or the Informatization of Production* Hardt and Negri discuss postindustrial economy in terms of informational economy: "Just as through the process of modernization all production tended to be industrialized, so too through the process of postmodernization all production tends toward the production of services, toward becoming informationalized." Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, 286.

²⁴⁶ *Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books*, Weatherspoon Art Gallery, Greensboro, N.C., February 8 – August 12, 1998; Emerson Gallery, Clinton, N.Y., August 31 – October 18, 1998; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, IL, November 6 – January 3, 1999; Lowe Art Museum, Coral Gables, FL, February 18 – April 14, 1999; Western Gallery, Bellingham, WA, April 30 – June 27, 1999; University Art Gallery, Amherst, MA, October 29 – December 18, 1999.

criticized the *Artist/Author* project.²⁴⁷ However, rather than presenting the project through the discussion of her critiques, it will be introduced in the following, keeping Mœglin-Delcroix's definition of the artist's book in the background and allowing some of her observations to emerge only in few critical moments.

Artist/Author: Contemporary Artists' Books was organized by The American Federation of Arts (AFA) and constituted the first engagement of the institution in promoting "books as an art form"²⁴⁸. The project focused on the 1980s and mid-1990s and aimed at authoritatively gathering together the most relevant examples of contemporary artists' books. It was curated by Cornelia Lauf, an independent curator and art historian, who at the time was working as an editor at the publishing house Imschoot, uitgevers²⁴⁹ and Clive Phillpot who, after having left his position as director of The Museum of Modern Art Library in 1994, moved back to England from where he still provides his expertise as a freelance writer and archives consultant. Lauf was responsible for the initial conceptualization of both the exhibition and of its related publication. To make the most out of the exhibition project she invited the influential Phillpot to collaborate as a co-curator and co-editor of the book, of which the design was commissioned to the artist Renée Green.²⁵⁰

In her editorial review of the book, Paula Frosch of the Library of The Metropolitan Museum of Art resumed the main thesis of the entire project *Artist/Author* as follows:

ranging from limited editions to posters to comics, the works presented here mirror the multiple styles and varied concerns of today's creative community. New technology has led to innovations in graphic design, computer-generated

²⁴⁷ Mœglin-Delcroix, "Une Exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme."

²⁴⁸ Serena Rattazzi, "Acknowledgments," in *Artist/Author*, 19.

²⁴⁹ Imschoot, uitgevers is a Belgian publishing house specialized in artists' books in limited edition. Active in this area since the early 1990s, it ceased its activities in the mid-2000s but continues to sell and distribute the publications still available in its catalogue.

²⁵⁰ This was the first time in which AFA commissioned an artist to design the catalogue of one of its exhibitions. Renée Green, whose publications *Camino Road* (Madrid/New York: MNCARS/Free Agent Media, 1994) and *Certain Miscellanies – Some Documents* (Amsterdam/Berlin: De Appel/DAAD, 1996) were also on show, accomplished this task with the collaboration of Susan Sellers who supported her as design consultant and typographer. Lauf also involved artist Richard Merkle who was responsible of the exhibition furniture's production.

publications, and the blurring of distinctions between art and advertising, expanding and shifting artistic boundaries.²⁵¹

It is precisely this eclectic expansion and shift of artistic boundaries which led Mœglin-Delcroix to affirm that the publication, and implicitly the show which it accompanied, does nothing but promote and amplify the confusion between art and consumption, thus polluting the highest values of the relationship between artists, art and books. According to her, this would already be communicated by its title, clearly stating the equation between artist and author: every book that has an artist as its author is automatically an artist's book, independently from its aims and core (artistic) values.²⁵² Furthermore, this would be blatantly embodied by the fact that being conceptualized by artist Renée Green, the book is presented as an artist's book.²⁵³

Curiously, the French scholar states the unacceptability of Green's book as an artist's book mainly because it does not truly absolve its scientific function as an exhibition catalogue. In Mœglin-Delcroix's view, the objects on show would be misrepresented in the publication because they are gathered together in small groups and photographed against brightly colored backgrounds, following a purely arbitrarily and merely visual logic and because they are not only documented regardless of their difference in scale but also separated from their captions. In sum, Green's book is not an artist's book because the artists' publications it presents are treated "comme des images à manipuler."²⁵⁴

This is not the place to delve on an in depth reflection on the work of Renée Green. However, Mœglin-Delcroix' statement seems to confirm the interpretation of her thought presented above. In this case, she judges the book by its cover and criticizes it for being a bad exhibition catalogue, rather than

²⁵¹ Paula Frosch "Artist/Author: Contemporary Artist's Books" in *Library Journal Reviews* (1998)

http://www.strandbooks.com/product/artistauthor%2Dcontemporary%2Dartists%2Dbooks/_/searchString/cornelia%20lauf

²⁵² See Mœglin-Delcroix, "Une Exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme," 560, 563.

²⁵³ This is affirmed by both Rattazzi in the acknowledgments and Lauf at the beginning of her essay. Rattazzi, "Acknowledgments," 19; Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 67; See Mœglin-Delcroix, "Une Exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme," 564.

²⁵⁴ Mœglin-Delcroix, "Une Exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme," 564.

observing it with her perceptive attention and considering it within Renée Green's *œuvre* (of which, on closer look, it fully embodies not only the aesthetic but, above all, the key themes).²⁵⁵

What is at the heart of Mœglin-Delcroix is the destiny of the artist's book face to an art which she considers so contemporary, so adhering to its time, that it has renounced to every subversive potential: "le medium du livre préserverait-il sa fonction critique initiale, ou bien s'est-il autonomisé au point de pouvoir servir n'importe quel projets artistiques, et le plus contraires à ceux qui ont présidé à sa naissance?"²⁵⁶

What it is central to Lauf is the accentuation of the relationship between the constellation of exhibits which form and inform an exhibition and the catalogue which frames it, soon becoming the main lasting evidence of its existence and aim. In this case, through the intervention of Renée Green, Lauf aims to guarantee the exhibits, the exhibition, and the catalogue a strong metonymical bond, not only to enable the readers (especially those who could not experience the show) to grasp its content and arguments but also to experience them while handling (and eventually reading) the publication.

Beside the short, not content-based, critical remark on Green's involvement in the publication, Mœglin-Delcroix concentrates her review mainly on the essays by Phillpot and Lauf while only briefly referring to the text by writer and editor Brian Wallis and to the interview with Martha Wilson, that together with two other shorter contributions complete what could be seen as the scholarly apparatus of the book.²⁵⁷ Given the fact that the short reference to

²⁵⁵ This, however, does not seem to be only the prerogative of the French scholar. Even if the book is considered among Green's "artist books" in her *Between and Including*, ed. Kathrin Rhomberg (Wien: Secession, 1999), 246, there is no trace of this publication in the catalogue of his retrospective exhibition held at the Musée Cantonal des Beaux-Arts de Lausanne in 2009-2010. See Nicole Schweizer, ed., *Renée Green: Ongoing Becomings: Retrospective 1989-2009* (Zürich: JRP Ringier, 2009).

²⁵⁶ Mœglin-Delcroix, "Une Exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme," 558.

²⁵⁷ See Wallis, "The Artist's Book and Postmodernism," in *Artist/Author*, 92-109 and Thomas Padon, "Interview with Martha Wilson," in *Artist/Author*, 110-122. The two additional contributions are by Jane Rolo, as the representative of Book Works (a British public funded art commissioning organization specializing in artists' books and printed matter active since 1984) and by writer Glenn O' Brien. See Rolo, "Itinerant Text," in *Artist/Author*, 130-133 and O' Brien, "Artists Books: Making Literacy Pay," in *Artist/Author*, 139-143. Note, that *Perplexed* (1998), a work by Renée Green, completes the publication, partially infiltrating Wallis' text. See Green, "Perplexed," in *Artist/Author*, 98-108.

Wallis' text and Wilson's words serves her mainly to sustain her own definition of the artist's book, against the one proposed by Phillpot, but above all by Lauf, the following discussion will be introduced with a brief remark on Phillpot's text while Lauf's contribution will be analysed at some length.²⁵⁸

Referring to Phillpot's essay *Books by Artists and Books as Art*,²⁵⁹ Mœglin-Delcroix deplores the fact that, after having dedicated much effort in analysing and defining the domain of the artist's book, he seems now open to "un œcuménisme nouveau"²⁶⁰ in which what he has previously defined as *bookwork*, that is "a work of art in book form"²⁶¹ seems to be now only a subset of the larger "spectrum of artists' books."²⁶² According to Phillpot, this spectrum would comprehend: Magazine Issues and Magazinenetworks; Assemblings and Anthologies; Writings, Diaries, Statements, and Manifestos; Visual Poetry and Wordworks; Scores; Documentation; Reproductions and Sketchbooks; Albums and Inventories; Graphic Works; Comic Books; Illustrated Books; Page Art, Pageworks, and Mail Art; Book Art and Bookworks.²⁶³

²⁵⁸ Tellingly, in both Wallis and Wilson cases, Mœglin-Delcroix focuses only on the segments which are more attuned to her view. Proof of this could be the fact that she quotes the definition of the artist's book provided by Wilson at the beginning of her interview ("an artist's book is an object whose primary medium is the idea, as opposed to an object that is valuable by virtue of the materials from which it was made"; Padon, "Interview with Martha Wilson," 109) without problematizing the one which Wilson provides only a couple of pages later, when, explaining the collecting policies of Franklin Furnace, she accepts the definition of the artist's book as everything that an artist has named as such and is done in edition. See Padon, "Interview with Martha Wilson," 113 and Mœglin-Delcroix, "Une exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme," 565-566. In his contribution, Wallis does not explicitly provide a definition of the artist's book but surveys some recent examples by Richard Prince and other artists on the background of postmodern thought and theory. However, introducing his essay with Sol LeWitt *Autobiography* (New York/Boston: Multiples, Inc./Losi and Michael K. Torf, 1980) (a book which fully meet Mœglin-Delcroix's standards) and stating it as the paradigmatic example of a publication which interiorizes "the relationship between text and image" as well as other "three key aspects of postmodernism" (that is, the fragmentation of the subject, the implementation of new narrative forms, and a renewed consciousness of the public sphere as a space of social negotiation) (Wallis, "The Artist's Book and Postmodernism," 92), he is, in Mœglin-Delcroix's view, implicitly providing its definition and establishing LeWitt's book as a benchmark for future creations.

²⁵⁹ Clive Phillpot, "Books by Artists and Books as Art."

²⁶⁰ Mœglin-Delcroix, "Une exposition de Livres d'Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme," 560.

²⁶¹ Phillpot, "Books: Clive Phillpot on *Real Lush*," 77 and Phillpot, "Twentysix Gasoline Stations that Shook the World: the rise and fall of cheap booklet as art," 147.

²⁶² Phillpot, "Books by Artists and Books as Art," 38.

²⁶³ See Phillpot, "Books by Artists and Books as Art," 38-50.

The approach of Lauf, *deus ex machina* of the whole *Artist/Author* project could not be farther from that of the French scholar.²⁶⁴ Therefore, rather than on the specific critical point raised by Mœglin-Delcroix it seems more useful here to briefly discuss the arguments advanced by Lauf.

She begins his essay *Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks*²⁶⁵ with the premise that contemporary artists are very well “aware of the rhetorical aspects of every scrap of information,” and for this reason they are “increasingly wary about adding anything to an info-glutted world that doesn’t carry meaning.”²⁶⁶ They consider design an essential tool of their artistic language and create “books that function in the world, as catalogues, fashion magazines, cookbooks, etc.”²⁶⁷ This is the main message of *Artist/Author* and, according to Lauf, this is the reason why, “whether it is a ‘conventional’ artist’s book, a hybrid catalogue, or [a] fashion collections book designed by an artist, the book format is arguably the most useful device to chart the changes in artistic intention over the last fifteen years.”²⁶⁸

One of the main changes she charts is artists’ growing awareness of the active role they can play in the construction of their own image and history. In

²⁶⁴ It remains unclear if this is the case also for Phillpot. In the short introductory text Mœglin-Delcroix has written to introduce her 1999 review which was reprinted in 2005 in *Sur le livre d’artiste. Article et écrits de circonstance (1981-2005)*, she quotes a written message she received from Phillpot in which he affirms that he and Lauf had very different opinions on the theme. To prove this, he gives the French scholar an example. In preparation of the exhibition, in fact, he and Lauf decided to think about 60-80 titles each but when they finally confronted their two lists they noticed that they had just one title in common. Thus his preference for expressing his vision through his essays rather than through the exhibited objects. In this respect, he admits that if on the one hand he is satisfied with the inventory he provided under the title “the spectrum of the artists’ books”, on the other he regrets having placed the *bookworks* as merely one portion of the spectrum. Bookworks could be found in every area of the spectrum. Mœglin-Delcroix, “Une exposition de Livres d’Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme,” 557-558. The same episode is told by Phillpot in the short introductory text that accompanies the reprint of the original essay in his collected writings, although much more demurely: “Cornelia Lauf conceived the Artist/Author exhibition in 1994 and invited me to join her as co-curator and co-editor of the catalogue. We agreed that my emphasis would be the early artists’ books and their progeny, while Cornelia would concentrate on more recent examples. Next we each prepared a selection of books to be included, and found, surprisingly, virtually no overlap between the two lists. Then, in my essay, I took the opportunity to establish a specific historical foundation for artists’ books, based on the example of Ruscha and of Siegelau, as well as proposing a new taxonomy for this kind of publications.” Phillpot, “Books by Artists and Books as Art,” 184.

²⁶⁵ See Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks.”

²⁶⁶ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 67.

²⁶⁷ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 68. Lauf stresses this use-oriented aspect as a fundamental difference in respect to the often *arcane* artist’s books produced during the 1960s and 1970s.

²⁶⁸ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 67.

her view, the fact that most of them independently manage the presentation of their work (both in terms of form and content) increasingly directing, if not controlling, the critical and historical narratives built around it, is a tendency so widespread “that it is impossible to survey.”²⁶⁹ Locating in the early 1980s the moment in which this tendency burgeoned, she briefly retraces its roots in the book production of Joseph Beuys, probably the artist who was able to exploit the rhetorical potential of the printed image the most. In this respect, she mentions the comprehensive catalogue that accompanied Beuys’ retrospective at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in 1979²⁷⁰ as a paradigmatic example of the fact that “usually such publications are not considered part of the artist’s oeuvre but a sustained look at the aesthetic that informs them shows no difference between printed work and more monumental pieces.”²⁷¹ This is why Lauf underlines the necessity not only of acknowledging the great number of artists who consider their histories as artistic material, but also, and above all, of admitting that a too narrow field of the artist’s book would lead to the misrecognition of “the wide ranges of approaches that artists actually take towards books.”²⁷²

To substantiate and give historical relevance to her arguments she stresses the fact that this attitude, that is the careful attention paid by the artists in the presentation and communication of their works, absorbing, even if unconsciously, this aspect of their activities as part and parcel of their artistic output, is not merely a key feature of the 1980s and 1990s. Already artists such as Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Dan Flavin, and Donald Judd invested much energy and attentively supervised the presentation of their works. Among them, she expands on the case of Lichtenstein who always kept a hand over the photographic reproduction of his paintings, making sure that they were

²⁶⁹ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 69. Lauf mentions here Robert Gober and Heim Steinbach as representative examples.

²⁷⁰ Caroline Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1980). Tisdall acknowledges Beuys’ “time, care and patience at every stage of this publication.” Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys*, 284.

²⁷¹ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 69. In this respect, however, one might ask oneself if this affirmation could generally be confirmed, or if the fact that Beuys’ *oeuvre* and its catalogue apparently share and express the same aesthetical concerns would not depend on the intrinsic nature of Beuys’ work and operation mode.

²⁷² Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 70.

printed with exactly the same hues, thus ensuring a common standard amongst all reproductions in different catalogues and printed matter.²⁷³

Through Beuys' and Lichtenstein's examples, Lauf aims to affirm and demonstrate that the status of the reproduced object is profoundly changed. Already from the 1960s, instead of being relegated the role of merely a by-product of the original, it has been considered a carrier of primary information and for this reason "its graphic treatment may be critically evaluated as an expression of artistic intent no different than the process that transforms, say, fluorescent light tubes, bricks and other forms of readymades into art."²⁷⁴ This vision reflects an expanded notion of art, a notion through which it is possible to open the domain of artists' books up to publications usually considered only by-products of art.

At this point Lauf is ready to draw an historical outline of the artist's book in the 1980s and mid-1990s. Her version of the history relativizes the account defended by Phillpot, described above (§ 2.3). She defines the 1980s as "the decade of greed," a decade in which "the modest art of making book" has little appeal for the new horde of collectors that had arisen with the exponential growth of the art market.²⁷⁵ Even if artists still produced books (which, as Phillpot has registered, assumed more and more the aspect of luxurious publications recalling the tradition of the *livre de peintre*) "the major exhibitions of the period [...] generally ignored books, unless, as in the case of the books of Anselm Kiefer, they approximated sculpture."²⁷⁶ Lauf takes the international exhibition documenta as a case in point. If the 1972 edition presented a small amount of books and the 1977 an entire, thereby controversial, section dedicated to the *genre*,²⁷⁷ the 1982 edition did not present any of them.²⁷⁸

²⁷³ Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 73.

²⁷⁴ Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 73

²⁷⁵ Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 70

²⁷⁶ Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 73. Note, that even if, given the exponentially increasing numbers of exhibitions dedicated to the *genre*, from the very beginning of the 1980s artists' books seemed to have reached acceptance and recognition "within both the art and the book world, [...] they still played a very marginal role within them." Bader, *Modernism and the Order of Things*, 117.

²⁷⁷ See Dittmar (and Frank), "1. Metamorphose des Buches, 2. Konzept-Bücher."

²⁷⁸ Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 73. documenta 7 consecrated the return of monumental work. Lauf stresses that while books did not have any role in the official exhibition,

According to Lauf, during the 1980s a new phenomenon appeared in the domain: the artistic infiltration of academic publications. She presents artists Cindy Sherman, Louise Lawler, Richard Prince and Sherrie Levine – whose work was (and in much respect still is) characterized and made common by the use and appropriation of photographic images –, as the representative of this practice which first and most relevant example would be *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (1983), a collection of essays edited by art critic and art historian Hal Foster in which images by the four above mentioned artists are to be found.²⁷⁹ Lauf states that this book “can almost be considered an artist’s book itself for the cult status it attained among American artists.”²⁸⁰

At much disgust of Møeglin-Delcroix, Lauf considerably inflates the domain of the artist’s book.²⁸¹ Previously in the essay, she deplored the fact that accepting as artists’ books only books “actually made” by artists would mean placing the medium and its formal features in a prominent position in respect to the idea that it should transmit; on the other hand, this would bring one into the trap of defining “an artist by medium”.²⁸² Now, however, she does not notice

artists’ publications in general were very visible: “the distribution of the ephemera was an important feature of the alternative-minded, or even uninvited, participants at *Documenta*.” Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 73.

²⁷⁹ Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1983). All this involves several problems. Firstly, it is not clear following what criteria Lauf can affirm that the works of the above-mentioned artists infiltrate the publication. Richard Prince’s found and manipulated image *Untitled (Make-Up)* (1982) is used as a cover-picture while images by Levine, Sherman, and Kruger function as illustrations of Craig Owen’s essay *Feminists and Postmodernism*, in which they are *illustrated* (see Owens, “The Discourse of Others: Feminists and Postmodernism,” in *The Anti-Aesthetic*, 57-82). Certainly, one of the key features of these artists’ *Weltanschauung* is the belief that every photograph can be printed on different supports without losing its status of the original, but this does not seem a sufficient reason to affirm that their work purposely infiltrated this publication to make an artist’s book out of it. Secondly, Lauf compares this book to successive academic publications, first and foremost *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (1984), a collection of essays edited by Brian Wallis in which one can find, among others, “photographs [this time purposely and acknowledgingly] selected and arranged by Luise Lawler, in collaboration with Brian Wallis.” Brian Wallis, ed., *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York/Boston, MA: The New Museum of Contemporary Art/Godine, 1984), n.p. This is not the place to dwell on this and other comparable publications. However, it should be stressed that their history, intrinsic motivations, and the nature of the artistic contribution/s which characterize/s them deserve more research. For another example in which Lawler was involved, see Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum’s Ruins* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993).

²⁸⁰ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 74.

²⁸¹ See Møeglin-Delcroix, “Une exposition de Livres d’Artistes à la lumière trouble du postmodernisme,” 563-564.

²⁸² Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 70.

that in dramatically expanding the domain of the artist's book, she is falling into the trap of defining the opposite, namely *a medium by artist*.

Moreover, Lauf proposes considering artists' books in all respects also the volumes that collect artist's writings which are produced in strict collaboration with their authors. These would be for example those in the series *Writing Art*, initiated by the editor Roger Conover at MIT Press in 1991. To sort, select and organize one's writings, even if they are edited, introduced, published and distributed by second parties, should be regarded as a key component of the artistic output and by reflex, the books containing these writings should be called artists' books.²⁸³

Also the books produced by independent publishing houses such as Semiotext(e) should be considered as such, in Lauf's view. Having introduced French Theory to American readers, and in this specific case to American artists, these booklets not only testify the enduring relevance of the book as a cultural transmitter and as an omnipresent object of the human landscape, but, again, given that they "were widely read and cited in the mid-1980s, particularly by New York 'neo-geo' artists"²⁸⁴ should be part of the by now very vast domain of the artists' books.

Beside inflating the concept of *artist's book*, Lauf raises attention onto two important features of the complex relationship between artists, art and books which she judges particularly relevant for the 1980s and 1990s. They are: the artists' increasing awareness of the discursive relevance of "academic publications"²⁸⁵ and the erosion of "the historic differences between photography, fashion, the media, and art".²⁸⁶

²⁸³ See Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 74. Note, that the first volume of the series (see Kosuth, *Art After Philosophy and After*, 1991) is dedicated to C. L. (i.e. Cornelia Lauf, at the time the wife of the artist). The examples of the *Writing Art* series, as well as that of Beuys and Lichtenstein are in fact not casual. Lauf received her PhD from Columbia University with a dissertation on Joseph Beuys and Lichtenstein seems to have been close to the Kosuths (he had been one of the very first supporters of the artist during the second half of the 1960s; see Alberro, *Conceptual Art and The Politics of Publicity*, 27).

²⁸⁴ Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 75. The artists mentioned by Lauf in this context are "Jeff Koons, Peter Halley, Ashley Bickerton, Philip Taaffe, Hami Steinbach, and Alan McCollum, among others." Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 75.

²⁸⁵ Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 74.

²⁸⁶ Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 78.

The consciousness that books and exhibition catalogues could be as relevant as, if not equate, artworks and exhibitions was certainly not a *discovery* of the 1980s and 1990s (§ 3.4). Nevertheless, in these years this practice seems deeply internalized by artists. Lauf refers to *Democracy: A Project by Group Material* (1990) – a volume produced by the Dia Art Foundation as part of the book series *Discussions in Contemporary Culture* after a four-part show and the related open forums organized by the artist collective Group Material at Dia in 1988-89²⁸⁷ – as not only a paramount example of this habit but also of a publication that “proves the degree to which publishers can give artists the freedom to work within academic norms as part of their artistic activity.”²⁸⁸ Lingering on a statement by Group Material, Lauf refers to the book as “perhaps the most important part of the project.”²⁸⁹ The artist collective had in fact described their aim and their attitude towards the publication as follows:

through this book we tried to encapsulate many of the ideas that went into and came out of the Democracy Project in order to make them available to a far wider public than could attend the event. We organized this publication very much as we organize our exhibitions, bringing together a variety of voices and points of view to address the issues.²⁹⁰

Bethany S. Johns, a graphic designer who from the beginning of the 1990s served the most socially engaged New York art scene, designed the book.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ The *Democracy* project (to be held at Dia Art Foundation, 77 Wooster Street, New York between September 1988 and January 1989) aimed to problematize the crises in democracy and the most urgent issues related to the crisis of civil and civic rights. In discussion with curator Gary Garrels, Group Material opted for organizing the show in four sequential sub-thematic installations to mirror the exhibition pace of a commercial gallery. Each sub-thematic show was dedicated to a different issue (Education, Politics and Election, Cultural Participation, AIDS and Democracy) and accompanied by a public meeting held at Dia during the time-view of the related exhibition. See Julie Ault, ed., *Show and Tell: A Chronicle of Group Material* (London: Four Corner Books, 2010), 138-155.

²⁸⁸ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 74. See Brian Wallis, ed., *Democracy: A Project by Group Material*, *Discussions in Contemporary Culture* 5 (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1990). The launch of the book at Printed Matter Bookstore at Dia could be seen as the coronation of the project. See Ault, ed., *Show and Tell*, 177.

²⁸⁹ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 74.

²⁹⁰ Group Material quoted in Wallis, ed., *Democracy*, 3.

²⁹¹ Bethany Sage Johns was an active member of the Women’s Action Coalition (WAC), a feminist direct-action organization similar to ACT-UP (Aids Coalition To Unleash Power) and the WHAM (Women’s Health Action and Mobilization). WAC was officially founded in New York at the beginning of 1992 with the mission of fighting discrimination against women. From 1991 to 1993 Johns created diverse posters and printed matter to sustain the WAC’s cause, a cause to which Johns was close even before the officialization of the movement.

Although it was meant to be an academic publication, the ambitions and intents behind its production were not only those one would usually associate with an academic book.

Keeping her focus on New York, the geographical location that from the 1960s has become the main scene for art and its recognition as such, Lauf refers to *Interview*, the magazine founded by Andy Warhol in 1969 as the most prominent example, if not the precursor, of the crescent interlacing of art and fashion and on the role this played in the context of artists' publications and vice versa. In the early 1980s, the fashion industry, leveraging on the hipness produced by the interweaving of counterculture and the new culture of graffiti, increasingly borrowed strategies of the art and artists' publishing industry:

by the mid-1980s, [stylists] Rei Kawakubo and Yohji Yamamoto had opened boutiques in New York's Soho, and had begun to invite artists to model clothes, as well as to create collections catalogues and showroom installations. The catalogues of [stylists] Romeo Gigli, Karl Lagerfeld, the Japanese designers, and Christian Lacroix mirrored the full-bleed pages and luxurious printing techniques of many contemporaneous artists' books. Designers often issued books more in tune with trends in artist's book publishing than with traditional garment sales catalogues. [stylist] Donna Karan went so far as to have her DKNY collections catalogue distributed by D.A.P., an art book distributor and publisher.²⁹²

The entangled relationship between art and the different branches of design is directly and indirectly thematized over and over again in Lauf's essay.²⁹³ However, her project does not seem only related to underscoring the inescapable conflation of these domains.²⁹⁴ Rather, she aims to establish the validity of an equation derived from Duchamp, in which everything has to do with artists – whether with their (visual, intellectual, emotional...) literacy or with their commitment in giving shape to objects (in this case published objects) thus producing new forms of literacy –, can be considered art. By

²⁹² Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 79

²⁹³ See, as a further example, that Lauf does not forget to stress that "graphic designers of the 1980s and '90s, such as Re-verb, 2x4, Bethany Johns, Permanent Press, and Bruce Mau, often work closely with artists to produce publications that range from small press to high-volume, high-profile publishing. At the same time, museum and gallery artists are increasingly comfortable integrating their work into both real and hypertextual publishing worlds." Lauf, "Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks," 78.

²⁹⁴ In the second part of the present study it will be necessary to come back to this conflation (§ 4.3.4.2.1).

asking her readers if taking into account “the current welter of choices [...] shouldn’t all books produced under the direction of an artist be deemed artists’ books?”²⁹⁵ she clearly states her distrust in the classification of artists’ books as discreet aesthetical objects.

This question would seem to close the circle drawn in this chapter. Bader sustains that libraries and museums are responsible for the establishment of the artist’s book as a distinct, unitary, and artistic category. Phillpot and Mœglin-Delcroix, as well as the institutions they served (The Museum of Modern Art, New York and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, respectively), were an integral part of this system. Cornelia Lauf, controversially proposing not to classify these objects (but after all, showing them as contemporary artists’ books still proposing a classification), seems to go back to the pioneers’ understanding of these objects. Ed Ruscha, in fact, described his books as being “like a wolf in sheep’s clothing.”²⁹⁶ This understanding of the artist’s book is the same that transpires while reading Douglas Crimp’s account of his visit to The New York Public Library at the turn of the 1970s and the 1980s.²⁹⁷ Going there to do research on “an industrial film about the history of transportation,” he browses the shelves where books on this subject were to be found and discovers a book which collects the pictures of twenty-six gasoline stations, that is a “misplaced” book that only through its being *misplaced* can unleash all its artistic potential and fully become Ed Ruscha’s *Twentysix Gasoline Stations*.²⁹⁸

2.4 Artists’ Books: Between Discreet and Indiscreet Aesthetical Objects

Mœglin-Delcroix’s definition of the artist’s book is temporally and ideologically restricted. In order for her definition of the artist’s book to be respected, one must refer to the historical and artistic parameters in which it is tailored. However, she does not seem to recognize its weaknesses, such as for

²⁹⁵ Lauf, “Cracked Spines and Slipped Disks,” 75

²⁹⁶ Bernard Blistène, “Conversation with Ed Ruscha,” in *Edward Ruscha: Paintings/Schilderijen*, ed., Elbrig de Groot (Rotterdam: Museum Boymans van Beuniger, 1990) 126-140, reprinted in Ed Ruscha, *Leave Any Information at the Signal: Writings, Interviews, Bits, Pages*, ed. Alexandra Schwarz (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2002), 300-308, 303.

²⁹⁷ Douglas Crimp, “The Museum’s Old, the Library’s New Object,” *Parachute*, no. 22 (Spring, 1981), 32-37; reprinted in Crimp, *On the Museum’s Ruins*, 66-83.

²⁹⁸ Crimp, *On the Museum’s Ruins*, 78.

example, the problem of accessibility (which goes far beyond the reduced price of the book or of the possibility of physically accessing it thanks to a system able to ensure its widespread circulation). This is the true factor that undermines the supposed democratic nature of the artist's book and the possibility of its recognition as an object (in its form and content) which is valuable (primarily for its artistic content) and for this reason collected, preserved and valorized.

According to Lauf, however, it is the artist herself/himself who determines the scope of what is valuable, not the intrinsic characteristics that an entity must have to become *oeuvre* and be treated as such. The aura is no longer something pertinent to the *work of art* but to its author, or rather, to the one who invests in it her/his attention, transforming it, through her/his intentional attention in an *artwork*. The concept of intention involved in Lauf's approach is also misleading because it is limited to its psychological aspects.

Considering artists' books as discreet objects (the question raised and analysed by Bader), of which ontology is very much debated, relegates them to a specific space, thus limiting their possibility of action (to be *a wolf in sheep's clothing*, as Ruscha would say). Lauf refuses this and thus proposes a dramatic expansion of the ontology of the artist's book, making it 'indiscreet' in the true sense of the word (from the Latin, *indiscretus*, i.e. not separate or distinguishable). However, in so doing, more than creating an indiscreet and continuous space in which to situate artists' books, she creates a space which is, indeed, very much separate and circumscribed, this time by the scope of the artist.

This brief exemplary analysis of three different positions in the debate around the so-called artist's book shows just how necessary it is not to embrace a very narrow definition, and also to steer clear of a definition which is so comprehensive that it represents a renunciation of the very possibility of defining the field. It is certainly not the scope of this study to formulate a conclusive definition of the artist's book, but rather to reiterate, partly in line with the thinking of Mœglin-Delcroix, that the intention that makes of a book an artist's book must be analysed in its empirical context, without assuming an ideological horizon and without reducing it only to its psychological aspects.

What this research aims to do then, is to work on Matthew Barney's book production, considering his books as objects, mediums, and instruments in the context in which they were created with the goal to retrace their intention (in Baxandall's understanding of the term); not to discriminate what is or is not an artist's book but rather to accentuate various aspects of the relationship between artists and books, shedding light on the relevance of this multi-faceted partnership in contemporary art.

3. Exhibition Catalogue

*Der Katalog ist auch das Denkmal der Ausstellung,
er ist der Teil, der um die ganze Welt reisen kann,
und »er ist« der einzig bedeutende Teil, der bleiben wird,
wenn die Ausstellung zu Ende ist.*
Pontus Hulten²⁹⁹

*A s'occuper d'art, on ne tombe jamais
que d'un catalogue à l'autre.*
Marcel Broodthaers³⁰⁰

*The publication is the first priority.
The publication is not about the work
but becomes the work.*
Hans Ulrich Obrist³⁰¹

Before getting to the analysis of Matthew Barney's book production, it is necessary to take a last detour around a complex as well as neglected instrument that has not only seen its popularity grow exponentially in recent decades but also its relevance within the field of contemporary art: the exhibition catalogue.

The exhibition catalogue has been the subject and object of continuous structural, formal, and conceptual transformations, performing an increasingly essential role within the field of art and its histories at least since the late 1940s. Especially from the end of the 1960s, it has also been progressively implemented as a primary means of expression, information, and communication by many of the artists involved in reshaping the ontological framing of art and its social existence.³⁰² The exponential growth of exhibition spaces and the expanded cultural relevance of the exhibition format from the 1970s onward, with particular relevance for those promoting contemporary art,

²⁹⁹ Pontus Hulten, "Über Ausstellungskataloge," in *Das gedruckte Museum von Pontus Hulten: Kunstaussstellungen und ihre Bücher*, ed. Lutz Jahre, 173-177 (Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz Verlag, 1996), 173.

³⁰⁰ Marcel Broodthaers quoted in Cathrine David and Veronique Dabin, eds., *Marcel Broodthaers* (Paris: Musée du Jeu de Paume, 1991), 227.

³⁰¹ Hans Ulrich Obrist quoted in Deborah Wye and Wendy Weitman, *Eye on Europe: prints, Books, and Multiples 1960 to now* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2006), 77.

³⁰² See Anne Moëglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne*, no. 56/57 (Été-Automne 1996): 94-117.

have made the exhibition catalogue an essential tool not only for the *making* of art and the *writing* of its histories but also for what concerns the image and branding of the institutions which promote such exhibitions as well as of that of their supporters and patrons. Since the 1980s the exhibition catalogue has become an omnipresent tool that any individual who intends to become a professional artist has had to reckon with. Even if artistic visibility is nowadays increasingly the prerogative of the web, exhibition catalogues still determine the stature of artists, serving as a litmus test of their productivity and the desirability of their work, as well as being tangible instruments of their *Weltanschauung*. It is under these premises and for several other factors which will be introduced and discussed in the following that the exhibition catalogue has become indispensable for what could be defined as a whole generation of artists that came of age in the 1990s. They have implemented the catalogue not only as a tool for promotion: they have challenged it as the vehicle through which one could put to the test the intermedial translatability of their multimedia production as well as the incommensurability of art.

This chapter is not an attempt to establish a possible genealogy for the exhibition catalogue or to reconstruct its history.³⁰³ On the contrary, it aims to

³⁰³ In 1969 art historian André Chastel (1912-1990) complained that the history of the catalogue (which he mainly intended as the history of the catalogue of the collections of a museum) was yet to be written. See Chastel, "Éditorial: Le Problème des catalogues des musées," *Revue de l'Art* 6 (Décembre 1969): 4-7, reprinted as "Les Catalogues," in André Chastel, *L'Histoire de l'Art: Fins et Moyens*, 61-69 (Paris: Flammarion, 1980). In 1988 art historian Pierre Rosenberg still lamented that the history of the exhibition catalogue (which he mainly intended as the history of the evolution of the temporary exhibition catalogues) remained yet to be written. See Rosenberg, "Un Genre nouveau: Le Catalogue d'exposition," *Histoire de l'Art* 1/2 (Juin 1988): 101-102. In the past two decades, few attempts have been made to fill, with mixed results, the gaps denounced by Chastel and Rosenberg. The year 2015 was important in this regard because of the publication of two volumes that deal primarily and originally with the issue of the exhibition catalogue in its broad understanding and to a different extent with its historical development. See Karin Mihatsch, *Der Ausstellungskatalog 2.0: vom Printmedium zur Online-Repräsentation von Kunstwerken* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2015) and Coers, *Kunst katalog-Katalogkunst*. Moreover, in their article *Exhibition Catalogues in the Globalization of Art. A Source for Social and Spatial Art History* (2015), art historians Béatrice Joyeaux-Prunel and Olivier Marcel stressed the relevance of exhibition catalogues as "transnational and transperiodical tool[s] of art commensurability" and also as "multi-layered documents in which factual information is embroidered with ideological or situated views on art's geography, sociology, economy, theory, and history." Joyeaux-Prunel and Marcel, "Exhibition Catalogues in the Globalization of Art. A Source for Social and Spatial Art History," *Artl@s Bulletin* 4, no. 2 (Fall 2015): Article 8, 81, 84, <http://docs.lib.purdue.edu/artlas/vol4/iss2/8/>. In 2014 art historians Lucy Bradnock and Christopher Griffin convened the section *Exhibition Catalogues as Experimental Spaces* at the Association of Art Historian Annual Conference (Royal College of Arts, London, April 12, 2014),

present and discuss the peculiarities of this instrument, lingering on some representative moments of its history, focusing on its scope and operation modes as well as on some of the most interesting ways through which artists have interfaced with it, increasingly incorporating and recognizing it as an essential tool of contemporary art making.

Considering the success of the exhibition practice and the relevance that some newly founded areas of study within the discipline of art history have acquired in the last two decades (i.e. exhibition studies and curatorial studies), it is striking to notice the extent to which the epistemological relevance of a key ubiquitous instrument such as that of the exhibition catalogue has been taken for granted by most of the scholars who have produced seminal research in these fields³⁰⁴ and how little reflection (and literature) has been produced on

an event that has not given rise to any particular publication. See "Exhibition Catalogues as Experimental Spaces," AAH2014 40th Anniversary Conference & Bookfair, Royal College of Art, London, April 10-12, 2014, <http://aah.org.uk/annual-conference/sessions2014/session13> (last access March 7, 2016). Up to 2014 the only book specifically devoted to the subject was a collection of essays (of variable scholarly value) which discussed the exhibition catalogue in its historical and theoretical dimension; see Dagmar Bosse, Michael Glasmeier, and Agnes Prus, eds., *Der Ausstellungskatalog: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theorie* (Köln: Salon Verlag, 2004). Three other reference studies published in the 1990s should be mentioned here: Lutz Jahre, "Zur Geschichte des Ausstellungskataloges am Beispiel der Publikationen von Pontus Hulten," in *Das gedruckte Museum von Pontus Hulten*, 29-55 is a precise and scholarly study in which, taking the catalogues of the exhibition organized by Pontus Hulten as an example, Jahre discusses causes and effects of major changes in the exhibition catalogues between the mid-1950s and the early 1990s; the thematic issue "Du Catalogue" of *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne* 56/57 (Été-Automne 1996) offers a multifaceted account through texts encompassing a broad spectrum (from the catalogue and the practice of cataloguing as a cognitive endeavor to the relevance of this instrument in the practices of modern and contemporary artists up to the mid-1990s); and Iris Cramer, *Kunstvermittlung in Ausstellungskatalogen: Eine typologische Rekonstruktion* (Bern: Peter Lang, 1998) in which she reconstructs and discusses the educational approaches of exhibition catalogues produced in Germany between the 1910s and the 1930s as well as the 1980s and 1990s reflecting on their different educational strategies.

³⁰⁴ One could take as an example, the seminal publications conceived and edited by Bruce Altshuler, *Salon to Biennial: Exhibitions that Made Art History (1863-1959)* (London/New York: Phaidon, 2008) and *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions that Made Art History 1962-2002* (London/New York: Phaidon, 2013). In both volumes the exhibition catalogue of every exhibition discussed is photographically represented through a picture of its cover and/or of some of its most representative pages; however, its meaning and relevance for the making of art as well as for its interpretation and historicization is rarely truly thematized within the text, if not left unspoken. Another example would be Paula Marnicola, ed., *What Makes a Great Exhibition?* (Philadelphia, PA: Philadelphia Exhibition Initiative/Philadelphia Center for Arts and Heritage, 2006). Besides the interventions of curators Robert Storr and Lynne Cook the exhibition catalogue is never discussed in this collection of essays on good curatorial practices. See Storr, "Show and Tell," in *What Makes a Great Exhibition?*, 14-31 and Cooke, "In Lieu of Higher Ground," in *What Makes a Great Exhibition?*, 32-43. If Cooke only transversally refers to this instrument in her discussion of the curatorial approach developed throughout the first three editions of the recurrent exhibition *Skulptur Projekte Münster* (Cooke, "In Lieu of Higher

the argument,³⁰⁵ not to speak of the sparse initiatives that have been undertaken to discuss it and analyze its features, of which there will be the opportunity to give notice in the following pages.

It is certainly not the aim of this research to make up in full for this lack; however, since the exhibition catalogue is not at all tangential but rather an essential instrument for the *making* of contemporary art, for its legitimation and historicization as well as for the practice of most contemporary artists, including Matthew Barney, it is necessary to present and reflect here on its main features, scope, as well as theoretical challenges. This will allow us to touch on the *state* of what could optimistically be called a *debate* around it and expand on the material and conceptual features of this challenging tool of confrontation with art. The fact that the texts at the core of this discourse are written in different languages and times does not mean that they cannot be seen as the springboard for further investigations, and, perhaps, a scholarly international debate to come.

3.1 The (Exhibition) Catalogue

The word *catalogue* comes – via the late Latin *catalōgus* – from the Old Greek *κατάλογος* (*katálogos*) (i.e. list) which is in turn a derivate of the verb *κατα-λέγειν* (*kata-légein*) (i.e. to enumerate). As philosopher, semiotician, and

Ground,” 34) Storr lingers on it a little more. His dwelling on this instrument hides a profound normative conception of the tool. According to him, the exhibition catalogue would “exist to convey in the optimum manner in another medium the basic thrust of the exhibition” and should remain under “the complete authority” of the exhibition maker and or of the “catalogue writer/editor” (Robert Storr, “Show and Tell,” 28). Curator, exhibition and publication catalyst Hans Ulrich Obrist seems to represent the exception that proves the rule in the global trend. Obrist has a penchant for the book and often thematizes the relevance and the role of the exhibition catalogues within the framework of his multifaceted activities; see, for example, Obrist, “After the Moderns, The Immaterials,” *The Exhibitionist: Journal on Exhibition Making*, no. 5 (January 2012): 12-15.

³⁰⁵ In this respect, one should underline the striking fact that exhibition catalogues – their presence, features, and the modalities through which they relate to their related exhibition – are very rarely thematized in exhibitions’ reviews (see Coers, *Kunstkatalog-Katalogkunst*, 6, 9). Moreover, also art education’s specialists underestimate the relevance of the exhibition catalogue, an instrument on which they are rarely invited to work and that they rarely insist on co-curating. Nora Sternfeld, Professor of Curating and Mediating Art, School of Arts, Design and Architecture, Aalto University, in conversation with the author, Düsseldorf, January 20, 2016. See also Cramer, *Kunstvermittlung in Ausstellungskatalogen*, 198.

novelist Umberto Eco (1932-2016) affirmed in his book *Vertigine della lista*,³⁰⁶ the apparently insatiable attitude towards the production of verbal and visual lists is inherent to human beings since ancient times³⁰⁷ as it is the practice of collecting (along with Eco, collections could also interpreted as “liste di cose”³⁰⁸). The infinity of the list represents the way humans draw upon, measure, order, and thus comprehend not only the immeasurable dimension of the “infinito dell’estetica” but also that of the “infinito attuale”.³⁰⁹ The *infinito dell’estetica* concerns the feeling of what goes beyond us, while the *infinito attuale* concerns our relationship to *things* (i.e. objects, places, and so on); usually we perceive these *things* as being graspable, finished and countable, but their number is so abundant as to be uncountable or rather unintelligible. The concept of the catalogue then takes with it the human will, if not the necessity, to bring order, to be able to measure the world in which we live and to understand it.

Scholars tend to date the origins of the exhibition catalogue back to the pamphlets produced in the frame of the Parisian Salons in the 17th century and the antique sales catalogues of the 18th century.³¹⁰ However, some of them stress a much older lineage. Apparently following an 1863 thesis by the priest and librarian Anton Ruland (1809-1874)³¹¹ which had in fact already been reiterated by art historian Georg Friederich Koch (1920-1994) in the 1960s,³¹² at the beginning of the 2000s art historians Johannes Zahlten (1938-2010) and Dagmar Bosse presented the *Heiltumsbücher*, that is, illustrated relic books created during the late 15th and 16th century in Southern Germany and modern Austria, as the precursors of the modern illustrated collection and exhibition

³⁰⁶ Umberto Eco, *Vertigine della lista* (Milano: Bompiani, 2009). The book was prepared on the occasion of the festival *Le Louvre invite Umberto Eco: Vertige de la liste*, Musée du Louvre, Paris, November, 2 - December 13, 2009. It has been published contemporarily in numerous languages, including English. See Eco, *The Infinity of Lists*, trans. Alastair McEwen (New York: Rizzoli, 2009).

³⁰⁷ See Eco, *Vertigine della lista*, 9-35.

³⁰⁸ Eco, *Vertigine della lista*, 67.

³⁰⁹ See Eco, *Vertigine della lista*, 15.

³¹⁰ See, for example, Georg Friederich Koch, *Die Kunstaussstellung: Ihre Geschichte von den Anfängen bis zum Ausgang des 18. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter & Co., 1967), 149-157; Jean-Pierre Ciqui, “Éditorial,” *Les Cahiers du Musée National d’Art Moderne*, no. 56/57 (Été-Automne 1996): 3; Chastel, “Éditorial,” 4-7.

³¹¹ See Anton Ruland, “Über das Vorzeigen und Ausführen der Reliquien oder über die „Heiltumsfahrten der Vorzeit,” *Chilaneum* 2 (1963): 231-236, 285-295, 336-344, esp. 235.

³¹² See Koch, *Die Kunstaussstellung*, 149

catalogue.³¹³ In spite of this, art historian Livia Cárdenas, a top expert on the *Heiltumsbücher*, has never supported this genealogy.³¹⁴ She recognizes that there are structural analogies in favor of the genealogical bond between *Heiltumsbücher* and modern illustrated collection and exhibition catalogues. These analogies are, for example, that in both cases the intermingling of images and text facilitates the readers to follow the display and that both serve as mnemonic devices, allowing the readers to grasp the content of the show even after its end. However, she stresses two differences that she deems as crucial. First, with a few exceptions, no aesthetic impulse drives the development and the operation of the *Heiltumsbücher*. The second fundamental difference corresponds to the fact that the images printed in the relic books do not have to match the real objects as naturalistically as possible. In the *Heiltumsbücher* it is not rare to spot identical images that have the task of representing different objects (figure 3.1). This is because the purpose of these books was to enable the faithful to perceive and grasp the sacral dimension of the relic, not to notice and evaluate its aesthetical properties.³¹⁵

It is interesting to note that the efforts made by those who have attempted to reconstruct the history of the exhibition catalogue are based on two assumptions. The first assumption consists in the literal interpretation of the term catalogue: they presuppose the catalogue to be a list. The second assumption relates to the fact that they do not problematize the empirical concept of catalogue. In their research they simply apply the common sense understanding of the very object they are trying to historicize. Doing that, they put in use a definition of exhibition catalogue based on the transposition of both the literal meaning of the term *catalogue* as a list and the implicit knowhow they have acquired as *users* of this instrument. However, the history of this

³¹³ See Johannes Zahlten, "Prodromus. Vorläufer des illustrierten Sammlungskatalogs. Eine Skizze," in *Der Ausstellungskatalog*, 9-24, especially 9-11; Dagmar Bosse, "Souvenir, Dokument und Substitut. Die Abbildung im Ausstellungskatalog," in *Der Ausstellungskatalog*, 33-56, especially 33-36. Art historian Karin Mihatsch has recently recapped this thesis in the first section of her study *Der Ausstellungskatalog 2.0*. See Mihatsch, *Der Ausstellungskatalog 2.0*, 15-188, especially 39-42.

³¹⁴ See Livia Cárdenas, *Die Textur des Bildes: das Heiltumsbuch im Kontext religiöser Medialität des Spätmittelalters* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013).

³¹⁵ See Cárdenas, *Die Textur des Bildes*, 302-309. Note, that contemporary art exhibition catalogues tend to auratize the artworks they present. Paradoxically, this could be the conceptual link between the exhibition catalogue and the *Heiltumsbuch*.

instrument shows a development that makes these two premises paradoxical. This is why I propose putting on stand-by for a moment what one could call *an analytical or conceptual approach*, that is, the necessity to define a normative set of attributes of the exhibition catalogue in order to be able to understand its characteristics and historical transformations. Rather, and somehow paradoxically, I would like to focus on a fragment of this story which I believe to be particularly revealing of what one might call the *history* of this instrument, to get to unravel the paradox behind its univocal definition.

3.2. 1988

According to art historian, curator and art publisher Ernst Goldschmidt (1906-1992) the year 1988 is to be considered as a seminal moment in the recognition of the increasing importance of the exhibition catalogue within the field of art publishing for three reasons.³¹⁶ First, in February the prestigious and international *Prix Minda de Gunzburg* was awarded for the first time, honoring the author/s of the best exhibition catalogue published during the past calendar year.³¹⁷ Second, the first number of *Catalogus*, a trimestral illustrated bibliographical bulletin dedicated entirely to exhibition catalogues was released in September.³¹⁸ Third, at the beginning of November the third European convention of the art libraries of the International Federation of Library Association and Institution (henceforth IFLA) took place in Florence, its theme being *I cataloghi delle esposizioni*.³¹⁹

³¹⁶ See Ernst Goldschmidt, "Editorial," *Catalogus*, no. 3 (Printemps 1989), n.p.

³¹⁷ Businessman and philanthropist Alain de Gunzburg (together with his sons Jean and Charles) founded the prize to honor the memory of his wife Aileen Bronfman de Gunzburg (known as Minda). See "Lois, concours, colloques..." *Histoire de l'Art* 1, no. 1 (Juin 1988): 171-172. Minda de Gunzburg had passed away in the summer of 1985 after having spent a life in promoting the discipline of art history through her cultural foundation *Association de Soutien et de Diffusion d'Art* (ASDA) which was active in France, Canada and the U.S.A. See Roderick MacLeod and Eric John Abrahamson, *Spirited commitment: the Samuel and Saidye Bronfman Family* (Montréal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 42; Glenn Fowler, "Baroness Aileen Bronfman De Gunzburg, 60," *The New York Times*, July 3, 1985, <http://www.nytimes.com/1985/07/03/nyregion/baroness-aileen-bronfman-de-gunzburg-60.html> (last access October 19, 2015).

³¹⁸ See *Catalogus: Bulletin bibliographique trimestriel illustré de récents catalogues d'art contemporain* no. 1 (Automne 1988).

³¹⁹ See Lazzi, Leckey, and Calcagni Abrami, eds., *I cataloghi delle esposizioni*.

A fourth event, which also took place in late 1988, shall be added to this list. In November art historian and Louvre director to be Pierre Rosenberg was invited to give a lecture at the Centre Pompidou in the frame of the series *L'Exposition et l'histoire de l'art*.³²⁰ Recognizing the key role that the exhibition catalogue has played, especially after 1945, in the way in which art history has been made and written, he devoted his lecture to this instrument.

These four events and their related implications are discussed here to emphasize the importance within the field of art history and its related disciplines of a tool that in the previous years had relentlessly increased its role but of which the definition, scope, characteristics, responsibilities and potentialities had only been sporadically discussed up to that moment. Within this picture, 1988 was a remarkable year. An in-depth discussion of these four events permits one to track and better understand the amplitude of the discourse surrounding the exhibition catalogue in the late 1980s, that is, during the period coinciding with Matthew Barney's formative years and with the sudden launch of his career.

3.2.1 Prix Minda de Gunzburg

Consecrating "un catalogue d'exposition comme un prix littéraire un roman"³²¹ and endowed with the great sum of \$25.000, the *Prix Minda de Gunzburg*, that is, the newly founded annual award dedicated to the memory of art historian and philanthropist Minda de Gunzburg (1925-1985), was to be assigned to the author/s of the best exhibition catalogue of the year on the basis of the scientific merit of the publication. To be accepted in the competition, the catalogues were to be produced in the framework of a temporary exhibition (i.e. museums' and collections' catalogues were excluded) "consacré à l'art

³²⁰ His lecture was published the subsequent year as Rosenberg, "L'Apport des Expositions et de leurs Catalogues à l'Histoire de l'Art," *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne*, no. 29 (Automne 1989): 49-56. Issue no. 29 of *Les Cahiers du MNAM* bears the title *En Revenant de l'Expo*. It collects "l'essentiel des contributions" (Yves Michaud, "Éditorial," 3) presented at the lecture series, that is, beside Rosenberg's text, the ones by Werner Hoffman, Yves Michaud, Rosalind Krauss, Yve-Alain Bois, and Hubert Damisch.

³²¹ Hélène Lassalle, "Le Prix Minda de Gunzburg," *Artefactum* 5, no. 23 (April/May, 1988): 49.

occidental du Moyen Age au XX^e siècle, à l'exception des artistes vivants"³²² and be published during the calendar year of the awarding of the prize. All the exhibition catalogues which respected these consigns and were sent to the Parisian headquarters of the *Association de Soutien Diffusion d'Art* (ASDA), the association which Ms. de Gunzburg had founded in 1970 to promote art and its history, participated in the selection.³²³ The jury was composed of an international panel of experts³²⁴ who judged the publications on the basis of their scientific merit, to be measured in terms of "qualités d'érudition, de rigueur critique et de présentation".³²⁵ However, as art historian and museum professional Hélène Lassalle pointed out in her report of the first award ceremony of the prize which took place in Paris on the 23th of February 1988, the superiority of the winning catalogues resided not only in their scientific excellence but, above all, on the ability of their creator/s to coordinate and organize the "données cognitive, à l'intérieur de la parcellisation contraignante

³²² "Prix Minda de Gunzburg," *Histoire de l'Art* 1, no. 1 (Juin 1988): 172.

³²³ According to the regulation, to be considered for the prize, the catalogue was to be sent before the 20th of January of the following year (that is before January 20, 1989 to compete for the 1988 edition). However, the regulation also stated that the jury had reserved the right to consider the exhibition catalogues received after that date. See "Prix Minda de Gunzburg," 172.

³²⁴ The experts for the year 1987 were Avigdor Arikha, Marco Chiarini, Sydney Freedberg, Michel Laclotte, Neil MacGregor, Konrad Oberhuber, Pierre Rosenberg, Willibald Saüerlander, Seymour Slive, and Jean Sutherland-Boggs. According to the regulation of the award, every three years a member of the jury was to be replaced by draw. Paradoxically, in the jury of the prize dedicated to a woman and an art historian who spent more than 30 years of her life in promoting the discipline, there is only one woman, the Canadian art historian, Degas specialist and director of several North American art museums Jean Sutherland-Boggs. This mirrors the fact that, among many other disciplines, the history of art has been a male-ruled domain. In this respect, Minda de Gunzburg's commitment to the arts and their history is worthy of being rediscovered and valorized through further research.

³²⁵ "Prix Minda de Gunzburg," 172. Among the approximately 80 submitted catalogues, the prize for the year 1987 was assigned *ex-aequo* to the authors of two catalogues: Jonathan Alexander (and his team) for the catalogue of the exhibition *The Age of Chivalry, Art in the Plantagenet England 1200-1400* (Royal Academy of Arts, London, November 6, 1987 - March 8, 1988) and Alessandro Bagnoli (and his team) for *Scultura Dipinta, Maestri di Legname e Pittori a Siena 1250-1450* (Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena, July 16 - December 31, 1987). See "Prix Minda de Gunzburg," 172; Jonathan Alexander and Paul Binski, eds., *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200-1400* (London: Royal Academy of Arts/Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1987); Alessandro Bagnoli and Roberto Bartolini, eds., *Scultura Dipinta: Maestri di legname e pittori a Siena 1250-1450* (Firenze: Centro Di, 1987). Note, that the two books are very different. The former is a monumental publication (29 x 22 x 3,4 cm; 2,3 Kg) divided into two sections: the first presenting 28 thematic essays written by different specialists in the fields (20-191) and the second consisting of the catalogue of the 748 objects that were on show, ordered following the 12 thematic rooms in which their display was organized (193-540). The latter, much more humble, presents the results of the restoration campaign which permitted the study of the wooden sculptures produced in the Siena area between 1250 and 1450 that once devoided of their baroque superstructure they were rediscovered (if not re-invented).

du catalogue, pour réinventer un espace, construire une vision, une véritable travail de création.”³²⁶ Apparently, then, what made (and still makes) the extraordinariness of an exhibition catalogue was its ability to embody, visualize and transmit effectively (through the book format) the cognitive capital expressed in its related exhibition.

In this respect, it is important to stress that the regulation of the award stated clearly that the prize was in no way destined to honor a specific exhibition but only the catalogue of the same. In so doing, the prestigious international prize stated a relative but factual independence of the exhibition catalogue *vis à vis* the exhibition in the framework of which it was published. Moreover, celebrating the author/s of one or more exhibition catalogues, that is, acknowledging their commitment to the advancement of art historical knowledge, the prize indirectly promoted this type of publication as a fundamental instrument for the discipline of art history.

Beyond the fact that the purely Western focus of the award testified that the much discussed *global turn* in the arts and their history was still on its way in the 1980s,³²⁷ excluding the catalogues of exhibitions dedicated to the work by living artists from the competition, the prize apparently endorsed a two-fold idea. On the one hand, it reiterated what had long been (and in much respect still is) an *unspoken rule* of the history of art as a discipline: as long as artists are alive, and thus their work is still open and subjected to modifications, it is not possible to historicize it. On the other hand, it stated the fact that, probably by virtue of the above-mentioned *unspoken rule* and due to the fact that living artists could be influentially active in the process of the historicization of their work, it is not possible to recognize scientific value in contemporary art exhibition catalogues.

³²⁶ Lassalle, “Le Prix Minda de Gunzburg,” 51.

³²⁷ For an assessment of the multifaceted and problematic debate on issues related to a possible *global art history*, see Jill H. Casid and Aruna D’Souza, *Art History in the Wake of the Global Turn* (Williamstown, MA: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, 2014). For an overview of the *global turn* in contemporary art since 1989, see Hans Belting, Andrea Buddensieg, and Peter Weibel, eds., *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* (Karlsruhe/Cambridge, MA: ZKM | Center for Art and Media Karlsruhe/The MIT Press, 2013).

3.2.2. *Catalogus*

The release of *Catalogus*, a rich bibliographical index of exhibition catalogues published after 1987³²⁸ dedicated to “l’art et les artistes du XX^e siècle avec l’accent sur l’art contemporain”³²⁹ could be seen as opposing the *bush league* status associated with the catalogues of contemporary art exhibitions within the framework of the *Prix Minda de Gunzburg*. Since September 1988 the bulletin was published as the inseparable supplement of the prestigious scholarly journal *Les Cahiers du Musée National d’Art Moderne* under the auspices of the recently inaugurated Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques (henceforth IHEAP), that is, the experimental advanced school of arts of the City of Paris that had been conceived of in the mid-1980s by art historian, museum director, and cultural impresario Pontus Hulten (1924-2006), who at the time served as its director.³³⁰

Hulten had been fascinated with printed matter and its relevance within the arts, for their transmission, as well as communication since the beginning of the 1950s.³³¹ As evidenced by the innovative and diversified nature of the

³²⁸ See Evelyne Pomey, “Bulletin Bibliographique illustré de récents catalogues d’expositions d’art contemporain,” in *I cataloghi delle esposizioni*, 130.

³²⁹ Goldschmit, “Editorial,” n.p.

³³⁰ The IHEAP was officially founded on the 12th of September 1985 under the auspices of the City of Paris which economically subsidized it. Moreover, the institute could benefit from the subventions by the Ministère de la Culture, de la Communication, des Grands Travaux et du Bicentenaire, plus of that of a number of private sponsors such as the Fondation Cartier pour l’Art Contemporain, Paris; the J. Paul Getty Trust, Los Angeles; Leo Goldschmidt, Bruxelles; Paul N. Goldschmidt, Monaco; and Jean de Menil, Huston. See Pomey, “Bulletin Bibliographique illustré de récents catalogues d’expositions d’art contemporain,” 128. On the IHEAP, its history and activities see also: IHEAP, “Histoire de l’institut: Le Projet Iheap d’origine,” <http://iheap.fr/historique/> (last access October 11, 2015) and Marie-Sophie Boulan, ed., *Quand les artistes font école: vingt-quatre journées de l’Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques*, 2vols. (Paris/Marseille: Amis de l’Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques and Centre Pompidou/Musées de Marseille, 2004).

³³¹ In a dialogue with Lutz Jahre, Hulten stressed the relevance of these formative years, much of which he spent in Paris. See Jahre, “Ein Gespräch mit Pontus Hulten,” in Jahre, *Das gedruckte Museum von Pontus Hulten*, 11-28. It was in the French capital that he encountered for the first time Marcel Duchamp’s *La Mariée mise à nu par ses célibataires, même* (1934) (also known as *La Boîte verte* or *The Green Box*). Hultén described this encounter in terms of a “Kulturschock” that would play a fundamental role for his future approach with art, its exhibiting culture, and the exhibition catalogue; apparently, *The Green Box* amazed him not really because of its novelty but mainly because of the way in which Duchamp decided to present it and its content: “mich hatte die *Boîte verte* sehr beeindruckt [...]. Nicht nur was drinnen ist, sondern auch, wie das präsentiert wird, mit dieser Schönheit in allen Kleinigkeiten.” Jahre, “Ein Gespräch mit Pontus Hulten,” 26. According to Hultén, during one of his visits to the Bibliothèque Sainte Genèviève, he asked for all the materials catalogued under the name of Marcel Duchamp. See Jahre, “Ein Gespräch mit Pontus Hulten,” 26. Among them he found *The Green Box*, the second of

exhibition catalogues he had supervised, authored and/or produced during his directorship of the Moderna Museet in Stockholm (1960-1973)³³² and throughout his entire career, Hulten had considered the exhibition catalogue as a fundamental tool for a variety of reasons. As “Vehikel zur Erweiterung der Ausstellung über die Grenzen des Museums hinaus”³³³ exhibition catalogues could be seen as very effective tools for publicity but also as the perfect “kleine Gaben”³³⁴ through which one could make and keep visitors faithful museum customers. This is partially the reason why for him it had always been critical that exhibition catalogues were affordable: the loyalization of the visitors should be in fact not merely linked to the economic sustainability of the museum but, more importantly, to its educational mission. In this regard, Hulten was persuaded that a communicative, optically, and haptically engaging exhibition catalogue would facilitate this mission: “wenn der Katalog optisch und haptisch attraktiv [...] [wäre], so schien es mir jedenfalls, würde dass die Leute nicht davon abhalten, ihn auch zu lesen.”³³⁵ However, he was keen to recognize that these instruments are not only to be considered as “Informationsmittel, sondern auch als ästhetische Objekte, denen ein Gehalt innenwohnt, der über die reine Wissenvermittlung hinausgeht.”³³⁶

the four boxes created by Duchamp during his life. *The Green Box* consists of one color plate and 93 facsimiles of notes, drawings, and photographs (dated 1911-1915) inside a cardboard box (2,2 x 28 x 33,2 cm), lined with green silk and published by Edition Rose Selavy, Paris in September 1934 in an edition of 320 copies (300 regular and 20 deluxe ones, which contain also an original). See Arturo Schwarz, *The Complete Works of Marcel Duchamp* (1969), 3rd rev. ed., 2vols (New York: Delano Greenidge Editions, 1997), 2, 723-724. Given the fact that at the moment there is no trace of any copy of *The Green Box* in the catalogue of the library in question, it is neither possible to understand which copy of the work Hulten had encountered nor if he really got to know the work at the Bibliothèque Sainte Genèviève, nor if the work was simply relocated, or even why not, along with Duchamp’s predilection for mystery, whether it was taken away from the library in unsuspected times. On the relevance of the Bibliothèque Sainte Genèviève for Duchamp (who worked there as a librarian from November 1913 to May 1914) and his work, see Yves Peyre and Evelyne Toussaint, *Duchamp à la Bibilothèque Sainte-Genèviève* (Paris: Editions du Regard, 2014).

³³² See Martin Sundberg, “Between Experiment and Everyday Life: The Exhibiton Catalogues of Moderna Museet,” in *The History Book: On Moderna Museet 1958-2008*, ed. Anna Tellgren (Stockholm/Göttingen: Moderna Museet/Steidl, 2008), 299-328.

³³³ Jahre, “Zur Geschichte des Ausstellungskataloges am Beispiel der Publikationen von Pontus Hulten,” 31.

³³⁴ Jahre, “Ein Gespräch mit Pontus Hulten,” 27.

³³⁵ Hultén, “Über Ausstellungskataloge,” 177.

³³⁶ Jahre, “Zur Geschichte des Ausstellungskataloges am Beispiel der Publikationen von Pontus Hulten,” 31.

In *Über Ausstellungskataloge*, a text written in the early 1990s on the occasion of a book publication dedicated to his exhibition catalogues' production, Hulten emphasizes the cultural weight of these instruments, stressing their collective character but also, and at the same time, their relevance for the professional/s who are responsible for it.³³⁷ The production of an exhibition catalogue is in fact a business hardly attributable to a single individual but, contemporarily, the collective effort made by writer/s, editors, graphic-designers, photographers, photo-editors, printers, binders, and publishers (among others!) is strategically relevant for the curator/s responsible for the exhibition and the related publication. Some of Hulten's affirmations such as, for example, the one asserting that within the pages of the catalogue curators can express thoughts without entering into conflict with the integrity of the artworks on show ("im Katalog kann sich der Kurator ausdrücken und Informationen vermitteln, ohne mit der Integrität der Kunstwerke in der Ausstellung in Konflikt zu kommen"³³⁸) seem to ill-conceal a *naïveté* which is hardly attributable to such a dynamic figure with substantial work behind him. However, he is well aware of the key role that the exhibition catalogue has played, especially from the 1980s onward, for the emerging professional figure of the curators, for their image and above all, for the power they can exercise inside and outside the institutions they serve: "in vielen Fällen, und besonders in den letzten Jahren ist der Katalog zumindest für den Kurator so wichtig geworden wie die Ausstellung selbst."³³⁹ Hulten, who from the beginning of his career had tried, whenever possible, to actively involve the artists in the conceptualization and production of the respective exhibition catalogues, goes so far as to ascribing magical faculties to it: "Ein Katalog ist ein Buch, und ein Buch ist ein Gegenstand, ein Gegenstand mit seinem eigenen Recht auf Character und Individualität. [...] Es besthet offenkundig eine bestimmte Befriedigung darin, eine große Menge von einzelnen Dingen zu formen, geschriebenen [sic.] Ideen und Inhalten eine optische Form zu geben, das Unsichtbare zu formulieren."³⁴⁰ Beyond any magic faculties attributed by Hulten

³³⁷ Hulten, "Über Ausstellungskataloge," 173-177.

³³⁸ Hulten, "Über Ausstellungskataloge," 173.

³³⁹ Hulten, "Über Ausstellungskataloge," 173.

³⁴⁰ Hulten, "Über Ausstellungskataloge," 177.

to the exhibition catalogue, he describes this instrument also as the monument of the exhibition, as well as the only significant evidence once the exhibition comes to an end: “der Katalog ist auch das Denkmal der Ausstellung, er ist der Teil, der um die ganze Welt reisen kann, und »er ist« der einzig bedeutende Teil, der bleiben wird, wenn die Ausstellung zu Ende ist.”³⁴¹

Given the acknowledged significance that Hulten had credited to the instrument of the catalogue since the very beginning of his career, his great capabilities as a cultural impresario, and the promising innovative energies within the IHEAP, it is not surprising that art historian, curator and art publisher Ernst Goldschmidt, a fascinating intellectual personality whose activities merit being rediscovered and studied, decided to donate his exhibition catalogues’ collection to the newly-founded Parisian institution. The bulletin *Catalogus* was in fact the emanation of the Centre de recherche documentaire Ernst Goldschmidt, the research center created as an integral part of IHEAP around the approximately 16,000 exhibition catalogues and documents donated by Goldschmidt to the institution.³⁴² According to the agreement signed by Goldschmidt and Hulten (representing the IHEAP) on the 24th of September 1987, Goldschmidt decided, on the occasion of his 80th birthday, to hand over his collection of exhibition catalogues to the service of the artistic community, transferring it to the IHEAP.³⁴³ For its part, the IHEAP, an institution that had among its missions that of gathering documentation on the contemporary artistic creation with particular reference to its interrelationships with the humanities and the natural sciences, committed itself to creating a computerized catalogue of the entire collection, and to assuring its searchability through the artist’s name, as well as through topographical, chronological or thematic key words.³⁴⁴ More importantly, the institute took over and secured the publication of *Catalogus*, thereby ensuring the continuity, as well as the

³⁴¹ Hulten, “Über Ausstellungskataloge,” 173.

³⁴² Hélène Lassalle, “Cataloguer les catalogues ou la collection sublimée: la naissance de la fondation Goldschmidt,” in *Les Collections: fables et programmes*, ed. Jacques Guillerme, 201-210 (Seyssel: Editions Champ Vallon, 1993).

³⁴³ See Lassalle, “Cataloguer les catalogues ou la collection sublimée,” 201-203.

³⁴⁴ See Lassalle, “Cataloguer les catalogues ou la collection sublimée,” 201-202. Note, that the collection was accessible only to IHEAP’s students and professors.

survival of the activities Goldschmidt had undertaken for decades to support the promotion and the dissemination of this tool.

3.2.2.1 *Les Arts Plastiques* (1947-1954)

Already since 1947 Goldschmidt had endorsed the exhibition catalogue through the publication of an international bibliography exclusively dedicated to this instrument. The *Bibliographie internationale de catalogues d'expositions* (henceforth, the *Bibliographie*) appeared for the first time within the pages of issue no. 8-9 (November-December 1947)³⁴⁵ of *Les Arts Plastiques* (1947-1954), the art magazine he had initiated and directed together with cultural animator Luc Haesaerts.³⁴⁶ This 14,5 x 22 cm refined international magazine was published in Brussels by the Éditions de la Connaissance, a publishing house specialized in art books and exhibition catalogues which Goldschmidt had founded in 1937. The main aim behind the publication of the *Bibliographie* was to make the readers aware of the existence of these “document[s] très précieux contenant souvent des informations et des reproductions inédites”³⁴⁷ and to help them in their research, providing information on the listed volumes, in a time when exhibition catalogues were not expected to be found in any other bibliography and were available only at the institution where the respective show was taking place, and this, only during the exhibition.

In order to make the list as complete as possible, all the institutions responsible for organizing exhibitions and producing their catalogues were invited to send a copy of their book(let)s³⁴⁸ to the Éditions de la Connaissance, not forgetting to specify the sale price. The editorial team would assign a number to every received publication and list them alphabetically by title,

³⁴⁵ See “Bibliographie Internationale de Catalogue d’Expositions,” *Les Arts Plastiques* 1, no. 8-9 (Novembre-Décembre 1947): 131-132.

³⁴⁶ The magazine *Les Arts Plastiques* was published within the framework of the activities of the *Seminaire des Arts*, the non-profit association founded in 1944 at the Palais de Beaux-Arts in Brussel with the aim of offering experimental classes in aesthetics, visual arts, music, literature, and cinema in which artists, professionals and the interested public could enrich their cultural background. See Robert Wangermée, *André Souris et le complexe d’Orphée: entre surrealisme et musique sérielle* (Liège: Pierre Mardaga éditeur, 1995), 217-218.

³⁴⁷ “Bibliographie internationale des catalogues d’exposition,” *Les Arts Plastiques* 1, no. 8-9 (Novembre-Décembre 1947): 131.

³⁴⁸ Note, that the time the number of pages of an exhibition catalogue could oscillate between 8 and around 100, with the great majority of the publications oscillating between 20 and 50.

taking care to group them by countries and, in most cases, also by city of provenance. For every book a series of details are reported which usually consists of: title, name of the institution in which the show took place, date of publication, possibly the name of the authors of the texts (generally just one who authored the introduction or the preface), the measures of the volume as well as the number of pages and illustrations, the reference of the publishing house (even if this applied very rarely, given that at the time the institution which organized the exhibition was generally also responsible for the publication of its catalogue), the price and the reference number within the *Bibliographie* itself.³⁴⁹ The listed exhibition catalogues were kept at the headquarters of the Éditions de la Connaissance, where they could be consulted upon request. Moreover, since the beginning of 1948 an additional service was offered to the readers: the possibility to order copies of the exhibition catalogues mentioned in the *Bibliographie* via the Brussel based publishing house.³⁵⁰

The success of the *Bibliographie* was considerable if one considers that it became more and more international, listing exhibition catalogues published not only in several European countries,³⁵¹ but also in Argentina, Brazil, the U.S.A., Canada, Angola, Australia, and New Zealand. Furthermore, the Bibliography was featured in every issue of *Les Arts Plastiques*, even if from 1949 the magazine was issued at irregular time intervals and less frequently until its final closure in 1954.³⁵²

³⁴⁹ The books were assigned increasing numbers which apparently mirrored the chronology of their arrival at the publishing house's offices.

³⁵⁰ See "Bibliographie Internationale de Catalogue d'Expositions," *Les Arts Plastiques* 2, no. 1-2 (Janvier-Février 1948): 86. To make a request, the readers should just communicate the reference number of the selected catalogue/s and pay the related sale price plus 15% for expenses.

³⁵¹ Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Spain, Sweden, and the U.K.

³⁵² Although apparently the economic and administrative conditions of the magazine were deteriorating, in the Autumn of 1949 readers were given the news that, following the success of the *Bibliographie*, the editors of the magazine made contact with the Société Auxiliaire des Expositions du Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in order to create the *Centre International du Catalogue d'Exposition* (henceforth the *Centre*) and thus developing "d'une façon plus systématique et scientifique" the project undertaken with the Bibliography. More research deserves to be made around this initiative to verify if, when, and under which circumstances the *Centre* was put into operation at the Palais des Beaux-Arts. What is certain is that by 1951 the *Centre* was transferred to the Librairie des Galeries (2, Galerie du Roi, Brussels). Henceforth, the exhibition catalogues in the list would be made available through the intermediary of this

3.2.2.2 *Quadrum* (1956-1966)

3.2.2.2.1 The Magazine and its Performative-Enactive Dimension

Despite the cessation of *Les Arts Plastiques*, Goldschmidt continued to valorize the exhibition catalogue as an aesthetic and epistemic instrument for information, making his bibliographical project resurface, even if intermittently and in different forms, within the pages of the art magazine *Quadrum* (1956-1966). *Quadrum* is the 21 x 26,5 cm international,³⁵³ multilingual,³⁵⁴ high-quality, lavishly illustrated and experimentally laid-out biannual art magazine which he founded in 1956 together with the Venetian publisher Bruno Alfieri,³⁵⁵ with the aim of defending, spreading, and thus affirming the currents of contemporary art they considered truly modern (that is, abstraction and, subsequently, informal, optical, kinetic, and pop art).³⁵⁶

Within the magazine, graphic design, illustrations, paper, and printing are always very refined and diversified according to the theme of the different articles, not only to best convey their contents and to mediate at best the experience or the concepts they address, but even more to actively engage the readers and their minds, providing the tools to enactively comprehend their

bookstore. See "Bibliographie Internationale de Catalogue d'Expositions," *Les Arts Plastiques* 3, no. 9-10 (Septembre-Octobre 1949): 406. In this respect, it is to be reported that from early 1953 the *Bibliographie* was always followed by a page in which the editorial board noted the title and the respective order number of some catalogues that stand out "pour leur valeur documentaire." "Bibliographie Internationale de Catalogue d'Expositions," *Les Arts Plastiques* 6, n. 1 (Janvier-Février 1953): 81.

³⁵³ The international editorial board of *Quadrum* was formed by leading academics and professionals from the likes of, among other: Paul Fierens and Émile Langui (Belgium); Will Grohmann and Ewald Rathke (Germany); Georges Salles, Maurice Jardot, and Jean Leymarie (France); Herbert Read and Josef Paul Hodin (U.K.); Umbro Apollonio and Giulio Carlo Argan (Italy); Abraham Marie Hammacher and Hans Ludwig Cohn Jaffé (Netherlands); Georg Schmidt and Maria Netter (Switzerland); James Johnson Sweeney and Robert Goldwater (U.S.A.). According to art historian Yves Chevretil-Desbiolles, Goldschmidt had taken the United Nations Organization as a model for the magazine's editorial board. See Yves Chevretil-Desbiolles, "Quadrum et Ernst Goldschmidt," in *La Revue des revues - Revue internationale d'histoire de l'art et de bibliographie* 41, no. 41 (2009): 97-100.

³⁵⁴ The articles are in French, Italian, English and German. Translations and summaries are provided at the end, in English or French.

³⁵⁵ Alfieri, a Venetian librarian and publisher who at the time was responsible for the publication of the catalogues of the Venice Biennale, co-directed the magazine until 1959.

³⁵⁶ On *Quadrum*, its international relevance and history as well as on the eminent role played by the city of Brussels in the constitution and diffusion of art in Europe at that time, see Florence Hespel, ed., *Quadrum, revue internationale d'art moderne (1956 - 1966)* (Gand: Snoeck, 2007).

messages. Among the numerous exquisite examples that could be brought to attention in this regard, it is worth mentioning Willem Sandberg's article *Mondrian: L'organisation de l'espace* (1956).³⁵⁷ Sandberg's contribution addresses the survey of Mondrian's abstract development which he himself had mounted that same year at the XXVIII Venice Biennale.³⁵⁸ As he was used to do at the Stedelijk Museum Amsterdam, the museum he directed from 1945 to 1962, Sandberg (1897-1984) who was also a well-known typographer and graphic designer, personally produced the textual content and organized the visuals as well as the layout of his *Quadrum's* article, having care to exploit at best the performative features of the printed page.³⁵⁹ The originality of Sandberg's contribution lies not solely in the knowledgeable text, the straight typography, the presence of high quality b/w and color images, the clear layout, and the presence of full biographical information complete with a close up photo of the artist; it lies rather with the intention of providing the readers with the possibility of folding the leporello-like pages of his contribution, thus building an approximate b/w miniature-reconstruction of Mondrian's room through photographic reproductions of the twenty-five paintings created between 1910 and 1945 which one could encounter in the Sala LXVI of the 1956 Venice Biennale (figures 3.2 a-c).³⁶⁰ Sandberg's contribution is not bound in the magazine; it can be taken away and manipulated as an independent object. Bending the pages of *Quadrum* its readers are then invited to mediate the experience or recall to memory the experience of Mondrian's room at the Biennale, despite – when folding the pages of the magazine – building a space which is quadrangular whereas the Venetian exhibition space was hexagonal! However, on closer look, what Sandberg and the editors of *Quadrum* had at

³⁵⁷ See Willem Sandberg, "Mondrian: L'organisation de l'espace," *Quadrum*, no. 2 (1956): 119-126.

³⁵⁸ See *XXVII Biennale di Venezia*, 4th rev. ed. (Venezia: Alfieri, 1956), 4-5, 316-319.

³⁵⁹ On Sandberg's activities as a typographer and graphic designer as well as on his collection policy as director of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam (1945-1962) see Ad Petersen and Pieter Brattinga, eds., *Sandberg: a Documentary* (Amsterdam: Kosmos, 1975); Caroline Roodenburg-Schadd, *Expressie en ordening: Het verzamelbeleid van Willem Sandberg voor het Stedelijk Museum 1945-1962* (Amsterdam/Rotterdam: Stedelijk Museum/NAi Uitgevers, 2004).

³⁶⁰ Note, that Sandberg's article circulated also as a brochure accompanying the first solo exhibition of the artist in France: *Mondrian*, Paris, Galerie Denise René, March 8-April 8, 1957. See Ad Petersen, *Sandberg, Designer and Director of the Stedelijk* (Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2004), 110 and Catherine Millet, ed., *Denise Renée présente: mes années cinquante* (Paris: Galerie Denise René, 1988), 59-64.

stake was something more than providing a mediated experience of the exhibition or a mnemotechnic device through which one could recall the visit of the show. They wanted to create a paper version of the exhibition complemented with additional visual and textual information, thus beautifully framed in a context of knowledge. Inviting the readers to play with the two-dimensionality of the printed page, to literally build the tri-dimensional space of the exhibition within the four-dimension of time, they managed to offer them the possibility of enacting the different qualities and dimensions implied by the concept of space thus enactively comprehending Mondrian's *Weltanschauung* and the message of the exhibition. Mondrian moved from figuration toward geometrical abstraction exploring the multi-dimensionality of space in painting; the readers are invited to explore the very concept of geometrical abstraction and the possibilities it offers to imagine, rebuild and encounter the space and its qualities towards the printed page.³⁶¹

3.2.2.2.2 The Place of the Exhibition Catalogue

From its first issue, the magazine *Quadrum* presents the section *Les Expositions* where the reviews of major exhibitions of the past six months are gathered together, sometimes accompanied by an image of one of the displayed

³⁶¹ Other relevant examples of *Quadrum's* sophistication and enactive experimental approach could be: the verbi-visual organization of Hans Arp, "Franz Müller Drahtfrühling," *Quadrum*, no. 1 (1956): 88-94; the color photographs printed on very lucid paper and glued into the magazine to play at best the materiality of the stained-glass created by different contemporary artists such as Matisse and Sophie Tauber-Arp in France, François Mathey, "Situation du Vitrail en France," *Quadrum*, no. 4 (1957): 85-110; the colored paper used to point out that the text printed on it is given a special status, as in the case of the insertion of blue pages on which an extract of "Das unbekannte in der Kunst" by Willi Baumeister is printed (in the original German version with the French translation aside), Willi Baumeister "Das unbekannte in der Kunst," *Quadrum*, no. 8 (1960): 65-68; the implementation of rough porous paper to print graphic works, together with the technique of the *heliogravure* to print artistic photographs and engravings: Guy Habasque, "Vasarely et la plastique cinétique," *Quadrum*, no. 3 (1957): 63-68 (it should to be noted that a transparent acetate sheet printed with a special black pattern is also part of the article and should be moved to activate the effects of the optical patterns printed by Vasarely within the pages of the magazine); Georg Schmidt and Jean Cocteau, "Lucien Clergue," *Quadrum*, no. 3 (1957): 127-134 and Will Grohman, "Das Graphische Werk von Wols," *Quadrum*, no. 6 (1959): 95-118; the use of folded pages to represent in full and with satisfactory detail huge works such as Robert Rauschenberg's "Barge" (1963) (a painting measuring 80x389cm) or Mirò (and Josep Llorens Artigas)'s untitled ceramic frieze created in 1964 for the University of St. Gallen: Alain Jouffroy and Robert Rauschenberg, "Barge," *Quadrum*, no. 15 (1963): 99-106; Carl Huber, "Architektur und freie Kunst in der neuen Hochschule St. Gallen (II)," *Quadrum*, no. 19 (1965): 133-144.

works.³⁶² At the end of each review the reader is informed of the presence of an exhibition catalogue of which the content and formal features are briefly described in terms of: measures, names of the author/s of the text/s, presence of biographical or bibliographical information, the number and the quality of b/w and color illustrations (that is, more or less in the same terms, but with slightly more attention on the content, than in the previous *Bibliographie* published within *Les Arts Plastiques*).³⁶³

Already from the third issue of the magazine (1957), however, the policy of the exhibitions' reviews changes. These are no longer presented individually together with basic information on their catalogues but in longer reviews per country. Well-informed art historians, art critics, and professionals among the best of their respective nations, who discuss the most relevant exhibitions of their countries' art centers, sign them. Within this new format, there is no room for information concerning the presence of exhibition catalogues. The only explicit reference to these instruments as such appears to be the article *En marge de l'édition d'art: Les Catalogues d'Expositions*, written by art critic Roger van Gindertael at the end of the art books reviews' section of issue no. 10 (1961).³⁶⁴ Given its proximity to the issues discussed almost contemporarily by Rosenberg in his article *Art Books, Book Art, Art* (1959-1960) which have been presented in the first chapter of this study, van Gindertael's text and its implications are now discussed briefly by comparing them against the backdrop of those by Rosenberg (§ 1.3). In a direction diametrically opposite to that of Rosenberg, who had condemned the irresistible rise of art books (among which he counted also exhibition catalogues) as a symptom and at the same time as one of the triggers of the mutation that made art become a passive document of

³⁶² Actually the section *Les Expositions* is a sub-section of a wider section entitled *Documentation* which comprehends, among other things, short articles on the practice of not yet affirmed contemporary artists, architectural and museological studies of recently inaugurated museums or cultural institutions, as well as the sections dedicated to the review of exhibitions and books.

³⁶³ As already the case in *Les Arts Plastiques* the exhibition catalogues are separated from the most valuable art books of the period that are reviewed in the rubric *Les Livres*. The section *Les Livres* (also indexed as a part of the larger section entitled *Documentation*) follows the one dedicated to exhibitions in every issue of the magazine until no. 19, 1965. In this respect, one should note that *Les Livres* is a merely textual section that never presents illustrations of any kind.

³⁶⁴ See Roger van Gindertael, "En marge de l'édition d'art: Les Catalogues d'Expositions," *Quadrum*, no. 10 (1961): 184-187.

culture, van Gindertael deprecated the scarcity of art publishers willing to engage – risking their capital and maybe also their reputation – in the publication of art books dedicated to the work of little known or not yet fully established contemporary artists.³⁶⁵ In this respect, the exhibition catalogue had started to fill this gap, as the commitment of some particularly virtuous and active commercial Parisian galleries of the time would show. According to van Gindertael, despite and at the same time because these instruments are essential to the understanding and evaluation of the artworks offered to public appreciation but, and primarily, offered for sale to their wealthy admirers, commercial galleries were the institutions that had invested more in the exhibition catalogue, often producing high quality information tools that other organizations had not been bold enough to produce.

Along with Rosenberg, van Gindertael recognized the key role played by this instrument with which the public of the gallery usually entered in contact before encountering the work *face to face*: “de plus en plus envoyé en même temps que l’invitation ou remis au cours du vernissage, le catalogue a pour but de prévenir le visiteur éventuel, de renseigner l’amateur [...] et de le préparer à apprécier les œuvres”.³⁶⁶ The fact that exhibition catalogues were at the time increasingly sent by the galleries together with the invitations to the exhibition opening suggests that these were conceived of not only to attract the buyers’ appetite, but also to inform them and the general public better, thus enabling an improvement of their discernment skills. This could be interpreted as the two sides of a coin, or in this case, of a booklet: even if it was conceived of as an instrument to provide information and thus enhance knowledge, it is also an instrument through which capital can grow and be traded. What is meant here is that through these book(let)s material capital is operated to assure and enhance the immaterial capital of art and its related knowledge. If Rosenberg was very well aware of this, van Gindertael avoided discussing (and even acknowledging) the way in which the *instrument* of the exhibition catalogue changes the relationship of the public with the work of art and thus the very

³⁶⁵ It is interesting to note that both Rosenberg and van Gindertael thematize the recent inauguration of the series *Le Musée de Poche* (§ 1.3), the first in negative terms while the second, of course, in positive ones.

³⁶⁶ Van Gindertael, “En marge de l’édition d’art: Les Catalogues d’Expositions,” 184.

status of art, becoming not only *instrumental* in the artwork's experience and with art at large but also in the trading of art and its values.

With issue no. 15 (1963) *Quadrum* inaugurates a new section entitled *Grands Expositions*.³⁶⁷ Here the most relevant and influential exhibitions recently opened are individually presented on a single page specifically designed for the purpose. On the top of the page the readers encounter the title of the exhibition and the name of the city/ies in which it was held. Below one finds two black and white pictures placed side by side: the left one representing the cover of the exhibition catalogue and on the right an installation view of the show or, alternatively, a double spread of the book. Underneath these pictures one can read an excerpt of the text/s published in the catalogue (generally taken from the volume's introduction or preface and selected with the aim of giving an idea of the key concept/s, features, and scope of the exhibition itself). Furthermore, at the very bottom of the page the reader finds, on the left, the title, the location/s and the dates of the exhibition complemented on the right by information regarding its related publication (measures, number of pages, name of the author/s and title/s of their text/s, number of illustrations in b/w and in color, name of the artists included in the show or number of invited artists and works on show). Today, a reader might be surprised by the fact that there is no mention of specific publishing responsibility. This is not a means to avoid surreptitious advertising, but a feature of the time: in those years, the publishers of the catalogues still (and almost exclusively) were the museums and the institutions responsible for the organization of the show itself.

This special section, in which the exhibition catalogue, via the reproduction of its cover, introductory text, and extensive bibliographical information, is implemented to represent the show in question, is maintained in all the subsequent issues of the magazine. The many pages dedicated to the *great exhibitions* and their catalogues throughout the years seem to exemplify what Harold Rosenberg intends when he denounces an increasing number of exhibitions reiterating the book model, embodying not only its scientific and

³⁶⁷ Actually, and exceptionally, in this issue the section is entitled *Les Grands Expositions d'été* but for all the subsequent issues it will be titled *Grands Expositions*. See "Les Grands Expositions d'été," *Quadrum*, no. 15 (1963): 150-157. As it was already the case of the section *Les Expositions*, also this new section is indexed as being part of the larger section *Documentation*.

educational potentials but also its architecture (§1.3). However, these pages also stress the fact that the exhibition catalogue is increasingly assigned with the role of enacting its related exhibition in order to properly represent it, keep it alive, and literally stand for it after its definitive closure.

The page devoted to William C. Seitz's exhibition *The Responsive Eye* seems to be a perfect example in point because it visually and conceptually accounts for both approaches, that of Rosenberg and that of Goldschmidt (figure 3.3).³⁶⁸

More than the textual information offered, it is the approaching of the two b/w photographic images, the cover of the exhibition catalogue and an installation view of the show, that catch the attention of the reader.³⁶⁹ The background of the cover is characterized by an optical motive which extends on the entire surface, that is, a detail of Bridget Riley's painting *Current* (1964). Almost at its center the words composing the title of the exhibition are printed five times (in five different colors which appear all black in this b/w picture), partially superimposing, as of mimicking the experience of reading them through a mesmerizing kaleidoscope. Looking at the installation view of the exhibition presented next to the cover of its catalogue, one is attracted by an almost identical wording that composes the title of the show, this time jutting from the foreshortened exhibition's entrance wall. Through this oblique wall the eye of the reader is invited to explore the various layers of the image. The dark, two-dimensional exhibition title on the catalogue's cover (the *entrance* of the book) seems to emulate a destabilizing three-dimensional effect as much as does the light, three-dimensional protruding wording composing the title of the show within the museum. The two titles, one at the *entrance* of the book, one at

³⁶⁸ "The Responsive Eye," *Quadrum*, no. 18 (1965): 169. *The Responsive Eye*, The Museum of Modern Art, New York, February 23 - April 25, 1965; St. Louis Art Museum, May 20 - June 29, 1965; The Seattle Art Museum, July 15 - August 23, 1965; The Pasadena Art Museum, September 25 - November 7, 1965; and The Baltimore Museum of Art, December 14, 1965 - January 23, 1966. See also William C. Seitz, *The Responsive Eye* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1965).

³⁶⁹ This installation view corresponds to one of the nineteenth b/w photos that architectural photographer George Cserna (1919-2003) was commissioned to take as a documentation of the exhibition. Installation view of the exhibition, "The Responsive Eye" Feb. 25 - Apr. 25 1965, The MoMA, gelatin-silver print, 19,1 x 24,1 cm. Photographic Archive. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, NY. Original Negative Number: Cserna 18. Photographer George Cserna. Copyright unknown.

the entrance of the exhibition, aim to make *visible* the main question behind the show itself: “can such works, that refer to nothing outside themselves, replace with psychic effectiveness the content that has been abandoned?”³⁷⁰ The readers cannot flip through the pages of the catalogue because it is made present here only partially, mainly through its cover but also through excerpts of its introductory text printed below the above-mentioned images.³⁷¹ However, they can explore the layers of the nearby image and discover the multiple bright walls on which the abstract-perceptual paintings are hung, thereby getting an idea of the exhibition appearance. These clear walls, on which one can easily recognize the paintings *Construction Eurasia* (1964) by Piero Dorazio and *Green Blue Red* (1964) by Ellsworth Kelly, could be interpreted as mimicking the pages of a book, or rather the pages of the exhibition catalogue in which color photographs of, among a few others, exactly these two paintings by Dorazio and Kelly, as well b/w photographs of other works on show, are printed on a white ground which likewise *stand* for the walls of the exhibitions on which the original works were hung.³⁷²

³⁷⁰ Seitz, *The Responsive Eye*, 43. Seitz’s exhibition attempted to be a positive answer to this question. Referring, among others to the work of psychologist and cognitive scientist Paul Kolars, Seitz asserts that one should not allow oneself to be guided by a positivist concept of perception: as the works in the exhibition aimed to demonstrate, demanding to be observed not for their content but for their effect on one’s perception, emotions, and ideas: “illusion corresponds to genuine perceptions that do not stand up when their implications are tested.” Kolars quoted in Seitz, *The Responsive Eye*, 5. For a brilliant art historical assessment of this exhibition, see Ann Reynolds, *Robert Smithson: Learning from New Jersey and Elsewhere* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 2003), 45-55.

³⁷¹ The text, which at a first glance seems to be an excerpt of Seitz’s introduction to the exhibition, is in fact a freely organized collage of his main arguments, points, and questions. See “The Responsive Eye,” 169 and Seitz, *The Responsive Eye*, 7, 9, 12, 16, 18, 30, 38, 41, 43.

³⁷² This is not the right context to dwell on the events related to the history of this exhibition, of its photographic documentation, or of the implications related to the fact that Seitz had originally planned to produce not a small catalogue but a voluminous book which, for reasons of time and budget was not possible to realize. The volume would have to be characterized by “format and length” similar to the 176 page lavishly illustrated catalogue of his 1961 exhibition *The Art of Assemblage*. Françoise Boas (MoMA Department of Publications), internal communication to William C. Seitz, January 3, 1964; See also Seitz to Boas, January 3, 1964; The Museum of Modern Art Exhibition Records, [757.24]. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. See William C. Seitz, *The Art of Assemblage* (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 1961). According to the intentions of the curator, the 51 page booklet *The Responsive Eye* was to be intended as just an “introductory catalogue to accompany the exhibition of the same title”; “a full book” would have in fact followed “later in the year”. Undated and unsigned statement, MoMA Exhs., [757.24]. MoMA Archives, NY. This thorough publication by Seitz would have encompassed eight chapters complemented by an appendix and a bibliography. The volume was never published but a document describing its index and its working title (*The Responsive Eye: A Study in Perceptualism in Modern Art*) is kept in the MoMA Archives. Undated and unsigned document, MoMA Exhs., [757.24]. MoMA Archives, NY.

Starting from issue no. 17 (1964), the section *Les Grands Expositions* is followed by a new rubric entitled *Sélection de catalogues d'expositions*.³⁷³ No statement of any kind introduces this *new* bibliographical list that appears to be the continuation of the *Bibliographie internationale de catalogues d'expositions*. Started within *Les Arts Plastiques* at the end of the 1940s, briefly resurrected, even if in a different format, within the pages of the first numbers of *Quadrum* at the end of the 1950s, the list is now fully revitalized in a brand new set-up. In the rubric *Sélection de catalogues d'expositions*, recently published catalogues of the main international exhibitions are presented through a b/w image of their cover which is complemented by textual information reporting the title of the show (generally coinciding with the name of the artist, in case of solo-exhibitions), its dates, a physical description of the book,³⁷⁴ as well as the mentioning of special or unusual features (e.g. artist letters and correspondence). To complete this information, the name of the author/s of the texts and possibly their titles, the presence of interviews or of biographical and bibliographical information are also reported. This extended information and the insertion of the picture of each catalogue's cover make the rubric richer than the mere textual references presented in *Les Arts Plastiques* and in the first numbers of *Quadrum*. The readers are now encouraged to link the image of the book cover to the textual information about its format and content (and vice versa).³⁷⁵ Every cover, characterized by the interaction of images, graphic design and text, *speaks* for the book it envelops and for its content, functioning as *pars pro toto* and relying on the common belief that *covers say a lot about books*.

Quadrum ceased its publication in 1966 when the artistic currents and values it aimed to support had become part of the common culture.³⁷⁶ Goldschmidt, disoriented (like his collaborators) by the upcoming of aesthetical

³⁷³ See "Sélection de catalogues d'expositions," *Quadrum*, no. 17 (1964): 171-174.

³⁷⁴ The physical description of the book encompasses its measures, the number of pages, which is often followed by the number of textual pages and that of the proper catalogue, as well as the number of b/w and color images.

³⁷⁵ Note, that the exhibition catalogues are presented in groups of 6 or 8 per page without respecting the proportions of their covers.

³⁷⁶ See A.D.A.C., "De Quadrum à 'Depuis '45'," *Quadrum* no. 20 (1966): 5.

propositions such as Minimal and Conceptual art, declared the mission of the magazine concluded.³⁷⁷

With the end of *Quadrum* also Goldschmidt's bibliographical aspirations towards the exhibition catalogue seemed to have reached their end.³⁷⁸ Meanwhile, the *World Art Catalogue Bulletin* (henceforth WACB), a different but similar educational project with an additionally considerable commercial aspect that had been inaugurated in the U.S. in 1963, was by now an almost fully consolidated reality.³⁷⁹ If at the beginning of the 1960s only few academic

³⁷⁷ After having dedicated himself for a decade to the "arme de combat" represented by *Quadrum* and its manifold rubrics, Goldschmidt, by now in his sixties, channeled his energies towards a "outil pédagogique", i.e. the preparation of multivolume history of the art *L'Art de notre temps depuis 1945*. Chevretil-Desbiolles, "Quadrum et Ernst Goldschmidt," 100. See Ernst, Goldschmidt, ed., *L'Art de notre temps depuis 1945*, 3vols. (Bruxelles: Éditions de la Connaissance, 1969-1972).

³⁷⁸ This is not the case for his engagement as an art publisher within the Éditions de la Connaissance, which will stop only in 1976 with his retirement.

³⁷⁹ The WACB was a international quarterly bulletin published by the World Art Catalogue Center (henceforth, WACC), a division of Worldwide Books, Inc – the company founded in 1962 in New York City by music and art magazine publisher Eva Kroy Wisbar (1908-1984). The main aim of the WACC was to keep abreast of museum and gallery publications throughout the western world, describing "in helpful detail their size, the number and kind of illustrations, the quality of the text, their range [...] as well as the] price" at which they could be ordered directly at the company. Newal W. Richmond, "Introduction," *The Worldwide Art Catalogue Bulletin*, 1, no. 1 (Fall 1963): 2. Keeping catalogues in circulation once a show was over, the WACC functioned as a central source of supply for the books and also, along with Newal W. Richmond, at the time at the head of the Art Library of the Queens College at The City University of New York, for "all information that heretofore has had to be sought at such an expense of time and effort as to discourage the acquisition of [...] these difficult-to-obtain publications." (Richmond, "Introduction," 2). Thanks to the collaboration of nearly 300 American and foreign art museums, galleries, and organizations the team of professional art historians of the WACC could select, describe, and provide brief scholarly reports on the content and the significance of around 200 new titles per issue. Maintaining the subscribers updated on the major exhibition catalogues published internationally and reserving them the opportunity to order the books from a single source, Worldwide Books, Inc. became soon an important center for the collection, selection, and dissemination of the most important exhibition and collection catalogues produced at the time, investing special care in expanding its working range in order to reach books published in distant or *peripheral* countries. In 1987 the WACB ceased being published in its original format. It was soon substituted by the magazine *The Art Book Biannual* (1992-1998), which by 1995 was complemented by Worldwide Books's first website. From the end of the 1990s a monthly e-mail newsletter conveys the information once propagated by the magazine. Since May 2010 a new well structured and user friendly website enriches the official means of information and communication of the company. See Kelly Fiske, "Newsletter," Worldwide Books, May 2010, <http://archive.constantcontact.com/fs051/1103230118693/archive/1103361843521.html>, last access February 29, 2016. In addition, on the Facebook page of Worldwide Books, information on new titles included in its catalogue (comprehensive of a picture of every cover) are updated in real time. See "Worldwide Books," Facebook Profile, <https://www.facebook.com/WorldwideBooks/?fref=ts>, last access February 29, 2016. Note, that from the analysis of the different editorial ventures animated by Goldschmidt or in which Goldschmidt was involved and the different issues of the WACB (1963-1987) it has not been possible to establish points of contact between the two bibliographical projects. More research in the archives of Worldwide Books (since 2007 based in Ithaca, NY) and the archives of Ernst

libraries methodically acquired art catalogues, by 1970, when Eva Kroy Wisbar retired from her position of publisher and editor-in-chief of the WACB, “systematic acquisition of these materials had become an accepted ‘must’ for competent art history programs and for keeping abreast of today’s art today.”³⁸⁰ Thanks to the WACB, catalogues from the whole of Europe, even from countries behind the Iron Curtain, such as Yugoslavia and Hungary, began to come across the Atlantic Ocean; at the same time, more and more catalogues produced by American institutions (from Argentina to Canada passing, of course, from the U.S.), by now rivaling with those produced in Europe, were accessible and progressively requested on the Old Continent.³⁸¹

3.2.2.3 *Artefactum* (1983-1988)

In 1983, when the WACB reached its 20th year of publication,³⁸² Goldschmidt, aged seventy-seven, reprised his project in support of the exhibition catalogue. The opportunity came within the framework of a new publication, *Artefactum: the magazine of contemporary art in Europa*, which Florent Bex, the soon to be founding director of the Museum of Modern Art,

Goldschmidt (preserved by his heirs in Brussels) would be needed to shed light on two bibliographical projects which seem two parallel ventures animated by two genuine intellectual personalities resulting from, and at the same time shaping, the historical and cultural circumstances of the period in which they were undertaken.

³⁸⁰ Worldwide Books, Inc. “Systematic Acquisition of Art Catalogues,” *The Worldwide Art Catalogue Bulletin*, 6, no. 1 (1969): 4. 1004 art museums and galleries in 33 countries were at the time cooperating with the company. See Neal W. Richmond, Untitled text, *The Worldwide Art Catalogue Bulletin*, 6, no. 3 (1969): 2. Note, that after having retired from Worldwide Books, Inc. (which in the meantime was moved to Boston in 1969), Eva Kroy Wisbar came back to New York City where in 1971 she founded a new company, VISUAL RESOURCES, Inc. Similarly to Worldwide Books, VISUAL RESOURCES functioned as a central source of supply for art films with special attention to the new medium of the videotape. They were supported both as a means of art documentation and as final artistic products. The quarterly magazine “Art+Cinema” (1973-1978), which in many respects was similar to the WACB, provided information and access to films and videotapes (for rent or purchase).

³⁸¹ See Grace Glueck “Art Notes: Catalogue Corner,” *The New York Times*, April 12, 1964, <http://www.nytimes.com/1964/04/12/art-notes-picassos-principle.html>, last access February 11, 2016.

³⁸² Note, that the bulletin had for 5 years passed under the ownership of the Kraus-Thompson Organization (later the Kraus Organization Ltd.), a business with family ties to legendary antiquarian bookseller H. P. Kraus (1907-1988). On Hans Peter Krauss’ activities and the origins of the Kraus-Thompson Organization see Hans Peter Krauss, *A Rare Book Saga: The Autobiography of H.P. Kraus* (New York/Toronto: G.P. Putnam’s Sons/Longman Canada Ltd., 1978), especially 367-372.

Antwerp (MHKA) initiated that same year.³⁸³ *Artefactum* (1983-1995) was a 20,5 x 28 cm bimonthly multilingual³⁸⁴ magazine that quickly attracted transnational attention for its combination of critical insight, high-quality hip photographs, and expensive advertising, through which the latest and greatest contemporary art produced or shown in Europe was presented at an international level. Already in the first issue of the magazine one can find the announcement for the forthcoming publication of *Catalogus*, the magazine that from the next issue was to be published within the same periodical. The statement presents the aims of this matryoshka-like publication, briefly describing its features as follows:

1) To deal with the various problems that crop up while publishing an exhibition catalogue – problems of conception, editing, design, production, distribution..., 2) to offer a wide, illustrated and partly commented European bibliography of recently published catalogues in the field of contemporary art [...]. These two main features are supplemented by a list of smallish catalogues and folders, which do not call for inclusion in the Bibliography; by ‘Stray Quotation’ [sic], taken from some of the catalogues listed in the Bibliography; by ‘Miscellanea’ with various informations [sic]. Thus, through various columns, texts and illustrations, CATALOGUS hopes to become both documentary and lively, useful and pleasant, controversial and comprehensive, in one word serious, but, as we hope, not overly serious.³⁸⁵

As proclaimed into the above-reported announcement, the backbone of *Catalogus* consisted of two sections: the first in order of appearance presents articles written by academics and professionals dealing with the various conceptual, design-oriented, material and logistic problems which arise while publishing an exhibition catalogue as well as discussing and analyzing the constitutive features and scope of this epistemological instrument; the second corresponded to an illustrated bibliography of recent *contemporary* art

³⁸³ After having directed the International Cultural Center, Antwerp (ICC) from 1972 to 1981 Bex directed the MKHA from 1985 to 2002.

³⁸⁴ The articles, selected by an independent board, were issued in 6 languages (Flemish, French, English, German, Italian, Spanish) and usually published in the writer's mother tongue. During the first year of publication a system of summaries and translations printed at the end of the magazine was developed.

³⁸⁵ “Catalogus (Announcement),” *Artefactum* 1, no. 1 (December 1983 - January 1984): 109. The announcement is published in English, Flemish, French, and German.

exhibition catalogues, that is, catalogues of exhibitions dedicated to the art of the 20th century.³⁸⁶

Browsing through the multifaceted contents that the magazine offered in the twenty-three issues of *Artefactum* in which it was published between 1984

³⁸⁶ The information presented in this section was exactly the same as that presented in the rubric *Sélection de catalogues d'expositions* (1964-1966) within the pages of *Quadrum* (1956-1966), with the difference that here a greater number of catalogues were listed in two sections, *Group Exhibitions* and *One-man Exhibitions*. Furthermore, as in the *Bibliographie* published within *Les Art Plastiques*, every catalogue was associated with a number in order to facilitate its reference and retrieval within the list. Note, that the books were assigned increasing numbers that apparently mirror the chronology of their arrival at the magazine's offices. It should be noted that unlike *Les Arts Plastiques*, and the WACB, *Catalogus* did not aim to perform the function of supply source, but rather to be an organ of information and critical reflection on the instrument of the contemporary art exhibition catalogue on a European level. To arrange for the distribution of the catalogues presented within *Catalogus* would apparently have been not only outside of the physical and organizational capabilities of Goldschmidt (who moreover had retired as publisher in 1976), but also a wasted effort, given the presence of European based specialized booksellers through which it was possible to obtain the listed catalogues and which regularly placed their advertisement in the magazine. See, for example, "Catalogus," *Artefactum* 1, no. 4 (June-August, 1984): 101. Given the huge amount of catalogues that were sent to the magazine's office to be listed free of charge in this section of *Catalogus*, and despite the considerable number of pages which were dedicated to the bibliography (to be counted in an order of magnitude that exceeds the ten for each issue), the rubric *Recent Catalogues of Contemporary Art Exhibitions in Europe* constantly lacked space. The readers were then soon informed that covers not conveying "anything about the content of the catalogue" would be not reproduced. "Catalogus: Recent Catalogues of Contemporary Art Exhibitions in Europe," *Artefactum* 1, no. 5 (September-October, 1984): 90. Together with the two main sections, the one presenting scholarly articles and the proper bibliographical one, another four rubrics usually appeared in *Catalogus*. *Other Recent Catalogues and Folders Received* listed small catalogues and folders, which did not call for inclusion in the main bibliography but were nevertheless itemized straight after it, mentioning their title as well as the name of the city and the institution in which the exhibition took place (generally a small commercial gallery). *Stray Quotations* comprehended a series of aphorismic sentences and brief statements taken from the texts of the catalogues listed in the illustrated bibliography. In *Notes on Some Catalogues*, the most interesting, problematic or revelatory features of some of the listed catalogues were discussed at some length. The section *Miscellanea*, the only section which was not regularly featured in the magazine, lists books (e.g. anniversary publications, art fair catalogues) that, although apparently considered as exhibition catalogues by the institutions and the individuals who sent them to the magazine, were not undoubtedly recognized as such by the editorial board of *Catalogus*. As an example of this ambivalence one could refer to the first issue of *Catalogus* in which, instead of refusing to include such publications, the editorial staff (at the time, Ernst Goldschmidt aided by Patricia Vaerman) preferred to mention them in the hybrid section *Miscellanea* leaving the final judgment (partially) to the readers. In fact, the readers were asked the *covertly* rhetorical question: "should the art fair catalogues, published with more or less lavishness be considered as 'exhibition' catalogues? Not more, than the fairs themselves should be considered as 'art exhibitions' one might say. Publications such as these always look like repertoires of the participating galleries (reminding the readers of an illustrated telephone book)." "Catalogus: Miscellanea," *Artefactum* 1, no. 2 (February-March 1984): 111. Patricia Vaerman, production and then editorial assistant of *Artefactum* since the beginning of the magazine, is credited as the secretary of *Catalogus* from *Artefactum* no. 1 (December 1983-January 1984) to no. 11 (November 1985-January 1986). After an initial trial period in which the magazine offered uneven contents or split its rubrics into more than one issue of *Artefactum*, starting from *Artefactum* no. 7 (February-March 1985) *Catalogus* was tried and tested.

and 1988, one is offered a glimpse into the European exhibition trends of the period and can get an idea of the key features, of the changes that involved the exhibition catalogue, and also of the topics related to this tool that were discussed in those years. A few of them deserve to be discussed at some length, since they will be trademarks of the exhibition catalogues produced in later years. These are:

1) the fact that (art) publishers paid increasing attention to this kind of publication;

2) the fact that the list of the exhibits, that is, what etymologically corresponds to the catalogue and its initial instantiations, tends to be less important to the point of disappearance, causing a radical change in the relationship between exhibitions and their catalogues as well as in the meaning and scope of these publications;

3) the fact that with the affirmation of performance, installation and time-based media art – that despite seeming to be adumbrate by pictorial and sculptural practices in the 1980s, have continued to be vital areas of experimentation –, it becomes increasingly challenging to properly represent photographically, within the pages of a book, artworks which develop in space and time;

4) the fact that exhibition catalogues progressively become the expression of the norms on which they are founded – the instruments through which the normative approach on which they are founded is cristallized and objectified;

5) the fact that the authority of the exhibition catalogues is increasingly entrusted to their outer material appearance rather than to their contents;

6) the fact that artists tend to give progressively more value to the exhibition catalogue, considering it of equal importance, if not of greater importance, than an exhibition, increasingly incorporating the making of exhibition catalogues in their practice.

Ernst Goldschmidt, initially aided by Vaerman and subsequently by Anne Schraenen³⁸⁷, authored most *Notes on some catalogues*, as well as the unsigned

³⁸⁷ Anne Schraenen (born Marsily), editorial assistant of *Artefactum* since no. 9 (June-August 1984) is credited as secretary of *Catalogus* together with Patricia Vaerman from *Artefactum* no. 114

statements that appeared within *Catalogus*. On the pages of the magazine he developed critical thought on the exhibition catalogue and fuelled a debate that took advantage of the experiences and the knowledge in the field he had gained since the 1930s, the years in which after getting a PhD in History of Art from the University of Vienna (1931), he began to organize and co-organize his first exhibitions in Brussels³⁸⁸, where he founded the Éditions de la Connaissance (1937).

Back in those years, art publishers attempted to match the publication of an art book dedicated to the work and the imaginative personality of certain artists or groups of artists with their related exhibitions. In this way, the visitors were incentivized to buy those books, eventually using and considering them as illustrated complements of the humble, non-illustrated or very poorly illustrated exhibition catalogues which, as previously mentioned, were available (only and exclusively) contextually to the show.³⁸⁹ This state of affairs continued, with few exceptions, in the 1950s and partially in the 1960s. It is only between the late 1960s and the 1970s that it radically changed. According to Goldschmidt, art publishers for whom until then “un ‘simple’ catalogue d’exposition semblait en-dessous de la dignité d’un ‘vrai’ éditeur”³⁹⁰ began to contend for the right to publish exhibition catalogues, and these instruments increasingly acquired the form as well as the conceptual features of art books. During the 1970s exhibition catalogues were increasingly conceived of as scientific publications and slowly began to replace monographic art books. Meanwhile, general publishers started to open up their catalogues to art publications, a sector that, as it was mentioned in the first chapter of this study (§ 1.3), had met growing success with the public since the 1950s. With the proliferation of art institutions and the success of the exhibition format, the instrument of the catalogue became a fundamental tool of visibility not only for

9 to no. 11 (November-December 1985, January 1986). Since no. 12 (February-march 1986) she accomplished this task alone.

³⁸⁸ See for example, *Cinq siècles d’art* exhibition which Goldschmidt co-organized on the occasion of the Brussels World Exhibition (1935) or the exhibitions *Ingres et Delacroix* (1936), *Les plus beaux dessins du Louvre* (1937), *De Jérôme Bosch à Rembrandt* (1938), et *Rubens* (1939) which he organized upon request of the *Société des Expositions du palais des Beaux-Arts de Bruxelles*.

³⁸⁹ See Ernst Goldschmidt, “Catalogus: Notes on some catalogues,” *Artefactum* 5, no. 22 (1988): 57-58.

³⁹⁰ Ernst Goldschmidt, “Catalogus: Notes on some catalogues,” *Artefactum* 5, no. 22 (1988): 57.

art but also for the artists and the institutions that promoted their work together with its cultural (and economic) value. In the context of the exhibition the production of a related book, the *exhibition catalogue*, became essential. Thus, the production costs of exhibition catalogues that grew in proportion to the ambitions and expectations projected in the instrument, were progressively internalized into the production budget of the exhibitions themselves. This is why publishers started to evaluate and willingly welcome the advantages of undertaking such enterprises which not only offered the security of a reduced business risk but carried with them significant cultural prestige.³⁹¹

Since the late 1960s, the emergence of the professional figure of the curator as exhibition maker marked the beginnings of the exhibition being conceived as a creative original act in itself.³⁹² Meanwhile, the exhibition catalogue was increasingly conceived as an erudite instrument through which one access the oeuvre of one or more artists and its related knowledge. It is under these premises that the list of the works on display, that is the *catalogue* in its literal and etymological sense, gradually ceased to be a constitutive part of the exhibition catalogue, often becoming so muddled that those who had not visited the show could not understand which artworks were actually part of the exhibition in question. It became a mere secondary apparatus of the book, presenting a variety of textual and visual context which went well beyond the artworks displayed in the exhibition and their organization.³⁹³ From the end of

³⁹¹ It is under these premises that in the subsequent years was established the trend of publishing exhibition catalogues in two versions, a museum edition and a bookseller one. The museum edition, usually in softcover and available during the exhibition, was cheaper than the bookstore one. In the first case the price was lower because educational institutions such as the museums benefited from special rates on the rights of the images; while in the second case the book, often in hardcover, was more expensive because in addition to higher copyright, additional marketing, distribution and storage costs needed to be covered. See Jahre, "Zur Geschichte des Ausstellungskataloges am Beispiel der Publikationen von Pontus Hulten," 46-48. This trend became obsolete between the 1990s and the 2000s, although, for the reasons listed above, the price difference continues to exist.

³⁹² For a discussion on the intermingling of the role of the artist and that of the curator since the 1960s, see the chapter *Artists as Curators/Curators as Artists* in Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012), 101-138.

³⁹³ As a precocious but very representative and influential example of this transformation one could mention the *catalogue* of the exhibition *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form, Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information*, Kunsthalle Bern, March 22 - April 27, 1969; Haus Lange, Krefeld, May 9 - June 15, 1969; Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, August 28 - September 27, 1969. See Harald Szeemann, ed., *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form, Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information* (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1969). In the context of this study, only the volume issued in Bern will be briefly examined.

Note, that three slightly different versions of the exhibition catalogue were published in occasion of the re-instantiation of the exhibition in Krefeld and London. See Harald Szeemann and Paul Wember, eds., *Vorstellungen nehmen Form an / Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form, Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information* (Krefeld: Museum Haus Lange, 1969); Harald Szeemann, ed., *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Become Form, Works – Concepts – Processes – Situations – Information* (London: ICA, 1969). For a brief overview of the exhibition catalogues produced by the Museum Haus Lange under the directorship of Paul Wember see: Marina Grasmik, *Paul Wember, Johannes Cladders und Konrad Fischer: Kataloge und ihre Ausstellungsmacher im Rheinland um 1968* (master's thesis, Universität Duisburg-Essen, 2016), 34-58. The publication takes the form of an office binder, thus perfectly corresponding to the *aesthetic of administration* which art historian Benjamin Buchloh ascribed to the conceptual trends of the 1960s. See Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962-1969: From the Aesthetic of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October*, no. 55 (Winter, 1990): 105-143. The binder contains: rough pink and white pages, as well as alphabetically ordered white index cards. On the pink sheets are printed paratextual elements of the exhibition, such as the title, dates, opening hours, statement of the sponsor, acknowledgements, statement of the curator Harald Szeeman (who, as credited in the publication, "directed" both the "Exhibition and [the] Catalogue"), the photographic reproductions of the working sheet with the names and the contacts of the artists that the curator used in NY, texts by artist Scott Burton, painter and writer Grégoire Muller, and art critic Tommaso Trini, as well as a general bibliography. See Szeemann, "Zur Ausstellung," in Szeemann, ed., *Live in Your Head*, n.p.; Burton, "Notes on the New," in Szeemann, ed., *Live in Your Head*, n.p.; Muller, untitled text in Szeemann, ed., *Live in Your Head*, n.p.; Trini, "Nuovo alfabeto per corpo e materia," in Szeemann, ed., *Live in Your Head*, n.p. The white sheets present the list of the *works on exhibit*, that is detailed information (title, year, materials, measures, provenance) of 127 works, numbered in crescent order and listed under the names of their 69 authors and accompanied by the mention of the city in which they live. Interspersed within the index cards one finds white coated-sheets with textual and visual information on the work and the career of the 69 above-mentioned artists. They are the "69 Künstler aus Amerika, Belgien, Deutschland, England, Frankreich, Holland, Italien" mentioned by Szeeman in his introductory statement on the exhibition, with the clarification that "in die Ausstellung sind es ungefähr 40, die mit Werken vertreten sind; dann über die Aktivitäten der andern kann lediglich «informiert» werden, da ihre «Werke» nicht ausstellbar sind." Szeemann, "Zur Ausstellung," n.p. This is not the context in which to dwell further on this *exhibition catalogue* that unfortunately has not yet received the same attention that has been devoted to the exhibition that it *putatively* documents and *represents*. Cf., for example, Rattemayer, ed., *Exhibiting the New Art*. In the studies dedicated to this exhibition the catalogue is inevitably but rarely, and only tangentially, thematized. As already mentioned (§ 1.3, footnote 115), the exhibition *When Attitudes Become Form* was recently *recreated* within the premises of the Prada Foundation at Ca' Corner della Regina in Venice. The *artifices* of the exhibition, that is Germano Celant in dialogue with architect Rem Koolhaas and artist Thomas Demand, carefully cared to *restage* the spaces and all (the existent, retrievable, and obtainable works) effectively on show in Bern. However, they did not *reenact* the catalogue of the exhibition, substituting the administrative flare of the binder and data sheets that characterized the 1969 publication with a thick elegant hard cover volume, the aesthetic, epistemic, and discursive features of which deserve a separate study. See Celant, ed., *When Attitudes Become Form Bern*. Note that, at least in this lavish publication, the relevance of the 1969 exhibition catalogue is briefly thematized and contextualized in the panorama of artists' publishing in the 1960s and 1970s. See Gwen Allen, "The Catalogue as an Exhibition Space in the 1960s and 1970s," in *When Attitudes Become Form*, ed. Germano Celant, 505-510. Curator Jens Hoffman recently organized the exhibition *When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes: A Restoration – A Remake – A Rejuvenation – A Rebellion* (CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, San Francisco, CA, September 13 – December 1, 2012). Across both the exhibition spaces and the exhibition catalogue the show presented the work of over 80 contemporary international artists that experiment within the lineage and language of Conceptual art practices. Interestingly, in this case, the publication created as a part of the exhibition mimic the aesthetics and the structure of the catalogue of the 1969 show which is at the origin of Hoffman's exhibition project. See Jens Hoffmann, ed., *Live in Your Head: When Attitudes Became Form Become Attitudes: A*

the 1960s onward, exhibition catalogues were increasingly less likely to be published *to accompany the visit* of a determined exhibition, that is conceived and produced to serve the visitors, to permit them to use them within the exhibition's walls, drawing information on the artworks on show and being guided in their exploration of the exhibition. On the contrary they became more and more books published *to accompany the exhibition* or *on the occasion of determined exhibitions*, supplemented with a list of the exhibited works and related pertinent information.³⁹⁴ In some cases, as will become clear in the following, they even get to more or less covertly *expand*, if not *stand for* the exhibition. By the 1980s, the nature of this kind of publication was transformed to the point that it was sometimes very difficult to understand if the volume in question might still serve as an exhibition catalogue, or if it should be rather considered an art book.³⁹⁵ One could not exclude that so-called exhibition catalogues were gradually assigned new functions, meanings, and scope becoming objects which go well beyond the etimological and commonsensical concept of exhibition catalogue or art book.

As Goldschmidt underlined from the pages of *Catalogus*, the books published within the framework of exhibitions were by the 1980s generally assigned the task of simultaneously *functioning* as catalogues (for and of the exhibition) and *being* art books (for commercial purposes). However, this often led these publications to fulfill neither the one nor the other function. According to Goldschmidt this has happened because their creators have tended to forget a

Restoration – A Remake – A Rejuvenation – A Rebellion (San Francisco: CCA Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, 2012).

³⁹⁴ See Ernst Goldschmidt, "Catalogus: Note on Some Catalogues," *Artefactum* 3, no. 17 (February-March 1987): 61.

³⁹⁵ In 1988, comparing the exhibition catalogues produced in the 1980s with those of some legendary art exhibitions which took place in Germany between 1910 and 1962, art historian Eberhard Roters noted with concern the tendency to denigrate the list of the exhibited works, glimpsing the danger of its definitive disappearance. See Eberhard Roters, "Einleitung," in Roters ed., *Stationen der Moderne: Kataloge epochaler Kunstaustellungen in Deutschland 1910-1962 - Kommentarband zu den Nachdrucken der zehn Ausstellungskataloge*, 11-32 (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 1988). More than profetizing a future reality Roters seemed unconsciously to describe something which was already true: the *catalogue* of the exhibition *Les Années 1950*, Paris, Musée National d'Art Moderne (Centre Pompidou, June, 30 - October, 5, 1988), is a good example in point, since it does not contain the complete list of the exhibited works, but just that of those in the section *Architecture et Design*. See Demarcq, Jacques, ed., *Les Années 1950* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1988), 636-639 and Ernst Goldschmidt, "Éditorial," in "Catalogus 2," supplement, *Les Cahiers du Musée ational d'art moderne*, no. 26 (Hiver 1988): n.p.

fundamental difference among art books and exhibition catalogues: “an exhibition is nearly always subject to compromises which are then forcibly reflected by the catalogue. A book on the other hand, is never or at least should never be a compromise.”³⁹⁶

One of the exhibition catalogues which he included not only in the main bibliographical section, but also in one of his *Notes on some catalogues* seems to be the perfect case in point to discuss his positions in the light of the *state of the things* related to this instrument in the 1980s.

The publication in question is entitled *L'Exotisme au quotidien* (1987)³⁹⁷ (figure 3.4). As indicated at the beginning book, it was “réalisé” (that is, literally, executed, created), on the occasion of the homonymous exhibition held at the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Charleroy in 1987.³⁹⁸ Ambiguously evoking anthropologist Georges Condominas’ (1921-2011) book *L'Exotique est quotidien* (1965)³⁹⁹ – an autobiographical study on the Mnong people of Vietnam who, after the independence of the country, had become victims of a petty local form of colonialism – the book and the exhibition pivot around and aim to show as well as to push through the idea that the *modern* expansion of the field of knowledge has changed the focus of what it is considered exotic. According to art historian Laurent Busine (who at the time directed the Palais des Beaux-Arts, Charleroy, and is credited as the curator of the exhibition), in fact, the concept of *exoticism* should not be linked anymore to what is alien to “notre conduite sociale, culturelle ou religieuse.”⁴⁰⁰ Rather, he contends that “l'exotisme est la source de la curiosité et la nature du savoir. L'exotisme est partout.”⁴⁰¹ Along to Busine, the *exoticism* is a key feature of everyday life and has to do with the vastness of knowledge, with everything one knows of not knowing or that one does not exactly know and wants, needs, or/and can find out.

³⁹⁶ Ernst Goldschmidt, “Catalogus: Notes on Some Catalogues,” *Artefactum* 4, no. 18 (April-May 1987): 59.

³⁹⁷ See Laurent Busine, ed., *L'Exotisme au quotidien* (Charleroy: Palais des Beaux Arts, 1987).

³⁹⁸ *L'Exotisme au quotidien*, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Charleroy, February 7-April 5, 1987.

³⁹⁹ See Georges Condominas, *L'Exotique est quotidien* (Paris: Plon, 1965). On Condominas’ activities in Vietnam see also Christine Hemmet, ed., “*Nous avons mangé la forêt...*” *Georges Condominas au Viêt Nam*, La Collection du Musée du quai Branly (Arles: Actes Sud, 2006).

⁴⁰⁰ Laurent Busine, “L'Exotisme au quotidien,” in *L'Exotisme au quotidien*, 8.

⁴⁰¹ Busine, “L'Exotisme au quotidien,” 8.

The publication *L'Exotisme au quotidien* is a 24 x 27 cm 151 page book with a very gaunt paratextual apparatus. After the title page – where the names of those who appear to be the protagonists of the show are listed in the guise of subtitle⁴⁰² and the name and place of the institution responsible for the exhibition (as well as for the publication of the book in question) are reported –, one finds a page in which the organizers of the show as well as its sponsors are credited. In the subsequent page all those who have co-operated to the success of the exhibition, such as the lenders (collectors, museums, galleries as well as a number of public and private institutions) are acknowledged. From this point onward, no index or other paratext separates the reader from the two sections in which the book could be loosely divided.

The first section reunites the critical essays by, in order of appearance: Laurent Busine,⁴⁰³ art critic Daniel Soutif,⁴⁰⁴ writer and botanist Jacques-Bernardin-Henri de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814),⁴⁰⁵ curator Catherine Bouche,⁴⁰⁶ and anthropologist Remo Guidieri.⁴⁰⁷ These texts are partly interspersed by as well as partly illustrated with b/w photographs that document historical moments (e.g. the anonymous photographs of the display of the Parisian Musée de la France d'Outre-Mer) as well as with b/w and color reproductions of different artworks. As an example, one could mention the two color images of Gauguin's *Le Sorcier d'Hiva-Oa* (1902)⁴⁰⁸ and *D'où venons-nous? Qui sommes-*

⁴⁰² They are: Paul et Virginie, Le Musée de la France d'Outre-Mer, Paul Gauguin, Lothar Baumgarten, Jacques Charlier, Francesco Clemente, Jiri Georg Dokoupil, Carlo Maria Marani, Pierre et Gilles, Walter Swennen, David Tremmlett.

⁴⁰³ See Busine, "L'Exotisme au quotidien," 5-8.

⁴⁰⁴ See Daniel Soutif, "Exotiques, exotismes," in *L'Exotisme au quotidien*, 11-35.

⁴⁰⁵ It consists of two excerpts taken from Jaques-Bernardin-Henri de Saint-Pierre, *Paul et Virginie* (Paris: De L'Imprimerie de Monsieur, 1789), accompanied by b/w illustrations of paintings and engravings dedicated to the story of Paul et Virginie from the collection of the former Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens, Paris (today, Musée du quai Branly).

⁴⁰⁶ See Catherine Bouche, "Un visage de l'exotisme au XXe s.: du musée des colonies au musée de la France d'outre-mer à Paris (1931-1960)," in *L'Exotisme au quotidien*, 47-63. Bouche was at the time in charge of the *Section historique et des anciennes collections* of the institution, then called Musée des Arts africains et océaniens. The Musée des Arts africains et océaniens was inaugurated in 1931 as a part of the Exposition coloniale internationale which was held in Paris in the late Spring and Summer 1931. It was located in the Palais de la Porte Dorée (XIIe arrondissement) and was called at the time Musée de colonie. In 1935 it was re-baptized Musée de la France d'Outre-Mer and in 1961 Musée des Arts africains et océaniens before becoming the Musée national d'art d'Afrique et Océanie. In 2003 the collection was merged with what would soon become the Musée du quai Branly, which was opened to the public in 2006.

⁴⁰⁷ See Remo Guidieri, "*Parau ne te varaua'ino*," in *L'Exotisme au quotidien*, 64-93.

⁴⁰⁸ Paul Gauguin, *Le Sorcier d'Hiva-Oa*, 1902. Oil on canvas, 92 x 72 cm. Musée d'Art Moderne, Liège.

nous? Où allons-nous? (1898)⁴⁰⁹ laid out on the pages that faces the ones in which the text by Guidieri begins and ends, respectively (figures 3.5 a, b).⁴¹⁰

Guidieri's text is a literary work.⁴¹¹ It is interspersed with 16 b/w photographical reproductions of engravings and sculptures created by Gauguin between c. 1891 and 1902 (that is, between his first travel to Tahiti and the year before his death). These images seem to perfectly illustrate the text, even if they were obviously not created as such. Guidieri did not select them as the inseparable complement to his literary creation; it was Busine that, with the approval of the anthropologist chose them to complete Guidieri's lyrical evocation and let it fully perform its function as the frame in which to present the *Weltanschauung* of the French master.⁴¹²

The second part of the book is dedicated to the work of contemporary artists Lothar Baumgarten, Jacques Charlier, Francesco Clemente, Jiri Georg Dokoupil, Carlo Maria Mariani, Pierre et Gilles, Walter Swennen, and David Tremlett. A few pages are reserved for the presentation of one or more artworks by each of them through a few color images. Their short biographies, complemented by information about their solo and group exhibitions, as well as a few bibliographical references, can be found at the end of the volume together with biographical information about the twenty-three artists whose works are reproduced in the first part of the volume. Among them, there is only one artist whose short biography is complemented with the lists of his exhibitions and bibliography: Paul Gauguin.

⁴⁰⁹ Paul Gauguin, *D'où venons-nous? Qui sommes-nous? Où allons-nous?*, 1898. Pastel on paper, 20,5 x 37, 5 cm; at the time in the collection of the Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens, today Musée du quai Branly, Paris.

⁴¹⁰ A color image of Gaguin's *Le Sorcier d'Hiva-Oa*, 1902 appears also on the pink cover of the volume in which, next to the picture, the title of the book (and the exhibition) is printed.

⁴¹¹ As the antropologist specifies at the very beginning of his contribution, it is an evocation that he had composed in Italian during a stay at the Tuamotu Island (French Polynesia) between 1979 and 1980, and translated as well as reworked in French as homage to artist Paul Gauguin in Tepoztlán, Mexico in 1986 (i.e. well before he was invited to contribute a text for the publication in question.) Busine remarked that he made acquaintance with Guidieri in Paris. The museum's director informed the anthropologist about the exhibition project and asked him to contribute a text for the related publication. Given Guidieri's busy schedule, the anthropologist agreed to send the curator a text he had previously written which he found suitable for the project's general concept. Laurent Busine, e-mail message to author, February 19, 2016. Note, that at the end of the 1980s, the introduction of literary (and fictional) texts takes hold within the exhibition catalogue. It will become a recurrent feature in the catalogues of the subsequent decades. Cf. Coers, *Kunstkatalog – Katalogkunst*, 41-42.

⁴¹² Laurent Busine, e-mail message to author.

Despite the book being considered as the catalogue of its homonymous exhibition, one cannot find among its pages neither the list of the exhibited works nor any other useful information to understand (at least) which works were gathered together to create, convey, and show its message. Somehow paradoxically, this function is delegated to a humble staple-bound 8-page booklet made by folding four A4 sheets of paper fixed with a thin layer of glue on the third page of the volume. This unassuming booklet is almost identical to the exhibition catalogues en vogue until the 1950s. It is a mimeographed copy of a typewritten document (figures 3.6 a, b). The cover reports the title of the exhibition, the name of the institution in which it took place, and the dates. Moreover, twelve names are listed at the cover's center. On the top of the list, one finds Paul and Virginie, the names of the two fictional protagonists of de Saint-Pierre's homonymous novel to which are dedicated some pages and images in the first section of the bound book; then comes the Musée de la France d'Outre-Mer, the Parisian institution which from 1935 to 1961, was in charge of studying, documenting and displaying the *other*, the *foreign*, that is, the *exotic* and to which origins and history is dedicated one of the essays in the bound volume;⁴¹³ subsequently there is the name of Paul Gauguin (whose works are reproduced along with Guidieri's evocation *Parau ne te varaua'ino*); and finally the ones of the contemporary artists whose work has been presented in the book (Baumgarten, Charlier, Clemente, Dokoupil, Mariani, Pierre & Gilles, Swennen, and Tremlett). All the exhibited works are listed within the pages of this humble booklet along with the name of their author, their title, date, technique or/and materials, measures, and provenance. The works authored by the eight above-mentioned contemporary artists are grouped under their names and occupy the last pages of the unpretentious *catalogue*.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹³ See Bouche, "Un visage de l'exotisme au XXe s." As highlighted in footnote 403, this was one of the Parisian institutions (together with the Musée de l'homme) that performed the task of studying and representing *the other*. It collected and displayed artifacts from those territories that were once French colonies and then subsequently became, in some cases, part of the overseas territories and departments (known as T.O.M. and D.O.M.).

⁴¹⁴ Note that, this is not the case for the other works listed in the first pages of the unassuming pamphlet. Here, in fact, the paintings, engravings, and drawings created by twenty-two minor artists, plus a few anonymous creators, are divided into two groups. The first of them comprehends eleven works (only seven of which are photographically reproduced in the bound book). They depict different moments of Paul and Virginie's story and are grouped under the name of the two youngsters, as if the two fictional characters and their metaphorical as well as

Interestingly, although the name of Paul Gauguin is prominently listed on the cover of the booklet, there is no mention of his work within its pages: none of his creations, abundantly illustrated in the bound volume are listed; not even *Le Sorcier d'Hiva-Oa*, that is, the painting which is notably presented on the cover of the book (figure 3.4).⁴¹⁵ As the catalogue of the exhibited works this pamphlet is misleading as it is the bound book to which the list is loosely stenciled. According to the documentary evidence obtained by crossing the information offered by the pamphlet and the bound volume, the visitors of the show could confront all the works listed in the pamphlet less than the work by Gauguin. The works of the French master were (and still are) exhibited and can be *seen* only through the photographic reproductions printed in the book, that is, on its cover and along with Guidieri's evocation where, more than functioning as a homage to Gauguin, they appear to be included to literally evoke his spirit.⁴¹⁶ Thanks to the interaction between pamphlet and bounded book, the

allegorical meanings were not only the thematic subjects of the artworks but also the agents and the efficient causes of their existence and presence in the exhibition. Through a number of artworks inspired by their story and by the fascination for the island in which it took place (Mauritius Island), the fictional Paul and Virginie are conferred a particular agency that, within the framework of this list, makes them appear as the authors of the images that different artists have dedicated to them. This also applies for twenty-three paintings and drawings by nineteen artists active in the 19th century which, given their exotic subjects and their having once been part of the collection of the *Musée de la France d'Outre-Mer*, are grouped under the name of the defunct French institution (only eleven of them are photographically reproduced in the book). Beyond the fact that these works were all part of the collection of the *Musée de la France d'Outre-Mer*, it is through them, but above all through its order of knowledge and symbolic value, that the museum is called to act within the show and shape its message and meaning.

⁴¹⁵ The Musée des Beaux Arts de Liège refused to loan the painting because of its precarious conservative conditions; Laurent Busine, e-mail message to author, February 19, 2016. The practice of presenting on the cover of an exhibition catalogue images of artworks that could not be included in the show have records which date back at least to *Francis Picabia: portrait de l'auteur par lui-même* the exhibition organized by Pontus Hulten (together with Jean-Hubert Martin and Hélène Seckel) at the Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, from January 23 to March 29, 1976. The embossed cover of its catalogue prominently illustrates and tries to render the tri-dimensionality of Picabia's *Très Rare tableau sur la terre* (1915), one of the very first mechanomorphic works by the artist which was not on show because its owner, Peggy Guggenheim, refused the loan. See Jahre, *Das Gedruckte Museum von Pontus Hulten*, 122 and Jean-Hubert Martin and Hélène Seckel, eds., *Francis Picabia* (Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1976), 184-185.

⁴¹⁶ According to a recent testimony by Bousine, it would seem that the stapled booklet included in the illustrated publication misses a central sheet, that is, a fifth A4 sheet on which information about a work by Horace Vernet plus those by Gauguin actually on show were reported. Given the fact that the pages of the pamphlet are stapled together so that one would note if the paper in question had removed, it would seem that this lack characterizes the publication as such. Moreover, of the twenty-one works by Gauguin listed in the loose sheets exhibition's booklet recently sent from Busine to the author, only a dozen are actually photographically reproduced in the bounded volume, including *Le Sorcier d'Hiva-Oa* that, as already anticipated (see footnote

publication *L'Exotisme au quotidien* becomes the instrument through which the horizon of the *real exhibition* is dilated to create a larger context for the exhibited works of art. Moreover, the *real exhibition* seems in this case to be instrumental to the creation of an *imaginary exhibition* which takes place partly within the exhibition space and partly within the pages of the volume presented as its catalogue, but which finds its fulfillment only within their real as well as imaginary interaction.

Regarding the eight above-mentioned contemporary artists, one should note that many of their exhibited works are not photographically represented in the bound volume. One or a few images were selected to stand for the artworks the respective artist had contributed to the show. Beyond the name of the artist, the title of the represented work, and its date, no corollary information is provided in the book, except for the biographical and bibliographical data included at the end of the publication. Paradoxically, the *pamphlet* (that is, the list, the catalogue) offers very precious information to understand the nature and features of the artworks on show. The best example in point is without doubt offered by the work of Lothar Baumgarten, *Eine Reise oder Mit der MS Remscheid auf dem Amazonas*, 1971-1972 - a projection of 81 diapositives (90 x 60 cm) in a 12,5 minutes sequence.⁴¹⁷ Three spreads are dedicated to it in the bounded book (figures 3.7 a-c). The first is reserved to the name of the artist and the title of the work (figure 3.7 a) while the second and third present each a color image: an unpretentious urban building (figure 3.7 b) and a grainy b/w picture of the tops of a stand of trees (figure 3.7 c). Two numbers, 4 in the first case and 23 in the second, are the only additional information provided directly

412), was not physically part of the exhibition. See Busine, letter to author, February 24, 2016. Note that within the pages of *L'Exotisme au quotidien* a total of eighteen works by the French master are photographically reproduced.

⁴¹⁷ Lothar Baumgarten, *Eine Reise oder Mit der MS Remscheid auf dem Amazonas*, 1971-72, projection of 81 slides in a 12,5 minute sequence, Kunstmuseum Bonn. The work presents itself as an imaginary voyage built through photographs taken by Baumgarten in Düsseldorf (most of them within the wall of his atelier cum apartment); these images are photographs of the ones illustrating ethnological studies about Amazonia and of quotations taken from ethnological studies published in German at the beginning of the 20th century. For a more detailed description of the work and its sources, see Elisabeth Hartung Hall, *Imaginäre Tropen oder Kunst als Ethnographie der eigenen Kultur: Aspekte der Annäherung von Kunst und Ethnographie ausgehend vom Werk Lothar Baumgartens* (PhD diss., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 2006), 45-48, <http://www.kunstbuero.de/assets/applets/DISSERTATION-NEU.pdf>, last access February 11, 2016.

with the images. Without the technical information offered by the list in the pamphlet it would be impossible to grasp the time-based dimension of the work or, as Goldschmidt put it in one of his *Notes on Some Catalogues*, “it would take a lot of imagination to discover that [...] the work by Lothar Baumgarten [which presentation in the book is entrusted to] (two plates numbered 4 and 23) is a projection of approximately 80 slides.”⁴¹⁸

As this example suggests, the complex and multifaceted instrument of the exhibition catalogue, both in its literal and expanded dimension play a fundamental role for the transmission of time-based (media) artworks,⁴¹⁹ that is for works of art which photographic representation is particularly problematic and challenging, given that within the limited number of pages of an exhibition catalogue their durational dimension is often condensed into one or, in fortunate cases, a few, representative shoots. In this respect, the additional information provided by the list but also by the image’s label (e.g. materials, techniques, number of the components as well as, possibly, duration) help one to make oneself a better idea of the work and its features. We shall return to this issue at a later stage of this research, given that it will become central in subsequent years with the growth of time-based (media) art, i.e. the area within which Matthew Barney’s practice is situated.⁴²⁰

3.2.2.3.1 The Debate On the Exhibition Catalogue in *Catalogus*

In the 1980s, Goldschmidt was not alone to animate the debate around the instrument of the exhibition catalogue from the page of *Catalogus*. Art

⁴¹⁸ Ernst Goldschmidt, “Catalogus: Notes on Some Catalogues,” *Artefactum* 4, no. 18 (April-May 1987): 59, 59.

⁴¹⁹ Artworks having duration as a constitutive dimension and unfolding themselves to the viewer over time could be defined as time-based artworks. Usually this nomenclature is used in association with the noun media – time-based media artworks – to refer to works which include video, film, slide, audio, or computer-based technologies. However other art forms, like for example performance art and kinetic sculpture or installation, could also be addressed as time-based art forms.

⁴²⁰ However, as will become clear in the following though the analysis of Matthew Barney’s book production, the fact that Baumgarten chose to represent his work through the two above-mentioned images is symptomatic of the way he meant to communicate his work within the parameters dictated by the catalogue publication.

historian Hélène Lassalle,⁴²¹ was one of the most regular contributors. In an article focused on the catalogue *Manet, 1832-1883*, the exhibition held in 1983 in Paris⁴²² and New York⁴²³ to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the French painter's death, Lassalle discusses a trend which emerged in the late 1970s and fully established itself in the 1980s, that is the organization of monumental exhibitions dedicated to single masters on the occasion of which huge catalogues are produced which seem to share the same ambitions of a *catalogue raisonné*.⁴²⁴ These catalogues are characterized by very precise and detailed records devoted to each of the numerous artworks which might or might not be part of the often multi-venues travelling exhibitions; they are introduced by scholarly essays, often very specialized and complemented by various apparatus.⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ Lasalle served as chief curator of American art collection at the Musée national d'art moderne – Centre Pompidou, Paris until 1984 when she became part of the staff of the *Direction des Musées de France*.

⁴²² *Manet, 1832-1883*, Paris, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, April 22 - August 8, 1983. See Françoise Cachin, Charles S. Moffet, and Michel Melot, eds., *Manet 1832-1883* (Paris: Ministère de la Culture/Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1983).

⁴²³ *Manet, 1832-1883*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, September 10 - November 27, 1983. See Françoise Cachin, Charles S. Moffet, and Michel Melot, eds., *Manet 1832-1883* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1983).

⁴²⁴ Hélène Lassalle, "Catalogus: A propos du catalogue Manet (1983)," *Artefactum* 1, no. 2 (February-March 1984): 80. Generally speaking, a catalogue raisonné is a comprehensive, annotated listing of all the known artworks by an artist either in a particular medium or all media.

⁴²⁵ In the specific case of the exhibition *Manet, 1832-1883*, the catalogue comprises scholarly essays, exhaustive art historical and critical information, as well as photographic reproductions of all the work exhibited in Paris and New York which, it is important to note, were not exactly the same. A system of notations made by letters helps the reader to understand where the work in question was actually exhibited. Furthermore, the records of the engravings provide additional information on the provenance of the specific copy on show, given the fact that in some cases different prints were exhibited in the two venues. See Françoise Cachin, Charles S. Moffet, and Juliet Wilson Bareau, "Catalogue," in *Manet 1832-1883*, 41-500, especially 42. The book included also mostly unpublished documents. See Colette Becker, "Lettres de Manet à Zola," in *Manet 1832-1883*, 519-528; Juliet Wilson Bareau, "Documents concernant L'Exécution de Maximilien," in *Manet 1832-1883*, 529-531. Underlining the fact that this omni-comprehensive model has the advantage of providing exhaustive information on the *work* of Manet, Lassalle emphasized its bigger disadvantage, that is, that even more than through the confrontation with the works within the exhibition's walls it is through their confrontation within the pages of the catalogue that the readers are deprived of a plural vision, synchronic as well as diachronic, on the *œuvre* of the artist: "dans le cours du développement même de la carrière de l'artiste chaque création est à son tour sortie et fixée." Lassalle, "A propos du catalogue Manet (1983)," 80. The catalogue of the exhibition *Manet, 1832-1883*, an indispensable *œuvre de référence*, was at the time of its publication the most complete book on the artist's work and presented the most accurate art historical, critical and visual information available on his life and career; however, and especially for this reason, Lasalle denounced that fixing the *œuvre* of the French master in a very precise and detailed context of knowledge, this publication was (and still is) a representative example "de la limite des méthodes et des normes

If, on the one hand, it is undeniable that these publications profoundly impact the understanding of the *œuvre* of the artists to which they are dedicated, crystallizing it and thus depriving it of its organic living dimension, on the other hand one could also argue that it is precisely through what could be seen as an organic living process of apparent crystallization that art and its histories are made and written. In this respect one should resort to another concept exemplarily investigated by Michael Baxandall, that is the concept of *tradition*. Baxandall intends *tradition* “to be not some aesthetical sort of cultural gene but a specifically discriminating view of the past in an active and reciprocal relation with a developing set of dispositions and skills acquirable in the culture that possesses this view.”⁴²⁶ In her article, Lasalle rightly points out the dangers of a blind faith in the catalogue and the diffused habit of not calling into question its methodological limits as well as the criteria behind its supposed normativity. However, in the light of Baxandall’s understanding of tradition it is important to stress the historical and art historical relevance of the exhibition catalogue as such. This instrument is inherently interesting because, if critically observed and analyzed, it permits one to study and comprehend the *tradition* of the period in which it was published and the way in which art and its histories are shaped, made, written and re-written. This process seems much more fluid than Lasalle thought and the normativity to which she referred could be also interpreted as being functional to this flow.

On a few occasions, art critic Jasia Reichardt, a regular contributor to *Artefactum*, was invited to express her opinions about the exhibition catalogue within the pages of *Catalogus*. In one of her contributions, she proposed a tripartite typologization of the exhibition catalogues produced between the late 1970s and the early 1980s: those “cheap and expedient” – which she classified as “ephemera”; those dealing with a specific issue, topic, period, artist or group of artists for which she did not provide any specific name or additional connotation; and those she referred to as “curatorial works of art” characterized by their being glossy, heavy, and expensive, usually put together by a team to

imposées.” Lasalle, “A propos du catalogue Manet (1983),” 80. Lasalle disapproved with apprehension the normative character presiding over the conceptualization and production of monographic exhibition catalogues and, vice versa, promulgated by their very diffusion.

⁴²⁶ Baxandall, *Patterns of Intention*, 62.

suggest “an authority through their ponderous outer appearance that is rarely merited by their contents.”⁴²⁷ Describing the exhibition catalogue as “a record, a document, something that an artist can use as a stepping stone in his[/her] career”⁴²⁸ Reichardt mentions the fact that since the 1960s an increasing number of artists have tended to “give more value to them than the exhibition they are about”⁴²⁹. An additional issue raised by Reichardt concerns their counterproductive entropic potential: “to preserve moments, to preserve history is to clutter the world lip with a lot of information that is likely to be repetitive and unmanageable”⁴³⁰. As it will soon be discussed lingering on the future development of the magazine *Catalogus* and in a later section of this chapter, where the exhibition catalogue will be briefly contextualized within the field of library science, in a context characterized by abundant and often redundant information, it is difficult to properly retrieve, evaluate, collect, and organize relevant materials making them available for a broader audience. Reichardt’s contribution testifies that by the mid-1980s this awareness was widespread and had begun to be openly discussed, if not called into question.

In his article *Conserver la mémoire des expositions* the gallerist, collector, publisher, and curator Guy Schraenen also stressed the documentary importance of the exhibition catalogue underlying the growing interest of artists *vis à vis* this instrument. Schraenen considered the catalogue (together with the *affiche* and the invitation card) as the “témoin capital” of the exhibition and the library, as the “pinacothèque d’aujourd’hui.”⁴³¹ According to him, there would be two types of exhibition catalogue: the “catalogue traditionnel” which is generally characterized by preface, introduction, acknowledgements,

⁴²⁷ Jasia Reichardt, “Catalogus: Catalogues versus Books,” *Artefactum* 1, no. 6 (November-December 1984): 69, 71.

⁴²⁸ Reichardt, “Catalogues versus Books,” 71.

⁴²⁹ Reichardt, “Catalogues versus Books,” 71.

⁴³⁰ Reichardt, “Catalogues versus Books,” 71.

⁴³¹ Guy Schraenen, “Catalogus: Conserver la mémoire des expositions,” *Artefactum* 3, no. 16 (November 1986-January 1987): 53, 56. Note, that Schraenen is the husband of Anne Schraenen, at the time editor of *Catalogus* together with Goldschmidt. On Schraenen’s career, activities, and collection with a focus on his *Archive for Small Press & Communication (ASPC)* see Schwarz, *Archive für Künstlerpublikationen der 1960er bis 1980er Jahre*, 42-87. Schraenen further developed the ideas presented in the above-mentioned article in Schraenen, “Catalogues: Passation du pouvoir,” *Les Cahiers du Musée national d’art modern*, no. 56/57 (été/automne 1996): 119-127. See also Guy Schraenen, *Ohne Kommentar: Künstler machen Kataloge, Plakate und Einladungen – aus dem Besitz des Archive for Small Press & Communication, Antwerpen* (Bremen: Neues Museum Weserburg, 1996).

photographical reproductions of the works on show with title, date and measures plus a biographical apparatus; and the “catalogue-œuvre,” that is a “création parallèle à l’exposition” which should be considered as its extension.⁴³² The *catalogue-œuvre* is conceived by the artist as an integral part of the exhibition and lives a life which is contextual and at the same time parallel to it.

Beyond the typologisations proposed by Reichard and Schraenen, one should stress that they emphasized not only the documentary value of the exhibition catalogue but also the increased interest from the part of the artists in this instrument both as an artistic means of expression and as a tool for publicity and communication. In this respect, from the pages of one of the last issues of *Catalogus* within *Artefactum*, art expert Wolfgang Hilger⁴³³ affirmed that “das Diktum «*publish or perish*», das Natur- und Geisteswissenschaftler seit jeher qualvollen Zugzwängen unterwirft, [hat] auch für bildende Künstler Gültigkeit erlangt.”⁴³⁴ What started out in the 1960s and had thoroughly taken hold in the 1970s had become an overriding imperative in the 1980s: every artist who wanted to be considered as such should be able to boast a (possibly high) number of exhibition catalogues to its name. Since then, exhibition catalogues (possibly introduced by prominent protagonists of the art world) have become not only indispensable documents and instruments but also out-and-out status symbols and “Gradmesser innerhalb eine imaginären Wertskala.”⁴³⁵

3.2.2.4 *Catalogus* Today

The last number of *Catalogus* within *Artefactum* appeared in the summer of 1988.⁴³⁶ On that occasion the readers were informed that in agreement with the direction of the magazine, the publication of *Catalogus* had been ceded to

⁴³² Schraenen, “Conserver la mémoire des expositions,” 53.

⁴³³ Hilger worked at the time for the Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of Vienna.

⁴³⁴ Wolfgang Hilger, “Catalogus: Neue Katalogkultur in Österreich,” *Artefactum* 4, no. 21 (November 1987-Januar 1988): 49.

⁴³⁵ Hilger, “Catalogus: Neue Katalogkultur in Österreich,” 49.

⁴³⁶ See “Catalogus” *Artefactum* 5, no. 24 (June-August 1988): 47-54.

the IHEAP, an institution that, as previously mentioned, had been recently inaugurated in Paris under the directorship of Pontus Hulten.⁴³⁷

Passing under the protector's wing of the IHEAP, *Catalogus* was meant to become truly international and be published as the official media outlet of the promising experimental advanced school of arts. Hulten, the former (founding) director of the Musée National d'Art Moderne – Centre Pompidou, had been able to arrange for the bulletin to be released as the inseparable supplement of *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne* the trimestral magazine of the museum and be internationally diffused through its distribution channels.

As already anticipated, this operation took place within the context of the donation that Goldschmidt made to the IHEAP in 1987, on the occasion of his 80th birthday (§ 3.2.2).⁴³⁸

Contrarily to what Goldschmidt had wished for, the publication of the new *Catalogus: bulletin bibliographique trimestriel illustré de récents catalogues d'exposition d'art contemporain* coincided only for a short time with an actual work of examination, study, and evaluation of the catalogues that museums and art institutions all over the world were invited to send to the Centre de recherche documentaire Ernst Goldschmidt at the IHEAP in order to be catalogued and included in the bibliographical bulletin free of charge. A careful examination of the magazine reveals that, given the small number of people who were in charge of the publication⁴³⁹ and the Sisyphean task of cataloguing the numerous volumes sent to the center, the octogenarian intellectual was the only person who could invest his time and expertise in this

⁴³⁷ See Ernst Goldschmidt, "Catalogus," *Artefactum* 5, no. 24 (June-August 1988): 47.

⁴³⁸ The core of this bequest consisted in the collection of more than 16.000 exhibition catalogues that the intellectual had accumulated during his career. As agreed in the convention undersigned by Goldschmidt and by Hulten in representation of the IHEAP, the institute committed itself: 1) to name its newly founded documentary research center after Goldschmidt (the center was then baptized Centre de Recherche Documentaire Ernst Goldschmidt); 2) to create a computerized catalogue of the entire collection (to be completed within 12 months following the reception of the fund); 3) to assume the research center's managing costs as well as those related to the preparation and publication of a periodical magazine focused on the catalogues of exhibitions of 20th century art. See Lassalle, "Cataloguer les catalogues ou la collection sublimée," 202-203. Given the fact that Goldschmidt's sons were among the IHEAP patrons, one is easily brought to think that their financial involvement was functional to the economic sustainability of the activities of the research center named after their father.

⁴³⁹ Basically just one or two, comprising Evelyne Pomey, the documentalist who was responsible for the publication.

scholarly undertaking.⁴⁴⁰

In comparison to its previous version, the new *Catalogus* was freed from most of its rubrics: it presented only its core content, that is, the partially illustrated bibliography of recent contemporary art exhibition catalogues in which leading principles were maintained, together with the standard of not illustrating purely typographical covers. A very minimal critical apparatus, actually coinciding with a brief editorial introduction to each issue, possibly complemented this list. Given the diversified look, structure, conceptual as well as cognitive features that characterized exhibitions catalogues at the end of the 1980s, the ordering principle that until that time could be considered as *traditional* (i.e. solo exhibitions listed alphabetically by artist name and group exhibitions listed alphabetically by city) was increasingly complemented by additional information as well as new groupings and categories, such as collection catalogues and *catalogues raisonnés*.⁴⁴¹ *Catalogus*, the only existing magazine specifically dedicated to the instrument of the exhibition catalogue, adopted a fairly comprehensive understanding of this tool encompassing “tout ouvrage publié «à l’occasion» d’une exposition et en collaboration avec les organisateurs de celle-ci, et qui n’aurait pas pu être réalisé sans elle.”⁴⁴² In hindsight, this definition of exhibition catalogue reflected a trend in the development of this instrument that was already perceptible within the pages of *Artefactum*. However, in the mid-1980s, a rich critical apparatus that allowed one to analytically problematize the changes regarding the exhibition catalogues and their conceptual implications characterized *Catalogus*. The

⁴⁴⁰ Every two months Goldschmidt spent a few days at the research center. During that time he examined “de la première à la dernière page” hundreds of recently published catalogues as well as proofed the coming issue of the bulletin before it was published. “Ernst Goldschmidt nous a quittés,” *Catalogus*, no. 18 (Octobre-Décembre 1992), n.p.

⁴⁴¹ In the new version of *Catalogus* every record was associated with a crescent number and supply of information such as: title, city, location and opening and closing dates of the exhibition as well as future itinerary of the show and related time-space information; a physical description with the number of pages, of black and white as well as color illustrations, and dimensions; names of the authors of the texts judged as most relevant, writing of the artists or interviews; language/s; information regarding the series in which the catalogue might be published and the publishing house (if different from the institution which hosts the exhibition); presence of biography, bibliography, list of the exhibited work, and index as well as International Standard Book Number (ISBN) and International Standard Serial Number (ISSN). Moreover, each issue of the bulletin featured an index of the names. See Pomey, “Bulletin Bibliographique illustré de récents catalogues d’expositions d’art contemporain,” 131.

⁴⁴² Ernst Goldschmidt, “Éditorial,” in “Catalogus 1,” supplement, *Les Cahiers du Musée National d’Art Moderne*, no. 25 (Automne 1988): n.p.

overly minimal critical approach that characterized the new *Catalogus* was completely lost in autumn 1992 with the death of its founder, leading spirit, and author. Deprived even of its slight critical vision, the magazine became a sort of receptacle of publications issued on the occasion of any given exhibition independently by the way, the mode, and the accuracy with which they referred to their related exhibitions. After Goldschmidt's death, even artists' books, writings by artists, catalogues of fairs and publications related to public commissions were included in the magazine, together with an additional miscellaneous section in which all the books that were not easily classifiable in one of the other sections were listed. The column once reserved to Goldschmidt's editorial was soon dedicated to brief reports on the IHEAP activities or to promotional messages regarding the institution and its program. Neither a critical bibliography of recent publications about contemporary art (exhibitions) nor a true organ of information of the IHEAP, *Catalogus* ceased to be published in 1994 after four years of autonomy.⁴⁴³ Since the first issue of 1990 in fact, it had left the protector wing of *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne* in order to become a full autonomous magazine under the responsibility of the IHEAP.⁴⁴⁴

Due to the lack of funding and related organizational difficulties the IHEAP concluded its activities in the summer of 1995 and closed its doors at the end of the year.⁴⁴⁵ Meanwhile, Goldschmidt's heirs⁴⁴⁶ had appealed to the fact that the institute had not yet completed the catalogue of their father's exhibition catalogues collection within the agreed deadline and had retired the donation, legally untying the future of the Centre de recherche documentaire Ernst Goldschmidt from that of the Parisian institution.⁴⁴⁷ After the definitive closure of the IHEAP, the search for a new and appropriate location for the collection of

⁴⁴³ The last issue coincided with no. 24. See *Catalogus*, no. 24 (Juillet-Décembre 1994), that was actually published in February 1995.

⁴⁴⁴ See *Catalogus*, no. 7 (Janvier-Mars 1990).

⁴⁴⁵ See Annick Boissard, "Présentation de l'Institut des hautes études en arts plastiques: Novembre 1985 - Décembre 1995," in *Quand les artistes font école*, 1, 21-25, 25. Similar problems had already compromised some of the Institute's activities, for example in 1994 *Catalogus* was published just in two semestrial issues. See *Catalogus* no. 23 (Janvier-Juin 1994) and *Catalogus* no. 24.

⁴⁴⁶ Léo, Paul and Sylvia Goldschmidt, that is, Goldschmidt's children.

⁴⁴⁷ Guy Peralo, Coordinator of the Centre de Recherche Ernst Goldschmidt, MAC, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille, telephone conversation with the author, December 1, 2015.

the Centre began, led by Pontus Hulten and under the auspices of the recently founded association Les Amis de l'Institut des Hautes Études en Arts Plastiques, Paris.⁴⁴⁸ Different proposals and hypotheses were evaluated before the city of Marseille and in particular its museum of contemporary art – the Musée d'art contemporain, Marseille (henceforth MAC) that had been inaugurated in 1995 by art historian Bernard Blistène⁴⁴⁹ and put under the directorship of his younger colleague Philippe Vergne –, was selected as the ideal host for the Centre's collection which by that time comprehended not only Goldschmit's convolute but also all the volumes accumulated by the IHEAP for a total of 20.000 volumes.⁴⁵⁰

The entire collection was transferred to the [mac] in July 1996. On the 14th September 1996 Goldschmidt's heirs and the mayor of Marseille (Jean-Claude Gaudin), undersigned a new convention of donation.⁴⁵¹ The publication of *Catalogus* was among the terms of the donation. The first number of the new series of the magazine was published at the end of September 1996 under its former title *Catalogus: bulletin bibliographique trimestriel illustré des catalogues d'expositions d'art contemporain*.⁴⁵²

The publication is still ongoing. It has maintained the functioning and the sections in use in the last number of its first autonomous series, that is, a structure that reflects a very broad understanding of what an exhibition catalogue could be. The listed publications and their related information are now organized as follows: personal exhibitions, writing by artists, artists' books (listed alphabetically by artist name); group shows, collection catalogues, biennials-fairs-salons (listed alphabetically by city name); and a miscellaneous section (listed by artist, city, or author name). When possible, the records are complemented by a short text, usually slightly edited from press releases and similar documents. At present, *Catalogus* has a circulation of 2000 copies. Since

⁴⁴⁸ See Marie-Sophie Boulan, "Une Bibliothèque au [mac]: mémoire d'expositions," in *Quand les artistes font école*, 1, 9-11, 10.

⁴⁴⁹ Blistène directed the Musées de Marseille from 1990 to 1996.

⁴⁵⁰ Other institutions in Villeurbanne, Toulouse, Tokyo, Tours, and London had expressed interest in the collection. See Danièle Giraudy, "Avant-propos," in *Quand les artistes font école*, 1, 5-7, 5.

⁴⁵¹ The document is basically an updated version of the one undersigned by Goldschmidt and Hulten 9 years before. A copy of the undersigned convention is conserved in the archives of the Centre de Recherche Ernst Goldschmidt, MAC, Musée d'Art Contemporain, Marseille.

⁴⁵² See *Catalogus* (new series), no. 1 (Été 1996).

issue no. 40 (Winter 2013/2014) it is also available online on the website of the *Bibliothèques de Marseille*.⁴⁵³ However, despite the efforts of the small number of staff in charge of its preparation – currently solely composed by art historian Guy Peralo, the coordinator of the Centre the Documentation Ernst Goldschmidt –, the magazine is largely obsolete. Peralo has recently admitted with a hint of resignation that, given the reduced human capital invested in the publication, *Catalogus* gives priority to quantity (i.e. to the prompt listing of all the titles that the documentation centre receives), instead of quality (i.e. to a true critical and art historical assessment of the received publications).⁴⁵⁴

Catalogus is today obsolete because its corpus is by no means representative of the totality of the information produced. More importantly, lacking a true critical apparatus, it fails to accomplish the educational and scholarly mission foreseen by its founder, that is, to recognize and critically analyse the specificities and the particularities of the materials it lists. On a contemporary scale, in fact, the mission of the Centre de Documentation Ernst Goldschmidt has revealed itself to be imbued with the same hubris, the desire of knowledge, and the mastering of reality that the infinity of the list has brought with it since the dawn of time. However, it does seem that neither a physical nor a mental space exist in which it could be possible to list and give order to the existing (and available) information in all its amplitude. If one compares *Catalogus* with the previously mentioned WACB, the activities of which are still undertaken today by World Wide Books, it becomes clear that the trump card of the U.S. venture consists not only in its being a supply source with true international range, a well-established international reputation, and a user-friendly online interface, but mainly in its critical mission of selection. Being a commercial venture and functioning as a rating agency, it assumes responsibility *vis à vis* its customers (but also *vis à vis* history) to inspect a broad spectrum of contemporary art publication, selecting the most relevant

⁴⁵³ Bibliothèques de Marseille "Catalogus,"

<http://www.bmvr.marseille.fr/in/sites/marseille/bibliotheques/ernstgoldschmidt>, last access January 7, 2016.

⁴⁵⁴ Peralo in conversation with the author. If, on the one hand, Peralo is proud to be able to catalogue all the books that the center receives (the collection comprises today more than 56.000 items), on the other, he is aware that, in light of the massive contemporary production, he is able to fully accomplish the quantitative aspect of his task only because just a limited fraction of the volumes produced on an international scale is sent to the centre.

ones and thus establishing a standard.

3.2.3 *I Cataloghi delle esposizioni*

From 2nd to 5th November 1988 the third European convention of the art libraries (IFLA) took place in Florence under the theme *I cataloghi delle esposizioni*. Representatives of the major European and U.S. art libraries as well as other professionals involved in the field (e.g. curators, gallerists, publishers, photographers, and booksellers but also high school and university professors, politicians and other representatives of a variety of national and international institutions),⁴⁵⁵ gathered together to discuss issues related to the history, the definition, the production, the distribution, the documentation, and the acquisition of exhibition catalogues, sharing reflections and good practices for a more effective as well as efficient understanding, management of, and access to of this instrument.

Although one can retrospectively notice that many of the issues discussed at the conference actually corresponded to what Goldschmidt had already directly or indirectly brought to the fore in the framework of his commitment with the exhibition catalogue and its changes over the years, the fact that this international conference was dedicated to exhibition catalogues and could count a very interdisciplinary group of international participants, importantly witnesses to the significance that this instrument had gained on a global scale.

Among the multifaceted issues discussed within the framework of the conference, preoccupations *vis à vis* the exhibition catalogue's definition, diffusion, and access emerged directly or indirectly from almost all the papers presented at the gathering.⁴⁵⁶ In this respect, some of the problems brought to discussion by Ann Gallagher,⁴⁵⁷ Thomas Lersch,⁴⁵⁸ and Leslie Wilkins⁴⁵⁹ around

⁴⁵⁵ For the complete list of the registered participants (names and affiliations), see "Elenco dei Partecipanti," in *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*, 277-286.

⁴⁵⁶ See Lazzi, Leckey, and Calcagni Abrami, eds., *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*.

⁴⁵⁷ At the time team member of the London-based Nigel Greenwood Gallery; see Ann Gallagher, "The diffusion and availability of catalogues," in *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*, 133-137.

⁴⁵⁸ Then librarian/scientific collaborator of the Zentral Institut für Kunstgeschichte, Munich and member of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Kunstbibliotheken – AKB of the Federal Republic of

the theme of diffusion and access of the exhibition catalogue will be sketched straight away, while the main concerns related to its definition will be introduced toward the end of this subchapter.

Despite the efforts undertaken in previous decades, including those by Goldschmidt and Kroy Wisbar that have been previously discussed, one of the problems that emerged at the conference in Florence was the lack of a central international source of information on planned or published exhibition catalogues, which a contemporary estimate declared to be more than 20.000 every year.⁴⁶⁰ This problem preoccupied both librarians and booksellers, impacting their work and mission. Gallagher belonged to the latter professional category. In her intervention, she brought to light the issue, framing it within the experience accumulated and the difficulties faced by the Nigel Greenwood gallery, a gallery that since the early 1970s had realized (and incentivized) the success of the art book in its multiple and interrelated dimensions (art book, artist's book, exhibition catalogue), organizing thematic exhibitions but also inaugurating a flourishing specialized bookselling operation.⁴⁶¹ She stated:

Germany; see Thomas Lersch, "The acquisition of exhibition catalogues," in *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*, 143-159.

⁴⁵⁹ At the time Supervisor of Processing at the Boston Public Library; see Leslie Wilkins, "COBRA: five years of collaboration for bibliographic records in art," in *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*, 192-207.

⁴⁶⁰ See Wilkins, "COBRA," 192. The number refers to the new exhibition catalogues believed to be issued each year by museums, galleries, and publishing houses around the globe.

⁴⁶¹ Art historian Nigel Greenwood (1941-2004) became interested in the multifaceted instrument of the book in the late 1960s. It was at his gallery that the seminal exhibition *Book as Artwork 1960-1972* took place, in which catalogue the English translation of the homonymous text by Germano Celant discussed in the second chapter of this study (§ 2.1) was published, together with a list of the exhibited books. Realizing the key role that printed matter and especially the exhibition catalogue could play in exposing and communicating contemporary art, but also intercepting an all new interest in this instrument, the gallery invested a conspicuous energy not only in the publication of books and exhibition catalogues but also in collecting different forms of printed matter, including exhibition catalogues, for its library, friends, and clients. In the 1970s, a small bookselling operation run from within the gallery – Nigel Greenwood Books – was set up, functioning mainly on a mailing basis. At the time of Gallagher's communication, Nigel Greenwood Books was a prosperous business which from its retail outlet supplied art books and exhibition catalogues to libraries and collectors all over the world. Gallagher, "The diffusion and availability of catalogues," 133. On Nigel Greenwood and the historical relevance of his vision and gallery see Nicholas Serota, "Nigel Greenwood," *The Guardian*, 21 April 2004, <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2004/apr/21/guardianobituaries.artsobituaries> and Gordon Burn, *Sex & Violence, Death & Silence: Encounters with Recent Art* (London: Faber and Faber, 2009), 147-151.

there is no central international source of information on planned or published exhibition catalogues. There are museum bulletins, exhibition announcements, magazine listings, and helpful guides such as the *Belser Kunstquartal*, listing current exhibitions. But what a lot of material to sift through! And what a disappointment when the lengthy correspondence entered into with a distant gallery or museum results in a pleasant but totally unsalable leaflet with a single reproduction and less information than one originally began with. Alas, there is at present no alternative to the scouring of relevant literature, in the quest for information on exhibition catalogues.⁴⁶²

Once one had gained access to information about the presence and nature of a particular exhibition catalogue, another problem surfaced that Gallagher judged much more important: “the greater problem is that of speed. Corporate and private clients alike require their catalogues if not immediately, then as soon after the exhibition takes place as possible.”⁴⁶³ Given the relatively small circulation that characterized many exhibition catalogues, especially if related to contemporary art, the alacrity in obtaining information and then placing an order was decisive to acquire the sought book. The case of the English edition of the catalogue of the 1988 Venice Biennale, which sold out within a week and required months to be reprinted, shows that this problem was far from affecting only small or newborn institutions.⁴⁶⁴

The librarians who participated at the conference shared many of the concerns expressed by Gallagher. On closer inspection, their difficulties in

⁴⁶² Gallagher, “The diffusion and availability of catalogues,” in *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*, 134.

⁴⁶³ Gallagher, “The diffusion and availability of catalogues,” in *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*, 133-137.

⁴⁶⁴ See Marie-George Gervasoni, ed., *XLIII. Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte, La Biennale di Venezia: Il Luogo degli Artisti* (Venezia/Milano: La Biennale di Venezia/Fabbri Editori, 1988). The problem related to the availability of the English edition of the 1988 Venice Biennale's catalogue seems to be for much respect still very topical given that the exact same issue concerned the one of the 2015 Istanbul Biennial. See Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Tuzulu Su/Saltwater: A Theory of Thought Forms*, ed. Süreyya Evren (Istanbul: Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts/Yapi Kredi Publications, 2015). Without going into the details of the publications which accompanied the visit of the 2015 Istanbul Biennial (a short guide written by the curator herself with very succinct information about the works on show and their locations plus an anthology of commissioned texts, texts selected by the biennial participants, plus drawings created by some of them printed in the form of a Baedeker travel guide) one should stress that, despite the Baedeker-exhibition catalogue sold out already in the opening days, it was reprinted within a few weeks. Note, however, that both the short guide and the Baedeker-exhibition catalogue have been made available in PDF format on the biennial website shortly after the opening of the show. See Christov-Bakargiev, *Tuzulu Su/Saltwater: A Theory of Thought Forms* and Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, *Tuzulu Su/Salt Water: Guidebook* (Istanbul: Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts/Yapi Kredi Publications, 2015). Both publications are since then available for free download at <http://14b.iksv.org/publications.asp>, last access February 29, 2016

accessing information and acquiring exhibition catalogues as well as the responsibilities which their mission implies, are greater than those of commercial booksellers who can select their products according to areas of interest and economic convenience, operate more nimbly and quickly than a librarian subjected to institutional rules and procedures, and who, in the worst case scenario, will not fully satisfy the wishes of their customers. The consequences therefore, for a commercial bookseller are infinitesimally small compared to those of a librarian, for the latter determine future generation's access to history and knowledge. However, given the fact that libraries are among the main customers of specialized booksellers, one could argue that they both share similar missions and responsibilities. What is certain is that to buy the catalogues directly at the source without having to go through the intermediary of a bookseller, allows the libraries to leverage their budget and acquire a larger number of volumes.

Along with Gallagher, librarian Thomas Lersch emphasized the crucial importance related to the streamlining of this process. As he eloquently pointed out, information regarding the existence and quality of an exhibition catalogue, as well as its sale price, are of primary importance to allow a librarian to evaluate a purchase and, if possible, place an order directly to the source.⁴⁶⁵ Timely ordering of a catalogue at the source during the opening period of an exhibition allows one not only to *make sure* of assuring a copy, but also to make a considerable saving on the increased price of the volume once arrived in the bookstore.⁴⁶⁶ Moreover, and contrary to the practice then (and sometimes still today) *en vogue* that ensured that the catalogues reached the library once its related exhibitions were over, a faster acquisition process would grant interested readers and scholars the access to information provided within the publication before the end of the show allowing them to critically question and verify its assumptions.⁴⁶⁷ Besides the cultural advantages inherent to a speedier flow of information and the related streamlining of the bureaucratically

⁴⁶⁵ See Lersch, "The acquisition of exhibition catalogues," 147. Even if gifts or exchanges are common methods of acquisition, especially for art libraries that are divisions of museums, purchases remain determinant.

⁴⁶⁶ See Lersch, "The acquisition of exhibition catalogues," 147.

⁴⁶⁷ See Lersch, "The acquisition of exhibition catalogues," 144, 151.

challenging acquisition process, Lersch emphasized especially the economic aspect of the question: the increasing growth in the price of exhibition catalogues threatened the budget of the library.⁴⁶⁸ As should be clear by now, the increase in price of the exhibition catalogues did not only depend on mere market logics. It was, rather, deeply connected with the changes that this instrument and its scope, were experiencing. In this respect Lersch identified two trends: the first concerned the lavishly produced catalogues of what he called “super-exhibitions”⁴⁶⁹ (i.e. large monographic or thematic travelling exhibitions) the cost of which, even if *important*, seemed to be proportional to the content and offset by the fact that they were international co-productions of different publishing houses or similar ventures; the second involved what he considered to be just a “lucrative development” bankrolled by the West German Publishing houses, that is, the so-called *Katalogbuch*. The compound word *Katalogbuch* was coined and used in the 1980s to indicate a typology of publications presenting “more and more the characteristics of both a monograph and a collective work”⁴⁷⁰. Published within the framework of an exhibition, their often highly specialized scientific content characterizes the *Katalogbücher* as going “far beyond an actual exhibition catalogue.”⁴⁷¹ As art historian Ekkehard Mai noted in 1986, discussing the features of the *Katalogbuch* and its rapid diffusion up to becoming the exhibition catalogue’s model par excellence: “Ansatz und Ziel der Katalogbuchproduktion der letzten Jahre standen nicht nur im Dienst der Popularisierung von Kunst, sondern auch der Wissenschaft.”⁴⁷² In the next section of this study, specific aspects of the

⁴⁶⁸ To support this information, Lersch reports the example of the average price of the catalogues produced in the U.S. which increased of the 10% between 1970 and 1979. See Lersch, “The acquisition of exhibition catalogues,” 148, 157. Retrospectively, it should be noted that this figure seems to be not particularly alarming given the high inflation rates that characterized the 1970s on a global scale. Higher prices were due to the higher production costs provoked by the oil crisis. Observing the data related to the historical inflation in the U.S. since 1950 it is not surprising to see that the 1970s were the years with the highest inflation rates, with annual average peaks of 12% in 1974 and 14,5% in 1979. However, with an average inflation of about 7.5 percentage points over the decade, one should agree with Lersch in noticing that the average price of exhibition catalogues increased a little more (2,5%) than the average of other prices.

⁴⁶⁹ Lersch, “The acquisition of exhibition catalogues,” 148.

⁴⁷⁰ Lersch, “The acquisition of exhibition catalogues,” 148.

⁴⁷¹ Lersch, “The acquisition of exhibition catalogues,” 148.

⁴⁷² Ekkehard Mai, *Expositionen: Geschichte und Kritik des Ausstellungswesens* (München/Berlin: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 1986), 99. For a brief assessment of the *Katalogbüch*

theory of the exhibition catalogue and of the mutated relationship between art and knowledge will be taken up more extensively.

In his paper, Lersch dealt mainly with the material consequences related to the diffusion of the *Katalogbücher*; their high price importantly affecting the power of acquisition of the libraries. For the moment it suffices to note that the captivating attractiveness of the *Katalogbücher's* high quality colour plates and glossy covers suggests that they were conceived not only to appeal to exhibition-goers, researchers, and art libraries, but to find a wider audience willing to pay considerable sums for the cultural value embodied by these authoritative illustrated volumes.⁴⁷³

Although the price of these volumes and, in general, of each volume that a library wants to acquire, can be crucial in the decision to purchase the title or not, it should be noted that this possibility depends upon the availability of the chosen title. Gallagher pointed out that the best means to be sure of obtaining one or more copies of the desired exhibition catalogue remained that of acting in advance. However, if until the 1970s the availability of exhibition catalogues and, especially, of contemporary art catalogues “was fairly limited [...] [and] the area as such [...] almost finite”⁴⁷⁴ allowing the interested parties (booksellers, librarians, readers) to place advance orders and being relatively sure not to miss anything essential, by the 1980s the situation was much more complicated and diversified.

The exponential quantitative increase of art museums and institutions and the consequent escalation of exhibitions organized on a global scale did not lead to “a greater number of desirable essential catalogues, but just a greater number of catalogues.”⁴⁷⁵ In this context, a rather *perverse* habit came into

within the evolution of the exhibition catalogue in Germany, see the chapter *Der Katalog - Das Katalogbuch*, in Heinz Peters, *Bücher über Kunst - Kunst im Buch seit 1945* (Frankfurt am Main: Stiftung Buchkunst, 1988), 63-74.

⁴⁷³ See Lersch, “The acquisition of exhibition catalogues,” 148.

⁴⁷⁴ Gallagher, “The diffusion and availability of catalogues,” 135. According to Gallagher, besides the catalogues published in the framework of recurrent exhibitions, such as the Venice Biennale, the Whitney Biennial and the documenta, the essential exhibition catalogues, that is, the ones not to be missed, in the 1970s were limited to those produced by the major museums, such as The Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Musée National d'Art Moderne - Centre Pompidou, Paris, the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam, the Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, the Tate, London, and the Whitechapel Gallery, London as well as those produced by the main German museums and art institutes. See Gallagher, “The diffusion and availability of catalogues,” 135.

⁴⁷⁵ Gallagher, “The diffusion and availability of catalogues,” 135.

being. Both Gallagher and Lersch openly denounced it as highly problematic. In the 1980s several museums and art institutions began to combine their intellectual resources and especially their material ones, to organize ambitious itinerant exhibitions. So far nothing sinful. The perverse aspect of these collaborative ventures concerned the production of their related exhibition catalogue or, as it would be better to say, a convolute of exhibition catalogues. In this respect, it was not rare that instead of producing a single catalogue published in different languages, similar but different versions of the same book were produced. Every institution customized *its catalogue* to emphasize how its actualization of the exhibition was expressly adapted to its own distinctive environment. Yet, they also aimed to create products capable of representing and communicating at best its symbolic significance as producers and guarantors of cultural capital. One of the best examples of this practice was represented at the time by the exhibition *Zurbarán* and their related catalogues. The exhibition in question was dedicated to to the *œuvre* of the Spanish baroque painter Francisco de Zurbarán and was inaugurated in New York in 1987 before travelling to Paris and Madrid in 1988.⁴⁷⁶ To the delight of their users, a customized catalogue was published at every stopover of the exhibition.⁴⁷⁷ Both Gallagher and Lersch explicitly referred to the publications produced in the framework of this show in their papers. If Gallagher rhetorically asked to audience:

Do we really need several different versions of the same catalogue, produced in one version for an exhibition in France, for example, and then as the show tours, another Spanish/English version, with maybe an extra text, and in a completely different format, to the utter confusion of librarian and catalogue buyers everywhere?⁴⁷⁸

Lersch directly addressed the authentic trouble of the matter:

⁴⁷⁶ *Zurbarán*, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 16 September – 14 December 1987; Galeries Nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, 14 January – 11 April 1988; Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid 3 May – 30 July 1988.

⁴⁷⁷ See Jeannine Baticle, ed., *Zurbarán* (New York: Abrams, 1987); Jeannine Baticle, ed., *Zurbarán* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1988); Santiago Saavedra, ed., *Zurbarán* (Madrid: Museo der Prado, 1988).

⁴⁷⁸ Gallagher, "The diffusion and availability of catalogues," 135.

How can one know in advance that – to name only one example – the catalogues of the Zurbaran exhibition in New York and Paris, with respectively 71 and 73 entries, are almost identical, but that the Spanish version for Madrid documents far more objects, namely 118?⁴⁷⁹

Such catalogues bear witness not only to a new development in the practice of exhibition, but also to important changes in the relationship between exhibition and exhibition catalogue, that is a mutated understanding of the exhibition catalogue's definition and role. Moreover, they bear witness to a redundancy of information that did not seem to benefit anyone (other than perhaps the producers of the respective catalogues) and in most of the cases seemed not to justify the production of new content.⁴⁸⁰

A similar over-abundance of redundant information also characterized the other major source of exhibition catalogues, the private gallery. As already touched upon, commercial galleries had often been responsible for and particularly interested in the production of printed matter such as exhibition catalogues (§ 3.2.2.2.2). They had often produced relevant material, especially in the field of modern and contemporary art. Therefore, booksellers and librarians alike had been particularly eager about these materials. However, even in this field relevant information goes missing in the plethora of the materials produced. Gallagher described the situation as follows:

Catalogue production is entirely linked with changing trends in contemporary art as a whole. In every 'art capital' in the world, and in many smaller towns too, the number of galleries has increased manifold. If this meant, and in some cases it does, that more artists are given the opportunity to exhibit work, then this is entirely commendable. Market forces however can only support a certain number of high earning artists, and the constraints of running an economically viable gallery mean that a 'stable' of international names is essential to the exhibition programme, to high sales figures, and to survival. So once more we have the same artist exhibiting at several different galleries in one year, each publishing a catalogue for almost the same work.⁴⁸¹

While the numerous and highly publicized exhibitions of established artists coincided with the production of catalogues which were often very similar, the

⁴⁷⁹ Lersch, "The acquisition of exhibition catalogues," 151.

⁴⁸⁰ See Gallagher, "The diffusion and availability of catalogues," 135.

⁴⁸¹ Gallagher, "The diffusion and availability of catalogues," 136.

ones presenting the work of emerging artists usually took place in smaller or new-born galleries with limited resources. Given the fact that these exhibitions were generally not advertised – and even less so was the publication of their catalogues that even if modest, often presented relevant information –, it was difficult to be aware of their existence, other than through an extensive search.⁴⁸² It is in this context that Gallagher expressed what she defined as the “booksellers dilemma”: “from the commercial point of view, time spent on research outweighs any potential profit, and yet to ignore the market for small catalogues would be to offer a half-backed service.”⁴⁸³ According to Gallagher’s conclusions, which were in many respect similar to those of Lersch, the diffusion and adoption of new information technologies, would seem the only way to remedy the chronic lack of knowledge in this area.⁴⁸⁴

Before focusing on some problems related to the definition of the exhibition catalogue and its scope, it is worthwhile to come back to the previously mentioned WACB (Worldwide Art Catalogue Bulletin, see § 3.2.2.2.2) and sketch the central role that this publication has played for librarians, especially in the U.S. In fact, one of the main causes from which the lack of a central international source of information on published exhibition catalogues depended, was the lack of a common language and useful parameters to properly catalogue the exhibition catalogues and thus let them appear in national and international bibliographies.⁴⁸⁵ Not one of the conference’s speakers specifically addressed the circularity of this problem: the volumes should make it into the library in order to be catalogued and thus included in the above-mentioned bibliographies.

⁴⁸² This is even truer in the case of what might better refer to as grey literature, that is exhibition catalogues published by non-profit parties such as, for example, so-called *alternative spaces*. This aspect was largely glossed over by most of the participants of the conference. It was boarded just in a brief intervention. See Claudio Rotta Loria, “Dai Cartoncini agli Opuscoli: gli Strumenti di Informazione di Gallerie, Spazi Alternativi e Artisti in Piemonte,” in *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*, 266-272.

⁴⁸³ Gallagher, “The diffusion and availability of catalogues,” 137.

⁴⁸⁴ It should be noted that a sort of technological optimism emerged from many of the papers presented in Florence, a belief mixed with hope, that the introduction of new technologies may facilitate access to information and remedy a number of problems which afflicted (and in many respect still afflict) the general economy of the library.

⁴⁸⁵ See Leslie Wilkins, “COBRA: Five Years of Collaboration for Bibliographic Records in Art.” and Stefania Rossi Minutelli, “Problemi di catalogazione dei cataloghi di esposizioni,” in *I cataloghi delle esposizioni*, 168-177.

Librarian Leslie Wilkins, a representative of the Boston Public Library, the oldest U.S. public library and one of the biggest in the country, stressed that given the hybrid nature and scope of exhibition catalogues, as well as their bibliographic complexity, most of the U.S. libraries – *in primis* the Library of Congress – did not consider them a priority.⁴⁸⁶

At the beginning of the 1980s, the Boston Public Library, an institution that had early shown interest in the exhibition catalogue as a source of information on art, and which had quickly realized the importance of their being brought under a good level of bibliographic control, noticed that the Library of Congress lacked many records in this area. It was not only the international production that was very poorly represented within the prestigious federal institution, but even the national one. In this respect, and on an international scale, the Library of Congress seemed not to be an exception.⁴⁸⁷ Beyond the qualitative differences that the bibliographic records of these tools can present from library to library as well as from country to country, one should note that the delay in their being included in national and international catalogues as well as in bibliographies (in the fortunate cases in which they are!), could be fatal for their diffusion. If this procedure is not fast enough it can happen that by the time they are listed, many of them are not only out of print but have already disappeared from the market.⁴⁸⁸

In the 1980s, when the importance of the exhibition catalogues and the necessity of sound bibliographic tools to assure their preservation and accessibility were not yet fully realized, this problem was particularly acute. It was under these premises that in 1983 WACB and the Boston Public Library joined their forces to create COBRA, an unprecedented win-win collaboration between the private and the public sectors.⁴⁸⁹ On a bi-weekly basis the WACB donated exhibition catalogues to the Boston Public Library. The Library committed to creating accurate bibliographic records for all the received materials within fifteen days of their arrival. Rapidity was crucial in order for the WACB to be able to send to their client, upon request, the records produced

⁴⁸⁶ See Wilkins, "COBRA," 193.

⁴⁸⁷ See Wilkins, "COBRA," 193.

⁴⁸⁸ See Wilkins, "COBRA," 194; see also Lersch, "The acquisition of exhibition catalogues," 146.

⁴⁸⁹ See Wilkins, "COBRA," 199.

by the Boston Public Library together with the exhibition catalogues.⁴⁹⁰ The Library of Congress soon joined the venture, taking the role of distribution and marketing agency of the COBRA records.⁴⁹¹ The COBRA project represented a virtuous example of mutual collaboration between the private and the public sectors, between the profit and non-profit worlds. Thanks to the WACB donation, the Boston Public Library could save the energies previously invested in the research as well as acquisition of exhibition catalogues and redirect them towards their cataloguing. In this way standards were developed which both the WACB and later on the Library of Congress could diffuse on a national and international scale. This importantly contributed to the development of awareness around the instrument of the exhibition catalogue and its appropriate cataloguing.

Taken together, the papers presented at the conference define the catalogue of exhibition as an essential source of information on art. Far from being considered secondary to the exhibition, the exhibition catalogue was raised to the level of art book par excellence, an instrument that (as also evidenced by Haskell's study to which the first chapter of this dissertation is dedicated) was going through a period of important epistemological reconsideration. Kryzstof Cieszkowski (Tate Library, London) was the only speaker who specifically addressed this issue. Introducing his paper, Cieszkowski stressed not only the vagueness of what he stated being "the traditional definition"⁴⁹² of the exhibition catalogue (i.e. "a permanent record of a temporary event"⁴⁹³) but also the unilateralism and the non-permeability of most definitions of the time. In 1977 bibliographer Anthony Burton had emphasized its serving not only as a record of the exhibition but "first and foremost as a record of the existence of works of art."⁴⁹⁴ In 1985 art historian Ernst Gombrich characterized the exhibition catalogue as having become a

⁴⁹⁰ See Wilkins, "COBRA," 199. In this case the records were produced under the form of on paper catalogue cards.

⁴⁹¹ See Wilkins, "COBRA," 196-197. The records were available to the entire international library community on subscription as magnetic tapes. See Wilkins, "COBRA," 196.

⁴⁹² Kryzstof Cieszkowski, "The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue," in *I cataloghi delle esposizioni*, 1.

⁴⁹³ Cieszkowski, "The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue," 1.

⁴⁹⁴ Anthony Burton quoted in Cieszkowski, "The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue," 1. See also Anthony Burton "Exhibition catalogues," in *Art Libraries Manual: A Guide to Resources and Practices*, ed. Philip Pacey, 71-86 (London/New York: Bowker, 1977).

heavy and pedantic “ritualistic” object whose sole function was that of reassuring “the public” (not even the readers!) “of the care and thought that have gone into the arrangement of the show.”⁴⁹⁵ While in early 1988, literally quoting ethnologist Clifford Geertz’ seminal essay *Thick Description: Towards an Interpretable Theory of Culture*, bibliographer Katherine Haskins defined it as a “transient example of shaped behaviour.”⁴⁹⁶

According to Cieszkowski, Burton, Gombrich and Haskins (or it would be better to say Geertz) all stressed very relevant aspects related to the definition and scope of the exhibition catalogue. However, their understandings did not fully recognize the “integrally [...] fluent, interactive and symbiotic”⁴⁹⁷ relationship between an exhibition and its catalogue. In the view of the Tate librarian, to fully recognize the nature and scope of an instrument such as the exhibition catalogue one should never forget that an exhibition is “more than just an ordered display of certain objects in a certain place or places for a specified duration: it is, above all else, a human event [...] [which] involves many ideological, political and nationalistic factors, from matters of selection, evaluation and definition to those of funding, promoting and sponsorship.”⁴⁹⁸ Taking into account the complex economy of the exhibition one should never underestimate the significance of the “ancillary activity”⁴⁹⁹ it occasions. Reviews and press coverage, lectures and symposia, as well as different forms of publicity (among which one can count the exhibition catalogue) are all part of this *activity*. According to Cieszkowski, when it comes to exhibition catalogues one cannot generalize. To fully understand the nature and scope of such publications one should contextualize them within the framework of the exhibition to which pertain:

Publications contingent on this event may include brief guides, collection of related essays and/or documents, and other hybrid publications that both state the

⁴⁹⁵ Ernst Gombrich quoted in Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 1. See also Ernst Gombrich, “Dutch Genre Painting,” in *Reflections on the History of Art: Views and Reviews*, ed. Richard Woodfield (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), 109-114.

⁴⁹⁶ Katherine Haskins quoted in Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 2. See also Clifford Geertz, “Thick description: Towards an Interpretative Theory of Culture,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*, 3-30 (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

⁴⁹⁷ Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 2.

⁴⁹⁸ Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 2.

⁴⁹⁹ Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 2.

rationale of the exhibition and develop it further than conditions governing the exhibitions permit. Thus the relationship between catalogue and exhibition is a fluent and diverse one, and its precise nature will be as varied as there have been exhibitions and catalogues resultant from them.⁵⁰⁰

In this respect, Cieszkowski described the history of the exhibition catalogue in terms of a “process of accretion”⁵⁰¹:

There may be unease regarding the lack of uniformity or the uncertainty of purpose of catalogues [...] but any irritation with the rebarbative nature of this genre will usually owe more to a misunderstanding of its heterogeneity than to any lack of consistency in the genre. An exhibition catalogue has seldom been merely a neutral and unmediated record, and it is wrong for us to expect such a neutrality from it; more often it has been a manifesto, a statement of intent or ideology, or a claim to consideration beyond the temporal and local parameters governing the exhibition.⁵⁰²

To proof this, the librarian dedicated the rest of his speech to briefly locating and defining the relationship between exhibition and catalogue within three early solo-exhibitions that took place in London between the late 18th and early 20th century.⁵⁰³ In so doing, he was one of the very few speakers who lingered on the different degrees of significance that artists throughout history have accorded to the exhibition catalogue, envisaging it not as a mere document of a transient event but as an instrument through which to contextualize, develop, and commend their artistic vision.⁵⁰⁴

⁵⁰⁰ Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 2.

⁵⁰¹ Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 2.

⁵⁰² Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 2.

⁵⁰³ See Cieszkowski, “The Resistible Rise of the Exhibition Catalogue,” 3-7. The exhibitions and catalogues in questions are: the exhibition of about seventy of his paintings which Nathaniel Hone inaugurated on St. Martins’s lane in 1775 and the catalogue Nathaniel Hone, *The Exhibition of Pictures by Nathaniel Hone, R.A., mostly the Works of his Leisure, and many of them in his own Possession* (London, 1775); the exhibition of his own paintings and drawings which William Blake organized in 1809 above his brother’s hosiery shop in Broad Street and the publication William Blake, *A Descriptive Catalogue of Pictures, Poetical and Historical Inventions, Painted by William Blake in Water Colours, Being the Ancient Method of Fresco Painting Restored: and Drawings, for Public Inspection and for Sale by Private Contract* (London, 1809); and the exhibitions of his paintings which Benjamin Robert Haydon organized in the Egyptian Hall (Piccadilly, London) in 1846 which did not occasion the publication of any catalogue. Actually it seems that Cieszkowski chose to thematize this last exhibition (which failure brought Haydon to take his life) just to stress at what level an artist can invest their hopes in an exhibition and its related success, and eventually (but not in this case!), in the role that its catalogue can have.

⁵⁰⁴ See also Rotta Loria, “Dai Cartoncini agli Opuscoli” and, cursorily, Jack Robertson, “The Exhibition Catalogue as a Source of Artists’ Primary Documents,” in *I Cataloghi delle Esposizioni*, 239-249.

Later on in this chapter, as well as in the second part of this study (§ 4), there will be the occasion to linger on this often overlooked aspect of artistic production, analysing and discussing it in depth within the practice of Matthew Barney. Now it is time to focus attention on certain features of the exhibition catalogue and on its scope, given that, as already anticipated, the end of the 1980s coincided with an intense scholarly confrontation with this instrument which brought about an acknowledgment of its crucial relevance in the field of art history and related disciplines.

3.2.4. A Fully-Rounded Genre: the Exhibition Catalogue

Discussed as an integral part of the *genre* of the art book by Harold Rosenberg at the end of the 1950s (§ 1.3) and still implicitly considered as such by Haskell in his assessment of its historical origins (§ 1.1), the exhibition catalogue experienced a moment of intense scholarly confrontation in the late 1980s, being described and praised not only as a “genre à part entière”⁵⁰⁵ but also as a “nouveau genre”⁵⁰⁶ by Rosenberg’s homonymous younger French colleague, the art historian and Louvre director to be Pierre Rosenberg.

Rosenberg, who at the time served as the *conservateur du patrimoine chargé du département des Peintures*⁵⁰⁷ in the museum he would direct from 1994 to 2001, had had the opportunity to work extensively with this tool. Since 1962, the year in which he had started his career in the Department of Painting at the Louvre, he had not only time and again faced the technical and practical challenges related to exhibitions and exhibition catalogue production, but also the conceptual implications of their elaboration. He witnessed and was also actively involved in its epistemic and formal transformation. Moreover, he had assessed first-hand the relevance of the exhibition catalogue within the field of

⁵⁰⁵ Pierre Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” *Les cahiers du Musée national d’art moderne* 29 (Automne 1989): 54.

⁵⁰⁶ Pierre Rosenberg, “Un genre nouveau: Le catalogue d’exposition,” *Histoire de l’art: Bulletin d’information de l’Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art, publié en collaboration avec l’Association des Professeurs d’Archeologie et d’Histoire de l’Art des Universités*, no. 1/2 (Juin 1988): 101.

⁵⁰⁷ That is, more or less, chief curator of the Department of Painting. Within the French system, the *conservateur[s/ices] du patrimoine* are civil servants with administrative, technical, and scientific responsibilities vis à vis a specific area of the national heritage. The aim of their work is to study, classify, preserve, enrich and publicly valorize the segment of heritage entrusted to them.

art historical research, reflecting on the fundamental role played by its “auteurs”⁵⁰⁸ (intended as both the one/s that conceptualized and worked on the exhibition as well as on its catalogue). In this respect, one should emphasize that, given his experience and knowledge of the field, he had also begun to serve as a juror for the *Prix Minda de Gunzburg* (§3.2.1).

Considered as the “maître français en expositions et en catalogues,”⁵⁰⁹ on the 10th of November 1988 Rosenberg was invited to give a lecture at the Centre Pompidou within the framework of the conference series *L’Exposition et l’histoire de l’art*. In his talk, which would be published the year after with the title *L’Apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art*,⁵¹⁰ he focused on the interrelationship between the exhibition, the exhibition catalogue and the discipline of the history of art after 1945.⁵¹¹ Although he had been invited to speak by an institution devoted to modern and contemporary creation, he purposely avoided discussing the topic in the framework of modern and contemporary art, mainly referring to exhibitions and exhibition catalogues dedicated to one of his main areas of interests, that is seventeenth and eighteenth century French painting.⁵¹² His pronouncement highlights certain characteristics and problems that are worthy of being mentioned at some length, since they help, even if only by contrast, to further clarify the role and

⁵⁰⁸ Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 58.

⁵⁰⁹ Yves Michaud, “Éditorial,” *Les cahiers du Musée national d’art moderne* 29 (Automne 1989): 4.

⁵¹⁰ See Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 49-56.

⁵¹¹ On this occasion, Rosenberg took up and expanded on some convictions and arguments he had briefly sketched in an article published at the beginning of the Summer 1988 in the inaugural issue of *Histoire de l’Art* the journal of the newborn French *Institut National d’Histoire de l’Art* (INHA). See Rosenberg, “Un genre nouveau,” 101-102. Note, that within the pages of this and of the subsequent issue of the journal, an entire section was dedicated to the instrument of the exhibition catalogue and to the *state of the thing* of art publishing. See Daniel Ternois, “Donner à voir: L’exposition et son catalogue,” *Histoire de l’Art*, no. 1/2 (Juin 1988): 103-109; Jean Clair, “Les catalogues d’exposition: Les cas Bonnard,” *Histoire de l’Art*, no. 1/2 (Juin 1988): 110-112; André Chastel, “Livres sur l’art: Dans l’impasse,” *Histoire de l’Art*, no. 3 (1988): 113; Pierre Brochet, “L’édition d’art, que faire?” *Histoire de l’Art* no. 3 (1988): 114-116; Adam Biro, “Livre d’art, livres sur l’art” *Histoire de l’Art*, no. 3 (1988): 117-119. As one can guess by scrolling through these titles, Pierre Rosenberg was not the only protagonist of the scholarly confrontation on this instrument that took place at the time. However, his contribution proves to be particularly interesting, especially as concerns the desire to normatively define the exhibition catalogue as a particular genre within the field of art publishing. On the premises on which the INHA were to be founded, see André Chastel, *La Création d’un institut national d’histoire de l’art: Rapport au Premier ministre* (Paris: La Documentation française, 1984).

⁵¹² Together with 17th and 18th century French and Italian painting and drawing, two areas in which Rosenberg has published extensively, his scholarly activity encompasses also the history of collecting.

scope of this instrument as well as its relevance within the realm of modern and contemporary art.

Before getting to the heart of his arguments, Rosenberg sketches a general definition of the exhibition catalogue. According to him, beyond the presence of institutional statements and scholarly essays signed by more or less accredited authors, to be fully considered an exhibition catalogue, it must present a reproduction of every exhibited work together with a precise and substantial “notice”⁵¹³ about each of them. If at the end of the 1960s “tout reproduire de ce qui était exposé paraissait une audace folle”⁵¹⁴ (not only for the high production costs that this would have resulted in, but also because of the different function that the exhibition catalogue was expected to perform) it was more or less common practice to include a picture of every work on show already at the end of the 1970s. Color photography was however still relatively rare and in most of the cases the layout of the pages was rather austere. By the end of the 1980s, the praxis of illustrating every work on show was well established: they were all in color and possibly presented in the frame of captivating graphic designs. This trend, which Rosenberg presented in relation to art exhibitions catalogues up to the 18th century, seems however due to the boost given by modern and contemporary art exhibition catalogues.⁵¹⁵ As for the preparation of the *notices* that were to go with the pictures, Rosenberg underlined the necessity of their being guided by both a heuristic and an interpretative inspiration. Every text should reconstruct the history of the artwork, paying particular attention to its provenance as well as providing information about its changes in ownership; it was to mention its state of conservation and all the known related preparatory drawings, copies, etc. Furthermore, it should be concluded by an analysis, not only including the dating of the work and, if necessary, the elucidation of its iconography, but also, and more importantly, a personal statement of the author about the aesthetic

⁵¹³ Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 52, 49.

⁵¹⁴ Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 53.

⁵¹⁵ See Camille Morineau, “Un corpus emblématique? Les catalogues d’expositions du Musée national d’art moderne de 1947 à 1977,” in *Les cahiers du Musée national d’art moderne*, no. 56/57 (Été-Automne 1996): 155-177. See also Germain Viatte, “Introduction,” in Francine Delaigle, *Les catalogues d’exposition: Guide de catalogage* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1991), 3-4.

value of the piece and on the art-historical significance of the intentions and ambitions of the artist who created it.⁵¹⁶

Without going into detail of what he considers to be auxiliary elements of the exhibition catalogue (such as introductory texts and essays on specific works), Rosenberg focuses on a characteristic of the instrument that he claims to be as paradoxical as constitutive, that is the fact that it is prepared before the opening of the exhibition, and not after, as logic would dictate. To edit the catalogue of an exhibition after it has been opened would entail a series of advantages: the artworks would be photographed on site, controlling in front of them “la qualité et la fidélité”⁵¹⁷ of their pictures; the author/s of the texts who form their opinions as well as hypotheses on photographs and memories of works of art they have accessed in different locations at different times, could give shape to their intuitions in front of the artworks and in dialogue with them. Moreover, they could also benefit from the discussion undertaken on the spot with other experts, as well as incorporate and respond to the criticisms expressed by their detractors.⁵¹⁸ However, this rarely applies. Indeed, the praxis calls for the contrary and the catalogue is usually available from the very opening of the exhibition. A choice that could seem driven simply by economical reasons and be seen as a strategy to capitalize on its cost of production in fact hides much broader implications.

Discussing the irresistible rise of art books at the end of the 1950s, Harold Rosenberg had vehemently deplored the mutation that led art to become only a passive document of culture, denouncing the fact that exhibitions were becoming the illustration of *a priori* formulated interpretations. According to the American Rosenberg, instead of functioning as the engine-agent for the catalogue itself, exhibitions had become the indispensable pretext to justify the hypotheses and the insights previously developed by the author/s of their catalogues (§ 1.3).⁵¹⁹ Conversely, for Pierre Rosenberg, it is precisely in its apparently non-deontological and paradoxical nature that the value and “l’originalité” of the exhibition catalogue lies, “dans le vaste champ des

⁵¹⁶ See Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 52.

⁵¹⁷ Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 53.

⁵¹⁸ See Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 53-54.

⁵¹⁹ Rosenberg, “Art Books, Book art, Art,” 139-140.

publications artistiques”⁵²⁰. That is why he upgrades and praises the catalogue as a fully rounded genre: “le catalogue, par le fait qu’il est conçu alors que les oeuvres ne sont pas reunites, est un genre à part entière, un genre en soi et doit le demeurer.”⁵²¹ But how does he justify his normative position? According to him, the core value of this instrument lies in the way it is able to serve and at the same time construct the history of art; Rosenberg maintains not only the indissolubility of the relationship between the exhibition and its catalogue but also the very short circuit on which this relationship is based: it is through and within the exhibition catalogue that, especially after 1945, the history of art has been written and made.⁵²²

To clarify his arguments and the biunivocal relationship between the exhibition and its catalogue, Rosenberg refers to two examples. The first relates to the 1988 exhibition *Poussin, The Early Years in Rome: The Origins of French Classicism* at the Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth.⁵²³ In the early 1980s Harvard professor and Fogg Art Museum curator Konrad Oberhuber had completed an audacious study the French master early Roman years, which remained unpublished.⁵²⁴ In 1984 the Texan art museum acquired *Venus and Adonis* (1624), a painting whose attribution to the early Poussin was still controversial but which Oberhuber nevertheless credited to the French painter. Oberhuber’s study and his *a priori* formulated interpretations functioned as an engine-agent for the exhibition (which verified them) and were published in its *related* catalogue.⁵²⁵ Without his *a priori* formulated interpretations the above-

⁵²⁰ Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 54.

⁵²¹ Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 54.

⁵²² Rosenberg, “L’apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 56. In this respect, Rosenberg refers especially to his homeland, to France. However one should note that this affirmation is liable to be generalized to other contexts and country.

⁵²³ *Poussin, the Early Years in Rome: The Origins of French Classicism*, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, TX, September 24 – November 27, 1988.

⁵²⁴ See Anthony Blunt, “Seventeenth-Century Painting: The Literature of the Last Ten years,” *The Burlington Magazine* 124, no. 956 (November 1982): 705-711, 706.

⁵²⁵ See Konrad Oberhuber, *Poussin, The Early Years in Rome: The Origins of French Classicism* (New York/Fort Worth, TX: Hudson Hill Press/Kimbell Art Museum, 1988). The book was contemporarily published in Europe (Oxford: Phaidon/Christies’s Limited, 1988). Two separate illustrated lists, one of the early Poussin’s paintings and one of his early drawings, are published in the book as the two parts of a unitary section entitled “catalogue”; Oberhuber, *Poussin*, 257-354. Even if this section might represent a sort of catalogue raisonné, it is described as being “a basic checklist that takes the place of footnotes, even though it contains a few works not mentioned in the text. Arrangement is approximately chronological, although on occasion groupings according to subject matter take precedence. [...] An asterisk (*) following the title of

mentioned exhibition and the scholarly publication which shed light on the early Roman years of Poussin would never have come into being.⁵²⁶

The second example is connected to the showing of ten canvases commissioned in the 17th century by the marquis de La Vrillière for the gallery of his Parisian palace.⁵²⁷ The paintings, created by six Italian masters considered to be among the best at the time,⁵²⁸ were exhibited together once again and for the first time after the French Revolution (1789) in 1988 in Paris (and in 1989 in Milan) on the occasion of the exhibition *Seicento: Le Siècle de Caravage dans les collections françaises*.⁵²⁹ The catalogue of this exhibition includes two essays dedicated to La Vrillière, his gallery and his collection.⁵³⁰ The insight presented in these studies (which were written well before the opening of the show) in association with the awaited reunion of the ten paintings brought a whole series of new questions to the fore, which were to be addressed in future studies.⁵³¹

a work indicates that it was included in the exhibition at the Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth, September 24-November 27, 1988." Oberhuber, *Poussin*, 256. See also Rosenberg, "L'Apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l'histoire de l'art," 49-51 and Pierre Rosenberg, "Konrad Oberhuber et Poussin," *Artibus et Historie* 31, no. 62 (2010): 8-13.

⁵²⁶ This has much to do with the dialectic between document and instrument, that art historian Edgar Wind (1900-1971) termed "the dialectic of the historical document": to adequately understand a document one ought to presuppose the information which one is trying to get from the document itself because "every instrument and every document *participates* in the structure which is meant to reveal." Edgar Wind, "Some Points of Contact between History and Natural Science (1936)," in *Philosophy & History: Essays Presented to Ernst Cassirer*, eds. Raymond Klibansky and H. J. Paton, 255-264 (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1975), 257. Emphasis in the original.

⁵²⁷ See Jean-Aymar Piganiol de la Force, *Notice sur l'état ancien et nouveau de la galerie de l'Hôtel de Toulouse* (1876) (Paris: Banque de France, 1903).

⁵²⁸ Guercino, Guido Reni, Carlo Maratta, Pietro da Cortona, Alessandro Veronese (also known as Alessandro Turchi or L'Orbetto), and Poussin, who was considered an Italian master because he was living in Rome.

⁵²⁹ *Seicento: Le Siècle de Caravage dans les collections françaises*, Galeries nationales du Grand Palais, Paris, October 11, 1988 - January 2, 1989; Palazzo Reale, Milano, March - April 1989. See Arnauld Brejon de Labergnée and Nathalie Volle (eds.), *Seicento: Le siècle de Caravage dans les collections françaises* (Paris: Éditions de la Réunion des musées nationaux, 1989). Apparently, no Italian edition of the catalogue was published.

⁵³⁰ See Christel Haffner, "La Vrillière, collectionneur et mécène," in *Seicento*, 29-38 and Sabine Cotté, "Un exemple du «goût italien»: La galerie de l'hôtel de La Vrillière à Paris," in *Seicento*, 39-46.

⁵³¹ See Rosenberg, "L'apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l'histoire de l'art," 51. Rosenberg reports that, after art historian and collector Denis Mahon had visited the exhibition and read the two dedicated essays in the catalogue, he manifested the intention to do further research on the theme. Apparently this never happened since no published contribution on this subject is to be found under the authorship of Mahon.

Along with Rosenberg then, one can affirm that exhibitions could be the illustration, but also the verification, of *a priori* formulated hypotheses. Their catalogue is the place in which one can access these hypotheses and thus the relationship between the exhibition and the exhibition catalogue is a circular one. It is through the interaction between the exhibitions and their catalogues that the history of art is made and written, given the fact that it is precisely in their interaction that new questions and problems emerges. Knowledge generates doubts; doubts come with knowledge; knowledge generates knowledge.

In Rosenberg's account the exhibition catalogue is praised as "une véritable somme scientifique"⁵³², that is the instrument that embodies and enables the process of making and writing the history of art. That is why the author/s of an exhibition catalogue play/s a fundamental role and are the pivotal masters of the discipline as such:

Bien plus que l'auteur d'un livre, le rédacteur d'un catalogue doit maîtriser tous les instruments de travail qui font l'originalité de l'histoire de l'art: les archives, les archives photographiques, les manuscrits, les sources bibliographiques, [...], les documents les plus varies, les catalogues de ventes, les estampes, les dessins, les copies [...].⁵³³

Emphasizing the key role and the peculiar skills of the author/s of an exhibition catalogue, Rosenberg has a double aim. On the one hand, he directly valorizes the erudition and the competence of the scholars who are responsible for these publications (including, of course, himself); and this, in a time when, even holding one of these instruments in one's hands, it was still difficult to clearly identify them, and once identified, their role was not clearly acknowledged in bibliographical terms.⁵³⁴ On the other hand, he stresses that exhibitions and all the more their catalogues are not only key instruments for art and the *making* of its history, but are also indispensable tools to build and export a specific national (and, on a more *modest* scale personal) authority in the field. It is precisely on this point that Rosenberg emphasizes in his lapidary

⁵³² Rosenberg, "L'apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l'histoire de l'art," 54.

⁵³³ Rosenberg, "L'apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l'histoire de l'art," 54.

⁵³⁴ See § 3.2.3 and Stefania Rossi Minutelli, "Problemi di catalogazione dei cataloghi di esposizioni."

closing remark: “si l’on accorde à la France une place dans l’histoire de l’art, depuis 1945, c’est avant tout à causes de ses expositions, grâce à ses catalogues d’expositions.”⁵³⁵ Despite the fact that he had calibrated his arguments mainly on the French context, it is evident, not least from the examples cited by the same Rosenberg (e.g. Oberhuber's study on Poussin and the related exhibition as well as catalogue) that this statement could be extended to numerous other countries. Certainly, France is a very significant example, not only because it is the country in which the art book was born (§ 1.1), but also because, and perhaps precisely because of this, it is the country in which the scholarly discussion of the exhibition catalogue, its features and scope began in the late 1960s⁵³⁶ and had continued to be brought to the fore with different levels of engagement, intensity, and visibility at least until the beginning of the 2000s.⁵³⁷

3.2.4.1 Marin's *catalogue-en-acte* and *catalogue-document*

The way in which the history of art is made and written, through exhibitions and, above all, exhibition catalogues, had previously drawn the attention of the philosopher and semiotician Louis Marin. In a 1975 article⁵³⁸ which should be considered as among the first insightful scholarly confrontations with the exhibition catalogue as such, Marin offers a witty semiotic reading of the conceptual, operational, and social functions of this instrument, implementing what he defines as the “analyse sémiotique parodique”⁵³⁹ of an exhibition and its catalogue; that is, the itinerant exhibition

⁵³⁵ Rosenberg, “L’Apport des expositions et de leurs catalogues à l’histoire de l’art,” 55.

⁵³⁶ In 1969 André Chastel was the first to problematize some of the issues related to the catalogue, focusing mainly on museums’ collection catalogues. He lamented not only the lack of international standards in this regards, but also the neglect of this instrument, to which the museum staff devoted less and less attention in order to concentrate in the development of temporary exhibitions which tended to be of variable scientific value. See Chastel, “Éditorial: Le Problème des catalogues des musées,” 4-7.

⁵³⁷ See Jean François Lasnier, “La crise de l’édition d’art, une crise culturelle?,” in Nicole Picot, ed., *Arts en bibliothèque* (Paris: Electre Éditions du Cercle de la Libraire, 2003), 51-59 and Francine Delaigle, “Les catalogues d’exposition,” in *Arts en bibliothèque*, 109-122.

⁵³⁸ See Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art: notes de travail sur un catalogue d’exposition”.

⁵³⁹ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 50. Marin defines what he calls “une analyse sémiotique parodique”, as, “une stratégie de description et d’analyse opérée par le déplacement d’une terminologie et de notions hors du domaine où elles ont été produites, dissociées des actes épistémologiques et méthodologiques qui leur ont donné naissance, par leur mise en jeu sur une scène autre.” Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 50. Implementing this method, he aims

Les Cubistes – held in Bordeaux and Paris in 1973 – and its catalogue.⁵⁴⁰ Without going into the details of the case study around which his considerations emerge, and without paying too much attention to the purely semiotic and sociologic aspects of the matter, it is useful to focus on a few passages which highlight the performative nature of the exhibition catalogue.

Writing in a time in which the catalogue was still conceived as a tool to be used primarily within the exhibition, that is, a time in which it still had a size and a weight that allowed it to be carried with and used during the visit to an exhibition, Marin focuses initially on its value of use in this specific context. According to him, the catalogue serves first and foremost *to guide* the “lecteur-visiteur”⁵⁴¹ through the exhibition, permitting them *to identify* the works on show, by providing their titles, the names of their authors, as well as a black and white picture for each of them. In the economy of the instrument, the provided pictures have a fundamental role, since only through them could the process of identification reach its completion and thus allow to the *reader-visitor to see* the work on show. Every photograph serves as the “ultime contrôle d’identité [...] où l’oeuvre se dédouble comme pour vérifier sa propre existence aux yeux de son contemplateur [...] dans une ‘épreuve’ dont la couleur a été exclue”⁵⁴². The *exclusion* of color, that is, the white and blackness of the pictures in the exhibition catalogue, was still a constant in the early 1970s, mainly for economical reasons. According to Marin, it is especially through this fundamental constant that the *reader-visitor* is enabled to certify the identity of the artwork they are physically facing, and then seeing it in the exhibition.⁵⁴³

to stress the analytic relevance of the semiotic of the art not as a science of art in general, but as obliquely opening a certain type of reflection and questioning of the structural conditions that support art and its related system. See Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 50.

⁵⁴⁰ *Les Cubistes*, Bordeaux, Galerie des Beaux-Arts, May 4 - September 1, 1973; Paris, Musée d’art moderne de la ville de Paris, Septembre 26 - Novembre 10, 1973. See Gilberte Martin-Mery and Jacques Lassaigue, *Les Cubistes* (Bordeaux/Paris: Galerie des Beaux-Arts/Musée d’Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1973).

⁵⁴¹ Louis Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 52.

⁵⁴² Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 52.

⁵⁴³ A few incongruencies should be noted though. First, the exhibition catalogue on which Marin bases his reflections actually does not contain a black and white photographic reproduction of every work on show; second, Marin never addresses the presence of a special section entitled *planches couleur*, preceeding the (partially) illustrated and annotated list of the artworks. Sixteen works of art which records are not provided with an identificative black and white picture in the above-mentioned list are each presented by a (more or less cut) full-page color picture at the beginning of the catalogue. See Martin-Mery and Lassaigue, *Les Cubistes*, 1-16.

Marin seems to consider the exhibition catalogue as being a meta-instrument that comments on its capability of guidance and identification, offering the *reader-visitor* “la forme générale d’un déchiffrement ou d’une interprétation possibles.”⁵⁴⁴ This *forme générale* is somehow contained in the functioning modalities of the catalogue itself since every exhibition catalogue is the place in which one or more classification-system, typical of the epoch in which the catalogue is produced, are adapted, tested, and run; embodying these systems, the catalogue represents and proposes to the readers-visitors the only *historically possible* principle of articulation of the display and of the identification of the exhibited works.⁵⁴⁵

Although the philosopher and semiotician writes at a time when the catalogue is still considered as a tool to be used first and foremost within the exhibition walls, he is very well aware of the fact that this instrument outlives the exhibition: “sous sa forme de livre, il [le catalogue] est ce document que l’exposition temporaire laisse derrière elle après sa disparitions.”⁵⁴⁶ In the very moment in which the exhibition comes to an end, the specific usage value of the exhibition catalogue within its walls is lost forever. From this moment onward “the catalogue est l’instrument d’une opération qui vise à ‘mémoriser’ le monument passé qu’est l’exposition en document, matériel d’une histoire et d’une science de l’art.”⁵⁴⁷ The catalogue is then not only a document,⁵⁴⁸ but also a mnemotechnic instrument. From being a slim, non-illustrated list, over time it has increasingly taken the shape, the volume, and the epistemic features of the art book in order to embody and temporally expand the temporary nature of the exhibition. According to Marin, this has happened for reasons that are intrinsic to the book as the tool of knowledge par excellence:

Dans l’espace clos du livre au statut duquel le catalogue contemporain prétend de plus en plus, toutes les pratiques et les conduits complexes enchevêtrés,

⁵⁴⁴ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 52.

⁵⁴⁵ See Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 52 and Pierre Bourdieu, “Eléments d’une théorie sociologique de la perception artistique,” *Revue internationale de sciences sociales* 20, no. 4 (1968): 640-664.

⁵⁴⁶ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 54. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁴⁷ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 54. Emphasis in the original.

⁵⁴⁸ i.e. “a piece of written, printed, or electronic matter that provides information or evidence or that serves as an official record.” Maurice Waite, ed., *Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

aléatoires qui font de l'exposition un moment d'une 'vie sociale' [...] se trouvent réduits en une totalité permanente, lisible, analysable par un discours second qui fait parler ces traces en récupérant à son profit ce qu'elles ne disaient pas ou ce qu'elles disaient mal ou autrement: usage 'métalinguistique' où l'usage instrumental se transforme et s'étend. Ce qui constituait la structure et l'organisation actuelles d'un espace pratique de comportements sociaux institutionnalisés, lieux d'instanciation complexe de pouvoirs de contrôle symboliques et réels, est alors converti en organisation et structure sémantiques d'un vocabulaire, d'un discours, d'un livre. Une zone du corps social [...] se déploie devant la curiosité érudite en un corpus de textes et d'images propre à d'autres parcours, d'autres articulations, d'autres focalisations: ceux du savoir.⁵⁴⁹

The exhibition catalogues tend to increasingly assume the form and characteristics of the actual book. In so doing, all the practices and the social mechanisms that characterize the exhibition as a temporally, geographically, and socially defined space are reduced and expanded to a *totalité permanente*. This *permanent totality* is supposed to be read and analyzed without really noticing the fact that, it is, in itself, a discourse. It is a discourse built on some traces of the exhibition itself, traces that could easily be abused.⁵⁵⁰ Furthermore, what characterizes the show as an arena of institutionalized social behaviors, as a meeting place of different real and symbolic power is translated into a book. Texts, images and their interaction are invested with the responsibility of inserting the social body of the exhibition into a context of knowledge.

Once the exhibition is closed and the only way *to access* it remains its catalogue, the *reader-visitor's* – by now just the *reader's* – interaction with this instrument changes forever. The photographs, decisive for the identification of the artworks, are now the devices of confrontation with the works: they make them present again, present in absence. The different texts, largely unread while visiting the exhibition, no longer serve to guide the *reader-visitor*; they now play a rather explanatory role. Within the pages of the catalogue “une autre

⁵⁴⁹ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d'art,” 54.

⁵⁵⁰ This *abuse* was strongly denounced twenty years later by philosopher Yves Michaud. Critically observing the production of contemporary art exhibition catalogues of the 1980s and early 1990s, Michaud stressed that these instruments were mainly intended as “dispositive[s] de sauvetage de l'exposition”; making exhibitions “invérifiable[s]” and immunizing them from any possible questions they had become mere apparatuses of their publicity. Yves Michaud, “Voir et ne pas savoir,” *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne* 29 (Automne 1989): 24, 27. According to Michaud, one of the best examples of this trend would be the catalogue of the exhibition *Les Immatériaux*, Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, March 28 – July 15, 1985. See Jean-François Lyotard, ed., *Les Immatériaux*, 2 vols (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1985).

exposition, abstraite, idéale” comes to the fore and “la ‘réelle’ se répète, épurée, enfin devenue object de savoir”⁵⁵¹.

Behind the presence of images and texts, Marin stresses that “tout catalogue correctement établi [...] se clôture par les dispositifs caractéristiques de l’appareil de la science, les inventaires, les taxonomies, par lesquels le livre de connaissance renvoie à un système de savoir qui l’autorise lui-même comme ouvrage de savoir en indiquant son appartenance au système qui l’a permis.”⁵⁵² The bibliography, presenting the book as belonging to the same class of books that it mentions and lists, is one of these *dispositifs*. In this respect, one should note that within the pages of the exhibition catalogue, the bibliographical references pertaining to specific artists, movements, etc. are always accompanied by a list of additional exhibitions related to them. According to Marin, this “dualité”, that is the co-presence of these references, is particularly significant: it is symptomatic of the double role played by the exhibition catalogue as a “catalogue-en-acte” and as a “catalogue-document”.⁵⁵³ Within the pages of the exhibition catalogue, a series of historical events (the listed exhibitions) is coupled with a list of bibliographical references. These bibliographical records function as a direct reference to the system of knowledge characteristic of the erudite book. Coupling a list of previous exhibitions with a series of references directly linked to knowledge and its system, the instrument of the exhibition catalogue posits that the history of an artist and her/his work as well as of an artistic movement is that of the exhibitions which publicly manifest their existence. In Marin’s view, this means that the catalogues of these exhibitions – and indeed of every exhibition – are not only “des instruments à faire de l’histoire” but also “les actions concrètes et remarquables par lesquelles l’histoire se fait.”⁵⁵⁴ The exhibition catalogue, both as *in act* and as *a document*, is the instrument of “une action historique performantielle.”⁵⁵⁵ According to the French intellectual, a constitutive feature of the exhibition catalogue is then that of performing an historical action: being

⁵⁵¹ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 54.

⁵⁵² Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 54.

⁵⁵³ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 54.

⁵⁵⁴ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 54.

⁵⁵⁵ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 54.

a “document pour la Kunstgeschichte, le catalogue est aussi l’acte-moment de la Kunst Historie.”⁵⁵⁶

Along with Marin’s understanding of the exhibition catalogue, one could resume his main arguments as follows: the catalogue is the instrument in which and through which the process of visiting an exhibition and the exhibition itself are abstracted and reified in a concrete object, an object of knowledge per antonomasia, namely the book. This object is a multi-faceted instrument which functions *in act* (i.e. it guides the *reader-visitor* through the actualized exhibition) but also as *a document* in which a number of immaterial elements (e.g. the institutional powers and the rules of conduct that govern the exhibition practice) are narrativized and made manifest. Furthermore, it is a mnemotechnic instrument able to *register* and *memorize* the exhibition while performing its historical relevance. The catalogue, then is a site of historiography in the idea that it enacts art history and re-enacts a diversity of revisions concerning the canon of art, namely reproducing it while at the same time revisiting it.

3.3 The *catalogue-document/monument*: a genre... *quelque peu anarchique*

Between the reflections by Marin and those by Rosenberg, that is, between the mid-1970s and late 1980s, the exhibition catalogue as a guide, or the *catalogue-en-acte* was replaced by books that were not intended anymore as guides that the visitors could actualize within the exhibition, but rather as thick volumes to be considered the *scientific summa* of the exhibition itself. The exhibition catalogue as a *scientific summa*, that is the exhibition catalogue as Pierre Rosenberg understood it, proposes itself to be and act as a full explication of what Marin described as *catalogue-en-acte*, positing the possibility of being a *catalogue-en-acte* beyond the experience of the exhibition itself. What Marin understood as *catalogue-en-acte* is not just a printed booklet, but an instrument at work in shaping the experience of visiting the exhibition. It

⁵⁵⁶ Marin, “La Célébration des oeuvres d’art,” 54. In German the word *Geschichte* refers to the *faktischen Geschichte*, that is, the *factual history*, while the term *Historie* refers to the *Geschichtschreibung*, that is, the practice of writing history. See Matthias Schloßberger, *Geschichtsphilosophie* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2013).

serves as a guide in the sense that it is an attempt to conduct the *reader-visitor* to seeing and experiencing the artworks on show as the curator thinks the exhibition should be seen and appreciated. Marin's *catalogue-document* is instead an instrument of assertion of the thesis behind the exhibition, an instrument that ultimately allows for no verification. It does not operate as a guide for the exhibition – how could it? The exhibition is over! –, but it stands for the exhibition, it becomes its substitute when the exhibition comes to its end. The *catalogue-document* pretends to be the instrument of the very knowledge of the exhibition by virtue of the fact that it replaces the very process of knowledge which develops within the exhibition. This certainly does not mean that the catalogue of an exhibition does not offer any kind of experience of the exhibition, or of the knowledge produced through the display, or of the significance of the exhibition itself. Rather, it means that the *catalogue-document* accomplish all this through very different modalities in comparison to that of the *catalogue-en-acte*.

Returning to the transformation of the exhibition catalogue between the years in which Marin and Rosenberg confronted the instrument at such – a transformation which led to a state of the affairs that is in many ways the same as today – the question remains whether and to what extent Marin's categories of *catalogue-en-acte* and *catalogue-document* have some validity to this day, when exhibition catalogues are not meant to become *catalogues-en-acte* but directly *catalogues-document*. In this respect, one could say that bypassing the *catalogue-en-acte* phase, these catalogues are created as *catalogues-document/monument*, that is, exhibition catalogues which are intended to be (and not only to become!) the very instrument through which the exhibition becomes a monument. These catalogues are created to work regardless of whether one visits the exhibition or not. Their operation mode does not depend on the *pre-existing monument* of the exhibition. Regardless of their size or their specific weight, they are not created to be actualized in the exhibition.

Someone who visits the exhibition usually flips through the pages of its catalogue and eventually buys it at the end of the visit, and not only because of the annoyance of having to carry it throughout the show, but also because one does not want to ruin the experience of the visit itself. Catalogues also enjoy

increasing exposure within the exhibitions: they can be found at the end of the visit as well as at strategic points of the display on the chairs, benches, and sofas that furnish the exhibition spaces. In this case, the visitors are expressly invited to interact with this instrument. However, even if they do browse through the book, they do so to learn more about the works on show and not to be guided by the catalogue in their exploration of the exhibition.

In this context one should stress that within the pages of the exhibition catalogue there is the tendency to represent the artworks on show, but rarely the structure of the exhibition as such. Or rather, in the most innovative exhibition catalogues this structure is somehow suggested, redesigned within the different elements of the catalogue. One instrument that has been sometimes implemented in this way is the map. Contrary to what seems to appear more frequently within the collection catalogues, and especially since exhibition catalogues have ceased to be created to function as *catalogues-en-acte*, exhibition catalogues are only sporadically equipped with maps that suggest the configuration of the exhibition spaces helping one to better navigate, memorize, and retrace the respective positions of the works on show, making it increasingly difficult to understand how the works are and were actually positioned within the display. If present, these maps are usually printed on loose sheets or small brochures, ancillary materials produced for the show but basically designed to be used and discarded after a while.⁵⁵⁷

Observing the publications produced within the framework of the last editions of the Venice Biennale, but also, for example, of the 2012 edition of another authoritative recurrent exhibition such as *documenta*, one should register the revival of some of the characteristics of the *catalogue-en-acte* in the so-called *short guide* or *guidebook*. Compared to the *official* exhibition catalogues, short guides are smaller, handier, and cheaper book(let)s usually

⁵⁵⁷ This transformation can be read very clearly in the context of the Venice Biennale's publications. The Venice Biennale catalogue has lost over the years the function of guiding the visitors within the international exhibition, and therefore no longer includes the maps of the site and of the main exhibition spaces. These maps are indispensable even for expert visitors who want to make their way through the large and expanded spaces of the exhibition. They were always provided within the pages of the handy, even if thick, Biennale catalogue until the beginning of the 1970s and usually present until the end of the 1980s in the increasingly large and multivolume catalogues. Now, they are provided free of charge at the entrance to the exhibition, but not printed in the official catalogue.

equipped with one or more maps of the exhibition space(s); they collect brief textual information more or less related to the works on show, possibly accompanied by visuals or contextual images.⁵⁵⁸ However, one should note that this textual and visual information does not correspond to the images and to the *notices* that Rosenberg considered constitutive for every catalogue worthy of the name.

Contemporary artworks increasingly incorporate site-specific, installative, and time-based dimensions; *flexible* and *fluid* formal features constitutively characterize their intermediality. Their various elements and components can be configured to best fit the spaces in which the artworks should be presented, thus developing their meaning within their reciprocal positions and with the flowing of time: given their mutable nature and the fact that short guides (even more than exhibition catalogues) are produced before the opening of the exhibition, it is rare to find within their pages images of the artworks as they *look* in the space in which they are actually exhibited. Moreover, rather than elucidating the characteristics and the relevance of the artworks on show, the texts printed in these guides tend to contextualize the production and *Weltanschauung* of the artists who authored the work in question, only sporadically providing specific information about it, which in most cases tend to be elusive and incomplete. This is mainly due to a superficial curatorial commitment towards these instruments which is habitually justified by the mutable nature of contemporary artworks and by the fact that the exhibited works are often new productions specifically created for the exhibition. This happens especially in the case of recurrent exhibitions such as Biennals, where

⁵⁵⁸ Occasionally they might even be conceived as an integral part of the exhibition catalogue, as happened in the case of dOCUMENTA(13) (2012). See Katrin Sauerländer, ed., *dOCUMENTA(13) Das Begleitbuch/The Guidebook, Katalog/Catalog 3/3* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012). This publication represents 1/3 of the entire catalogue of the dOCUMENTA(13); the others 2/3 coincide with: *Das Buch der Bücher/The Book of the Books, Katalog/Catalog 1/3* and *Das Logbuch/The Logbook, Katalog/Catalog 2/3*. *The Book of the Books* includes essays by the artistic director of the exhibition, Carolin Christov-Bakargiev and her curatorial right-hand man Chus Martínez; 99 out of 100 texts (and images) of the dOCUMENTA(13) book publication series *100 Notes — 100 Thought*; as well as information on the exhibition and its participants (biographies, exhibited objects and works). See Katrin Sauerländer, ed., *dOCUMENTA(13) Das Buch der Bücher/The Book of the Books, Katalog/Catalog 1/3* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012). *The Logbook*, traces the making of dOCUMENTA(13) from 2009 to 2012 through images, correspondence, and interviews. See Katrin Sauerländer, ed., *dOCUMENTA(13) Das Logbuch/The Logbook Katalog/Catalog 2/3* (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2012).

the percentage of new commissions can reach 80%.⁵⁵⁹ Although this *superficiality* seems to be accepted unconditionally, it is important to point out that its effects might affect the way in which the *reader-visitor* faces the artworks within the show. Once the exhibition is over this lack of consistent information, as well as errors and inaccuracies remain among the *factual elements* through which art history is written and made, not to mention that mistakes and imprecisions are often handed down in the texts of journalists, professionals and art critics with poor observational skills and thus consigned to history through their writings.⁵⁶⁰

Pictures of the artworks as actually set up in the exhibition are rare within the pages of exhibition catalogues. Starting from the 1960s, especially with the spread of minimal practices underscoring the inseparable relation between the artworks, the space in which they are exhibited, and their perception, as well as with the growing demand for visual information, such pictures started to be increasingly present in specialized art magazines *illustrating* the reviews of the shows and sometimes providing even more convincing examples of *visual art criticism*.⁵⁶¹ This has rarely been the case for exhibition catalogues. A few exceptions could be mentioned in this regard, such as, for example, the second and third editions of the book published as the *exhibition catalogue* of the Andy Warhol's show at Moderna Museet in 1968⁵⁶² or the exhibition catalogues published in the 1970s by the Internationaal Cultureel Centrum in Antwerp

⁵⁵⁹ This was the case, for example, of the 2013 Lyon Biennial curated by Gunnar V. Kvaran. *12ème Biennale de Lyon: Meanwhile... Suddenly and Then*, Lyon, September 12, 2013 - January 5, 2014.

⁵⁶⁰ A good example in point could be the presentation of Monica Bonvicini's sculptural installation *Latent Combustion*, 2015 within the short guide of the 56. Venice Biennial – *All the World Futures*. See Anna Schneider, "Monica Bonvicini," in *All the World's Futures – short guide*, ed. Luz Gyalui, 160-161 (Venezia: Marsilio, 2015). The editor of the text erroneously indicates that the main material which composes the work is concrete. Although even at a superficial observation it is clear that *Latent Combustion* is made up of plastic circular saws covered with black liquid rubber, held together in clusters and hung from the ceiling by chains, the error was reported by several of the critics who mentioned Bonvicini's work in their reviews.

⁵⁶¹ See Umberto Eco, "Introduzione" in Pietro Consagra and Ugo Mulas, *Fotografare l'Arte* (Milano: Fratelli Fabbri, 1973), 9-12; Giulio Carlo Argan, "Ugo Mulas, Alexander Calder a Saché e Roxbury," in *Ugo Mulas, Alexander Calder a Saché e Roxbury 1961-1965* (Rimini: Galleria dell'Immagine, Palazzo Gambalunga, 1982), n.p.; Rémi Parcollet, "Les Vues d'expositions: un outil critique?" *Artpress*, no. 24 (Février-Avril 2012): 99-107. Cf. Rémi Parcollet, Aureliën Mole, and Christophe Lemaitre, *Postdocument 1-7, 8* (Dijon: Les presses du reel, 2015); "Exhibition Views 1985-1995," *Mousse*, no. 51 (December 2015-January 2016).

⁵⁶² *Andy Warhol*, Moderna Museet, Stockholm, February-March, 1968.

(henceforth, ICC).⁵⁶³ In the first case, when the first edition of the book (1968)⁵⁶⁴ sold out, the director of the museum (Pontus Hulten) decided to complement future editions (1969 and 1970) with a series of exhibition's views,⁵⁶⁵ thus allowing the readers not only to *commemorate* or get an idea of how Wahrol's first exhibition in a museum *looked*, but also of how the audience interacted with it.⁵⁶⁶ This book, accompanying the exhibition without being its catalogue in a literal sense (indeed there is no list of the exhibited works), had a circulation that went well beyond the success of the exhibition in the framework of which it was produced.⁵⁶⁷

In the second case, the ICC conceived the catalogues of its exhibitions as loose files to be collected together under a standardized cover. Some of these included views of the shows and/or photographic documentation of the performances that took place within their walls after their openings.⁵⁶⁸ In the 1970s, in order to be available from the very moment an exhibition was inaugurated or shortly thereafter, exhibition catalogues were prepared well before the exhibition's start, because the time required for setting up the printing process and for binding simply made the inclusion of images from the exhibition materially impossible. The duration of the entire process was gradually reduced in the years ahead. Between the 1980s and 1990s

⁵⁶³ For an overview of the activities of the ICC in the 1970s see Lieve De Deine, ed., *ICC, 1970-1977: een documentaire overzichtstentoonstelling, 18 juni - 11 september 1977, catalogue* (Antwerp: ICC, 1977).

⁵⁶⁴ See Kasper König, Pontus Hultén and Olle Granath, eds., *Andy Wahrol* (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1968), offset printed, glue bound, 26,6 x 21 cm, 654 pp., n.p. Print run: unknown.

⁵⁶⁵ See König, Hulten and Granath, eds., *Andy Wahrol* 2nd and 3rd eds. (Stockholm: Moderna Museet, 1969 and 1970), offset printed, glue bound 26,6 x 21 cm, 658 pp., n.p. Print run: unknown. Besides the colorful cover presenting Wahrol's flowers motive, a number of aphorismic quotes by Wahrol, a long sequence of b/w full page photographs which present the artist's work (photo by Rudolph Burckhardt, Eric Pollitzer, and John D. Schiff), his personality and life-style (photos by Factory stalwart Billy Name and a young Stephen Shore) which characterized the first edition of the book, a few pictures of the visitors interacting with the artworks as installed in Stockholm (photos by Bror H. Gustavsson, Peter Gullers, Nils Göran Hökby) were added to these editions (2nd and 3rd) of the *catalogue*.

⁵⁶⁶ I allude here to the Latin origin of the participle *commemorate* (i.e. *commemorat*) which means *brought to remembrance*.

⁵⁶⁷ Its estimated total print run amounts to 20,000 copies; even though the number of attendees were relatively few compared to the museum's standards due to persistent snow and temperature as low as -20° during the five weeks of the exhibition's run. See Jahre, *Das gedruckte Museum von Pontus Hulten*, 112. Thanks to the fact that it was printed on economy paper and under very convenient conditions, its sale price was of about one dollar. Note that in 1968 in the U.S. a laborer's minimum wage was 1,40 \$ per hour.

⁵⁶⁸ See Schraenen, "Conserver la mémoire des expositions," 55.

developments in the technology related to computers, graphic design softwares, and printing techniques greatly reduced the printing times, even allowing, by the end of the 1990s, the last-minute insertion of images in the layout of a book whilst still ensuring its being ready for the exhibition's opening.⁵⁶⁹ However, up to the present, it is still rare to find exhibition catalogues presenting pictures of the works as shown within the space of that very exhibition, not to mention a series of exhibition's views. This is today the general state of the affairs, unless the catalogue of the exhibition is published during the course of the show or even after its end. As it will be discussed in more detail in the following, digital publishing seems to offer interesting alternatives in this respect.

In the preface of the guidelines for the cataloguing of modern and contemporary art exhibition catalogues published by the Centre Pompidou in 1991, just three years after having defined what he considered the basic characteristics of the exhibition catalogue as an autonomous genre, Rosenberg described this very same genre as being "abundant" and "quelque peu anarchique"⁵⁷⁰.

Indeed, the exhibition catalogue has remained a polymorph instrument until today. As an effect and at the same time a symptom of the expanding

⁵⁶⁹ Thomas Demand, for example made use of this possibility within the context of his national participation in the São Paulo Biennial (2004) when, thanks to digital data delivery and the flexibility of the printing processes he could include in the exhibition catalogue at least a few views of the construction of the exhibition itself. The catalogue, printed in Germany, was sent via airmail to Brazil on time for the opening of the exhibition. See Coers, *Kunst Katalog – Katalogkunst*, 92. Cf. Helmut Friedel, ed., *Thomas Demand/b&k+* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2004).

⁵⁷⁰ Pierre Rosenberg, "Préface: Des Catalogues d'expositions," in *Les Catalogues d'exposition*, 9. The international debate around the exhibition catalogue that characterized the end of the 1980s encouraged the Centre Pompidou to publish these guidelines, thus sanctioning the bibliographic dignity of such publications. This nevertheless neither contributed to fully resolving the majority of problems discussed within the above-mentioned IFLA convention, nor to a normalization of the features, the scientific organization, and the scope of this instrument. See Delaigle, *Les Catalogues d'expositions*, especially 114-122. Note, that even the *Prix Minda de Gunzburg* had a short life. Its records stop at some point in the mid-1990s. See Anne Bertrand, "Des Prix pour récompense les catalogues d'exposition," *Liberation*, February 17, 1995, http://next.liberation.fr/culture/1995/02/17/des-prix-pour-recompenser-les-catalogues-d-exposition_123051, last access March 15, 2016. Pierre Rosenberg, a member of its jury and one of its warmest supporters, actually does not even remember when and why it ended. Rosenberg, e-mail to author, October 12, 2015. Moreover, despite the efforts of André Chastel, who already in the late 1960s, and again in the 1980s, had emphasized the need for international standards for the production of collection and exhibition catalogues, hoping for an intervention of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and/or of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in the establishment of such parameters, this never happened. See Chastel, "Éditorial: Le Problème des catalogues des musées," 4-7.

cultural value of art, especially contemporary art, its production has never ceased to increase. This has been encouraged by different but profoundly interrelated factors: 1) the proliferation of exhibition spaces and recurring exhibitions; 2) the growing globalization of the art system and of the art publishing sector; 3) the developments in computer technology and in the related graphic design softwares as well as in the techniques of printing; 4) the increasing acknowledgment of the book as a medium and as an instrument the economy of which aptly embodies, enacts, and transmits the narrative dimension of time-based (media) artworks, stabilizing and rendering graspable their structure, meaning and constitutive features. All this has been accompanied and nurtured by a boost to the professionalization of the artist and to innovation.

The proliferation of exhibition spaces and recurrent exhibitions, which had already started in the late-1960s and 1970s, has continued over the 1990s and 2000s, especially in the case of contemporary art. A prime example of this would be the phenomenon of the *biennialization*,⁵⁷¹ that is, the exponential increase of the Biennial exhibition format on a global scale (1990s-2000s). Moreover, in these years, there has been a new wave of art publications that has supported and contributed to the production of lavishly illustrated exhibition catalogues.⁵⁷² During the 1990s through purchases and mergers, the opening of new offices and branches abroad, as well as through jointventures with international partners, the art publishing market increasingly globalized. This phenomenon was also encouraged by the opening of markets in 1992.⁵⁷³ Within

⁵⁷¹ See Monica Sassatelli, "The Biennialization of the Art World: The Culture of Cultural Events," in Laurie Hanquinet and Mike Savage, eds., *The Handbook of The Sociology of Art and Culture* (London: Routledge, 2016), 277-289; Gustavo Grandal Montero, "Biennialization? What Biennialization? The Documentation of Biennials and Other Recurrent Exhibitions," *Art Libraries Journal* 37, no. 1 (2011): 13-23.

⁵⁷² A striking case in point is the publishing house founded by Benedikt Taschen in 1985 in Cologne, Germany. In the 1980s the dollar tended to be low and fluctuating; this made it hard for European publishers to find foreign partners for co-editions; they were thus pushed to publish directly in English in the hope of reaching the international market (see Chastel, "Livres sur l'art," 113). Taschen took advantage of this condition and flipped it around to make it one of the pillars of his soon to be art publishing empire. Already in 1990 his richly illustrated art books – mainly monographs dedicated to modern classics printed in long runs to cut down costs –, were published and distributed in 12 languages. See Simone Philippi, *International Art Book Publishing: Internationalisierungskonzepte deutscher Kunstbücherverlage seit 1990* (PhD diss., Universität zu Köln, 2005), 20-21.

⁵⁷³ See Philippi, *International Art Book Publishing*, 20-21.

this context, there has been a progressive reduction, if not the near disappearance, of exhibition catalogues produced by galleries. Commercial art galleries have increasingly preferred to invest their resources to support exhibitions of their artists within institutions which would then produce exhibition catalogues. One could refer to this trend as a sort of *outsourcing* of the exhibition catalogue's production, especially considering the fact that in this way galleries can capitalize on the authority of an instrument published under the aegis of a recognized (non-profit) cultural institution. Leveraging the cultural value expressed by the institution in which artworks are presented and enhanced through the context of knowledge produced through and within the exhibition catalogue accompanying their presentation, their economic value can be importantly redefined (i.e. augmented). At this point, art dealers need just basic digital tools to create and diffuse an *illustrated catalogue* (intended here in the literal sense of the word, i.e. an illustrated list) of the works available for purchase.

Although since 1945 one can identify recurring exhibition catalogue typologies⁵⁷⁴ – or even “Katalogordnungsprinzipien”⁵⁷⁵ –, the exhibition catalogue as a genre, but even more as an instrument, has not yet accepted normativization. Its definition is to be sought after in its polymorphous conceptual nature, layout, and materiality as well as in the different modalities through which it relates or does not relate to the exhibition upon which, if not for economic reasons, it still depends.

3.4. Artists & Exhibition Catalogues

⁵⁷⁴ See Delaigle, *Les Catalogues d'exposition*, 113-114. Delaigle differentiates between: “Les Catalogues d'exposition traditionnels”; “Les ‘Catalogues’ ou ouvrages édités à l’occasion des expositions” among which one can find “Les ‘Catalogues d’artistes’, ou livres conçus par eux même à l’occasion de leur expositions” and “Les ouvrages coédités par les maisons d’édition traditionnelles et les institutions organisatrices”; and “Les Catalogues des salons, biennales, prix et assimilés.” Delaigle, *Les Catalogues d'exposition*, 113-114.

⁵⁷⁵ This is how influential exhibition catalogue designer Walther Nikkels calls the different ways in which content has been graphically organized onto the pages to produce specific meanings and which have been more or less characteristic, popular, or abandoned through the decades. Nikkels, *Der Raum des Buches* (Köln: Tropen Verlag, 1998), 50-51. On Nikkels’ lifelong engagement with the design of exhibition catalogues, see Wigger Bierma and Astrid Vorstermans, eds., *Walter Nikkels: Depicted/Afgebeeld/Abgebildet* (Amsterdam/Stuttgart: Valiz/Tropen, 2013).

3.4.1. ...l'échelle subtilement graduée, qui relie la publication scientifique à l'œuvre autosuffisante

Since the *advent* of the artist's book and the diffusion of artists' publications, artists have rarely missed the opportunity to produce books within the framework of their exhibitions, often replacing the *traditional* catalogue or reinterpreting its *traditional* features. This practice, however, could be considered ambivalent.⁵⁷⁶ If, on the one hand, especially in the 1970s, it had been essentially linked to practical and economic reasons, given that the easiest way for artists to publish their books was to *disguise* them as exhibition catalogues,⁵⁷⁷ on the other, it could also be interpreted as a way through which the artists, the institutions and all the other members of the artworld, with particular reference to those involved in its more mercantile area, could exploit not only the auratic quality of the artistic gesture but even more the authority of the book, its communicative efficiency, as well as its effectiveness as a medium and as an object.⁵⁷⁸

In her essay *Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement*,⁵⁷⁹ Anne Moëglin-Delcroix maintains that since the 1960s, the number of books by artists published on the occasion of their exhibitions (and thus often being considered as their catalogues) has constantly increased. According to her, the plethora of publishing activities that accompany exhibitions led to the loss of the critical strength that she deems constitutive of artist's publications. For this reason, Moëglin-Delcroix attempts to clearly differentiate an artist's book published within the framework of an exhibition from what she defines as a "catalogue d'artiste"⁵⁸⁰. To do so, she founds her reasoning on a very precise and normative definition of the exhibition catalogue, which (again) seems founded upon the implicit knowhow she has acquired as a user of this instrument more than upon a universally accepted definition. According to Moëglin-Delcroix there are three

⁵⁷⁶ Cf. Jérôme Dupeyrat, *Les Livres d'artistes entre pratique alternatives à l'exposition et pratique d'exposition alternatives* (PhD diss., Université Rennes 2, 2012), <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/tel-00772314/document>, last access March 15, 2016.

⁵⁷⁷ See Peter Frank, *Words & Images: A Contemporary Survey of Artists Books* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Art Alliance, 1981), n.p.

⁵⁷⁸ See Michel Claura, "Vorwort zur Ausstellung 'Book as Artwork' Contemporanea, Rom 1973-1974" *Interfunktionen* no. 11 (1974): 76-77.

⁵⁷⁹ Moëglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement."

⁵⁸⁰ Moëglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 99.

fundamental characteristics through which one could differentiate an artist's book issued in the framework of an exhibition to function as its catalogue, from an exhibition catalogue produced by one or more artists in the framework of their exhibition:

[1]] Tandis que le catalogue est *au minimum la trace d'une œuvre ou la mémoire d'une exposition*, la publication d'artiste est une création originale, s'ajoutant à ses autres œuvres et participant, à ce titre, de l'exposition. [...] [2]] Tandis que le catalogue est *un outil scientifique et critique rédigé par les spécialistes* du sujet, la publication d'artiste refuse *de facto* la distinction entre ceux qui font et ceux qui savent, entre la réalité de l'œuvre et son interprétation. Elle traduit ainsi la responsabilité revendiquée par l'artiste sur sa création, de sa conception à sa réception. [...] [3]] Enfin, tandis qu'*en authentifiant les œuvres et en consacrant l'importance* le catalogue contribue à établir leur valeur comme produits artistiques sur le marché, la publication d'artiste substitue à la circulation marchande la circulation de l'œuvre pour elle même.⁵⁸¹

The best example she provides to clarify her position relates to two publications by Dieter Roth, that is, *Dieter Roth: Bücher* (1974)⁵⁸² and *Dieter Roth: Boeken* (1975)⁵⁸³. These books were issued in the framework of two exhibitions dedicated to Roth's books production, the first taking place in Hannover in 1974⁵⁸⁴ and the second in Amsterdam in 1975.⁵⁸⁵

Dieter Roth: Bücher is a 20,5 x 20,5 cm seventy-eight page book whose cover and the sixty visual pages corresponding to the core part of the volume are credited as "originalgrafiken von dieter roth"⁵⁸⁶ (figures 3.8 a, c). It includes a frontispiece with information related to the exhibition (name of the artist, title, name and address of the hosting institution, dates), a list with detailed information about the sixty-nine books on show (figure 3.8 b),⁵⁸⁷ Roth's biography, a list of his solo- and group-exhibitions, as well as a prospect of

⁵⁸¹ Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 96-97; italics by the author.

⁵⁸² Roth, *Dieter Roth: Bücher*.

⁵⁸³ Roth, *Dieter Roth: Boeken*.

⁵⁸⁴ *Dieter Roth: Bücher*, Hannover, Kestner Gesellschaft, May 10 - June 30, 1974.

⁵⁸⁵ *Dieter Roth: Boeken*, Amsterdam, Stedelijk Museum, February 1 - March 16, 1975.

⁵⁸⁶ Roth, *Dieter Roth: Bücher*, n.p.

⁵⁸⁷ Roth's understanding of the books was very loose and metaphorical. That is why the exhibition comprised objects that are not books in the codex format such as the *Literaturwürste*, that is, literary works in form of a sausage which Roth created by smashing newspapers and books and bagging the mixture to create a salami. See Stefan Ripplinger, "Bücher," in Dirk Dobke, ed., *Dieter Roth: Bücher + Editionen* (Hamburg/London: Dieter Roth Foundation/edition hansjörg mayer, 2004) 127-143, 134-135.

Roth's books available through the edition Hansjörg Mayer – the publishing house founded and run by publisher, gallerist, and artist Hansjörg Mayer with whom Roth had collaborated since the 1960s.⁵⁸⁸ At the very end of the volume, as was usual at that time, one could find an advertising section through which the costs of the exhibition and of the related publication were cut.

Dieter Roth: Boeken is a 33,5 x 23,5 cm b/w publication made by folding and stapling together eight huge thin sheets of paper (123 x 86 cm) on which drawings by the artists (and by his daughter Vera) are printed on both sides⁵⁸⁹ (figures 3.9 a, b). As in the case of *Dieter Roth: Bücher*, the cover of *Dieter Roth: Boeken* was created by the artist and includes handwritten information about the exhibition: name of the artist, title, name of the institution, dates of the show, plus, in this specific case, the date in which the publication was created by Roth, and information about the place and the time-frame in which it was actually printed.⁵⁹⁰

Given *Dieter Roth: Bücher's* square format, which Mœglin-Delcroix considers “plûtôt conventionnel”, the presence of “pages documentaires sans reproductions” as well as of what she dismisses as “de pages de dessins en couleurs”, Mœglin-Delcroix downgrades the publication as being a “catalogue d'artiste”, an *artist's catalogue*.⁵⁹¹ On the contrary, she praises *Dieter Roth: Boeken* as an artist's book because “bien que sans rapport documentaire avec l'exposition des livres de l'artiste, il est en *totale affinité* avec son sujet.”⁵⁹² Still, she forgets to acknowledge and reflect on the fact that *Dieter Roth: Boeken* was

⁵⁸⁸ Mayer's *typographic stamp* is very well recognizable within the pages of *Dieter Roth: Bücher*. The typeface chosen for the book is in fact Futura, Mayer's favourite typeface and the one he chose for the publication dedicated to the experimental literature, graphics, and typography magazine, that he published in collaboration with several artists in 26 issues between 1965 and 1968, that is, *futura. publikationsfolge für experimentelle literatur, druckgrafik und typographie*. On Mayer's activities, see Hansjörg Mayer, “Art as collaboration: 50 years of Edition Hansjörg Mayer; interview by Eleanor Vonne and Gustavo Grandal Montero,” *Artist's Book Yearbook 2014-2015* (2015): 64-75.

⁵⁸⁹ 120 heads drawn by Dieter Roth and 8 heads drawn by her daughter Vera Roth which is why the artist considered the book to include 128 *pages*. See Dieter Roth, *Books and Graphics (part 2) and other stuff: from 1971 until 1979*, *Gesammelte Werke* 40 (Stuttgart/London: edition hansjörg mayer, 1979), 13-64, no. 82.

⁵⁹⁰ “Dieter Roth Boeken STEDELEJK MUSEUM AMSTERDAM 1 Februari – 16 Maart 1975 Publikatie=datum 31 Januari; printed in germany by Staib & Mayer, STUTTGART” See Roth, *Dieter Roth: Boeken*, n.p.

⁵⁹¹ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement,” 99. Mœglin-Delcroix authorizes the translation of the term *livre d'artiste* with artist's book; that is why her term *catalogue d'artiste* has been translated in the present study with *artist's catalogue*.

⁵⁹² Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement,” 99; italic by the author.

distributed together with an additional pamphlet entitled *dieter roth: complete lijst van boeken*, which, despite being separate and isolable from the purely visual publication, literally serves as the catalogue and ultimately as “support documentaire” of the exhibition (figure 3.10).⁵⁹³ This omission is due to the fact that the notice of the existence of this separate pamphlet – a typographic imitation of the list printed in *Dieter Roth: Bücher*, the *artist’s catalogue* which was actually on display in Amsterdam among the books created by Roth⁵⁹⁴ –, went lost very soon. In fact, there is no specific mention of the *complete lijst van boeken* in the catalogue of Roth’s books that the artist himself edited and updated on several occasions during his lifetime.⁵⁹⁵ This however does not mean that the *complete lijst van boeken* should not to be considered an integral part of the publication *Dieter Roth: Boeken* which was released as the catalogue of the homonymous exhibition.

Although in both *Dieter Roth: Bücher* and *Dieter Roth: Boeken* one recognizes the *touch* and the *Weltanschauung* of the artist and although each publication relates to the content of the exhibition in the frame of which it was published, Mœglin-Delcroix situates their discriminating difference in the modalities through which the artist equipped them with the apparatuses etimologically and traditionally associated with the concept of *exhibition catalogue*. With Mœglin-Delcroix, the difference between an artist’s book and a parasitical artist’s catalogue could be encapsulated in the equation: “autonomie du livre d’artiste comme œuvre; dependence du catalogue à l’œuvre qu’à sa manière il expose.”⁵⁹⁶ Compared to an artist’s book an artist’s catalogue would be a double loser: on the one hand, providing only partial information it fails to function as an exhibition catalogue (e.g. *Dieter Roth: Bücher* includes neither pictures of the exhibited works nor interpretative or critical texts); on the other, in presenting some of the apparatuses which traditionally characterize the *exhibition catalogue*, it does not attain the level of autonomy that every artist’s

⁵⁹³ “dieter roth: complete lijst van boeken” in *Dieter Roth: Boeken*, n.p. This unpaginated booklet composed by seven A4 sheets of paper folded and stapled together includes the list of the exhibited works and the biography of the artist.

⁵⁹⁴ See cat. no. 70 in *dieter roth: complete lijst van boeken*, n.p.

⁵⁹⁵ See Roth, *Books and Graphics (part 2) and other stuff*, 13-64, no. 70; Dobke, ed., *Dieter Roth: Bücher + Editionen*, 196.

⁵⁹⁶ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d’art et inversement,” 100.

book worthy to be considered as such, should possess. After all, Roth did not provide for the *complete lijst van boeken* to be inseparably bound together within *Dieter Roth: Boeken*; its *artistic content* could be then enjoyed *without distractions*.

Even if Mœglin-Delcroix dismisses the artist's catalogue, she does not fail to thematize some examples of hybrid publications that in her view occupy a floating position "sur l'échelle subtilement graduée, qui relie la publication scientifique et l'oeuvre autosuffisante,"⁵⁹⁷ that is, on the scale that ascends from the exhibition catalogue (even if created by the artist) to the artist's book. The steps of this scale would represent the different levels of corruption to which art has been subjected since the 1960s under the false pretences of books sold as artists' publications without really being them.

3.4.1.1 The *volume* as Paradigm

Mœglin-Delcroix interpreted in this direction the *Kassettenkataloge* published by the Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach between 1967 and 1978 under the aegis of its director, Johannes Cladders (1924-2009).⁵⁹⁸ The idea of producing a box instead of an exhibition catalogue in form of a book was jointly developed by artist Joseph Beuys and by Cladders himself at the end of 1967, in the framework of Beuys' exhibition at the museum.⁵⁹⁹ Even if retrospectively one could state that this choice was probably inspired by the Fluxus boxes edited and produced by Fluxus founding member and coordinator George Maciunas (1931-1978) since 1964,⁶⁰⁰ Cladders affirmed that it was mainly dictated by the institution's reduced budget: to produce a book would have been much more expensive than to produce a cardboard box and fill it with different materials.⁶⁰¹

⁵⁹⁷ Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 103.

⁵⁹⁸ See Susanne Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders: Museumsmann und Künstler* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1997), especially 83-94, 261-420.

⁵⁹⁹ See Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 268. *Beuys*, Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach, September 13 -October 29, 1967. This exhibition was the first public survey of Beuys's work. See Joseph Beuys, *Beuys*, ed. Johannes Cladders (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach, 1967), n.p; 330 numbered copies (price: 10 German marks).

⁶⁰⁰ Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 101.

⁶⁰¹ Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 83.

Beuys's box measures about 20 x 16 x 3 cm and it is characterized by the surname of the artist marked on the upper face as well as on the side where the name of the Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach is also marked (figure 3.11). These external features and the size of the box became the standard for all the thirty-three *Kassettenkataloge*,⁶⁰² twenty-eight of which were produced within the framework of solo exhibitions dedicated to the work of contemporary artists, including, after Beuys, Carl Andre (1968), Hanne Darboven (1969), Richard Long (1970), Lawrence Weiner (1973), Giulio Paolini (1977), and Jannis Kounellis (1978) among others. Susanne Wischermann, the art historian who has concentrated the most on the figure of Cladders and the *Kassettenkataloge*, labels these twenty-eight boxes "Premieren-Katalogen."⁶⁰³ Beyond providing basic information about each exhibition (i.e. name of the artist, which often coincides with the title of the show, name of the institution, and dates) the boxes usually feature an introductory text by Cladders as well as diverse contents. They may vary from artist's book(let)s (e.g. Lawrence Weiner's *A PRIMER*⁶⁰⁴) to critical texts or writings by artists (e.g. Carl Andre's interview of himself conducted by himself⁶⁰⁵), to various objects (e.g. Marcel Broothaer's box contains another three similar boxes, like a Russian doll,⁶⁰⁶ while Jasper Johns's one includes a plastic red rose⁶⁰⁷), and might, but in many cases do not, comprise a list of the exhibited works, biographical information and a catalogue of the solo and group shows in which the artist in question took part. Each box was produced in a variable amount of numbered original copies

⁶⁰² This is true apart from thickness (i.e. the case's depth) which varied depending on the content, that is, from the most frequent 3 cm to the almost 8 cm of James Lee Byars's *Kassettenkatalog*. See Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 83 and James Lee Byars, *James Lee Byars*, ed. Johannes Cladders (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach, 1977).

⁶⁰³ Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 84, 268-277.

⁶⁰⁴ Lawrence Weiner, *A PRIMER* (Kassel: documenta GmbH-Verlag, 1972). See *Weiner* (Mönchengladbach: Museum Abteiberg, 1973), n.p. Print run: 330 numbered copies (price: 6 German marks).

⁶⁰⁵ See Carl Andre, "Artist interviews himself," in Carl Andre, *Andre*, ed. Johannes Cladders, n.p. (Mönchengladbach: Museum Abteiberg, 1968). Print run: 660 numbered copies (price: 5 German marks).

⁶⁰⁶ See Marcel Broothaers, *Marcel Broothaers* ed. Johannes Cladders (Mönchengladbach: Museum Abteiberg, 1971), n.p. Print run: 220 numbered copies (price: 6,5 German marks).

⁶⁰⁷ See Jasper Johns, *Jasper Johns: Das Graphische Werk 1960-1970*, ed. Johannes Cladders (Mönchengladbach: Museum Abteiberg, 1971), n.p. Print run: 550 numbered copies (price: 9 German marks).

(usually between 220 and 660)⁶⁰⁸ and had a unit price between 5 and 20 German marks. Furthermore, six boxes were produced in the framework of different typologies of exhibition organized by Cladders in Mönchengladbach. Three of them, issued in 1968, 1972, and 1976 present the museum's collection and new acquisitions.⁶⁰⁹

As underlined by Wischermann, each of the *Premieren-Katalogen* "hat immer direkt etwas mit dem Künstler, dessen Ausstellung in Mönchengladbach oder sein Werk zu tun. Aber eben nicht als Dokumentation oder Repräsentation der Ausgestellte Werke, sondern als Interpretation und Ergänzung."⁶¹⁰ According to Cladders in fact, every box should function as an "intermediale Interpretation"⁶¹¹ of the show and the works to be seen within

⁶⁰⁸ The only exception is the box produced for the exhibition *stanley brown. durch kosmische strahlen gehen*, Städtische Museum Mönchengladbach, September 4-20, 1970. The box was produced in just one copy in possession of the artist. Stanley Brown (b. 1935) invites who wants to discover the content of the box to contact him in Amsterdam. See Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 87.

⁶⁰⁹ These three exhibitions are: *Beleg: Kunstwerke der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts aus dem Besitz der Stadt Mönchengladbach*, Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach, May 29 - August 11, 1968; *Beleg II: Neuerwerbungen 1969-1972 / Erster Teil, Kunst der 2. Hälfte des 20. Jh.*, Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach, June 13 - July 23, 1972; *Beleg II: Neuerwerbungen 1969-1972 / Zweiter Teil, Kunst der 1. Hälfte des 20. Jh.*, Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach, August 6 - September 17, 1972; *Räume (Beleg III)*, August 29 - Oktober 3, 1976. See Johannes Cladders, ed., *Beleg: Kunstwerke der zweiten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts aus dem Besitz der Stadt Mönchengladbach* (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach, 1968), n.p. Print run: unknown (price: 5 German marks); Johannes Cladders, ed., *Beleg II: Neuerwerbungen 1969-1972* (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach, 1972), n.p. Print run: 110 numbered copies; Johannes Cladders, ed., *Räume (Beleg III)* (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach, 1976), n.p. Print run: unknown. A *Kassettenkatalog* was issued also in the framework of each of these other three exhibitions: *Rationale Spekulationen: konstruktivistische Tendenzen in der europäischen Kunst zwischen 1915 und 1930 – ausgewählt aus deutschen Privatsammlungen*, Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach, October 1 - November 26, 1972; *Programm Zufall System – Ein neuer Zweig am alten Konzept der Sammlung Etzold*, Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach, May 5 - June 11, 1973; *Postkarten*, Städtisches Museum, Mönchengladbach, March 28 - April 28, 1974. See Johannes Cladders, ed., *Rationale Spekulationen: konstruktivistische Tendenzen in der europäischen Kunst zwischen 1915 und 1930 – ausgewählt aus deutschen Privatsammlungen* (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach, 1972), n.p. Print run: 660 numbered copies; Johannes Cladders, ed., *Programm Zufall System* (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach, 1973), n.p. Print run: 330 numbered copies (including four prints by artist François Morellet each; the prints included in the box no. 1-99 are signed by the artist); Jennifer Gough Cooper and Jacques Caumont, *Archiv J & J*, ed. Johannes Cladders (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach, 1974), n.p. Print run: 330 numbered copies containing the game of cards *Stilkunde an Beispielen – Ein Lehrspiel* which was created for the occasion by the lenders of the exhibited postcards, artists and researchers Jennifer Gough Cooper and Jacques Caumont. Note, that a *Kassettenkatalog* was not issued for all the exhibitions organized by Cladders in the museum between 1967 and 1978; that is during the time in which the institution was located in the Bismarckstrasse 97.

⁶¹⁰ Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 84.

⁶¹¹ See *Jasper Johns*, n.p.

the museum's walls, thus reflecting his understanding of the *catalogue* not as a document of the exhibition but "als zusätzliches Werk zu den ausgestellten Arbeiten, wobei sich die Dinge natürlich überschneiden können."⁶¹² Especially since 1971, beginning with Marcel Broodthaers' exhibition,⁶¹³ Cladders accorded complete autonomy to the artists in the production of the content of *their* boxes, the features and meanings of which would be discussed and historicized in the years to come in the framework of the discourses built within the domains of fraternal twins such as multiples and artists' books.⁶¹⁴ A detailed analysis of these multifaceted publications goes beyond the focus of the present study. However, it seems appropriate to briefly bring out in this context a facet of the relationship between *book-exhibition catalogues* and *Kassettenkataloge*. According to Cladders, in fact, "die Kassetten, [...] tragen einen gewissen Objektcharakter, mehr als etwa ein Buch, das zwar auch Gegenstand ist, seinen dinghaften Aspekt jedoch in der gewohnten Dienlichkeit des Mitteilungsträgers verschliessen hat."⁶¹⁵ Despite the *object-character* of the boxes, the variety of their contents, and the high degree of interaction and participation they imply, the *Kassettenkataloge* were designed as *a metaphor of the book* in a time when the practice and the economy linked to the production of exhibition catalogues, especially those related to the work of contemporary artists at their first exhibition in a museum, still called for the release of thin pamphlets rather than authoritative volumes. Interviewed by Hans Ulrich Obrist at the end of the 1990s, Cladders affirmed: "Ich hatte nur ein ganz kleines Budget, dennoch wollte ich nicht nur dünne Faltblättchen machen. Ich wollte etwas für den Bücherschrank haben, das Volumen besaß. Eine Box hat Volumen, da lässt sich einfach alles Mögliche hineinlegen, was man sich finanziell erlauben kann."⁶¹⁶

⁶¹² Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 84.

⁶¹³ *Marcel Broodthaers: Film als Objekt. Objekt als Film*, Städtische Museum Mönchengladbach, October 21 – November 7, 1971. See Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers*.

⁶¹⁴ See Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 91-93; Wye and Weitman, *Eye on Europe*, 76-77, 104; Mœglin Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste. Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, 123-124.

⁶¹⁵ Johannes Cladders, untitled text in Richard Long, *Richard Long*, ed. Johannes Cladders (Mönchengladbach: Museum Abteiberg, 1970), n.p., 330 numbered copies (price: 8 German marks).

⁶¹⁶ "Kann man hier Ping Pong spielen? Johannes Cladders über die Funktion des Antimuseums und die Geschwindigkeit einer Institution," by Hans Ulrich Obrist, *Jungle World*, no. 48 (November 24, 1999), <http://jungle-world.com/artikel/1999/47/29131.html>, last access July 16, 2016; Cladders expanded on this in an interview with Walter Grasskamp, see Grasskamp, *Johannes Cladders* (Köln: DuMont, 2004), especially 36-37.

Retrospectively, it is clear that the strained economical resources of the museum were not the efficient cause but only a pretext for the production of the boxes, that is, for the production of latent physical *volumes* through which one could access and interactively develop knowledge about the artists, their works, and their *Weltanschauung* while entering into contact with Cladders' curatorial approach, in the framework of which the boxes functioned also as innovative promotional objects and instruments through which retain the public. The idea of their main *creator and promoter* was that the *Kassettenkataloge* should be assimilated to the instrument of the book and gain its authority. This is also communicated by the fact that on each box, the name of the artist and that of the Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach are always accurately printed on the edge of the case so that the physical volume of the box could be easily stored and placed on a shelf, together with other (art) books⁶¹⁷ (figure 3.12).

Problems related to the actual content of this and other publications in a box have taken a grip on scholars doing research on these mobile and mutable objects. In this respect, the case of Beuys's box is significant. According to what has been reported by Wischermann, Beuys filled his box with a partially cut rectangular felt pad on which the name of the artist and a cross (BEUYS +) were printed with oil paint (*Braunkreuz*⁶¹⁸) and two leporellos⁶¹⁹ (figures 3.13 a-c and 3.15 a-b). One of them reports on the one side, ten b/w pictures of different Beuys' actions by Ute Klopheus ("Beuys' most constant photographer"⁶²⁰ as art historian Caroline Tisdall defined her in 1979), a text by art critic Hans Strelow,⁶²¹ as well as information (title, date, technique) about the twelve early drawings which are photographically reproduced on one side of the other leporello (photos by Oskar Söhn) (figure 3.15 a). In addition to the reproduction of these drawings, the second leporello presents, on its other side, a critical text

⁶¹⁷ This interpretation is also confirmed by the way in which the *Kassettenkataloge* are often photographically represented as an ensemble. As an example, see the picture by Hubert Renard in Mœglin Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste. Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, 124.

⁶¹⁸ *Braunkreuz* (literally Brown cross) is the name that Beuys employed for the brown color he applied to many works from the early 1950s onwards. See Martin Kunz, "Christus, Kreuz und Braunkreuz," in *Joseph Beuys: Spuren in Italien*, Marianne Eingheer and Martin Kunz, eds., n.p. (Luzern: Staub, 1979).

⁶¹⁹ See Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 268.

⁶²⁰ Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys*, 101.

⁶²¹ Hans Strelow, "Joseph Beuys als Zeichner," in *Beuys*, n.p.

by Johannes Cladders⁶²² as well as Beuys' *Biography*⁶²³ (figure 3.15 b). Wischermann underlines that only one of the twelve drawings listed and *shown* within the leporellos was actually exhibited in Mönchengladbach.⁶²⁴ Given the fact that she does not report the source of this information one asks oneself how she could make this assertion.

The Joseph Beuys multiples website, a scholarly platform recently launched by the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, describes the content of the box *Beuys* as: "an exhibition checklist, two folded strips of card and a small sheet of felt"⁶²⁵. On the website, the box and its content are presented through four pictures which do not enable one to understand with exactitude the features of the printed matter actually included in the *Kassettenkatalog* (figures 3.14 a-d). One does not see a picture of the exhibition checklist but just the one in which the front *page* of the folded sheet appears that, as it will become clear in the following, contains/enfolds/envelops the checklist (figure 3.16 a). This folded sheet performs the function of the *title page* of this *box-cum exhibition catalogue* (figure 3.16 b) while also presenting the readers with its acknowledgements and colophon section (figure 3.16 c).⁶²⁶ Moreover, information regarding the total number of boxes produced and the number of the box in question are provided here (figure 3.16 c). Despite the *frontispiece* of the folded sheet being partially presented through photography in the website,

⁶²² Johannes Cladders, "Beuys – und das weiße Kreuz von Malewitsch," in *Beuys*, n.p.

⁶²³ *Beuys*, n.p. In 1961 Beuys began to compile his biography incorporating, for example, relevant episodes of his childhood, youth, and soldier time, in order to create a poetic CV which attempted to truthfully correspond to the development of his (artistic) *personality*. The biography available within the Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach's box was copied from the one published in Harald Szeeman, ed., *Science Fiction* (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1967).

⁶²⁴ Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 269.

⁶²⁵ "Mönchengladbach Museum Catalogue," *The Joseph Beuys multiples website*, <http://pinakothek-beuys-multiples.de/en/product/catalogue-museum-monchengladbach/>, last access March 30, 2016. The Joseph Beuys multiples website includes an online selection of works drawn from the collection of the Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen. It has been conceived and launched in the framework of the Beuys Research Project at the homonymous museum. The accuracy of the information provided by this scholarly website far surpasses that of the last edition of the *catalogue raisonné* of the artist's multiples which dates back to the beginning of the 1990s. See Schellmann, ed., *Joseph Beuys*.

⁶²⁶ On the *title page* the name and address of the museum, the name of the artist (which is also the title of the exhibition), and its dates are reported while in the *acknowledgements and colophon section*, those involved in the exhibition, as well as those involved in the creation of the materials to be found within the box, are mentioned and thanked (the artist, the lenders, the photographers, the author of the text, and the printer).

its presence in the box is paradoxically not mentioned in the description provided by the online database!

Given that Wischermann does not mention these materials in her study, one could argue that they were probably not to be found in the box(es) she explored. After all, given the mobile and mutable nature of the materials contained in the boxes this is not surprising. Exploring the *Kassettenkatalog(e)* *Beuys* which has been conserved since 1967 Kunst und Museum Bibliothek der Stadt Köln and at the Abteiberg Museum, Mönchengladbach (i.e. the two institutions where Wischermann developed her research)⁶²⁷ one discovers that the box(es) in question contains not only the two leporellos and the printed felt pad, but also the *frontispiece/acknowledgements/colophon* pages inside of which one finds a folded sheet of the same size, on which the list of the exhibited works is printed (figures 3.17 a, b). It is now clear that Wischermann simply forgot to mention these materials, materials which were certainly included in the boxes *Beuys* she explored in Cologne and Mönchengladbach. This demonstrates that Wischermann interpreted the *Kassettenkataloge* as autonomous works of art without critically considering their multilayered ontology.

The mobile and mutable nature of the *Kassettenkataloge*, as well as their possibility of manipulation fully testify to the flexibility with which they were projected, handled, and *modified*, expressing the openness that has characterized the concept of document and that of monument in the 1960s (and beyond).⁶²⁸ Unfortunately, the fact that these publications are rarely shown and scholarly described in their entirety does not help the understanding of their peculiar features.⁶²⁹

⁶²⁷ As acknowledged at the beginning of her study, Wischermann developed her research on the *Kassettenkataloge* between the Kunst und Museum Bibliothek der Stadt Köln and the Archives of the Museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach. See Wischermann, *Johannes Cladders*, 7. Wischermann's frequentation of the museum's archives was confirmed by Hannelore Kersting. Hannelore Kersting, Chief curator of the Abteiberg Museum, Mönchengladbach, in conversation with the author, Mönchengladbach, March 23, 2016.

⁶²⁸ See Umberto Eco, *Opera Aperta* (1962), 3rd rev. ed. (Milano: Bompiani, 1976).

⁶²⁹ As a further example, one could refer to Wye and Weitman, *Eye on Europe*, 104; here Beuys' *Kassettenkatalog* is presented only through partial photographic reproductions of its box, the felt pad and of the two – closed and superimposed – leporellos. The caption of these images does not help the readers in their understanding of the features of the object they are confronting through photography; it reads "Kassettenkatalog, exhibition box/catalogue [...] Joseph Beuys [...] Felt with paint additions and artist's book". Wye and Weitman, *Eye on Europe*, 104. The

In *Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement*, Mœglin-Delcroix's interprets the *Kassettenkataloge* as hybrid instruments born, on the one hand, from Cladders' neglect *vis à vis* his scientific role of curator and museum director and on the other hand, from the willingness of the artists to affirm themselves and mediate, if not control, the reception of their work in publications within the instrument of the exhibition catalogue, that is, a typology of art publication which had started to assume scientific relevance.⁶³⁰ Moreover, the boxes would witness to the fact that Cladders put aside his critical and scientific responsibilities to place himself at the source of the creative act, that is, commissioning different artists to produce multiple new works to be contained in a pre-designed box (and in some cases even intervening on the features of the works themselves).⁶³¹ Mœglin-Delcroix accuses art historian and curator Jean-Christophe Amman (1939-2015) of the same negligence. During his position as the director of the Kunstmuseum Luzern (1969-1977) he also entitled himself to share some kind of artistic responsibility when he increasingly combined the insight of artworks created *ad hoc* to be printed within the pages of the museum's *Kataloge* with the informative and documentative character associated with the instrument of the exhibition catalogue.⁶³² In her view, the unethical upgrade of the role of the

series of the *Kassettenkataloge* was recently shown in its entirety in a dedicated exhibition curated by Guy Schraenen in Madrid: *More Than A Catalogue: The Catalogue-boxes of the Museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach (1967-1978)*, Library and Documentation Center, Museo Nacional Centro de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid, October 15, 2015 - April 4, 2016. This show was not accompanied by a book publication but rather only by an exhibition leaflet. A monographic study on the *Kassettenkataloge* is being prepared by the Museum Abteiberg Mönchengladbach and will be published in September 2017 on the occasion of a thematic exhibition that will take place to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the Beuys exhibition at the museum and of the beginning of Cladders' directorship of the institution.

⁶³⁰ See Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 102.

⁶³¹ See Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 102. For example, Cladders intervened on the format of Richard Long's book *Richard Long Skulpturen. England Germany Africa America 1966-1970* (Mönchengladbach: Museum Abteiberg, 1970). Cladders acknowledged this intervention in his introductory text which is printed on the cardboard inside the box: "Er war der Wunsch von Richard Long, in die hausübliche Schachtel ein solches Buch zu legen – und es war meine Absicht, es durch eine geringe Maßverschiedenheit von dieser Schachtel zu distanzieren." Cladders, untitled text, in *Richard Long*, n.p.

⁶³² See Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 102. According to Mœglin-Delcroix, the *catalogue* of Gilbert & George's exhibition *The Paintings (With Us in the Nature)* (1972) would be the clearest case in point. Gilbert & George, *The Paintings (With Us in the Nature)* Kunstmuseum Luzern, May 20 – June 25, 1972; see *Oh, the Grand old Duke of York* (Luzern: Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1972), offset printed, glue-bound, 29,5 x 20,5 cm, 42 pp., n.p. Print run: unknown. A flipbook, in which only the photographs of the original photowork

curator in the authorial scala that Amman had cunningly reserved for himself within the publication series he edited at the Kunstmuseum Luzern, would be testified not only by his commissioning of the artists' new works or special contributions for their exhibition catalogues, but also by the fact that he signed all the texts he contributed to the catalogues of the museum with a reproduction of his handwritten signature,⁶³³ something which is traditionally linked to artistic authoriality, as other exhibition catalogues of the Swiss institution seem to communicate (figure 3.18).⁶³⁴

3.4.1.2 Beyond the *catalogue-document*

Among the many examples of *hybrid* publications discussed by Møglin-Delcroix in her exploration of the different levels of the scale ranging from the exhibition catalogue to the artist's book, there is one that seems to offer her the

appear, was released by the artists in 1996 under the editorship of Hans Ulrich Obrist. See Obrist, ed. *"Oh, the Grand old Duke of York" Gilbert & George 1972* (Köln: Oktagon, 1996), offset printed, glue-bound, 11,3 x 8,4 cm, 37 pp., n.p. Print run: 900 numbered copies. Note, that the title of the book *Oh, the Grand old Duke of York* does not correspond to that of the exhibition but to that of the thirty-six page photowork created by Gilbert and George for the occasion. Ammann commissioned the art duo the creation of the photowork that, as emphasized in the *exhibition catalogue*, "wurde von Gilbert & George speziell für den Luzerner Katalog geschaffen." *Oh, the Grand old Duke of York*, n.p. As its title reveals, the work is inspired by a popular English children's nursery rhyme which is often performed as an action song. See "Oh, the Grand old Duke of York," in Steve Roud, ed., *Roud Folk Song Index*, <http://www.vwml.org/record/RoudFS/S176766>, last access February 29, 2016. The rhyme's text is printed on the first page, while the remaining thirty-five pages each present a b/w picture. For what concerns the photowork, the publication functions as a flipbook presenting the two artists in suits descending a staircase, coming closer to the fix camera that is shooting them, and disappearing out of the frame. A text by Amman, the acknowledgments and the colophon of the book, as well as a text by art historian Barbara Reise (1940-1978) complete this *catalogue* in which there is no list of the exhibited works was included. See Jean-Christophe Amman, "Gilbert & George," in *Oh, the Grand old Duke of York*, n.p.; Barbara Reise, "Gilbert & George (die intelligentsten, faszinierendsten, ernsthaftes und schönste Künstler, die Ihr je gesehen habt)," in *Oh, the Grand old Duke of York*, n.p. Note, that Reise's text, revised and translated in German for the Swiss exhibition, had already appeared in English in the November 1971 issue of the magazine *Art News*. See Reise, "Presenting Gilbert & George, the Human Sculptors," *Art News* 70, no. 7 (November 1970), 62-64, 91-92.

⁶³³ See Møglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 102.

⁶³⁴ See, for example, Jean-Christophe Amman, ed., *Processi di Pensiero Visualizzati. Junge Italienische Avantgarde: Anselmo, Boetti, Calzolari, Fabro, Griffa, Kounellis, Maini, Mattiacci, Merz, Paolini, Penone, Pistoletto, Prini, Salvo, Zorio/ Sonderausstellung: Irma Ineichen, Josephine Troller* (Luzern: Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1970); Jean-Christophe Amman (and Marianne Eigenheer), eds., *Ben Vautier, Christian Boltanski, Jean le Gac, John C. Fernie* (Luzern: Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1972). For a discussion of the meaning of the signature in modern and contemporary art, see Jean-Marc Poinot, *Quand l'œuvre à lieu: L'art exposé et ses récits autorisés*, 2nd rev. ed. (Genève: les presses du reel, 2008), 152-180.

opportunity to find an escape from what she paradoxically referred to as the “confusion volontaire des genres qui rend indécise, parfois indécidable, la discrimination entre le catalogue et l’œuvre, le document et le livre d’artiste.”⁶³⁵ Putting aside, albeit only for a moment her fundamental criterion of the total autonomy of the work of art, Mœglin-Delcroix refers to Lothar Baumgarten’s (and Michael Oppitz’s) *T’e-Ne-T’e: eine mythologische Vorführung* (1974)⁶³⁶ (figure 3.19) as the artist’s book which would show that since the diffusion of site-specific, installation, and time-based art, the documentary function of the catalogue (the being document of the *catalogue-document*) has undergone a transformation shifting “du rassemblement de connaissances objectives autour d’un objet donné (‘documentation sur’) à l’usage transitif du verbe ‘documenter’, [...] lequel signifie attester l’existence de quelque chose.”⁶³⁷ Without formally describing *T’e-Ne-T’e* or analyzing its operating modalities, Mœglin-Delcroix cites it as the artist’s book that would prove that the book can deploy the “dimension narrative latent dans l’installation” – but also, one could say, the narrative dimension which is latent, to different extents, in all time based (media) artworks –, transmitting the features and the meaning of such artworks “plus efficacement que ne le feraient les descriptions littérales des notices et les points de vue fragmentaires des reproductions dans une catalogue conventionnel.”⁶³⁸ For this reason, she seems ultimately able to accept and even to reconcile the function of the exhibition catalogue and the nature of the artist’s book, that is, “les fonctions de documentation et de creation”; in hindsight, a time based artwork “n’a de réalité communicable que par la publication qui lui assure bien plus qu’une mémoire: une autre forme d’existence.”⁶³⁹

Despite Mœglin-Delcroix’s belief, a more detailed analysis of *T’e-Ne-T’e* seems to lead to other conclusions. *T’e-Ne-T’e: eine mythologische Vorführung* is a 21 x 14, 8 cm twenty-four page booklet created by Baumgarten together with ethnographer Michael Oppitz on the occasion of the presentation of their *Hommage-Kasten Broodthaers* (1973) at Konrad Fischer’s gallery in Düsseldorf

⁶³⁵ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d’art et inversement,” 98.

⁶³⁶ See Baumgarten and Oppitz, *T’e-Ne-T’e*.

⁶³⁷ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d’art et inversement,” 105.

⁶³⁸ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d’art et inversement,” 105, 107.

⁶³⁹ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d’art et inversement,” 105.

in May 1974.⁶⁴⁰ The *Hommage-Kasten Broodthaers* is a 47,5 x 15,6 x 18,5 cm box covered with silk cloth and bearing the inscription *Hommage à MB, Section 125-25 64-58, MUSEUM*. It contains 49 eagle feathers. Inspired by a box published in 1904 containing ethnographic photographs of Indigenous people of South America from the collection of painter, photographer, and ethnologist Guido Boggiani (1861-1902),⁶⁴¹ the *Hommage-Kasten Broodthaers* was created as a critical response to Marcel Broodthaers' exhibition *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute* which Baumgarten and Oppitz had visited at the Städtische Kunsthalle Düsseldorf in 1972.⁶⁴²

Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute constituted the *Section des Figures* of Marcel Broodthaers' *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*, that is, a section of the fictional museum with no permanent collection or permanent location that the artist had inaugurated in 1968 in his apartment in Brussels. Since 1968 Broodthaers had implemented the eagle – an animal traditionally associated with the concepts of authority and power –, as the emblem of art as idea as well as of the idea of art, infiltrating it in the instantiation of the different sections of the conceptual museum he himself directed. The exhibition *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute* gathered together 266 objects representing or referring to the bird — from a stuffed eagle to an oligocene fossil of it, to a multitude of artefacts characterized by its image —, dating from the Oligocene to the present (1972)⁶⁴³ (figure 3.20). They were borrowed from different museums of which the names and departments are prominently listed on the

⁶⁴⁰ *Rabe: eine Ausstellung für die Sinne und den Versand*, Konrad Fischer Galerie, Düsseldorf, 22 May 1974. This exhibition opened at 8pm and lasted just the evening of the 22nd of May 1974. See Dortothee Fischer, ed., *Ausstellungen bei Konrad Fischer: Düsseldorf Okt. 1967 – Okt. 1992* (Bielefeld: Ed. Marzona, 1993), 105.

⁶⁴¹ See Robert Lehmann-Nitsche, *Die Sammlung Boggiani von Indianertypen aus dem centralen Südamerika* (Buenos Aires: R. Rosauer, 1904).

⁶⁴² *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute*, Düsseldorf, Städtische Kunsthalle, May 16 – July 9, 1972; see Marcel Broodthaers and Jürgen Harten, eds., *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute: Marcel Broodthaers zeigt eine experimentelle Ausstellung seines Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Section des Figures*, 2 vols. (Düsseldorf: Städtische Kunsthalle, 1972), 2, 19. See also Michael Oppitz, "Adler, Pfeife, Urinoir," *Interfunktionen*, no. 9 (1972): 177-180.

⁶⁴³ The catalogue of the exhibition lists only 266 objects, but according to what has been reported by art historian Rachel Haidu, actually the show comprehended five hundreds *figures* of the bird, a figure to which one should add about two hundred slides projected by three projectors which were part of the display. See Rachel Haidu, *The Absence of Work: Marcel Broodthaers, 1964-1976* (Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press, 2010), 163. Note, that in a later passage of her study Haidu contradicts herself affirming that there were "four slide projectors and 140 images of eagles ticking with metronomic regularity." Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 209.

front and back covers of the two volume “catalogue”⁶⁴⁴ of the exhibition (figures 3.21 a, b), as well as from private collections including Broodthaers’ own. They were exhibited on the wall, displayed in glass cases and vitrines, and some of them were also free standing. Tags were placed next to them, reporting the performative contradiction *Ceci n’est pas un objet d’art* alternatively written in French, German (*Dies ist kein Kunstwerk*), and English (*This is not a work of art*). As Broodthaers literally illustrated in the *exhibition catalogue*, he intended this *label* as a conflation of Duchamp’s *dictum* that everything could be a work of art – if placed in the right context, and Magritte’s antithetical calligram *Ceci n’est pas une pipe* (figure 3.21 c).⁶⁴⁵ Through *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute*, that is, a fictional section of his fictional museum, complemented by a *catalogue* which should be interpreted as an integral part of *the fiction*, Broodthaers attempted *to demonstrate* (i.e. literally *to show*) what art historian Douglas Crimp termed “the oddness of the museum’s order of knowledge”⁶⁴⁶ and the power it exerts upon its publics while shaping the very notion of *public*.⁶⁴⁷

In Baumgarten’s and Oppitz’s view, aiming to de-auratize the objects he displayed in the section of his museum and, through the medium of photography as well as through that of the list, in its related catalogue, Broodthaers deprived them of any context, be it geographical, historical, and/or social. In so doing, he did nothing but deployed the very mechanisms at the base of the historical foundation of the museum, of the institution’s order of knowledge, and of the notion of art it propagated. With the *Hommage-Kasten Broodthaers* and *T’e-Ne-T’e* Baumgarten and Oppitz intended to give back a context to the eagle, demonstrating that through his artistic interventions Broodthaers did nothing other than perpetuate the myths that he meant to unravel. The box and the materials accompanying its presentation (i.e. the booklet *T’e-Ne-T’e*) were *created* by Baumgarten and Oppitz between 1972 and 1974, that is, during the two years which followed Broodthaer’s exhibition in Düsseldorf and the definitive closure of his fictional museum coinciding with its

⁶⁴⁴ Broodthaers and Harten, *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute*, 2, 6.

⁶⁴⁵ See Marcel Broodthaers, “Methode,” in *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute*, 1, 12-16; Foucault, *Ceci n’est pas une pipe* (1963) (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1973).

⁶⁴⁶ Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum Ruins*, 220.

⁶⁴⁷ For a detailed discussion of Broodthaers’ *Section des Figures*, see Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 163-224.

instantiation at *documenta 5* (1972).⁶⁴⁸ As already cursorily mentioned, the *Hommage-Kasten Broodthaers* contains 49 eagle's feathers, 48 of which are marked with the name of a different Native Americans' tribes once living in the area individuated by the geographical coordinates 124-25 64-58, likewise marked on the box. *T'e-Ne-T'e* is considered by Baumgarten and Oppitz as "das Buch" that accompanies the presentation of the box at Konrad Fischer's, but also as the instrument that releases its *exhibition* from its spatio-temporal constraints, letting it enter the pure dimension of time: the booklet *T'e-Ne-T'e* "löst die Ausstellung aus den Bindungen des Raumes heraus und versetzt sie in die Ebene der Zeit. Bald steht es für sich."⁶⁴⁹

In the introductory text to the *exhibition* and the booklet, Baumgarten and Oppitz illustrate the reasons that brought them to engage in the whole project. Assuming that everything in the world is covered with "ein[em] Film," a thin membrane of which one only rarely becomes aware, that is, "die mythische Dimension der Dinge: ihr ideologischer Mehrwert"⁶⁵⁰ they expand on what they consider the three ways to relate to *reality*. The first way could be defined as the *apologetic approach*, that is, to let oneself be caught from reality or, in other words, to let the film envelop oneself; taking the second way, one would face the world with a *disenchanted* attitude (*Entzauberung*), believing that one could reach a detached point from which to deconstruct the ideological film; the third way, would coincide with a bet on the ideological surplus of which all objects are covered, that is, to leverage on the mythological dimension which envelops every object in order to shed light on some aspects of their modes of operation within society.

According to Baumgarten and Oppitz's, Broodthaers took the second path, actually perpetuating the mechanism that he aimed to question. Through the *Hommage-Kasten Broodthaers* and its exhibition, Baumgarten and Oppitz intended to go the third way giving back a context to the eagle. To do this, they chose the Native Americans (mythical figures par excellence, especially in the

⁶⁴⁸ *documenta 5: Befragung der Realität – Bildwelten heute*, Kassel, June 30 – October 8, 1972. See Harald Szeeman et alii, eds., *documenta 5: Befragung der Realität* (Kassel/München: Verlag documenta GmbH/Verlagsgruppe Bertelsmann GmbH/C. Bertelsmann Verlag, 1972).

⁶⁴⁹ Baumgarten and Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e*, n.p.

⁶⁵⁰ Baumgarten and Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e*, n.p.

Western gaze) as a paradigmatic example to analyse how the eagle has *lived* in their social and cultural context. The box and the feathers act as symbolic objects in this endeavour. The booklet, which mimics the format as well as the formal and conceptual features of the catalogue Broodthaers prepared for his 1972 Düsseldorf exhibition, is described as “ein Mythos”⁶⁵¹: it embodies and enacts the deep mythological nature of knowledge.

T'e-N'e-T'e is divided into three parts. In the first part, photos of Natives accompany and are accompanied by scientific texts describing their traditions (figure 3.22). Texts and pictures share the same attitude, they represent different degrees of mythologization; in Baumgarten and Oppitz words: “sie dokumentieren in regelmäßiger Abstufung Grade der Mythisierung.”⁶⁵² The second section coincides with a list of one hundred and five different functions of the eagle in several Native American's tribes (figure 3.23). The third and last section corresponds to the “Anmerkungsteil”⁶⁵³ (figure 3.24). This section comprehends: the bibliographical references of the studies to which Baumgarten and Oppitz referred to create the box and the booklet, the list of the sources related to the information provided in the second section of the booklet,⁶⁵⁴ the list of the illustrations, as well as the section actually titled *Anmerkung*, that is, a glossary in which explanations are given of the meaning of certain terms Baumgarten and Oppitz implemented but also about the role of some of the elements in which their project was actualized, such as the publication in question. In this section one discovers, for example, that the booklet's title – *T'e-ne-t'e* – means *Eagle Head* and was the name of a Kiowa chief who was a famous narrator of myths as well as, as already mentioned, the booklet is considered by its creators as an instrument that accompanies the *exhibition* at Konrad Fischer whilst at the same time freeing it from its spatio-temporal constraints. Illustrating the key elements around which the entire project pivots, that is, the box, plus its *exhibition*, plus the booklet, the glossary

⁶⁵¹ Baumgarten and Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e*, n.p.

⁶⁵² Baumgarten and Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e*, n.p.

⁶⁵³ Baumgarten and Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e*, n.p.

⁶⁵⁴ This list, organized in three columns and characterized by a cumbersome reference number system consisting of Roman and Arabic numbers, connects the one hundred and five functions of the eagle in several tribes of Native Americans to their bibliographical sources. Judging from the spatial organization of the text on the page, the list is guided not merely by a scientific attitude, but clearly by an aesthetic one.

builds and catalogues their context of knowledge through keywords. The last part of the booklet is “eine Art dritter Serie mythischer Demonstration” which can be described as “das Schwindelgefühl beim ersten Betreten einer großen Bibliothek. Solange man noch nicht genug von ihm weiß, hat auch das Wissen eine mythisierende, eine beengende Kraft.”⁶⁵⁵ This affirmation echoes the concept of *vertigine della lista* introduced at the beginning of this chapter.

Baumgarten and Oppitz consider the booklet *T'e-ne-t'e* as the key to interpret and understand the message and the conceptual framework behind the box, its *exhibition*, and the booklet itself, that is, the *mythos* through which they aim to shed light on the mythological dimension of knowledge and its operation modes.

Building on Baumgarten and Oppitz's assertion that once the exhibition comes to an end, *T'e-ne-t'e* would remain an independent instrument, that is, the only tool capable of perpetuating the project it belonged to beyond the time-space frame of the exhibition it accompanied, Mœglin-Delcroix affirms that through this route an exhibition catalogue can become what she defines an artist's book, that is, an autonomous work of art. However, one should note that *T'e-ne-T'e* is the instrument through which Baumgarten and Oppitz reflect and communicate the coordinates of their artistic gesture, allowing the *readers-visitors* to enter and make their way into the work while actively understanding how the work itself, that is the *Opera*, operates.⁶⁵⁶ *T'e-ne-T'e* is then not an autonomous work of art *per se* but an integral part of the artwork.

3.4.1.3 Bibliographical Approach and Art Circulation: the Imprinting of Seth Siegelau

To understand the relevance of the book within contemporary art it is important to briefly discuss the activity of one of the protagonist of the art scene at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, that is, Seth Siegelau (1942-2013). His interest in books and printed matter had a lifelong impact not only on his

⁶⁵⁵ Baumgarten and Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e*, n.p.

⁶⁵⁶ See Eco, *Opera Aperta*.

attitude towards art and life⁶⁵⁷ but especially on the very notion of art and its future developments.

Siegelaub was an eclectic autodidact with a natural inclination to public relations.⁶⁵⁸ His interest in art was developed as part of wandering between New York City libraries and museums and consolidated through a brief stint as a part-time assistant director at the Sculpture Center (at the time located in a Manhattan's former carriage house at 167 East 69th Street) at the beginning of the sixties. In June 1964 he opened Seth Siegelaub Contemporary Art, a gallery space within which, for a short period, he combined his interest in contemporary art with those in oriental rugs, artifacts on which he had already started collecting information in the form of books.⁶⁵⁹ However, already at the end of April 1966 Siegelaub closed its doors: he wanted to be free to develop his activities and professional interests beyond the space-time limits and the economic constraints imposed by a gallery. From that moment onward and until the beginning of the 1970s he would dedicate himself full-time to his undertakings as an art dealer, exhibition catalyst, and, above all, as an independent publisher, considering the entire world as his gallery.⁶⁶⁰ In fact, starting from the spring 1966, Siegelaub supported and promoted the work of the artists he endorsed through many extra-gallery activities (e.g. exhibitions, symposiums, and conferences) among which stood his publishing commitment. Between 1968 and 1969 he edited some innovative publications that exploded the *traditional* concept of exhibition and exhibition catalogue, *inventing* the concept of *catalogue-as-exhibition*. Siegelaub's multifaceted publishing activity

⁶⁵⁷ See Sara Martinetti, "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor," in *Seth Siegelaub: Beyond Conceptual Art*, eds. Leontine Coelewij and Sara Martinetti, 14-29 (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2016).

⁶⁵⁸ Siegelaub was born in 1942 in the Bronx, NY, in a family that had always given much thought to his education which he completed with an high school diploma.

⁶⁵⁹ In 1965 Siegelaub and jazz musician and art dealer Robert Gaile joined forces to buy, restore, and resell oriental rugs using as a headquarters the spaces of Siegelaub's contemporary art gallery. See Sara Martinetti, "Chronology," in *Seth Siegelaub: Beyond Conceptual Art*, eds. Leontine Coelewij and Sara Martinetti, 44-463 (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2016), 52.

⁶⁶⁰ Interviewed by Patricia Norvell (at the time a graduate student in Sculpture under the supervision of Robert Morris at the Hunter College, NYC) on April 17th, 1969 about his activities, Siegelalub stated: "I've just, in a sense, eliminated space. My gallery is the world now." "Seth Siegelaub, interview with Patricia Norvell," in *Recording Conceptual Art: Early Interviews with Barry, Huebler, Kaltenbach, LeWitt, Morris, Oppenheim, Siegelaub, Smithson, Weiner*, eds., Alexander Alberro and Patricia Norvell, 31-55 (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2001), 38.

deserves a thorough study which goes beyond the thematic focus of this work.⁶⁶¹ In the following, the focus will be brought on some of the most representative *catalogues-as-exhibitions* he issued.

Douglas Huebler, published by Siegelaub in November 1968, and therefore also known as *November 1968* – a time frame which is reported on the frontispiece of the booklet in the guise of a subtitle –, is considered the first publication of this kind.⁶⁶² The 20,2 x 20,2 cm twenty page stapled booklet shows a b/w map of the U.S. on the cover (figure 3.25 a). This map is characterized by geographical and road data marked in white on the black background, that is a photostat of a general reference map of the U.S. which I would interpret as a *pun* linking general information with the specificities of the photographic medium.⁶⁶³ A statement by the artist introduces the thin volume. This statement, to which we shall return soon, is printed on the same spread in which the reader encounters the “catalog[ue]”, that is, the checklist of the fifteen works “made [by the artist] in 1967-68” included in the exhibition.⁶⁶⁴ Selected images credited as representing the *documentation* of some Huebler’s *Site Sculpture Projects*, *Duration Pieces*, and one so-called *Variable Piece* (no. 1-11 in the list, where no. 3 is reported as “not reproduced” within the pages of the booklet)⁶⁶⁵ appear on the following pages, together with four untitled *Drawings* (no. 12-15 in the list) (figure 3.25 b).

According to the legend, after the booklet was launched at the studio of fellow artist Robert Barry on the 2nd of November 1968, several people went to Siegelaub’s apartment-showroom at 1100 Madison Avenue hoping to see Huebler’s exhibition but soon discovering that it *existed* as such just in its

⁶⁶¹ For a first attempt in this direction, see Michalis Pichler, ed., *Books and Ideas after Seth Siegelaub* (Berlin/New York: Sternberg Press/Center for Book Arts, 2016).

⁶⁶² Douglas Huebler, *Douglas Huebler*, ed. Seth Siegelaub (New York: Seth Siegelaub, 1968), offset, stapled, 20,2 x 20,2 cm, 20 pp., n.p. Print run: 1,500 (price: \$2,25). Raymond Dirks, a stockbroker and patron of the arts financed the publication in exchange of several works of art. See Martinetti, “Chronology,” 100.

⁶⁶³ For a discussion on the relevance of the paradigm *photography* within conceptual art in the 1960s and 1970s with a focus on artists’ publications see Herta Wolf, “The Paradigm Photography as the Basis for Conceptual Strategies in Artists’ Publications during the 1960s and 1970s,” in *Buch. Medium. Fotografie*, eds., Sigrid Schade and Anne Thurmann-Jajes, 40-70 (Bremen/Köln: Neues Museum Weserburg/Salon Verlag, 2004).

⁶⁶⁴ Huebler, *Douglas Huebler*, n.p.

⁶⁶⁵ “Catalog[ue],” in *Douglas Huebler*, n.p.

catalogue.⁶⁶⁶ In the statement at the beginning of the publication Huebler affirmed: “the existence of each *sculpture* [this was the paradigm through which Huebler intended his work] is documented by its documentation. The documentation takes the form of photographs, maps, drawings and descriptive language [...]”.⁶⁶⁷ Documentation related to the *Location Piece* entitled *Boston-New York Exchange Shape*, for example, is presented in the booklet on three subsequent pages (figures 3.26, a, b). On the first page, the *reader-visitor* encounters the photographic representation of a *drawing* including two maps of downtown Boston and New York on which the artist had traced two hexagons and marked a letter to every corner (from A to F on the Boston map and from A’ to F’ on the New York ones). Below these two maps, the artist had handwritten a laconic textual *label* which includes data allowing one to infer the piece’s mode of operation. Reading this text, one could comprehend what one had just seen on the maps: the two hexagons, the sides of which measure in both cases three thousand feet, define the same portion of space in the two cities. Turning the page, one faces a double spread on which one can see on the left four b/w pictures and on the right the reproduction of a typewritten page. The four unspectacular photographs present corners of the cities of Boston and New York; actually they are credited as vizualizing A and B (New York) and A’ and B’ (Boston). These sites coincide with specific geographic locations whose approximate coordinates had been typewritten by Huebler on the paper reproduced on the right page. This paper attests that on August 27 and Spetember 9, 1968 he physically visited the sites individuated on the map by the corners of the hexagon, in Boston and New York respectively. During this visit he placed a marker (i.e. a one inch diameter sticker) on every *corner*, taking a photograph of each of the twelve locations. Through this *document* the readers-visitors can definitely link the *documentation* presented on the three pages, building the piece in their minds. Given the nature and the geographical

⁶⁶⁶ See Martinetti, “Chronology,” 100. Those who made to Siegelau’s apartment were nevertheless offered to buy *documents* which, as Huebler recalled, “consisted in typewritten ‘statements’, maps, and photographs enclosed in manila envelopes and lined on the floor against the walls of his [Siegelau’s] apartment.” Frédéric Paul and Douglas Huebler “Truro, Massachusetts, October 11-14, 1992,” in *Douglas Huebler: «Variable», etc.*, ed. Frédéric Paul, 125-130 (Limoges: F.R.A.C. Limousin, 1993), 128.

⁶⁶⁷ Douglas Huebler, Untitled Statement, in *Douglas Huebler*, n.p. See also Rosalind Krauss, “Sculpture in the expanded field,” *October*, no. 8 (Spring 1979): 30-44.

amplitude of Huebler's pieces – which Siegelaub once described as “primarily outdoor ‘pieces’ running along the East Coast of the United States”⁶⁶⁸ –, the publication was the only site in which one could contemporarily *access* (through photographs, maps, drawings, and descriptive language) all the works included in the show; the publication coincided then with the very site of their *expositio*, with a circumscribed immutable site which actually could be described in terms of a satellite-like instrument through which it was humanly possible to give an account of the expanded nature of Huebler's artworks, making them present, graspable, sensible.⁶⁶⁹ Linking the connotation of the anglosaxon transitive use of the verb *to document* – which means *to attest the existence* of something, that is, to attest that something *has an objective reality*⁶⁷⁰ – together with the concept of *expositio* (from the Latin *exponere*, put out, exhibit, i.e. the very action of making public), one can state that the publication *Douglas Huebler* actually brings the process of *apperception* of his works as well as of their exhibition to its full end. In its psychological and philosophical meanings the process of *apperception* (from the Latin *ad*, to, toward and *percipere*, to perceive, gain, secure, learn, feel) involves the way in which new experience is assimilated to and transformed by the residuum of past experience of an individual to form a new whole. Surveying Huebler's *documentation* one can activate the mental process through which what one sees, reads, and is presented with *via* the *documentation* can be brought into connection with an already existent and systematized mental conception, thereby understanding and actualizing the works in their *material* and *conceptual* dimensions. Without entering into the specificities of Huebler's work and of its evolution from minimal to conceptual and beyond,⁶⁷¹ one should stress that the works included in *Douglas Huebler*, were all effectively *made* (i.e. actualized or envisioned and designed as *projects*) between 1967 and 1968.

⁶⁶⁸ Seth Siegelaub, letter to Grace Glueck, September 12, 1968. The Seth Siegelaub Papers. Gift of Seth Siegelaub and the Stichting Egress Foundation, Amsterdam, I.B. 9. The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York.

⁶⁶⁹ Paradoxically, the labels which accompany the documentation within the catalogue always indicate the precise measure of each document, thus strongly remarking on its being an object or rather a commodity: the possession of these documents grants in fact the possession of the artwork.

⁶⁷⁰ See Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d’art et inversement,” 105.

⁶⁷¹ See Frédéric Paul, ed., *Douglas Huebler: «Variable», etc.*

However, to fully *exist*, they needed to gain social existence, they needed to be perceived or better *apperceived*.

In December 1968 SiegelauB further implemented and experimented with the book format as a site for exposition, publishing Lawrence Weiner's *Statements* and the so-called *Xerox Book*.⁶⁷² The following month he again put to the test the hierarchy between exhibition and its related publication, organizing *January 5-31, 1969* (figure 3.27).⁶⁷³ As he himself affirmed, this "exhibition consists of (the ideas communicated in) the catalog[ue]; the physical presence (of the work) is supplementary to the catalog[ue]."⁶⁷⁴ As can be seen from the draft of the floor plan for the show, the office space he rented in Manhattan fully modelled his porous understanding of the dichotomy between the exhibition and its catalogue (figure 3.28). It reads:

General floor plan for Gallery. 2 rooms equal size, 1 empty, with secretary, phone, desk [,] file cabinet and catalog. The other has two works of each artist (except Wilson).[⁶⁷⁵] The following works will be physically exhibited:

Robert Barry – Cat No. 1, 2 (they will be hidden and be invisible)

Douglas Hueber – Cat No. 3, 7 (the Sawdust Cat#2 will be removed after the first 6 hours of the show and be replaced by the 13 photos of the sawdust)

Joseph Kosuth – Cat No. 5, 7 (each work will have three Tearsheets pinned at the wall)

Lawrence Weiner - Cat No. 3, 8

~~Ian Wilson – cannot show 'anything'~~⁶⁷⁶

⁶⁷² See Martinetti, "Chronology," 112, 116. See also § 2.3, footnotes 178 and 196.

⁶⁷³ See Seth SiegelauB, ed. *January 5-31, 1969* (New York: Seth SiegelauB, 1969), offset, comb-bound, 17,5 x 20,8 cm, 24 pp., n.p. Print run: 1000 (price 2,75 \$); *January 5-31, 1969*, McLendon Building, 44 East Fifty-Second Street, New York, January 5-31, 1969. Art dealer Manuel Greer helped with the logistics of the show while collectors Raymond Dirks and Robert Topol provided financial support for the venture. See Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 184, footnote 63 and Martinetti, "Chronology," 130. From a letter that SiegelauB sent to Greer on the 26th of January 1970, one could speculate that the "moola" Greer paid to SiegelauB to acquire 6 works of art included in the January show plus 50% of 6 other works in the exhibition also helped the dealer to bear the costs of the exhibition. Seth SiegelauB, letter to Manuel Greer, January 26, 1970, SiegelauB, I.A. 39. MoMA Archives, NY.

⁶⁷⁴ SiegelauB quoted in Martinetti, "Chronology," 130.

⁶⁷⁵ As attested by the announcement of *January 5-31, 1969*, the work of artist Ian Wilson was not included in the show. See Seth SiegelauB, ed., *0 Objects, 0 Painters, 0 Sculptures, 4 Artists, 1 Robert Barry, 1 Douglas Huebler, 1 Joseph Kosuth, 1 Lawrence Weiner, 32 Works, 1 Exhibition, 2000 Catalogues, 44 e. 52 st. New York, January 5-31, 1969, (212) 288-5031 Seth SiegelauB* (New York: Seth SiegelauB, 1969). SiegelauB, I.A. 43. MoMA Archives, NY. By the time SiegelauB was concluding the organization of the show Wilson had in fact shifted his interests to oral communication as an art form. The *dealer* and the artist could not come to an agreement about how to present his work in a way that did not give it preference over those of the other participants, and for this reason it was not included in the show. See Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 183, footnote 63.

The visitors who physically accessed the office space Siegelaub had rented for the occasion on 44 East Fifty-Second Street encountered two rooms: a cool and accurately furnished *empty room* where one could sit on the plush sofa and flip through the pages of (and/or buy) one of the copies of *January 5-31, 1969* (as well as of *Douglas Huebler, Statements* and the *Xerox Book*) which were arranged in an orderly fashion on a minimal side table overseen by a young secretary hired for the occasion (3.29);⁶⁷⁷ and a room in which each of the above-listed artists *physically exhibited* two works. In the Manhattan space every artist presented two works while within the pages of the comb-bound b/w publication each of them had four pages devoted to their production (figures 3.30 a, b; 3.31 a, b). The first page always features a list of eight artworks with full information (title, date, materials related to their actualization, and reference of the collection which they would pertain⁶⁷⁸), two of which were *physically exhibited* in Manhattan.⁶⁷⁹ Then come two pages with photographic images which are not necessarily pictures of the works presented in the office-space. The artworks in the list could be totally invisible (e.g. Barry's wave-works, photographed in the artist's studio to paradoxically demonstrate their invisibility! - figure 3.30 b) or created to be actualized in outdoor spaces (e.g. Weiner's *A 2" wide 1" deep trench cut across a standard one car driveway*, 1968, a photograph of which actualization appears in the booklet). In Huebler's case the images are credited as "documentation"⁶⁸⁰ while in all the other cases as "photograph[s] of"⁶⁸¹ the respective work (figure 3.31 a, b). The last page presents a statement by the respective artist. Barry did not provide any, while

⁶⁷⁶ Floor plan for the exhibition *January 5-31, 1969* by Seth Siegelaub, pen on paper, 21,1 x 23,2 cm. Siegelaub, I.A. 44. MoMA Archives, NY.

⁶⁷⁷ The secretary happened to be artist and philosopher Adrian Piper (b. 1948) at the time a student at the School of Visual Art, New York. For an assessment of Siegelaub material, social, and political working conditions, such as, for example, his considering *empty* a room where a woman of color labored as a secretary and gallery assistant, see Julia Bryan-Wilson, "Seth Siegelaub's Material Conditions," in *Seth Siegelaub*, 30-43.

⁶⁷⁸ Note, that one of Siegelaub's marketing strategies was that of indicating the works as part of determinate collections in order to enhance the general commercial palatability of the art he endorsed.

⁶⁷⁹ Note, that from the list it was not possible to understand which work was physically exhibited in the gallery space while information were provided in order for the reader to link the works photographically illustrated within the booklet and their respective labels.

⁶⁸⁰ Siegelaub, ed. *January 5-31, 1969*, n.p.

⁶⁸¹ Siegelaub, ed. *January 5-31, 1969*, n.p.

Huebler took the occasion to reiterate the controversial position of his work *vis à vis* documentation which he had expressed in his previous publication: “because the work is beyond direct perceptual experience, awareness of the work depends on a system of documentation. This documentation takes the form of photographs, maps, drawings, and descriptive language.”⁶⁸² (figure 3.31 b, right). The monument and the document, the art and its representation melt in this booklet of which Siegelaub retains the copyright while the four artists are presented as the authors. It is a simple but meticulously refined publication, printed on thin coated-paper (as *Douglas Huebler*), and characterized by an unusual title. *January 5-31, 1969* refers to the time frame during which the very much geographically circumscribed and partially *physical* exhibition which only illustrated a sample of the works listed and presented in its catalogue, was open to the public. The *hic et nunc* of the Manhattan’ *show* was infinitely small compared to the communicative potential and the potential life expectancy of its *catalogue*. Actually, Siegelaub considered the two-room exhibition as the *guide* of the catalogue.⁶⁸³ For him, “the physical presence (of the work) [...] [was] supplementary to the catalog[ue]”.⁶⁸⁴ *January 5-31, 1969* inaugurated a seminal year for Conceptual art, for the future of art and its history, as well as for Siegelaub and “his place in history.”⁶⁸⁵ In Siegelaub’s hands and through the peculiarities of the work by the artists he appreciated, favoured, and promoted, the *exhibition catalogue*, still a thin publication able to be easily handed and diffused via mail to a larger (but very selected!) public, become of *primary* importance.⁶⁸⁶

Around mid-January 1969, Siegelaub was ready to start his next project. On January 21, 1969 he sent a letter to thirty-one artists inviting them to contribute a work limited “to just verbal information” for the “International

⁶⁸² Douglas Huebler, “Untitled Statement,” in *January 5-31, 1969*, n.p. For a discussion of the paradoxical nature of Hueblers’ art see Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 74-83.

⁶⁸³ See Jean-Marc Poinot, *Quand l’œuvre à lieu*, 113.

⁶⁸⁴ Seth Siegelaub, Information Concerning the Exhibition *January 5-31, 1969*. Siegelaub, I.A. 45. MoMA Archives, NY.

⁶⁸⁵ Martinetti, “Chronology,” 126.

⁶⁸⁶ Note, that in the specific case of *January 5-31, 1969*, until the show was over the exhibition-catalogue was available exclusively at the gallery. Siegelaub, I.A. 44. MoMA Archives, NY.

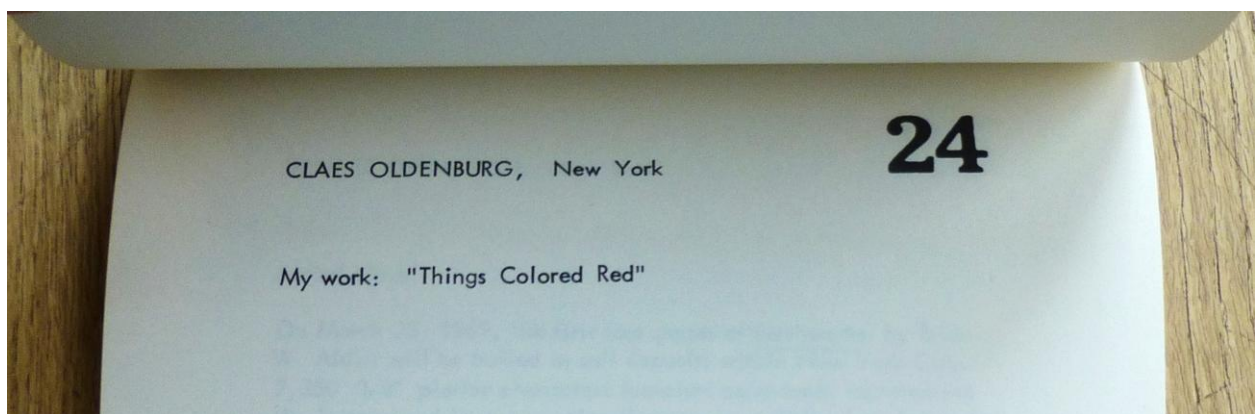
Exhibition [...] titled 'One Month'"⁶⁸⁷ he had programmed for the coming month of March. The aim of this show was to bring works together from different artists, not in a predetermined geographic location, but in the abstract site represented by a b/w offset printed stapled 17,8 cm x 21, 5 cm calendar of March 1969 (figure 3.32 a). Siegelaub elucidated the concept of this *exhibition* in the above-mentioned letter that was reprinted at the beginning of the calendar. The letter contains a list of thirty-one artists. Their names are presented in alphabetical order from Carl Andre to Ian Wilson and associated with a growing sequence of number from 1 to 31 corresponding to the thirty-one days that make up the abstract unity of the month of March. The thirty-one recipients of this letter were invited to confirm their participation and return to Siegelaub "any relevant information" regarding the work they intended "to contribute to the exhibition" on the assigned day, in order to appear in the "list of the artist and their 'work' [which] will be published, and internationally distributed."⁶⁸⁸ As specified by Siegelaub at the beginning of the publication, *March 1969* "is the record of replies (or non-replies) from each of the 31 invited artists"⁶⁸⁹ (figure 3.32 c). *March 1969* inhabits the abstract unit of the month (i.e. a list of days), listing the answers received or not received by the artists, that is, their works. If no response was received, the page on which it should have been printed remained *empty* except for the number of the day. The artists who responded to Siegelaub's invitation sent him more or less programmatic statements, openly declaring in front of an unknown and virtual audience – personified by Siegelaub but potentially constituted by every individual who would flip through the publication –, their commitment to create a work, during the assigned day, according to the announced modalities. Barry promised to release two cubic feet of Helium (a noble gas, inert, colorless and odorless) into the atmosphere sometime during the morning of the 5th of March 1969. Christine Kozolov (1945-2005), the only woman in the list, proposed to continuously record the twenty-four hours characterizing the 19th of March, from 12 am to 12 am on a 1 hour long tape. Richard Long envisaged taking four

⁶⁸⁷ Seth Siegelaub, ed., *March 1969 [One Month]* (New York: Seth Siegelaub, 1969), offset, stapled, 17,8 x 21,5 cm, 68 pp., n.p. Print run: 1000.

⁶⁸⁸ Siegelaub, ed., *March 1969*, n.p.

⁶⁸⁹ Seth Siegelaub, Untitled Statement, in Siegelaub, ed., *March 1969*, n.p.

photographs of different natural phenomena, at specific locations in Bristol and at precise moments during the 21st of March. At 12am he would mark the turn from the 20th to the 21st of March taking a flash picture of the tide of the River Avon at Hotwells (a district of the city); at 6am, from the Bristol Suspension Bridge, he would photograph the dawn while at 6.30pm, from the Severn Bridge the dusk; at 12 am he would mark the turn of the 21th into the 22nd of March taking another flash picture of River Avon's tide at Hotwells.⁶⁹⁰ For the 24th day of the month, Claes Oldenburg offered a work less temporally connoted and regulated but not necessarily perceived as less tied to the temporal slot assigned to him given the fact that it is clearly framed by the page with the number of his day (24) boldly printed in the upper right corner of the page that reports his statement.⁶⁹¹ It reads:



A representative number of artists, such as, for example, Allen Ruppersberg and Robert Smithson who had been assigned the 26th and the 28th March respectively, but also Douglas Huebler (14th March) proposed works that involved the abstract instrument of the map, exploring *ante litteram* the concept of *georeferenciation*⁶⁹² while directly (e.g. Huebler - figure 3.33 and Ruppersberg - figure 3.34) and indirectly (e.g. Smithson - figure 3.35) referring

⁶⁹⁰ Richard Long, "21st March 1969," in Siegelau, ed., *March 1969*, n.p.

⁶⁹¹ Claes Oldenburg, "24th March 1969," in Siegelau, ed., *March 1969*, n.p.

⁶⁹² *Georeferencing* means, "establishing a relationship between information (e.g. documents, datasets, maps, images, biographical information) and geographic locations through placenames (i.e. toponyms) or place codes (e.g., postal codes) or through geospatial referencing (e.g., longitude and latitude coordinates)." Linda Hill, *Georeferencing: The Geographic Association of Information* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2006), 229. The practice of georeferenciation anticipated by the conceptualists would have been *invented* in the mid-1980s, and advanced in the following decades thanks to the new IT developments. See Hill, *Georeferencing*, 14-17.

to the abstract and plastic dimension of time and of the relationship between time and space.⁶⁹³

March 1969 is literally an *exhibition-catalogue* in the full spectrum of meanings that the association of these two concepts could produce. It is an *exhibition* because it is the site in which the artists' programmatic statements are exposed; here they could be perceived of and actualized through apperception independently of their *coefficient of truthfulness*, that is independently from the fact that they were actually realized. It is a *catalogue* in the etymological sense of the term, because it basically and literally lists the works received or not received by thirty-one artists within its pages. It is an *exhibition catalogue* according to the features and meaning that this instrument acquired at the time on an international scale and that was further developed and transformed in the decades to come. *March 1969* in fact features an introduction (i.e. Siegelau's letter which serves as "one of the rare prefaces to his conceptual publications"⁶⁹⁴ figure 3.32 b) and a list of the *exhibited* works that in this case coincides with their *verbal illustration*, the latter being their unique mode of *apperception*. Moreover, it is a meta-instrument that reflects, and at the same time objectifies, the concept of the catalogue as a "performance conceptuelle," a performance toward which human beings are driven thanks to what art historian Patricia Falguières has defined as their "intelligence 'mécanicienne' qui est apte à mettre en place des procédures, à édifier des dispositifs, à décliner les agencements du montrer-s'orienter-classer."⁶⁹⁵ Structured around the ordered rhythmic articulation of the thirty-one days that form the temporal abstraction known as the month of March, *March 1969* recalls and thematizes the month as the

⁶⁹³ Time (present, past and future) was a crucial issue for the artists pledged to redesign the idea of art in those years. Ten days after the launch of *March 1969* (March 7, 1969, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, B. C.), Siegelau moderated a panel discussion around the concept of time organized by the Student Mobilization Committee to End the War in Vietnam (March 17, 1969, The Public Theater, New York). Different artists (among which a good number coincided with the ones invited to provide a work for *March 1969*), as well as other members of the New York *progressive* art scene took part in the debate. A transcript of the discussion, edited by Lucy Lippard was published as "Time: A Panel Discussion," *Art International* 8, no. 9 (November 1969): 20-23, 39. For a very convincing reading of Smithson's understanding and (artistic) interpretation of the concepts of time and space in the 1960s, see Reynolds, *Robert Smithson*, especially 124-191.

⁶⁹⁴ See Martinetti, "Chronology," 140.

⁶⁹⁵ Patricia Falguières, "Les Raisons du catalogue," *Les Cahiers du Musée National d'Art Moderne*, no. 56/57 (Été-Automne 1996): 6, 8.

temporal entity that regulates civil and economic life (just think of the monthly payment of rent or the collection of the salary). The works actualized in the succession of the days of the month of March find their cause and effect in this very artificial articulation. However, through the publication, they can only be thought of, *lived in the heads*, of those who enter in contact with this catalogue-exhibition.

Within the frame of Siegelau's multifaceted publishing activity, another venture is worth mentioning in the context of this study. As art historian Sara Martinetti recently explained, in the late spring 1969, Siegelau "curated the 'catalogue' and edited the 'exhibition'"⁶⁹⁶ *July, August, September 1969 / Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969 / Juli, August, September 1969* (also known as *Summer Show*).⁶⁹⁷ For the occasion, eleven artists were invited to produce one work in a location of their choice, anywhere in the world. In the invitation letter Siegelau sent them, he explained that the works should be actually "made" and therefore be "accessible to the public who want to view them"; in this respect, he also specified that "prior to the exhibition, a (tri-lingual) catalog[ue] will be published and distributed to the public, to aid them in seeing the exhibition. All the standard catalog[ue] information will be published in the catalog[ue]."⁶⁹⁸ And so it was. On the 1st of July 1969, the twenty-six page stapled b/w catalogue (21,2 x 27,5 cm) of the geographically expanded show was published in an edition of 2000 copies in New York and strategically distributed by Siegelau among his international contacts, a very specialized *public* made up of collectors, museum's professionals, artists, critics, booksellers, etc. (figure 3.36 a). As acknowledged within the table of contents at the beginning of the publication, the catalogue lists the works of eleven artists which were on show that summer in eleven different locations around the globe: Andre in The Hague, Barry in Baltimore, Daniel Buren in Paris, Jan Dibbets in Amsterdam; Huebler in Los Angeles, Kosuth in Portales (New Mexico); LeWitt in Düsseldorf, Long in Bristol, N.E. Thing Co. in Vancouver,

⁶⁹⁶ Martinetti, "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor," 20.

⁶⁹⁷ Seth Siegelau, ed., *July, August, September 1969 / Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969 / Juli, August, September 1969* (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969) offset-printed, stapled, 21,2 x 27,5 cm, 26 pp. Print run: 2000. The publication was financed by Raymond Dirks. See Martinetti, "Chronology," 170.

⁶⁹⁸ Letter of invitation to artists for *July, August, September 1969 / Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969 / Juli, August, September 1969*, Siegelau, I.A. 63, MoMA Archives, NY.

Smithson in Oxmal (Yucatán, Mexico), Weiner at the Niagara Falls (New York State, U.S. and Ontario, Canada) (figure 3.36 b). Within the booklet, the work of every artist is presented on a double page where the reader finds the name of the *author*, a description of the exhibited project, and different images, drawings, as well as maps (or collages comprehending some of these elements, as in Smithson's case – figure 3.37)⁶⁹⁹ that contextualize and illustrate the collocation as well as the appearance of the work, giving it advanced notice in four cases out of eleven.⁷⁰⁰ The only double-page which is left *empty*, except for the name of the artist, title, date, and trilingual description of the work "Everything in the unconscious perceived by the senses but not noted by the conscious mind during trips to Baltimore during the summer of 1967"⁷⁰¹ corresponds to Barry's contribution, that is, *Psychic Series* (1969). The publication closes with the section *Specific Information*. It contains additional information about the geographical collocation of the works and their accessibility. Examples are: the address and telephone number of gallerist Konrad Fischer, whom the public was expected to call to make an appointment in order to see Sol LeWitt's *Wall Drawing #5* at his place in Düsseldorf; or information about how to find the dirt road that lead to the quarry in which Smithson abandoned his *Earth map of Gonwanaland Ice Cap* (1969), a white limestone rock sculpture miniaturizing the hypothetical ice cap of Gonwanaland, one of the two supercontinents that formed the Pangea (figure 3.37).⁷⁰²

Siegelaub chose an image of the world map to serve as the cover of the publication: a *mappa mundi*, i.e. a sheet of the world (figure 3.36 a), a diagrammatic representation of the world which metaphorically renders the idea of the amplitude of the exhibition, of the potential reach of the information contained in its catalogue, and of the key relevance of communication. In an

⁶⁹⁹ Robert Smithson, "Earth map of Gonwanaland Ice Cap," in *July, August, September 1969 [...]*, ed., Seth Siegelaub, 19-20.

⁷⁰⁰ The works proposed by Barry, Kosuth, LeWitt, Long, N.E. THING Co. Ltd., Smithson, (and Weiner) had been already *made* before the opening of the exhibition/the publication of the catalogue, i.e. before the 1st of July.

⁷⁰¹ Robert Barry, "Psychic Series, 1969," in *July, August, September 1969 [...]*, ed., Seth Siegelaub, 3.

⁷⁰² See Robert Smithson, "Incidents of Mirror-Travel in the Yucatan," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 119-133, originally published in *Artforum* 8, no. 1 (September 1969): 28-33; and Reynolds, *Robert Smithson*, 163-172.

interview with sculptor and art critic Ursula Meyer at the end of 1969 Siegelau verbally explained what had driven his vision:

SS: Communication relates to art three ways: (1) Artists knowing what other artists are doing. (2) The art community knowing what artists are doing. (3) The world knowing what artists are doing. [...] The point is to 'objectify' the work of the artist. And that is a question of numbers. It's my concern to make it known to multitudes.

UM: Which means are most suitable?

SS: Books and catalogues. The art that I am interested in can be communicated with books and catalogues. Obviously most people become acquainted with art via illustrations, slides, films. Rather than having the direct confrontation with the art itself, there is a secondhand experience, which does not do justice to the work—since it depends upon its physical presence, in terms of color, scale, material and context—all of which is bastardized and distorted. But when art does not any longer depend upon its physical presence, when it has become an abstraction, it is not distorted and altered by its representation in books and catalogues. It becomes *primary* information, while the reproduction of conventional art in books or catalogues is necessarily *secondary* information. [...] When the information is *primary*, the catalogue can become the exhibition *and* a catalogue auxiliary to it, whereas in the January 1969 show the catalogue was *primary* and the physical exhibition was auxiliary to it.

UM: Have you arranged any exhibitions where catalogues were dealt with in a more conventional sense?

SS: Yes, I have. For the Summer Show, the show called 'July, August, September, 1969,' eleven artists each made one work of art at eleven different locations throughout the world. The catalogue is more like a traditional museum's exhibition catalogue in the sense that it documents the works as a standard guide to the exhibition, the only difference being that [...] here you have the whole world and not just a building for housing the exhibition. That is part of the reason why the catalogue is in three languages.

[...]

UM: Tell me about your books.

SS: Books are a neutral source. [...] It is an art medium in its own right. Books are 'containers' of information. They are unresponsive to the environment—a good way of getting information into the world. My books are printed in three languages to further global communication rather than limited and limiting local distribution.⁷⁰³

Books are instruments through which art can be objectified. Books are instruments through which art can circulate. Books are instruments through which the practice of exhibition, intended as spatially and temporally limited *expositio*, can be made totally obsolete. According to art historian Sara Martinetti,

⁷⁰³ Seth Siegelau, interview with Ursula Meyer (November 1969) in *Six Years*, 124-126. Siegelau expressed himself in the same terms in an often-cited almost contemporary interview with art historian Charles Harrison; see Seth Siegelau, "On exhibitions and the World at Large," interview by Charles Harrison, *Studio International* 178, no. 917 (December 1969): 202-203. Note, that as witnessed by Harrison, Siegelau completely orchestrated this *self*-interview. See Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 186, footnote 3.

taking Siegelau's concept of *primary information* through to its "logical end" would mean that

the works in *July, August, September 1969. Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969. Juli, August, September 1969*, in addition to their status as art, and before entering the realms of critique and history as secondary information, were, by virtue of Siegelau's editorial and curatorial work, bibliographic facts – in other words, 'tertiary information,' a compilation of primary sources.⁷⁰⁴

Even if compared with the other publications Siegelau edited at the end of the 1960s, *July, August, September 1969 / Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969 / Juli, August, September 1969* seems the one which formally and structurally fits the *traditional* concept of exhibition catalogue, it is an extremely challenging conceptual *object*. Along with Martinetti,

it occupies an interstitial space between art (the works were well and truly made and presented) and bibliography. In fact, it plays so important a role in accessing the works that, in Siegelau's mind, it tends to replace the actual exhibition. Short of traveling to each of the eleven locations, it was the only way to bridge the temporal and the spatial distances between the works and experience the exhibition as a whole. The title in three languages, the list with the names of the eleven participating artists, and the map on the cover act as a manifest: moving beyond the walls of the gallery and beyond the confines of the art world, Conceptual Art is itinerant, immediate, and simultaneous, disseminated through a web of references and translations that can only be grasped by a satellite-like reading.

The bibliographic nature of the project contributed to this expansion by increasing the possibilities of mediation and the mobility of art. From Gutenberg's invention to the theories of Marshall McLuhan, whose work heavily influenced the first generation of Conceptual artists, the book, in its ancestral form of a codex, enabled them to imagine new spatiotemporal relations and forms of organization.⁷⁰⁵

These would be then the true *conceptual features* of conceptual art and Siegelau's contribution not only to the history of publishing but also to the history of art and its making.

Even if it should be stressed that Siegelau and the artists he promoted were absolutely not the only champions of conceptual art, since this tendency was not a North American or European prerogative but a truly global

⁷⁰⁴ Martinetti, "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor," 21.

⁷⁰⁵ Martinetti, "Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor," 21.

phenomenon,⁷⁰⁶ his activities – in particular his publishing commitment and *bibliographical approach* –, had a wide resonance and helped to promote and affirm the artistic value of art publications.⁷⁰⁷ The book as a vehicle of ideas, as an instrument perfectly suited to the information society at the dawn of a rampant globalization, changed forever the modalities of accessing art and artworks, so that when the works of art *returned* to be considered for and in their aesthetic dimensions, did not want to give this tool up. The book, the publication, the exhibition catalogue has become an indispensable, if not primary element, of the exhibition itself.

In Anne Mœglin-Delcroix's *Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement* Siegelaub's publications are positioned at a very high level of the "échelle subtilment graduée, qui relie la publication scientifique à l'œuvre autosuffisante"⁷⁰⁸ even if, ultimately, Siegelaub acted through his publications not unlike Cladders, or as other museum professionals, such as Amman, would subsequently do. Although Siegelaub, as in the case of Cladders and, to a lesser extent, that of Amman, never placed its authorship at the level of any of the artists he promoted, he was the *deus ex machina* of the publications he edited and of its strategic distribution.⁷⁰⁹ He was the one who set the rules of his catalogues-cum-exhibitions, managing and defining the formal and conceptual *constraints* of these publications, among which the most *visible* are the format and the number of available pages for each artist.⁷¹⁰ In the case of *March 1969*, for example, he invited the artists to contribute textual works, very clearly (but also inescapably) regulating the terms of their participation, including that of the ones who refused

⁷⁰⁶ See Luis Camnitzer, Jane Farver, and Rechel Weiss, eds., *Global Conceptualism: Points of Origin, 1950s-1980s* (New York: Queens Museum of Art, 1999).

⁷⁰⁷ See Germano Celant, "A Profession Worthy of Protection," in *Seth Siegelaub* 154-155, 154.

⁷⁰⁸ Mœglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme œuvre d'art et inversement," 98.

⁷⁰⁹ On January 1970 he even founded International General, a company that had the primary duty of distributing the publications that he had released under his names. If one thinks that non-profit organizations and distribution platforms such as Art Metropole (Toronto) and Printed Matter (New York) were founded in 1974 and 1976 respectively, one recognizes that Siegelaub's International General was a pioneering experience. See Martinetti, "Thinker, Tailor, Soldier, Sailor," 27, 29.

⁷¹⁰ One of Siegelaub's imperatives was to accord to each of *his* artists what he called "the same available conditions". Seth Siegelaub, interview with Patricia Norvell, 35. As attested by the typography catalogues and by the different mock-ups of his publications which are conserved in the MoMA Archives, NY, Siegelaub personally and very carefully chose all the aspects (typography, lay-out, photography, format, binding) of the books he edited and published. See, for example, the materials archived in *Siegelaub*, I.A. 41; I.A. 44; I.A. 50; I.A. 62, MoMA Archives, NY.

to participate. Andre, Asher, Flavin, Kawara, LeWitt, Nauman, Ruscha did not reply to his invitation.⁷¹¹ Nevertheless, they were included in the calendar, even if only at a purely nominal level. All the invited artists are in fact listed at the beginning of the publication in Siegelaub's invitation letter and the *time-space* reserved to those who finally did not participate in the show still exists in the calendar: it might seem *empty*, but it is not void.

3.4.2 The Exhibition Catalogue: an Integral Instrument of Art and its Production

The diffusion of the art book, the advent of the artist's book, and the transformation of the exhibition catalogue are phenomena that cannot be addressed individually and monolithically. To understand them fully, they must, mathematically speaking, be put into a system. Only within this system can one imagine, explore, and comprehend the compelling interest that artists have developed towards the exhibition catalogue.

Anne Moeglin-Delcroix was among the first scholars to pay attention to this phenomenon within the framework of her studies around the *livre d'artiste* in the mid-1990s. Her approach is characterized by the desire to distinguish and enhance the primacy as well as the autonomy of artists' publications hiding behind what might seem an exhibition catalogue *vis-à-vis* exhibition catalogues presented and disguised as artists' books. This led her to plot a monolithic definition of exhibition catalogue, a definition that is much more prescriptive than descriptive, and that, in the end, she paradoxically invalidates by sustaining the "confusion volontaire des genres qui rend indécise, parfois indécidable, la discrimination entre le catalogue et l'oeuvre, le document et le livre d'artiste."⁷¹²

At the beginning of the 2000s, two events took place that testify for a renewed scholarly interest in the artistic implementation of the exhibition catalogue on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. They were: the exhibition *The Consistency of Shadows: Exhibition Catalogs as Autonomous Works of Art*, which took place in the Betty Rymer Gallery at School of The Art Institute of

⁷¹¹ Actually Ruscha did reply, but too late. See Edward Ruscha, letter to Seth Siegelaub, February 23, 1969, Siegelaub, I.A. 49, MoMA Archives, NY.

⁷¹² Moeglin-Delcroix, "Du Catalogue comme oeuvre d'art et inversement," 98.

Chicago (henceforth SAIC) in 2003;⁷¹³ and the publication of the book *Der Ausstellungskatalog: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theorie* which was released the following year as a result of research undertaken at the Hochschule für Bildende Künste in Braunschweig, Germany.⁷¹⁴ More than to focus on the German publication – a book that without exhaustive pretensions, sought to take stock of the scarce and sparse bibliography produced around the instrument of the exhibition catalogue up to 2004 and to reflect on its transformations through short essays on the topic which, in just a few cases, truly thematized its increased artistic relevance⁷¹⁵ – the vision behind the Chicago exhibition deserves to be discussed at some length.

The Consistency of Shadows featured over one hundred and twenty *exhibition catalogues* dating from the 1960s to the beginning of the 2000s (figures 3.38 a, b). All exhibits came from the SAIC's Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection. The curator of the show, artist and special collection librarian Anne Dorothee Böhme, selected them because "in their design, [they] depart from the usual function as mere memory and record of an event and serve as works of art in themselves."⁷¹⁶ In her introduction to the exhibition, Böhme assumed that especially since the 1960s artists have increasingly spent energies and attention on guiding as well as controlling the discourse around their work,⁷¹⁷ registering

⁷¹³ *The Consistency of Shadows: Exhibition Catalogs as Autonomous Works of Art*, Betty Rymer Gallery, School of The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL, February 21 - April 11, 2003. See Anne Dorothee Böhme, ed., *The Consistency of Shadows: Exhibition Catalogs as Autonomous Works of Art* (Chicago: The Betty Rymer Gallery, School of The Art Institute of Chicago, 2003), CD-ROM.

⁷¹⁴ Bosse, Glasmeier, and Prus, eds., *Der Ausstellungskatalog*.

⁷¹⁵ These short essays, of uneven scholarly value, are: Gabriele Macker, "Katalog statt Ausstellung," in *Der Ausstellungskatalog*, 100-115; Annette Südbeck, "Damit dagegen – Zu den früheren Katalogen der Land-Art," in *Der Ausstellungskatalog*, 116-130; Christine Bürgel, "Ein Ruf aus dem Alltag," in *Der Ausstellungskatalog*, 131-142; Michael Glasmeier, "Transformation des Ausstellungskatalogs," in *Der Ausstellungskatalog*, 193-211. The essays collected in the publication are interspersed with dialogues and interviews with experts and producers (one name among all of them is that of Cologne based publisher Walther König), but also with the reprint of a seminal text by Wölfflin, in which the art historian collected his reflections on the *Galeriekataloge* and their role as well as function during the museum visit. See Heinrich Wölfflin, "Über Galeriekataloge (1907)," in *Der Ausstellungskatalog*, 25-32; first published in *Kunst und Künstler: illustrierte Monatsschrift für bildende Kunst und Kunstgewerbe*, 6 (1908): 51-54.

⁷¹⁶ Böhme, ed., *The Consistency of Shadows*, CD-ROM.

⁷¹⁷ See Peter Schneemann, "Eigennutz – Das Interesse von Künstler am Werkkatalog," in *Legitimationen: Künstlerinnen und Künstler als Autoritäten der Gegenwartskunst*, ed. Julia Gelshorn, 205-221 (Bern: Peter Lang, 2005). In this essay Schneemann expands on this issue,

“a more recent and distinct push by gallerists, museum publications departments, and artists themselves to design the exhibition catalog[ue] as something that goes beyond remembrance, critique, and inventory of a show”.⁷¹⁸ Moreover, she expanded on the key point of her exhibition, that is, that since the 1960s the exhibition catalogue has increasingly abandoned its “traditional function of recording an event” to become and function “as ‘take-home multiple,’ [...] an authentic work of art, making itself available to an innumerable numbers of owners.”⁷¹⁹ Stressing the lack of attention and reflection on this trend, the 2003 exhibition attempted to provide an answer to the question: “Where do exhibition catalog[ue]s, where do artists' books, and where do exhibition catalog[ue]s as artists' books reside-or collide?”⁷²⁰ On show one could find and explore what Böhme defined as the “‘shadows’ of well over one hundred different exhibitions, exemplifying a wide range of artistic approaches on how to re-collect a past event and how to re-connect to it with minimal interference.”⁷²¹ *The Consistency of Shadows* presented an equilibrated and varied selection of publications issued in the framework of exhibitions which took place in the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s and in the early 2000s all made *under the control* or *with the cooperation of* the protagonists of the exhibitions, if not completely *by* the artists themselves. *Douglas Huebler, January 5-31, 1969*, and *Dieter Roth: Bücher* were among the oldest publications on show. As emerges very clearly from the homonymous multimedia interactive catalogue of the exhibition,⁷²² in *The Consistency of Shadows* each publication was interpreted and exhibited as the instrument

discussing it not only in terms of “Werkkonstruktion” and “Kontrolle” but also of “Selbstdokumentation”. Schneemann, “Eigennutz,” esp. 207-214.

⁷¹⁸ Anne Dorothee Böhme, “Catalog[ing] Complications,” in *The Consistency of Shadows*,” 1-5, 1.

⁷¹⁹ Böhme, “Catalog[ing] Complications,” 2.

⁷²⁰ Böhme, “Catalog[ing] Complications,” 1.

⁷²¹ Böhme, “Catalog[ing] Complications,” 5.

⁷²² See Böhme, ed., *The Consistency of Shadows*. This sophisticated exhibition catalogue was created by Böhme in collaboration with designer Kevin Henry with the intent of not only listing and documenting the publications on show, but also of communicating the spirit which animated the exhibition. It comprises six leporellos on which the colophon, essays and interview (which constitute the more traditional scholarly apparati of the publication are printed) and a CD-ROM containing an interactive list of the exhibits with textual and visual information, excerpts from a conversation between artist Christian Boltanski and Böhme, as well as links to different contents such as installation views, information about the venue and the Flasch Artists' Book Collection - hosted at the time by the SAIC website but no longer available. The printed matter and the CD-ROM are contained in a specially designed Plexiglas case which gives a decidedly sculptural dimension to the publication as a whole.

through which one could *make consistent, perceive, and mediate* experience the shadow left by the exhibitions in the framework of which the *catalogues* on show were created and published. Without entering into the specificities of each publication on display and without giving too much importance to the fact that, for example, *Douglas Huebler* could not be properly defined as the shadow of an exhibition because, as it has already been highlighted before, it *is* the exhibition, one should stress that the publications presented in Chicago were selected for their capabilities of embodying and granting access to the *Weltanschauung* of their *authors* while facilitating “the individual reader’s effort to actively understand an artist’s imaginative thinking and decision-making process,”⁷²³ rather than for their capability of reflecting and communicating the medium of the exhibition as such. In this respect, Böhme emphasized that the exhibition catalogues on show “might be just as powerful and engaging as the public displays that originally generated them”,⁷²⁴ so allowing the *readers-visitors* to understand that the publications on display were not documents of the exhibitions in whose context they were published, but are in fact effective complements of the medium exhibition because they permit entrance to the *Weltanschauung* of the artists responsible for the publication and the *horizon* of their creative process, while outliving the event of the exhibition.

If from a practical and symbolic point of view the exhibition curated by Böhme could be considered as the first show that truly elevated the importance of exhibition catalogues by artists to the rank of that of works of art, from a theoretical point of view she nevertheless still considered the artifacts on show as *just* efficacious tools for art mediation exemplifying but apparently not truly embodying “a wide range of artistic approaches on how to re-collect a past event and how to re-connect to it with *minimal* interference.”⁷²⁵ Although in practice the show aimed to present these publications not as a by-product of actual artworks and their constellations within the exhibition, but rather as an interrelated instance of their realization, organization, and memorization, its theoretical premises did not fully support this message. Because of her deeply

⁷²³ Böhme, “Catalog[ing] Complications,” 4.

⁷²⁴ Böhme, “Catalog[ing] Complications,” 5.

⁷²⁵ Böhme, “Catalog[ing] Complications,” 5. Emphasis by the author.

formalist understanding of the artist's book as a pure and self-referential artwork, Böhme remained stuck on in the problem of how to reconcile the autonomy of the artist's book, with the apparently instrumental mediated dimension of the exhibition catalogue:

Yet the self-sufficiency and coherence we have come to expect from artists' books is inevitably lost if the catalog[ue] refers back to – even has to depend upon – other work that was presented in a different physical format elsewhere. And if artist who design their own catalog[ue]s simply use the page as any other two-dimensional work surface and fail to employ the book as a structural and conceptual entity (thus fail to challenge conceptions of viewing and perceiving within a given book space), we might be rewarded with unusual items, featuring uncommon materials or techniques, but not with artists' books in their purest sense. So the items displayed here are indeed a strange breed. Strictly speaking, they are not artists' books. Those, after all, are supposed to be self-referential, cheap, and use marginal distribution channels to avoid validation or censorship from established gallery and museum networks. Nor are they catalog[ue]s, created to report factual information and to cultivate art historical knowledge. However, apart from this resistance to classification, they can engage and challenge the viewer in many gratifying ways.⁷²⁶

Once again, the monolithical definition of the artist's book as autonomous work of art and of the exhibition catalogue as an epistemological tool of documentation hinders the theoretical understanding of these instruments as an integral part of contemporary art practices.

Quickly dismissing this problem and ontological diatribe, artist Albert Coers recently implemented the term *Katalogkunst* to give a name to the consolidated contemporary tendency to treat exhibition catalogues – that is, the meta-reflexive multifaceted tools that *traditionally* accompany the event of the exhibition and are *traditionally* interpreted as epistemological tools of its documentation –, as one of the different aspects through which contemporary artistic production is declined and characterized. Focusing on the different but convergent modalities through which since the mid-1990s artists Thomas Demand (b. 1964), Tobias Rehberger (b. 1966), and Olafur Eliasson (b. 1967) have faced and sought the opportunity to publish books within (but also beyond), the framework of their exhibitions, Coers' study highlights the emergence of a new generation of artists which has made the exhibition

⁷²⁶ Böhme, "Catalog[ing] Complications," 4.

catalogue an important aspect of their artistic output, or in Coers' words the "Schauplatz ihrer Auseinandersetzung mit Reproduktionsprozessen"⁷²⁷.

Matthew Barney (b. 1967) could be considered one of the most representative artists of this generation whose artistic output encompasses a great variety of mediums, such as sculpture, photography, video, film, installation, and performance. These media and their strictly interrelated implementation are functional to the creation of artworks where the exhibition often involves the elaboration of challenging architectural and structural solutions that are integral parts of the works themselves. Apparently, the amplitude of these projects and their multifaceted medial dimensions are hardly representable within the book format. Notwithstanding, Barney and other artists of his generation, have chosen the book because the economy of this instrument (intended here in its conceptual and material aspects) allows them not only to reflect and show their understanding of the very concepts of reproduction and representation, but also to effectively map their creative process and the resulting time-based artworks in their material and conceptual complexity. Monolithically and singulantly taken, the ostensive and controversial categories of the art book, the artist's book, and the exhibition catalogue have become useless in truly comprehending how these artists intend and challenge the book as an instrument. In the wake of an increasingly professionalization of the role of the artist, a successful career does not only depend on concerns related to the production and exhibition of artworks, to growing preoccupations about their effective and efficient communication, but also, and above all, on their mediated representation which their creators envisage and care for with the same intensity they reserve to more traditional aspects of their *œuvre*. This representation has become a fundamental and integral part of their artistic output. Developing the approach toward printed matter pioneered by previous generations, the artists who came to the fore in the 1990s have internalized the book, as an object, a medium, and an instrument, within their work and their practices, facing printed matters, and in this specific case, the exhibition

⁷²⁷ Albert Coers, *Kunstkatalog-Katalogkunst*, 3. See also Wolfgang Ullrich, *Raffinierte Kunst: Übung vor Reproduktionen* (Berlin: Verlag Klaus Wagenbach, 2009).

catalogue, not as a byproduct of actual artworks, but rather as an interrelated instance of their realization.

3.5 Going Digital?

To close this first section of the study which has been dedicated to the concepts of art book, artist's book, and exhibition catalogue, it is time to discuss what at the beginning of the first chapter was referred to as the fourth technological and intellectual innovation that characterizes the instrument of the book, that is the e-book. As it has been already anticipated, the e-book is commonly defined as “an electronic version of a printed book that can be read on a computer or handled device designed specifically to this purpose,”⁷²⁸ that is, an e-reader. The e-book does not only offer the content of its printed source but it also mimics its qualities, attempting to make the reading as close as possible to that of a printed book. In imitating the paper book, the e-book can eventually take advantage of the features offered by its digital nature, such as the incorporation of dictionaries, hyperlinks and multimedia elements. When an e-book involves multimedia contents at a certain level of complexity, it is referred to as enhanced e-book.⁷²⁹ At the moment, the printed book still prevails in the art-publishing domain while its electronic fraternal twin is increasingly widespread as regards textbooks. However, the field of electronic art publishing is experiencing an important phase of experimentation and rapid expansion, especially in the case of collections and museum catalogues and their related complementary resources. Digital publishing experts have gone to swell the ranks of the publishing departments of most museums and art institutes while dedicated divisions have been created, as well as new professional positions.⁷³⁰

⁷²⁸ *Oxford Dictionary*, 12th ed., s.v. “e-book.”

⁷²⁹ In 2016 the term enhanced e-book is of current use, but one should remember that only a few years ago publishers could not reach an agreement on how to call the latest generation of e-books featuring multimedia content. Hachette Book Group referred to them as “enriched,” Penguin used the term “amplified,” while Simon & Schuster called them “enhanced”. Julie Bosman, “E-Books Fly Beyond Mere Text,” *The New York Times*, July 29, 2010, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/07/29/books/29ebook.html? r=0>, last access February 29, 2016.

⁷³⁰ One should note that digital publishing modifies the workflow within the museum’s departments. Multiple departments increasingly work together so that digital publications, printed matters, and in-gallery experience progress in parallel.

In *Der Ausstellungskatalog 2.0* art historian Kathrin Mihatsch has sketched a history of the evolution of the digital exhibition catalogue. Focusing primarily on museum collection catalogues, she has discussed their off- and online declinations.⁷³¹ According to Mihatsch, offline tools, such as CD-ROMs, e-books, and Apps would offer a limited and relatively static amount of information in comparison with online tools (i.e. web pages) which present their users with potentially endless and increasingly accurate information. Despite the fact that one should note that the recent study by Mihatsch is in some respect already outdated (e-books and Apps can no longer be considered essentially offline tools and several of the websites to which she refers are not online anymore – something which apparently would not speak in favour of the premises of her study) her work highlights the main problems linked to the possibilities offered by the digital exhibition catalogue while programmatically supporting what she refers to as the “Online-Katalog,” that is: “eine im Web 2.0 eigenständige veröffentlichte Website, die die Funktionen und Inhalte eines gedruckten Katalogs teilweise aufnimmt und durch die Möglichkeiten des neues Mediums sowohl inhaltlich als auch strukturell weiterführt.”⁷³² Along with Mihatsch the “Online-Katalog” would offer substantial advantages compared with a printed catalogue, an online database, the website of a museum, an App, or a virtual exhibition such as those available through the Google Art Project.⁷³³

⁷³¹ Mihatsch, *Der Ausstellungskatalog 2.0*, 214-326.

⁷³² Mihatsch, *Der Ausstellungskatalog 2.0*, 291.

⁷³³ The Google Art Project is an online platform launched on the 1st February 2011 by the Google Cultural Institute in cooperation with seventeen international museums with the aim of accomplishing their institutional mission on a wider basis through the net and the new possibilities that new technological improvements open. Since its launch the platform has enabled users to virtually tour partner museums’ galleries (thanks to Google’s Street View technology), explore information and high-resolution images of several artworks, and compile their own virtual collection. In April 2012 a second expanded and enhanced generation of the project was inaugurated. Available in eighteen languages, it is characterized by improved searchability functions, additional audio and video content, as well as educational tools (such as the *compare* function). Despite the limitations of the project, such as, for example, those dictated by copyright, it continues to broaden the base of its institutional partners. See Patricia Cohen, “Art is Long; Copyrights Can Be Even Longer,” *New York Times*, April 24, 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/25/arts/design/artists-rights-society-vaga-and-intellectual-property.html>, last access February 29, 2016. In 2015 the Venice Biennale enthusiastically joined the project. However, a brief exploration of the contents related to the international exhibition *All The World Futures* reveals the problematic nature of such an initiative *vis à vis* exhibitions of contemporary art. Time based artworks are basically presented through still images or short fragmentary recordings while several works have disappeared in the virtual transposition of the original display. See Google Cultural Institute, “Art Project” Google Cultural Institute – Art Project website, 210

The primary functions of this instrument are in fact those of providing an easily editable and updatable context for the information presented in the collection database in which the works on display are recorded, as well as of offering different possibilities of interaction between the user and the editors of this tool or between the users themselves. Moreover, it would permit the inclusion of audio and video. Mihatsch does not see the "Online-Katalog" as a substitute for the printed catalogue, but as a complement to it. Thanks to its dynamism, the "Online-Katalog" could communicate information difficult to be properly communicated through its printed counterpart, while by virtue of its real-time upgradeability it could easily register the changes in the exhibition. The main problem that Mihatsch sees in this instrument is related to the duration of its accessibility, something that, as already mentioned, is somehow paradoxically, even if inevitably, reflected in her study by the fact that several of the websites to which she refers and which represent most of her case studies, are not online anymore. As long as the institution that creates an "Online-Katalog" maintains its domain, the catalogue remains accessible online; it is up to the institution to decide whether to keep it active at the level of interaction or to archive it transforming it in an inert online *document-monument*.

Mihatsch's optimism toward new technologies and online publishing would seem totally acceptable, if only because they greatly advantage scholarly collection catalogues, since as soon as these are printed they are already outdated,⁷³⁴ and works can be made available to a broad audience that are not so easily publishable in a book (i.e. media art, e.g., internet works).⁷³⁵ However,

<https://www.google.com/culturalinstitute/u/0/project/art-project>, last access February 29, 2016.

⁷³⁴ See Paul Schmelzer, *Rethinking Collections Publishing for the Digital Age: Announcing The Living Collections Catalogue*, Walker Art Center Magazine, July 2, 2014, <http://www.walkerart.org/magazine/2014/living-collections-catalogue>, last access February 29, 2016; The Walker Art Center launched the *Living Collections Catalogues* in 2014: "each volume of the *Living Collections Catalogue* includes media-rich essays on broader themes as well as in-depth investigations of specific works of art. Featured works link to records in the Walker's collections database, where additional information about the artists and artworks is available. Implicit in the concept of a "living catalogue" is the dynamic nature of an online volume about the Walker's collections. Information in the database is updated as new research and presentations occur, while essays are versioned and citable with assurances of a permanent address to the information referenced." "Living Collection Catalogue," Walker Art Center, <http://www.walkerart.org/collections/publications>, last access February 29, 2016.

⁷³⁵ However, at present, this still seems rather utopic. For a discussion about media art, its accessibility and its possible strategies of diffusion, see Ursula Frohne, Mona Schieren, and Jean-

for what concerns the interaction possibility that new technologies and virtual publications would open, what emerges from the first statistics is that online publishing only works well if one considers it as an opportunity to expand the intellectual sphere in which the museums work rather than to attract audiences and encourage their willingness to interact with the content proposed.⁷³⁶ As writer Orit Gat has underlined, to generally argue that online publications would stimulate the interest and participation of the readers-users would mean “buying into Internet optimism.”⁷³⁷ In fact, 1) users usually do not comment on content published in museum’s online magazines and blogs; if they do at all, their comments are usually off-topic or misplaced: “the creation of space is not enough to make it useful”;⁷³⁸ 2) only very few museums’ publications truly research, implement, and promote tools for collecting and annotating articles, as well as for actively participate in their writing.⁷³⁹

If in the last few years consistent resources have been invested to incentivize the conceptualization and production of online digital museums’ publications such as magazines, blogs, and collection catalogues, one cannot say the same with regard to exhibition catalogues. Far from becoming what Mihalasch described in terms of “Online-Katalog,” the exhibition catalogue is rarely envisaged as a digital publication. In this context it seems appropriate to consider a representative example of the present situation. In 2011, on the occasion of the exhibition *Maurizio Cattelan: All*⁷⁴⁰ at The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, The Guggenheim became the first museum to

François Guillon, eds., *Present Continuous Past(s): Media Art. Strategies of Presentation, Mediation and Dissemination* (Wien/New York: Springer, 2005).

⁷³⁶ See Orit Gat, “The Outskirts of the Internet: How to Measure the Success of Museums’ Online Publishing Initiatives,” in *Turning Inward*, eds. Lou Cantor and Clemens Jahn, 66-80 (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2015), 68.

⁷³⁷ Gat, “The Outskirts of the Internet,” 75.

⁷³⁸ Gat, “The Outskirts of the Internet,” 75.

⁷³⁹ Gat, “The Outskirts of the Internet,” 72. Note in this regard the potential of the main crowd-sourcing tool of knowledge, that is, Wikipedia. Despite being widely downgraded, especially in academia, a critical use of Wikipedia (something which implies the active participation in first person for its improvement) seems to offer an unprecedented educational potential. See Casati, *Contro il colonialismo digitale*, 102-114

⁷⁴⁰ *Maurizio Cattelan: All*, The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, November 4, 2011 - January 22, 2012. See Nancy Spector, ed., *Maurizio Cattelan: All* (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2011). The show, announced by the artist as his last one, comprised all the works he had created up to that moment (minus two pieces that the owners refused to loan). These artworks were all exhibited in The Guggenheim rotunda, hanging at different heights thanks to a complex system of cables and grapples where they built a sort of catalogue raisonné of Cattelan’s production to be experienced in an unprecedented space-time dimension.

release an exhibition catalogue both in print and digital (e-book) versions. This *book* has remained the only complete monographic publication about Cattelan's work to date, given the fact that up to that moment, the artist had consciously and strategically refused to make a retrospective exhibition of his work, in order to avoid its crystallization and the drafting of a reference catalogue.⁷⁴¹ According to the institutional press release, the e-book incorporates the design and content of its printed fraternal twin while providing the readers with "the tools and flexibility that e-books offer, including the ability to search the full text and citations, bookmark pages, enlarge images, and annotate articles and photos."⁷⁴² The release of the e-book *Maurizio Cattelan: All* coincided with the online publication of a variety of out-of-print Guggenheim publications, i.e. digitalizations of some historical titles which can be flipped-through online and zoomed in and out. Furthermore, on the same occasion, selected essays from dozens of past Guggenheim publications were made available "for purchase as e-book singles," in order to "provide affordable access to in-demand out-of-print titles, particularly with students in mind"⁷⁴³ but also to facilitate a life long capitalization on out of print titles and on the knowledge they contain. While past Guggenheim publications are increasingly digitalized, *Maurizio Cattelan: All* remains the only Guggenheim e-book to date.

Even if at different degrees of *mimesis*, The Guggenheim's digital publications seek to maintain the formal visual characteristic of the book. Reading them on a computer screen, one has the impression of *seeing* the double spread, certainly virtual, but still clearly resembling the pages of a book, the *only* main difference being that the interaction with them occurs in mouse clicks rather than through haptic contact.⁷⁴⁴ In this respect, one should note that

⁷⁴¹ See Michael Glasmeier, "Transformationen des Ausstellungskatalog," in *Der Ausstellungskatalog*, 193-194. Note, that on the occasion of his come-back solo show (*Maurizio Cattelan: Not Afraid of Love*, Monnaie de Paris, October 21, 2016 - January 8, 2017), the artist produced a book in which he basically revisited the *catalogue Maurizio Cattelan: All* enriching it with a series of calligraphic drawings and a conversation with Chiara Parisi, the curator of the exhibition at Monnaie de Paris. See Maurizio Cattelan, *Not Afraid of Love*, ed. Cattelan and Chiara Parisi (Paris: Monnaie de Paris, 2016).

⁷⁴² Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, "The Guggenheim Releases Its First E-Book," press release, December 14, 2011, <http://www.guggenheim.org/new-york/press-room/news/4374-the-guggenheim-releases-its-first-e-books>, last access February 29, 2016.

⁷⁴³ The Guggenheim, "The Guggenheim Releases Its First E-Book."

⁷⁴⁴ This very much reminds one of the first printed books that were made mimicking the precious and contemplative dimension of manuscripts. See Edgar Wind, *Art and Anarchy*

going digital, and above all going online, requires “a profound rethinking of the ways in which art historical and critical content can be interactively organized, maintained, updated, and ultimately, used.”⁷⁴⁵ One should constantly ask oneself if and in which respect digital technologies could really offer epistemological improvements that starting from the book as a paradigmatic instrument of knowledge would bring to the creation of other equally effective and efficient instruments from the aesthetical, ergonomical, cognitive, and economical stand point. Formally and conceptually, in fact, the majority of e-art books in circulation function as digitalization, in different formats, of their printed fraternal twins, rarely enhanced with multimedia contents. For example, in 2014 an authoritative and powerful institution such as The Getty put online about 250 titles of its backlist catalogue to form the freely accessible Getty Publications Virtual Library.⁷⁴⁶ As advertised by Getty Publications, the books in question “are searchable by title, author, and keyword and include full descriptions, table of contents, links to read online, to purchase the print book, to find in a library, or to download the complete PDF for free for personal use.”⁷⁴⁷ Only the titles that, according to copyrights and royalty holders, could be entirely put online were included in the digital library. Despite Getty Publications having manifested the aim to augment the list as soon as new titles would be available, it is telling that the publishing house do not offer a digital version of its newer publications (no title in The Getty Fall 2016 publications catalogue is available as an e-book).⁷⁴⁸ The publications accessible through the Getty Publications Virtual Library coincide with the PDF version of their printed twins, thus allowing one to easily store and transport them, to zoom in and out

(London: Faber and Faber, 1963), 68-84, especially 69, 70. However, as will be highlighted in a moment, the e-book does not imply a shift from the point of view of the materiality or the manufacturing of the object, but cognitive faculties that do not seem to pertain to the economy of the human mind. See Casati, *Contro il colonialismo digitale*.

⁷⁴⁵ “Online Scholarly Initiative,” *The Getty Foundation*, <http://www.getty.edu/foundation/initiatives/current/osci/>, last access March 16, 2016. See also “Moving Museum Catalogues ONLINE: An Interim Report from the Getty Foundation, 2012,” *The Getty Foundation*, http://www.getty.edu/foundation/pdfs/osci_interimreport_2012.pdf, last access March 16, 2016.

⁷⁴⁶ “Getty Publications Virtual Library,” *The Getty Publications*, <http://www.getty.edu/publications/virtuallibrary/>, last access February 29, 2016).

⁷⁴⁷ “About Getty Publications,” *The Getty Publications*, <http://www.getty.edu/publications/about.html>, last access February 29, 2016.

⁷⁴⁸ *Getty Publications Spring 2016*, http://www.getty.edu/publications/pdfs/getty_fall_2016_catalog.pdf, last access July 9, 2016.

of their pages and images as well as to rapidly search for words or complete sentences.

In *Contro il colonialismo digitale: istruzioni per continuare a leggere* philosopher and cognitive scientist Roberto Casati discusses the most relevant implications of the implementation of new technologies in the publishing industry by asking himself what are the real advantages that the e-book and its related ecosystem offer in comparison to the codex format. He convincingly shows that it is precisely where the technologically advanced e-book would be called to overcome, if not replace, the old-timer codex, that the latter would show all its cognitive benefits. They are: the linearity of the fruition, which incentivises the readers' understanding; the faculty of presenting arguments in the space of stable pages which, not depending on any scroll function, allows the readers to keep multiple thoughts visually under control, and, more importantly, the fact that the printed book allows one to dive into the subject and isolate oneself much more than an e-book. According to Casati, in fact, attention would be the most endangered cognitive faculty when one speaks about digital publishing. This is largely due to the additional features that the devices through which one interfaces e-books have or shall have, in order to attain commercial success. The market profitability of e-readers (i.e. mobile electronic devices designed for the purpose of reading digital publications) over other kinds of devices not only and not merely designed for reading (i.e. computers, tablets, and smartphones) is increasingly bound to their offering additional services, that means, additional distractions to the long term concentrated attitude one should keep to read texts which imply relatively sophisticated argumentations and rhetorical structures.⁷⁴⁹ He also stresses the cognitive relevance of the book as an object: its haptic qualities offer important information to the reader, helping demotivated readers to keep going since there are not too many pages left or motivating passionate readers to engage in

⁷⁴⁹ Casati, *Contro il colonialismo digitale*, 24-28. Casati has in mind texts of about 200 pages which include not only academic papers, but also texts pertaining to the category of non-fiction. He mentions examples as diverse as a philosophical essay on art, an investigation into the situation of migrants supported by empirical data, the history of a technological innovation or a biography. Casati, *Contro il colonialismo digitale*, 24-5.

a new reading.⁷⁵⁰ Even if Casati's investigation is mainly focused on textual books, some of the aspects he discusses are relevant also in the case of illustrated books and particularly for art books, artists' books, and exhibition catalogues, publications for which format, layout, and materiality are determinant not only for the transmission of their content and of their authority as instruments of knowledge, but also for their ability to embody art, its related knowledge, or even as instruments of their enacted experience.

A developing trend in digital publishing endorsed by The New Media Consortium⁷⁵¹ provides for the implementation of responsive design based systems, that is, for an approach that ensures the optimal viewing experience of a given content on any device of an individual's choosing (laptop, smartphone, tablet...), assuming that the same content could be communicated as effectively through instruments whose interface and use are different. This approach poses several interrogatives regarding future developments of digital art publications. The potential and the constraints of the digital format are different from that of the codex format. While it appears clear that in the direct translation from the book to the e-book the sensitive and cognitive specificities, as well as the overall economy of the codex are lost, on the other hand it is too early to make reliable predictions. It is imaginable that in the coming years analogue art publications and their (not necessarily online) digital counterparts would differentiate themselves by exploring and exploiting (thus not by emulating!) their medium-specificities.

As for the case of the exhibition catalogue, the instrument at the center of this chapter which now approaches its conclusion, the 2015 Lyon Biennial has pioneered an interesting example that attempts to combine *traditional* and

⁷⁵⁰ Casati, *Contro il colonialismo digitale*, 42.

⁷⁵¹ The New Media Consortium (henceforth NMC) was founded in 1993 by a group of hardware manufacturers, software developers, and publishers of Apple Computer, Adobe Systems, Macromedia and Sony, who realized that the ultimate success of their multimedia-capable products depended upon their widespread acceptance by the higher education community. Transformed into a non-profit organization in 1994, the NMC is supported today by over 200 colleges, universities and museums all over the world, working together to discuss and inform the decisions that people make about technology. See The New Media Consortium, <http://www.nmc.org>, last access February 29, 2016.

online publishing. Recognizing that “all Biennale catalogues have a handicap”⁷⁵² – or rather, as I would say, that all (contemporary art) exhibition catalogues are confronted with the problem that the pictures they feature do not reflect the reality of the *in-situ* exhibited artworks – and underlying that this is all the more true for exhibitions featuring first-time exhibits,⁷⁵³ the French institution decided to couple a *paper catalogue* available since the opening of the 2015 edition together with a *digital catalogue* to be issued after the opening of the show.

The exhibition catalogue on paper (14 x 21 cm, 128 pages) aimed to be “a modest item”⁷⁵⁴ and to function as a guide of the exhibition, thus coinciding with, and carrying out the function of, the short guides now omnipresent in the context of big recurring exhibitions such as biennials, but also increasingly at hand within the context of smaller temporary shows. Purchasing this booklet, the visitors guaranteed themselves the opportunity to download for free the digital complement of the guide, that is, the universal ePub file advertised as “the most comprehensive digital catalogue ever published by a biennale.”⁷⁵⁵ According to the website of the publisher, this digital catalogue is supposed to include: images of the exhibitions and their construction; pictures of every artwork on show; contributions specifically designed for the digital catalogue by artists Haegue Yang, Lucie Stahl, Nina Canell and Nina Beier;⁷⁵⁶ images of preparatory drawings and sketches as well as statements about their works by some of the artists who took part in the exhibition; and some videos by several of the invited artists. However, despite these promises, the digital publication is incomplete: most of the pictures and the videos (which are fragmentary) lack appropriate labels, and not all the works are photographed as installed in the

⁷⁵² Les Presses du réel, “13th Lyon Biennale – Modern Life (ebook EPUB),” Les Presses du réel website, <http://www.lespressesdureel.com/EN/ouvrage.php?id=4057>, last access February 29, 2016.

⁷⁵³ Note, that the same Lyon Biennial usually produces up to 80% of the works it shows.

⁷⁵⁴ Les Presses du réel, “13th Lyon Biennale – Modern Life (paper catalogue + ebook),” Les Presses du réel website, <http://www.lespressesdureel.com/EN/ouvrage.php?id=4035&menu>, last access February 29, 2016; (price, paper + digital: 5 €).

⁷⁵⁵ Les Presses du réel, “13th Lyon Biennale – Modern Life (ebook EPUB).” (price, digital: 3,99 €).

⁷⁵⁶ On artists’ digital publications and their economy, see Océane Delleaux, “*Les Publications d’artistes à l’épreuve du numérique*,” in *Livres d’artistes: quels projets pour l’art?*, eds. Leszek Brogowski and Anne-Mœglin-Delcroix, 239-251 (Rennes: Éditions Incertain Sens, 2013).

different exhibitions.⁷⁵⁷ The amount of documentary materials related to the participation of the invited artists is very disomogenous, varying from artist to artist. Moreover, most of the time-based (media) works are still presented through sequences of frames, if not documented by short videos that capture brief sequences without really rendering the content and the characteristic features of the work nor the way in which it is installed and interacts with the space. On top of this, one should note another ambivalent aspect: via the hyperlinks embedded in the publication one can access numerous video-interviews of the artists and the video-documentation of some of the performance-based works on show. If, on the one hand these remote videos increase the percentage of audio-video materials available in and through the publication, on the other hand it suffices to click on these hyperlinks to find oneself on YouTube. All this involves a number of not insignificant issues: 1) these contents are accessible only through an electronic device connected to the Internet (accessibility to these technologies is globally increasing but one should not take it completely for granted); and 2) only in countries in which YouTube is not forbidden (this is not the case of China, for example); 3) the storage of these materials on external platforms could be problematic for their access in the long-term. Moreover, one should stress that, as soon as one finds oneself on YouTube, one's focus is in danger. A click suffices to access the many features offered by the video-sharing website, that is, just a click would suffice to potentially divert our attention from the the Lyon Biennial's catalogue and its content, bringing us to move towards other shores.

It being understood that this short excursus on the e-books and digital publishing is destined to become dated very quickly, in the contest of this study it was considered appropriate to approach this topic with no claim to completeness. That of e-books and digital publishing is a field in expansion in which much is still under experimentation. It should, however, be noted that the instrument of the *traditional* book continues to be preferred within/for art publications and artists' publications. Matthew Barney, the artist chosen as a case study to test the theoretical articulations developed in this first part of the research and to whose *bibliographic production* the subsequent part is

⁷⁵⁷ This is the case, for example, of the works by Ruscha or Abramovic and Ulay.

dedicated, has for example not yet experimented in this direction. Although Barney has always conceived Internet websites specifically for his main projects⁷⁵⁸ he, like most of the contemporary artists of his generation and beyond, have not yet truly ventured within the domain of digital publishing.⁷⁵⁹

⁷⁵⁸ See the websites of his: *The CREMASTER CYCLE* (1994-2002), www.cremaster.net, last access July 14, 2016; *DRAWING RESTRAINT* (1989-), www.drawingrestraint.net, last access July 14, 2016; *RIVER of FUNDAMENT* (2014), www.riveroffundament.net, last access July 14, 2016. Note, that at present (November 2016) *The CREMASTER CYCLE*'s and the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series' websites are not up-to-date. If for the former this translates in a lack of information regarding the screenings of the movies (the updates stop in 2006) and of the exhibitions of the project (the links to the exhibitions do not work anymore), for the latter it means a lack of information about the developments of the ongoing series which has already reached its 23rd recurrence (2016). On the website the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series is in fact *documented* only until its 16th iteration (2007). The artist's engagement with the internet and his projects' websites deserve a thorough study that goes beyond the thematic focus of this research. Note, that the artist has planned to soon update the *DRAWING RESTRAINT*'s website (end 2016). Mike Bellon, Matthew Barney Studio manager, in conversation with the author, New York, May 24, 2016.

⁷⁵⁹ *Badlands Unlimited*, the New York-based publishing house founded by artist Paul Chan in 2010 with the aim of creating "books in the expanded field" could seem the most prominent exception that proves the rule. Paul Chan, "Publish to Perish," (lecture, New York Art Book Fair, New York City, NY, September 28, 2012). However, although *Badlands Unlimited* has stood out for the publication of some experimental e-books (see, for example, *How to download a boyfriend* – the first "group show in the form of [an interactive] e-book") and offers several publications only in digital format, it cannot be defined a real innovative venture in this direction. See *Badlands Unlimited*, ed., *How to Download a Boyfriend* (New York: *Badlands Unlimited*, 2012) and Andrea K. Scott, "How to Download a Boyfriend," *The New Yorker*, June 25, 2012, <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/how-to-download-a-boyfriend>, last access July 14, 2016. The last set of e-books by artists that *Badlands Unlimited* launched in May 2016 in fact does not present any truly enhanced features. See Dan Duray, "Badlands Unlimited launches series of e-books by artists," *The Art Newspaper*, May 26, 2016, <http://theartnewspaper.com/news/badlands-unlimited-launches-series-of-e-books-by-artists/>, last access July 14, 2016.

PART II

*However we may look at it
the beginning of our investigation always presuppose the end,
and the documents which should explain the monuments
are just as enigmatical as the monument themselves.*

Erwin Panofsky⁷⁶⁰

⁷⁶⁰ Erwin Panofsky, "The History of Art as a Humanistic Discipline (1940)," in *Art History and Its Methods: A Critical Anthology*, ed. Eric Fernie, 184-195 (London: Phaidon, 1996), 188-189; originally published in *The Meaning of the Humanities*, ed., Theodore Meyer Greene, 89-118 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1940).

4. Matthew Barney's Book Production

*Es gibt Zusammenhänge, bei denen nicht, was im Ganzen geschieht, sich daraus herleitet,
wie die einzelne Stücke sind und sich zusammensetzen,
sondern umgekehrt, wo – im prägnanten Fall – sich das, was an einem Teil dieses Ganzen
geschieht,
bestimmt von inneren Strukturgesetzen dieses seines Ganzen.*
Max Wertheimer⁷⁶¹

*This is a map that will take you somewhere, but when you get there you won't really know
where you are*
Robert Smithson⁷⁶²

*[The books] are certainly pieces.
I tend to think somewhat non-hierarchically about the work
in the way that the different aspects are symbiotic.*
Matthew Barney⁷⁶³

In the first chapter of this study the *art book* has been introduced as the instrument that grants *access* to the artworks, the networks in which they are created, presented, and communicated, as well as to the horizons of meaning from which they originate and which they contribute to originate. The second and the third chapters have been dedicated to the *artist's book* and the *exhibition catalogue*, historically reconstructing as well as theoretically framing the fact that since the 1960s the relationship between artists and books has become ever closer, to the extent that the book (as a medium, as an object, and as an instrument) has been largely internalized in the practice of contemporary artists, especially within the format of the so-called exhibition catalogue.⁷⁶⁴

⁷⁶¹ Max Wertheimer, "Über Gestalttheorie (1924)," *Symposion: Philosophische Zeitschrift für Forschung und Aussprache*, 1 (1925): 39-60, 44.

⁷⁶² Liza Baer and Willoughby Sharp, eds., "Discussion with Heizer, Oppenheim, Smithson," in *Robert Smithson: The Collected Writings*, 242-252, 49. First published in *Avalanche*, no. 1 (Fall 1970).

⁷⁶³ Matthew Barney, "Beginnings and Endings with Jonathan Bepler, 2001" in *Matthew Barney – Hans Ulrich Obrist*, The Conversation Series 27, 7-34 (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2012), 30.

⁷⁶⁴ As part of further future research on the relevance of the book as an instrument within contemporary art practices it would be interesting to develop also the opposite view: despite being a minority, there are contemporary artists who completely reject their work being *documented* and *framed* within an instrument such as the exhibition catalogue. Emilio Prini (1943-2016) and Tino Sehgal (b. 1976) would be the most representative examples in point.

The fourth and final chapter of this research deals with *Matthew Barney's books production*. It does not focus on what one could ostensibly mean when referring to *the books by Matthew Barney*, nor to *the books about Matthew Barney's work*. Rather, it focuses on Matthew Barney's attitude towards the book as well as on what and how the books that the artist *conceived* and laid out – in toto or in part – tell us about his work, allowing us *to experience* it. These books are characterized by Barney's aesthetic: they are *deeply embedded and inter-related* to his production in other mediums.

One of the key problems of this chapter is that of *accessibility*. As we have seen in the previous chapters, in principle, the art book has the potential to make its *content* accessible for a broader audience. In practice, however, from the *qualitatively* point of view this business seems to be quite difficult. Already at the end of the 1950s Harold Rosenberg disavowed art books, describing them as the tool that does not allow one to shorten the distance between art and life but *to place* artworks in specific contexts of knowledge, therefore not enhancing the *experience* of art but crystallizing it within sterile cultural patterns (§ 1.3). In 2004, noting the attractiveness but also the inscrutability of most of the so-called *artists' books*, Lucy Lippard described them as the instruments through which one could realize that the supposed democratic (universal) value of (contemporary) art is “a pie in the sky”⁷⁶⁵ (§ 2.3). Nevertheless, as previously seen in the exemplary case of Baumgarten's and Oppitz's booklet *T'e-ne-T'e* (1974) and as to be seen in Matthew Barney, artists have increasingly paid attention to the instrument of the book, especially in its *dimension* of exhibition catalogue. It has allowed them to develop meta-narratives around their work, mapping, reflecting, and communicating the coordinates of their artistic gesture, thus allowing the *readers-visitors* to enter and make their way into their *œuvre*, while actively understanding how the work itself operates (§ 3.4). As artist Olafur Eliasson has pointed it out, “a book can attain the same level of physical and emotional performativity as an artwork”⁷⁶⁶ and that might be exactly why

⁷⁶⁵ Lippard, “Double Spread,” 86.

⁷⁶⁶ Eliasson, *TYT [Take Your Time]*, 51. Eliasson is a true phenomenon in the landscape of art publishing. In 2009, that is about fifteen years from the beginning of his professional carrier he had to his credit more than fifty publications. See Coers, *Kunstkatalog-Katalogkunst*, 163-226.

most of contemporary artists have made of this instrument an interrelated instance of their production in other mediums.

However, some questions remain: what do we *experience* when we flip through the pages of these publications? How? What are the (additional) values and potentialities of these tools? Furthermore, what is their relevance within art and its *making* as well as for the *making* and writing of art history?

Matthew Barney's engagement with the book is characterized by a number of features and touches on a number of issues that are addressed in this chapter in consecutive, stratified phases. Descriptive and analytical layers overlap, with the aim to provide access to the complexity of Matthew Barney's book production and the imagery therein *at work*. After initially briefly presenting the context in which Barney formed himself as an artist and within which his carrier was launched, as well as some key elements to frame his artistic concerns, we will focus on the production of *his* books.

Special attention will be paid to *Matthew Barney: New Work*,⁷⁶⁷ the first monographic *volume* that appears in the complete bibliography of the artist. Within the context of this research, this book(let) has been chosen as an exemplary case study to investigate Matthew Barney's attitude towards the book and the multifaceted-issues which it stresses for at least three reasons:

1) The fact that it was conceived by the artist himself (and laid out with the help of graphic designer Kathleen Chambers) bears witness: a) to the attention paid by Barney toward the book since the very beginning of his career but also to b) the collaborative effort that the production of this and other volumes by the artists have implied. This latter issue will be exemplarily discussed at a later stage in the chapter making reference to the volume *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*⁷⁶⁸ (§ 4.5.3).

2) *New Work* poses not only a) interesting questions about the way and purposes of its conception and realization, but also b) on the *accessibility* of its content. Even if Barney defined it both as a "story board"⁷⁶⁹ of the narrative and as the "manual"⁷⁷⁰ of instructions of the early multi-part expanded sculptural

⁷⁶⁷ See *Matthew Barney: New Work*.

⁷⁶⁸ See Spector, ed., *The CREMASTER Cycle*.

⁷⁶⁹ Matthew Barney, interview by Glen Helfand, *Shift* 14, 6, no. 2 (1992): 40.

⁷⁷⁰ Barney, "Beginnings and Endings with Jonathan Bepler, 2001," 30.

project which he has recently baptized *OTTO Trilogy*⁷⁷¹ (§ 4.4), only a very well informed reader can decipher its content.

3) This book(let) presents *in nuce* some characteristic features of *Barney's book production*. They are: a) the relevance accorded to the book as an object, a medium, and an instrument characterized by determined cognitive, conceptual, material and synesthetic implications (e.g. the linearity of its fruition, the format, the haptic quality of the paper, to name but a few); b) the implementation of b/w and colour photography as well as a simple but calculated layout of the page in order to enable the reader to focus on the sculptural elements and details of the projects through which the narration develops that serve as a pretext for its articulation (photography operates as a common denominator to unite and translate within the book the artist's intermedia practice while at the same time becoming an integral part of this intermediality); c) their functioning like maps through which the artist isolates, groups, orders, and reorders the different temporal, spatial, and sculptural aspects of his projects, so allowing their synchronic and diachronic reading.

Expanding on the characteristic features of *Matthew Barney: New Work*, specific reference will be made to other publications in the *artist's bibliography* as well as to *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy* (2016), the book that, reworking and expanding on the former book(let), closes the timespan of this research period.⁷⁷²

The in-depth analysis of Barney's book production will show how he conceptualizes his work, implementing the storyboard to sketch a general overview of his projects, within which specific moments and characters of the narratives at play in his pieces are put into closer focus. Storyboarding is an attitude of mapping, plastic visualizing and thinking, as well as recapitulating and communicating. As it will emerge by the end of this chapter, storyboarding can be considered as the backbone of Barney's practice: the book, as an object, as medium, and as an instrument is the privileged, material and imaginary space where he puts the practice of storyboarding and its inherent logic at work.

⁷⁷¹ See *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*.

⁷⁷² Note that in the weeks in which this text has been written the book *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy* was still being printed. Thanks to the collaboration of the artist and his studio has been possible to carry these reflections on the basis of the final drafts of the publication.

Focusing on Matthew Barney's book production, this chapter aims to give value to the main thesis of the entire research: developing the approach toward printed matter pioneered by previous generations, the artists who came to the fore in the 1990s – among which Barney is a representative example – have implemented the book, especially under the format of the so-called *exhibition catalogue* as one of the constitutive mediums of their practice. The internalization of this object, medium, and instrument within the domain of art is a clear symptom of the mutation that since 1945 has concerned the status of the work of art and thereby the status of art. As semiotician Nicola Dusi and art historian Cosetta G. Saba have stated:

alcune questioni poste dall'attività artistica di Barney sono tratti distintivi del processo di mutazione in atto dello statuto dell'*opera* nelle pratiche artistiche contemporanee e riguardano: la dimensione progettuale, il rilievo concettuale, la pluralità dei quadri disciplinari, dei linguaggi e dei supporti, l'implicazione costitutiva dei contesti e dei luoghi espositivi, la nuova pertinenza dei materiali paratestuali (interviste, cataloghi eccetera) e intertestuali (fonti, storyboard, versioni precedenti dell'opera) e delle procedure di documentazione (l'*archivio* che l'*opera* diviene o produce), infine il carattere performativo delle pratiche operative.⁷⁷³

Barney's artistic production is exemplary of the mutation process that has concerned the status of the work of art in contemporary art practices. This mutation has brought elements that were considered secondary and peripheral to the artwork and its ontology to the very core of contemporary art making.

4.1 Barney and the Book: a First Overview

Matthew Barney has been attracted by the book from the beginning of his artistic activity. However, his implementation of the book together with mediums such as video, film, sculpture, drawing, performance, and photography – mediums to which his work is generally associated – has been until now largely neglected.

⁷⁷³ Nicola Dusi and Cosetta G. Saba, "Introduzione," in *Matthew Barney: polimorfismo, multimodalità, neobarocco*, ed. Dusi and Saba, 7-15 (Cinisello Balsamo, MI: Silvana Editoriale, 2012), 8.

Since the early 1990s Barney's work has been at the centre of numerous group- and solo-exhibitions, each of which has been *accompanied* by one or more publications. These exhibitions, the diverse constellations in which his multifaceted production has been presented, and most notably the theatrical appearances of his movie projects gave rise to an impressive number of articles in the specialized and non-specialized press. Furthermore, since the mid-2000s, several papers and academic studies have complemented these printed matters.⁷⁷⁴ Despite all these writings emphasizing on different levels the *intermediality*⁷⁷⁵ (or even *transmediality*)⁷⁷⁶ of his practice as one of the

⁷⁷⁴ It should be noted that academic interest in Barney's work has developed especially in the German and Italian speaking world. As an example, see the recent anthologies: Christiane Hille and Julia Stenzel, eds., *Cremaster Anatomies: Beiträge zu Matthew Barneys CREMASTER Cycle aus den Wissenschaften von Kunst, Theater und Literatur* (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2014); Dusi and Saba eds., *Matthew Barney: polimorfismo, multimodalità, neobarocco*. While *Cremaster Anatomies* collects essays almost totally focused on *The CREMASTER Cycle* and encompasses a balanced plurality of disciplinary approaches, the texts collected in *Matthew Barney: polimorfismo, multimodalità, neobarocco* cover a larger spectrum of Barney's production – i.e. *Field Dressing (orifill)* (1989/2007), *The CREMASTER Cycle* (1994-2002) and the ongoing series *DRAWING RESTRAINT* (1989-) – but encompasses a narrower methodological spectrum within which semiotics prevail. In these countries, namely Germany and Italy, *The CREMASTER Cycle* has also found great favor within the field of graduate research. The published graduate work of note could be here exemplarily reduced to two titles: Eva Wruck, *Matthew Barneys Cremaster Cycle: Narration – Landschaft – Skulptur* (Berlin: Reimer, 2014), that is Wruck's PhD dissertation (Ruhr-Universität Bochum, 2012); and Antonio Fasolo, *Matthew Barney, CREMASTER CYCLE* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2009), that is, Fasolo's MA thesis (Università Sapienza di Roma, 2008). These two graduate works are worthy of note: the first, for the precision of the arguments and the accurate art-historical interpretation and the second, for the extent and the amplitude of the critical analysis.

⁷⁷⁵ Art historian Henry M. Sayer has even affirmed "perhaps no work more embodies the intermedia impulse of the era [1990-2005] than Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle". Henry M. Sayre, "1990-2005: In the Clutches of Time," in *A Companion to Contemporary Art since 1945*, ed. Amelia Jones (Oxford: Blackwell, 2006), 107-124, 121. Fluxus artist Dick Higgins coined the term and described the condition of *intermedia* already in the mid-1960s, See Dick Higgins, "Intermedia (1965)," *The Something Else Newsletter*, 1, 1 (February 1966): n.p. As media scientist Chiel Kattenbelt pointed out, "Insoweit der Begriff vor allem zur Unterscheidung der anderen Medialitätsbegriffe [Multimedialität, Transmedialität] benutzt wird, wird vor allem der Aspekt der wechselseitigen Beeinflussung (Interaktion) betont. In Kunst und medientheoretischen Diskursen bezieht sich 'Intermedialität' denn auch vor allem auf die Wechselwirkungen zwischen unterschiedlichen Medien, aus denen eine Neudefinition und Neusensibilisierung der aufeinander einwirkenden Medien resultiert." Chiel Kattenbelt, "Multi-, Trans- und Intermedialität: Drei unterschiedliche Perspektiven auf die Beziehungen zwischen den Medien," in *Theater und Medien: Grundlagen – Analysen – Perspektiven. Eine Bestandsaufnahme*, eds. Henri Schoenmakers, Stefan Bläske, Kay Kirchmann and Jens Ruchatz, 125-132 (Bielefeld: Transcript Verlag, 2008), 131.

⁷⁷⁶ Stressing what he defines as "le vere e proprie mutazioni, reinterpretazioni e fusioni di media diversi che Barney mette in scena" semiotician Nicola Dusi considers *The CREMASTER Cycle* as a representative example of a *transmedia* work of art. Nicola Dusi, "CREMASTER Cycle tra cinema e danza," in *Matthew Barney: polimorfismo, multimedialità, barocco*, 103. Note, that according to Kattenbelt, the concept of *transmediality* alludes to the "Übersetzung von einem Medium in das andere [...] für welche gilt, dass im Prozess der Übersetzung die spezifischen

constitutive features of the artist's work, most forget even to mention the book as one of the recurrent *mediums* of his practice. Up to now, none of these texts has ever really taken into account the peculiar role played by this instrument within the artist's *œuvre* and *Weltanschauung*.

Compared to the pioneers of the artist's book, who often invested their resources for the production and publication of their books, being also responsible for their design and outlook, it should be emphasized that Barney, like several of his colleagues of the 1990s and 2000s, has never proceeded in this way. Moreover, the books he has worked on (conceiving them in part, in *toto* or *just* supervising their realization) and collaboratively achieved with the help of professional designers and/or other professionals have never been self-published but always issued within the framework of one or more exhibition/s. Still, these volumes are rarely born as the catalogue/s of the exhibition/s in question in the traditional understanding of the term, that is, as mere *documents* or interpretative tools of the exhibited works and the *meaning* developed within their constellations.

This certainly applies for the first decade of Barney's career which goes from 1991, the year in which *New Work* was created, to 2002, that is, the year of publication of *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, the lavish and authoritative book prepared on the occasion of the completion of his homonymous best known epic saga as well as of the related travelling exhibition organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum.⁷⁷⁷ Amongst the diverse publications which Barney worked on until 2002, it is the five books dedicated to the five episodes of *The CREMASTER Cycle* which are the most well-known.⁷⁷⁸ However, it was especially the elaboration of the book *Matthew*

Merkmale des Ursprungsmediums völlig verloren gehen." Kattembeld, "Multi-, Trans- und Intermedialität," 128. The concept of *transmediality* as understood by Kattembeld and Dusi is very problematic because it implies that there can be a translation completely independent from what translates, i.e. totally autonomous and immune from the medial characteristics of its source. As we shall see in the following, this seems not to be the case within Barney's practice.

⁷⁷⁷ See Spector, ed. *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*. See footnote 26.

⁷⁷⁸ See *Matthew Barney: New Work*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4* (Paris/New York: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain/Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 1995), offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29,5 x 1 cm, n.p. Print run: unknown* (price £20, inc. postage and packing); *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, ed. Cristina Bechtler (Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1995); offset, perfect bound, 30,3 x 23 x 0,7 cm, n.p. Print run: unknown* (50 books were released with a plastic clip); *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL*, ed. Karel Schampers (Rotterdam: Museum Boymans van Beuningen, 1995), offset, perfect bound, plastic

Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle which went hand in hand with the preparation of the cycle's comprehensive exhibition that brought the artist to a new understanding of the instrument. The subsequent book production is in fact characterized by a more *didactic* approach and is therefore potentially more *accessible*.

In the following years, Barney paid unprecedented attention to the realization of the books dedicated to *DRAWING RESTRAINT*, the on-going series on which he had started working in college (*DRAWING RESTRAINT 1* dates back to 1987) and to whose seventh iteration he had already devoted a volume in 1995.⁷⁷⁹ On the occasion of diverse exhibitions dedicated to the series that took place in Japan, Korea, the U.S.A., and in Europe between 2005 and 2010, the artist worked on different publications which he has intended as a single open book series consisting thus far of six volumes.⁷⁸⁰

case, 24 x 17 x 0,8 cm, 92 pp. Print run: 2500; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1* (Wien/Basel: Kunsthalle Wien/Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel, 1997) offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29, 5 x 1,2 cm, n.p. Print run: unknown*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 5* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Portikus/Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 1997), offset, perfect bound, plastic cover, 24 x 29,5 x 1,1 cm, n.p. Print run: unknown*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 2*, ed. Kathy McLean (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 1999), offset, perfect bound, embossed plastic case, 24 x 29,5 1 cm, n.p. Print run: unknown*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 3*, ed. Edward Weisberger (New York: D.A.P., 2002/Ostfeldern/Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29,5 x 1,9 cm , n.p. Print run: unknown (price \$49,95/39,80€).

⁷⁷⁹ See Matthew Barney: *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*.

⁷⁸⁰ *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT*, Kanazawa (Japan), 21st Century Museum of Contemporary Art, July 2 – August 25, 2005; Seoul, Leeum, Samsung Museum of Art, October 13, 2005 – January 8, 2006; San Francisco, CA, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, June 23 – September 19, 2006; see *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. I, 1987-2002*, ed. Hans Ulrich Obrist (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2005) offset, perfect bound, plastic cover, 24 x 17 cm, 96 pp. Print run: unknown* (price 42€); *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. II* (Tokyo: Uplink Press, 2005), offset, perfect bound, embossed plastic cover, 24 x 17 cm, 164 pp. Print run: unknown* (price 43,90€); *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. III* (Seoul: Leeum Samsung Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005), offset, perfect bound, perforated plastic cover, 24 x 17 cm, 212 pp. Print run: unknown*; *Matthew Barney: The Occidental Guest*, New York, Barbara Gladstone Gallery (24th Street) and JMc&GHB Editions, April 7 – May 13, 2006; see *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. IV* (New York: JMc&GHB Editions, 2007); offset, sewn bound, embossed cover 25 x 17,5 cm, 74 pp. Print run: unknown*; *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT*, Vienna, Kunsthalle Wien, March 7 – June 8, 2008; London, Serpentine Gallery, September 20 – November 11, 2007; see *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. V* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2007), offset, perfect bound, perforated plastic cover, 24 x 17 cm, 232 pp. Print run: 3000 (English) 1500 (German)(price 39,80€); *Matthew Barney: Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail*, Basel, Schaulager, June 12 – October 3, 2010; *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. VI* (Basel: Schaulager, 2010), offset, embossed silk hardcover, 17,8 x 24, 7 cm, 146 pp., limited edition: 1000 (price: 185 Swiss Francs) plus special edition: 100 signed copies (price: 420 Swiss Francs).

Since the late 2010s the *artist's bibliography* has been enriched with volumes that, even if their conception is not directly credited (in part or in *toto*) to Barney, were realized under the close supervision of the artist and his studio. They are characterized by Barney's *aesthetic* and therefore could be regarded as deeply *embedded* and *interrelated* with the projects that they are called to represent.⁷⁸¹

It should be noted that, notwithstanding the large amount of attention and work invested in by the artist (and his studio) for the creation of the book counterparts of *The CREMASTER Cycle*, the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series, and the exhibition projects of the late-2000s and early-2010s, other projects he has led have not been *accompanied* by any volume. This is the case of, for example, *DE LAMA LÁMINA (From Mud, A Blade)*, realized in collaboration with musician Arto Lindsay in 2004 during the Carnival of Salvador de Bahia.⁷⁸² Despite the

⁷⁸¹ This is the case of: Isabelle Dervaux, ed., *Subliming Vessel: The Drawings of Matthew Barney* (New York: Skira Rizzoli Publications/The Morgan Library & Museum, 2013), offset-printed, hardcover, 22 x 29,5 cm, 243 pp. Print run: unknown (price: 55\$) and Okwui Enwezor, *Matthew Barney: RIVER OF FUNDAMENT*, ed. Louise Neri (New York/München: Skira Rizzoli Publications, Inc./Haus der Kunst, 2014), offset-printed, embossed hardcover, 23,5 x 30 x 3,3 cm, 311 pp. Print run: unknown (price: 95\$ - 75€). Note, that in the first case no *author* is officially mentioned in the publication; in the context of this study, Isabelle Dervaux, (Acquavella Curator and Head of the Department of Modern & Contemporary Drawings, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York) who curated the homonymous exhibition (New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, May 10 - September 2, 2013) together with independent curator Klaus Kertess and authored the introduction of the book (and who led the interview with the Barney in the book) has therefore mentioned as its main *editor*. Note, that in the second case the name of the artist prominently features on the spine and on the frontispiece of the book but the publication is presented as *by Okwui Enwezor*, i.e. the Director of Haus der Kunst, München as well as the curator of the exhibition which *accompanied* the European premiere of *RIVER OF FUNDAMENT* (München, Bayerische Staatsoper, March 16, 2014) and in the framework of which the homonymous publication was released. The name of Enwezor is printed on the spine of the book in the place traditionally reserved to the author. The exhibition *Matthew Barney: RIVER of FUNDAMENT* was on view at the Haus der Kunst, from March 16 to August 31, 2014. The homonymous publication was issued in August 2014 in order to include a variety of installation views of the show which then travelled to Ozman, Tasmania (Museum of Old and New Art, November 22 - April 13, 2015) and Los Angeles (The Museum of Contemporary Art, September 13, 2015 - January 18, 2016). Note, that in the framework of this study the book published on the occasion of the collaborative exhibition *Matthew Barney & Elizabeth Peyton: Blood of Two* (Hydra, Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art Project Space, June 16 - October 30, 2009) will not be considered among the books characterized by *Barney's aesthetic*, mainly because it is not a monographic publication. See Matthew Barney and Elizabeth Peyton, *Blood of Two: 16 June 2009* (Athens: Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art, 2010).

⁷⁸² Perhaps it is also for this reason that very little literature has been produced on this work. *DE LAMA LÁMINA*, 2004-2009 was staged as a performance (2004) and documented as well as partially reinvented through film (2007, colour, sound, 1h) and other mediums for exhibition. See Bennet Simpson and Matthew Barney, "1000 Words: Matthew Barney talks about DE LAMA LÁMINA, 2004," *Artforum* 42, no. 9 (May 2004): 191.

artist's objection to this development of events (he himself defines the projects which were not accompanied with a book counterpart "blind spots in my production"⁷⁸³), he has never personally committed himself to ensuring a timely creation of these books.

Likewise, *OTTOshaft* (1992), the work he developed within his participation to *DOCUMENTA IX*⁷⁸⁴ as a part of the *OTTO Trilogy*, has somehow remained a *blind spot* in Barney's production for about 25 years. The three pillars of the intermedia sculptural narration developed within the *OTTO Trilogy* are the sculptural situations cum installations *Facility of INCLINE* (1991), *OTTOshaft* (1992) and *Facility of DECLINE* (1991). On the occasion of Barney's and gallerist Barbara Gladstone's twenty-fifth anniversary of collaboration (1991-2016), the exhibition *Matthew Barney: Facility of DECLINE* was opened in New York in September 2016.⁷⁸⁵ In the framework of this show of Barney's early works, a publication entirely dedicated to the *OTTO Trilogy* was released.⁷⁸⁶ The book *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy* encompasses the three *episodes* of the trilogy and is advertised as "the definitive publication on this important series, [...] [offering] a key to understanding many of the themes that thread throughout Barney's oeuvre."⁷⁸⁷ It can be interpreted as the volume which should *cover* the *blind spot* left by *New Work*, the book(let) that the artist had developed in the late 1991 in the framework of the homonymous exhibition at SFMOMA. As we shall see in the following, *New Work* embodies a meta-narrative of the tripartite project composed by the three sculptural situations *Facility of INCLINE*, 1991, *Facility of DECLINE*, 1991 and *OTTOshaft*, 1992. However, it is an *ante litteram* narrative: at the time of its publication, only two of the three episodes had already taken full shape which is why *OTTOshaft* – the central axis of the project – was not *explicitly* included in the book(let).

⁷⁸³ Matthew Barney, in discussion with the author, Matthew Barney Studio, New York City, September 16, 2014.

⁷⁸⁴ *OTTOshaft* was created in the framework of the exhibition *DOCUMENTA IX*, Kassel, June 13 – September 20, 1992. See *DOCUMENTA IX*, ed. Roland Nachtigäller and Nicola von Velsen, 3 vols. (Stuttgart: Cantz, 1992), 1, 32-35.

⁷⁸⁵ *Matthew Barney: Facility of DECLINE*, New York, Barbara Gladstone Gallery (24th Street), September 9 – October 22, 2016.

⁷⁸⁶ See Matthew Barney: *OTTO Trilogy*.

⁷⁸⁷ "Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy," Yale University Press, <http://yalebooks.com/book/9780300223699/matthew-barney> (last access September 11, 2016).

Curator Nancy Spector has recently defined the *OTTO Trilogy* as “a Rosetta stone for understanding the conflicting drives that power the entirety of Barney’s artistic output.”⁷⁸⁸ However, the iconographic indecipherable nature of the project and of its book meta-narrative, together with the inaccessibility of the works themselves are among the reasons why the trilogy is one of Barney’s least known and studied projects.

Coming back to the concept of *accessibility*, one should note that Barney’s intermedia work is inaccessible on more levels: his video and movie projects are rarely accessible as they are not released theatrically but considered as sculptures and are distributed as such;⁷⁸⁹ the “family of objects”⁷⁹⁰ created in the framework of the moving images, i.e. his sculptures in other mediums (often real multipart sculptural situations) are rarely shown in all their complexity – mainly because they are characterized by a challenging materiality, but also because their various components are dispersed in different collections. The book therefore seems to be the most *accessible* medium within Barney’s intermedia practice - the handiest tool for *accessing* his work.

Other bibliographic materials such as the reviews produced in the context of the public presentation of his works and projects could also be regarded as sources through which one can get an idea of his work. However, concerning the *OTTO Trilogy* these sources have been particularly fragmentary for 25 years. In the case of the *blind spot* represented by *OTTOshaft*, no visuals of this sculptural situation have been included in *New Work*. Moreover, due to the unusual and *remote* location of the piece at *DOCUMENTA IX* (*OTTOshaft* occupied the space under the curving exit and entry ramps of the newly built underground car park in Friedrichsplatz), very few visitors, journalists or even art professionals, experienced the piece or mentioned it in their critical reports. Referring to the other two parts of the trilogy, i.e. *Facility of INCLINE* and *Facility of DECLINE*, one should note that beside the eminently visual

⁷⁸⁸ Nancy Spector, “Introduction,” in *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 13.

⁷⁸⁹ See Alexandra Keller and Frazer Ward, “Matthew Barney and the Paradox of the Neo-Avant-Garde Blockbuster,” *Cinema Journal* 45, no. 2 (Winter 2006): 3-16.

⁷⁹⁰ Barney quoted in Keller and Ward, “Matthew Barney and the Paradox of the Neo-Avant-Garde Blockbuster,” 4.

information presented in *New Work*, a very restrained selection of which often accompanies the few selected shots that appear as illustrations of their relatively numerous critical reports, these reports do not encompass accurate descriptions of the different elements in the installations. This is all the more true for the videos that are part and parcel of the sculptural situations. They are only fragmentarily described and are usually visually referenced by just one or two screen shots. This fragmentation of the information is also related to the fact that, due to their complex logistics these pieces have been rarely installed (*OTTOshaft*, for example, has been exhibited at most a handful of times since it entered the collection of The Tate in 1994).⁷⁹¹ In the specific case of these early works by the artist, another element should be taken into account: i.e. the fact that following its completion, Barney has been busy with the back to back realization of his subsequent projects and their related public presentations, and thus the *OTTO Trilogy* has remained until 2016 *almost a blind spot* in his production.

4.2 Barney's Artistic Profile

Matthew Barney is an American artist whose work, reception, and dazzling success should to be considered almost a phenomenon on its own. Since the beginning of the 1990s, Barney's work has been praised and recognized in the international art scene for his ability to explore and mix a wide-range of mediums, genres, and iconographic sources evoking contemporary rites of passage as well as ancestral themes, while creating elaborated works of art characterized by a highly refined aesthetic.⁷⁹² This

⁷⁹¹ Since 1994, *OTTOshaft* was featured in the exhibitions: *Art Now 1: Matthew Barney: OTTOshaft*, London, Tate Britain (Gallery 24), May 2 – June 18, 1995; *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*, Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, October 21, 1995 – January 1, 1996; Bordeaux, capc Musée d'art Contemporain, January 26, 1996 – April 8, 1996; Bern, Kunsthalle, May 17, 1996 – June 23, 1996; *Between Cinema and Hard Place*, London, Tate Modern (Level 4 West, Gallery 15), May 12 – December 3, 2000. See *Art Now 1: Matthew Barney: OTTOshaft* (London: Tate Gallery, 1995); *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*; Frances Morris, ed., *Between Cinema and Hard Place* (London: Tate Modern, 2000), n.p.

⁷⁹² Reviewing the show *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint* (San Francisco, CA, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, June 23 – September 17, 2006) art historian David Joselit described Barney's aesthetic as "reminiscent of the Apple store's elegance" and brutal at the same time. See David Joselit, "Matthew Barney: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art," *Artforum* 45, no. 1 (September 2006): 365.

happened at a time when, as it has already been mentioned in the previous chapters, the value of the cultural (and financial) capital associated to art, especially of contemporary art, reached a new peak.

The official launch of Barney's career took place in 1991 with a hat trick of solo-shows: Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco.⁷⁹³ Before that time, however, the undertakings of the young Barney had already attracted the attention of a few influential New York based dealers and critics.⁷⁹⁴ In 1989, after finishing college at Yale, Barney had in fact moved to New York to pursue a career in the arts. Just four years before, having abandoned the early dream to become a professional football player, he had enrolled at the prestigious athenaeum as a pre-med student with the idea of eventually becoming "a

⁷⁹³ See *Matthew Barney: [Facility of INCLINE]*, Stuart Regen Gallery, Los Angeles, May 22-June 22, 1991; *Matthew Barney: 00*, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, October 19-November 16, 1991; *Matthew Barney: New Work*, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco, CA, December 12, 1991-January 30, 1992.

⁷⁹⁴ See Michael Kimmelman, "The Imporance of Matthew Barney," *The New York Times Magazine*, October 10, 1999, 62-69, 64. In September 1990, a new iteration of Barney's graduation work, *Field Dressing (orifill)* (1989) was presented at Althea Viafora gallery in New York within the show *Body as Metaphor* (September 9-29, 1990). The work, which encompassed diverse sculptural elements, among which two monitors on which two silent videotaped actions run in loop, attracted the attention of art dealer Clarissa Dalrymple and of art critic Jerry Saltz. Dalrymple offered Barney a solo show for the beginning of 1991 at the Petersburg Gallery, the gallery she was directing since 1989, that is, the year after she and Nicole Klagsburn had to close their visionary Cable Gallery due to the loss of all the artists they promoted (Ashley Bickerton, Haim Steinbach, Philippe Thomas, Christopher Wool, among others) to more commercial-minded dealers. See Linda Yablonsky, "Eye Spy," *The New York Times*, August 26, 2007, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/08/26/t-magazine/culture/26eye.html?pagewanted=all> (last access August 5, 2016). Saltz dedicated to the piece a long article which was published on the May 1991 issue of *Arts Magazine*. See Jerry Saltz, "Notes on a Sculpture - Wilder Shores of Art: Matthew Barney's Field Dressing (orifill), 1989," *Arts Magazine* 65, no. 9 (May 1991): 29-31. However, two weeks before the opening of Barney's show at Petersburg's the owner of the business closed the gallery. Given the quantity of energy and economical resources that Barney had invested in the production of his work for the show, Dalrymple felt compelled to support who she believed to be a talented artist and turned to her established colleague Barbara Gladstone by asking her to pay a visit to the artist's studio in the New York meatpacking district. The way in which the work of Barney activated the space and his use of a visual language and materials not traditionally linked to sculpture but rather to the domains of sport and surgery impressed Gladstone and her gallery director Richard Flood very much. See Alison Chernick, *Matthew Barney: no restraint* (London: Soda Pictures, 2007), DVD and Richard Flood, Curator at Large, New Museum of Contemporary Art, NY, in conversation with the author, New York, December 3, 2012. Unable to offer him in short-term an exhibition within her New York space, Gladstone arranged for Barney's work to be presented within a few weeks at Stuart Regen gallery, the L.A. based art gallery run by her son. An exhibition at Barbara Gladstone in New York would have followed in the coming autumn. See Calvin Tomkins, "His Body, Himself," *The New Yorker* (January 23, 2003), 50-59, esp. 54. The text has been republished in Tomkins, *Lives of the Artists* (New York: Henry Holt, 2008), 115-139.

surgeon of some sort.”⁷⁹⁵ Already in his second year, however, he was sitting in the classes of the School of Art, the graduate program in which he was definitively embedded by his fourth year, when he was even given a graduate studio.⁷⁹⁶

At the time, abstract sculptor and painter David von Schlegell (1920-1992) was the director of Yale’s graduate studies in sculpture and prioritized postminimalist practices in his curriculum.⁷⁹⁷ Barney studied with von Schlegell, worked closely with sculptress Alice Aycock (b. 1946) (who took up a teaching position at Yale in 1988), and maintained close contact with graduates, especially Michael Rees and Michael Joaquin Grey who were tackling the methods and materials of postminimalism in their work at that time.⁷⁹⁸ The possibility of taking advantage of the material and immaterial *facilities* offered by the prominent graduate school, together with his solid cross-media work marked a springboard in Barney’s career.

As we shall soon see approaching the booklet *New Work*, already at the beginning of his career Barney had implemented a varied imagery *evoking* themes related to the challenge and violation of social, sexual, as well as material boundaries.⁷⁹⁹ In so doing, he was visually incorporating in his pieces some of the cultural, social, and political hot topics of the moment, thus

⁷⁹⁵ Barney, interview by Glen Helfand, 36.

⁷⁹⁶ Matthew Barney, in conversation with the author, New York, September 16, 2014.

⁷⁹⁷ David von Schlegell was appointed director of the graduate studies in sculpture in 1971, a position that he held until his retirement in 1990. See Roberta Smith, “David von Schlegell, Abstract Artist, Is Dead at 72,” *The New York Times* (October 6, 1992), <http://www.nytimes.com/1992/10/06/arts/david-von-schlegell-abstract-artist-is-dead-at-72.html>, last access August 23, 2016.

⁷⁹⁸ See Andrea Nitsche-Krupp, “Bound and Undetermined: Matthew Barney’s Materialism,” in *Matthew Barney: Bildungsroman* (Oslo: Astrup Fearnley Museet, 2016), online catalogue, <http://afmuseet.no/en/nettkataloger/katalog-matthew-barney/artikler/begrenset-og-ubestemt> (last access July 16, 2016). At the moment no consistent scholarly research on David von Schlegell and his work has been produced. On Alice Aycock and her work, see Robert Hobbs, *Alice Aycock: Sculpture and Projects* (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 2005); see also Michael Rees, “Yale Sculpture: A Recent Breed of Critically Trained Artists from the Noted School of Art,” *Flash Art*, no. 170 (May-June, 1993): 65-67. The pervasive *influence* of teachers and peers on Matthew Barney’s artistic practice deserves a separate study that goes beyond the thematic focus of this research.

⁷⁹⁹ See Lisa Phillips, “No Man’s Land: At the Threshold of a Millenium,” in *1993 Biennial Exhibition*, ed. Elizabeth Sussman, 52-61 (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art/Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1993), 63.

perfectly fulfilling new generational and market priorities that would become trademarks of the 1990s.⁸⁰⁰

As noted by writer and curator Bruce Hugh Russel:

The decade of the eighties was no less tumultuous for those seeking their intellectual formation in North American educational institutions than the more conspicuous campus tumult had been for the generation of the late sixties. But the terrain of academic contestation had shifted from class and anti-colonial issues to increasing emphasis on gender and minority concerns. These were years in which woman's studies departments became gender studies departments, and in which gay and lesbian studies became queer studies, and in which much more complex and sophisticated theoretical discussions further distanced academic discourse in these areas from community movements that had given them birth. [...] The introduction of Gender Studies and the new approaches to cultural theory, the new history, the new art history, all occurred in a larger climate of political reaction, not just the economic harshness of the New Right, but of voracious campaigns to defend Western Civilization from attacks on canonic tradition. It was the era of the Mapplethorpe trials, the NEA cuts and the AIDS activist art, a time in which manifestly political art reflecting these issues began to appear in prominent exhibitions such as the Whitney Biennial, and it was a time in which the feminist milieu was torn apart over debates about pornography and sexual representation. Art schools were no less the sites of these contestations than were the universities.⁸⁰¹

The environment of Yale University was not dissimilar. Note, for example, that philosopher and gender theorist Judith Butler completed her PhD dissertation in the Department of Philosophy at the same university in 1984⁸⁰² and developed some of the arguments presented in her seminal book *Gender*

⁸⁰⁰ See Mark Sladen, "Assault Course," *Art Monthly*, no. 187 (June 1995): 8-11.

⁸⁰¹ Bruce Hugh Russel, "Matthew Barney's Testicular Anxieties," *Parachute*, no. 92 (October-December, 1998): 36-43, 36, 38. Note, that the time span that Russel is describing includes also the early 1990s. For a further assessment on this *long decade*, see Helen Molesworth, ed., *This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s* (Chicago, IL/New Haven, CT and London: Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago/Yale University Press, 2012). On the Mapplethorpe trials, the NEA cuts and the AIDS activist art, see Richard Meyer, "The Jesse Helms Theory of Art," *October*, 104 (Spring 2003): 131-148. Conflict in Europe, attempts at peace in the Middle East, the AIDS crisis, national debates on health care, gun control, gay rights, caustic partisan politics were both the background and source material for a number of artists who came to prominence at the beginning of the 1990s, in the context of the 1991 and especially of the 1993 Whitney Biennale (New York, Whitney Museum of American Art, February 24 – June 10, 1993). For a contemporary account of that climate and of the 1993 exhibition, see Sussman, ed., *1993 Biennial Exhibition*; for a retrospective account of the relevance of the year 1993 see Massimiliano Gioni, ed., *NYC 1993: Experimental Jet Set, Trash and No Star* (New York: New Museum, 2013).

⁸⁰² See Judith Butler, *Subject of Desire: Hegelian Reflections in Twentieth-Century France* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).

Trouble (1990)⁸⁰³ within the framework of the graduate seminars on gender and psychoanalysis which she gave at the Yale School of Medicine.⁸⁰⁴

During the 1980s and early 1990s, the human body was definitely recognised and debated as the strategic site through which identity and structures of power could be negotiated.⁸⁰⁵ It became progressively technologized and manipulated through prosthetics, plastic surgery, hormones, as well as prescriptions. New achievements in scientific research presented a glimpse of human cloning soon becoming reality. All these *practices* seemed to offer the opportunity to actively intervene in the transformation of one's body.⁸⁰⁶

The body and its culture acquired greater importance also in everyday life, for example through the seductive and pervasive presence of advertising. In those years the domain of advertisement – through its multiple canals, not least that of television⁸⁰⁷ – decidedly moved its focus from the enhancement of the qualities of a determined product to the empathetic definition of the experience offered by the product, always more often appealing to the physical, bodily, and erotic presence of the actor/s chosen to publicize it.

Matthew Barney grew up, and formed himself as an artist, within this cultural climate. Several exhibitions, among which one could mention as an example, the travelling show *Post Human*,⁸⁰⁸ thematized this imagery (of which

⁸⁰³ See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990).

⁸⁰⁴ Note, that at the time Barney attended some of her lectures and he believes he may have been in one of her classes. Barney, in conversation with the author.

⁸⁰⁵ See, among others, Donna Haraway, *Simians, Cyborg, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1991);

⁸⁰⁶ These practices are constitutive of the *pharmacopornographic regime* theorized by philosopher Paul B. Preciado; that is, the dictatorship exerted within advanced Capitalism by the pharmaceutical and the pornography industry on the reproductive and social control through the regulation of bodies. See Paul B. Preciado, *Testo Junkie: Sex, Drugs, and Biopolitics*, trans. Brice Benderson (New York: Feminist Press, 2013); originally published as Beatriz Preciado, *Texto Yonqui* (Barcelona: Espasa-Calpe, 2008).

⁸⁰⁷ Note, that the generation of artists of which Matthew Barney is part is among the first to have grown up with television, a technological innovation that amplifies and creates desires. See Helen Molesworth, "This Will Have Been: Art, Love & Politics in the 1980s," in Molesworth, ed., *This Will Have Been*, 15-46.

⁸⁰⁸ *Post Human*, Pully/Lausanne, FAE Musée d'Art Contemporain, June 14 – September 13, 1992; Turin, Castello di Rivoli, Museo d'Arte Contemporanea, Rivoli, October 1 – November 22, 1992; Athen, Deste Foundation for Contemporary Art, December 10, 1992 – February 14, 1993; Hamburg, Deichtorhallen Hamburg, March 12 – May 9, 1993. See Jeffrey Deitch, *Post Human* (Amsterdam: Idea Books, 1992).

at the same time they were nurtured). Indeed, Barney's early works found acceptance and were extraordinarily well received within the framework of such exhibitions, that is, thematic group shows presenting and discussing the human body and identity as unstable and malleable entities open to different transformations.⁸⁰⁹ A revealing example of how this cultural climate was reflected in the contemporary artistic debate is the fact that among the jury of the 1993 Venice Biennale – Biennale where Barney won the *Europa 2000 Prize* as the best artist in the *Aperto '93: Emergency/Emergenze* exhibition with his installation *ENVELOPA: Drawing Restraint 7* (1993) – sat the renowned literary theorist and psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva.⁸¹⁰ This also shows that theories and symbolic representations of psychoanalysis had taken on growing importance within art, artworks, and their interpretation. However, it is important to note that his work was not about the *politics* of these transformations.

Despite the explanatory trajectories usually traced and followed by the interpreters of Barney's work both inside and outside the academia – interpretative paths within which the *reading* of the artist's work tends to remain closely tied to (if not trapped into) issues related to the notions of body and gender, especially with regards to their more psychoanalytic aspects, and the discursive fields in which these notions are traditionally investigated –⁸¹¹ Barney's artistic preoccupations resided elsewhere.

⁸⁰⁹ See, among others, *Périls et Colères*, Bordeaux, capC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, May 22 – September 6, 1992; *The Masculine Masquerade*, Cambridge, MA, List Visual Art Center, January 21 – March 26, 1995; *Foreign Body*, Basel Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 1996; *A Rose is a Rose is a Rose: Gender Performance in Photography*, New York, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, January 17 – April 27, 1997; Pittsburgh, PA, Andy Warhol Museum, 1997. See Asta Gröting, ed., *Périls et Colères* (Bordeaux: CAPC musée d'art contemporain de Bordeaux, 1992); Andrew Perchuk and Helaine Posner, eds., *The Masculine Masquerade: Masculinity and Representation* (Cambridge, MA: List Visual Art Center, 1995); Jennifer Blessing, ed., *A Rose is a Rose is a Rose: Gender Performance in Photography* (New York: Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, 1997).

⁸¹⁰ XLV Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte: Punti cardinali dell'arte, Venezia, June 14 – October 10, 1993. See XLV Esposizione Internazionale d'Arte: Punti cardinali dell'arte, 2 vols. (Venezia: Marsilio, 1993); Achille Bonito Oliva and Helena Kontova, eds., *Flash Art International: Aperto '93: Emergency/Emergenza* (Milano: Giancarlo Politi Editore, 1993); Giorgio Verzotti, "Aperto 93: The Better Biennale," *Artforum* 32, no. 2 (October 1993): 104-105.

⁸¹¹ Note that, especially within the academia, these readings usually take their starting point and abundantly refer to curator Nancy Spector's 2002 essay *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us* which is considered as the first authoritative (Freudian) interpretation of Barney's work. See Spector, "Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us," in *The CREMASTER Cycle*, 4-91. As art historian Eva Wruck has highlighted in reference to the artist's best-known five episode epic saga, inside this interpretative paradigm Barney's *oeuvre* remains inherently baffling and ambiguous. See Wruck, *Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle*.

In the following, restrained attention will be paid to the exegesis of Barney's iconographic sources, or to the exploration of how biographical aspects (such as, for example, his history as an athlete, his activity as a fashion model – a job through which he financed his studies at Yale, or his Irish origins) resonate within his work.⁸¹² Although this is a common approach to Barney's work, as art historian Andrea Nietzsche-Krupp has recently highlighted, his biographical facets might tell us something about how he came to his imagery, but not how he has employed it.⁸¹³ According to her, Barney's multifaceted imagery "functions as borrowed narrative structure" through which the artist puts at stake his "propositional artistic practice, one reliant on a predetermined set of constraints" which are functional to "*give form* to a state of potential."⁸¹⁴ Since the beginnings, Barney's artistic preoccupations have indeed been purely sculptural. His practice is in fact characterized by the implementation of materials with a strong physical behaviour (e.g. Vaseline, prosthetic plastic, and, more recently, metals such as copper), behaviour that becomes a fundamental compositional element of his works.⁸¹⁵

From an art historical point of view, in fact, Barney's *propositional artistic practice* is strictly linked to Postminimal approaches to art, such as Process art, as it was filtered and institutionalized, not at least within his art department at Yale.⁸¹⁶ In search for his own artistic language and profoundly embedded in what his cohort Michael Rees had defined as Yale's "intense

⁸¹² The best source for Barney's biographical facts to these days remains the profile that art critic Calvin Tomkins dedicated him on the pages of the *The New Yorker* in 2003. See Tomkins, "His Body, Himself."

⁸¹³ See Nietzsche-Krupp, *Bound and Undetermined*, n.p.

⁸¹⁴ Nietzsche-Krupp, *Bound and Undetermined*, n.p. Emphasis by the author.

⁸¹⁵ See Christian Scheidemann, "Appunti di laboratorio," in *All in the Present Must Be Transformed: Matthew Barney and Joseph Beuys*, ed. Nancy Spector, 124-139 (New York: Guggenheim Museum Publications, 2007).

⁸¹⁶ See Nietzsche-Krupp, *Bound and Undetermined*, n.p. Within the realm of so-called Process art of the 1960s and early 1970s, the focus is shifted from the production of a predetermined autonomous aesthetic object to the very process of *doing* art. The work of artists such as, for example, Robert Morris (b. 1931), Richard Serra (b. 1939), Bruce Nauman (b. 1941) is representative of this aesthetic orientation. To create their pieces, they turned to a set of procedures and task-based actions within which gravity, the properties of the implemented materials, chance, and the body resulted as primary operative tools. See Robert Morris, *Continuous Project Altered Daily: The Writing of Robert Morris*, (Cambridge, MA and London: The MIT Press, 1993); especially the essay *Anti Form* (41-47), originally published in *Artforum* 6, no. 9 (May 1968): 33-35.

community”,⁸¹⁷ Barney struggled against an artistic credo that revealed itself as liberating in the 1960s and 1970s, but which by the end of the 1980s was perceived as an academic canon.⁸¹⁸ As the artist recently recalled, during those years, Richard Serra’s *Verb List* (1967-68) “hung over our heads like a moralistic treatise on art making.”⁸¹⁹ *Verb List* is a catalogue of mainly transitive verbs (e.g. to scatter, to distill, to collect) and, as art historian Lynne Cooke has aptly underlined, “of other terms that conjure states, conditions, or relations”⁸²⁰ (e.g. of mapping, of gravity, of entropy). Written in 1967-68, it was first published in the Winter 1971 issue of the “artists’ magazine”⁸²¹ *Avalanche* where Serra described it as a series of “actions to relate to oneself, material, place, process.”⁸²² But, if at the turn of the 1960s and 1970s, the *List* embodied for Serra a series of productive restraints to freely produce work “without any preconceived idea” and without worrying “about the history of sculpture”⁸²³ this was no longer the case for Barney and his colleagues.

As Nietzsche-Krupp has appropriately explained, by the late 1980s, “process as an operating term became academicized and rule-bound, and as such [...] it ironically boarded on predetermining: the work produced, hinging as it does on a ever more restrictive definition of material and its treatment, approximates a foregone conclusion.”⁸²⁴ Consequently, making use of “a material-driven propositional method founded on a precise set of physical,

⁸¹⁷ Rees, “Yale Sculpture,” 65.

⁸¹⁸ See Nietzsche-Krupp, *Bound and Undetermined*, n.p.

⁸¹⁹ Barney, quoted in Nietzsche-Krupp, *Bound and Undetermined*, n.p. Note, that during the late 1980s, Barney used to take his guests to do late-night tours of New York City; Richard Serra’s *Tilted Arc* (1981, removed 1989) on which they would “reverently urinate” was a must. Matthew Barney, “Let Us Count the Ways: Statement by Matthew Barney, artist,” *The New York Time Magazine*, November 11, 2001, 109.

⁸²⁰ Lynne Cooke, “Thinking on Your Feet: Richard Serra’s Sculptures in Landscape,” in *Richard Serra, Sculpture: Forty Years*, eds. Kynastone McShine and Lynne Cooke, 77-104 (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 77.

⁸²¹ Willoughby Sharp, quoted in Allen, *Artists’ Magazines*, 91.

⁸²² Richard Serra, “Richard Serra,” *Avalanche* 2, no. 2 (Winter 1971): 20-21, 20. On Serra’s *Verb List* and its sources, see Lucie Kolb, “Vom Schreiben Künstlerischer Praxis: Verb List Compilations 1967-68 & 2010,” in *In Transition: Darstellungsformate im Wandel* (Zürich: Zürcher Hochschule der Künste, 2013), <https://blog.zhdk.ch/darstellungsformate/vom-schreiben-kuenstlerischer-praxis-verb-list-compilations-1967-68-2010/>, last access August 26, 2016; on the vision behind *Avalanche*, its history and impact, see Allen, *Artists’ Magazines*, 91-117.

⁸²³ Kynaston McShine, “A Conversation About Work with Richard Serra,” in *Richard Serra – Sculpture: Forty Years*, eds. McShine and Lynne Cooke, 15-40 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2007), 27.

⁸²⁴ See Nietzsche-Krupp, *Bound and Undetermined*, n.p.

material, conceptual restraints [...] [Barney's approach] remains deeply engaged with the concern of Process art, but rejects the conceit that form is primarily result of process."⁸²⁵ Thus, "Barney's materialism bounds and enables an interpretation of the work that is unresolved and deliberately impossible to grasp. [...] the work lives in a suspended state of mutual exchange between the confirmable and the unconfirmable – always confined by the material boundaries of a propositional framework."⁸²⁶ In Barney's work, a *state of potential* is constantly created and renegotiated. Precisely because it is potential, that is, prospective, and thus neither merely imprinted by the artist on a determined material nor *merely* the *result* of a process, his work appears then characteristically deliberately unsolved and ambivalent.

As we will see in the following, the relevance of his peculiar *material-driven propositional method* and the ambivalent fragmentated character of his work are constitutive elements of Barney's book production.

4.3 *Matthew Barney: New Work*, 1991-92

Matthew Barney: New Work is the title of a slim paperback that was published on the occasion of Matthew Barney's first museum exhibition, held from December 12, 1991 to January 30, 1992 at SFMOMA⁸²⁷ (see the folded visual index of the publication inserted at the end of the present study; henceforth, visual index).

The homonymous solo show in the framework of which the book came to the fore was organized by John Caldwell and Robert Riley (at the time Curator of Painting and Sculpture and Curator of Media Arts respectively) as a part of the *New Work* series, an on-going exhibition series inaugurated in 1987 by then-SFMOMA director John R. Lane with the support of the museum's Collectors Forum to promote "recent work by both emerging and established artists that has not been given wide attention in the Bay Area."⁸²⁸ At the end of 1991,

⁸²⁵ See Nietzsche-Krupp, *Bound and Undetermined*, n.p.

⁸²⁶ Nietzsche-Krupp, *Bound and Undetermined*, n.p.

⁸²⁷ See *Matthew Barney: New Work*.

⁸²⁸ John R. Lane quoted in Apsara DiQuinzio, "Surveying New Work: 1987 to Now," in *San Francisco Museum of Modern Art: 75 Years of Looking Forward*, ed. Janet Bishop, Corey Keller and Sarah Roberts, 369-375 (San Francisco, CA: SFMOMA, 2009), 369.

bringing to the extreme the mission of *New Work*, Caldwell and Riley managed to grant Barney, a recently Yale graduated 24 year old artist who had only a few participations in group exhibitions to his name and had just had his first gallery solo shows, his first museum exhibition.⁸²⁹

In retrospect, one should note that the major *result* of this audacious move – skilfully orchestrated by Caldwell and Riley and undoubtedly highly favoured by the SFMOMA Collectors Forum⁸³⁰ –, was not only or not mainly the spatially and temporally circumscribed exhibition (neither its faint nor flattering resonance in the press)⁸³¹ but rather the very fact that the exhibition had taken place in such a prestigious museum institution – a fact attested by the publication of its thin *catalogue*.

New Work is the first monographic publication that appears in the complete bibliography of the artist. It presents itself to the readers as a 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) perfect bound horizontal format booklet. Leafing through its 52 pages one is quite puzzled by the inscrutability of the images and by the general organization of the publication: even if it is often presented as an exhibition catalogue, as we will see in the following it does not meet the traditional understanding and functions of this instrument.

The analysis of *New Work* will be addressed as follows: initially the sequence of images that opens the volume will be described in its entirety as if the readers were approaching this booklet for the first time. As we will see, the

⁸²⁹ At the time of his *New Work* SFMOMA exhibition Barney had just had his solo debut exhibition on the West Coast (*Matthew Barney: [Facility of INCLINE]*, Stuart Regen Gallery, Los Angeles, May 22-June 22, 1991) as well as on the East Coast (*Matthew Barney: 00*, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, October 19-November 16, 1991). Furthermore his works were exhibited at the ACT-UP Benefit Sale at Paula Cooper Gallery, New York (December 14-21, 1991) as well as in the collective exhibition *Viral Infection: The Body and its Discontents*, Hallwalls Contemporary Art Center, Buffalo, N.Y. (November 17 - December 21, 1990); *Body as a Metaphor*, Althea Viafora Gallery, New York (September 9-29, 1990); *Group Drawing Show*, Althea Viafora Gallery, New York (June 9 - July 21, 1990); *Video Library*, Andrea Rosen Gallery, New York (1990).

⁸³⁰ It is not difficult to hypothesize that psychotherapist Norman Stone, who was part of the Collector Forum, warmly supported the exhibition. Under the guidance of Thea Westreich Art Advisory Services, Stone and his wife Nora had started to collect Barney's work early in the Spring of 1991, after having visited Barney's show at Stuart Regen Gallery in Los Angeles. See ARThound (Geneva Anderson), "Norah and Norman Stone discuss their Matthew Barney photo with ARThound," YouTube video, 3'38", <https://youtu.be/9zGVlOtBO4w>, last access, April 25, 2016.

⁸³¹ See David Bonetti, "This Kid's Just a Jock: Matthew Barney has talent, but it's too early for SFMOMA show," *San Francisco Examiner* (December 20, 1991); "Matthew Barney At Modern Museum," *San Francisco Chronicle* (January 9, 1992), E2.

action therein presented serves as a *prelude* to the narrative developed in the publication, sharing with it not only the visual qualities but also its disorienting character. After that, the description will continue turning the pages according to the direction of reading. We will examine the title page, the introductory critical text, and an untitled anonymous statement which is entrusted with the task of guiding the reader by providing some basic information on the relationship between the sequence of images that characterizes the book(let) and the different stations of the project that it re-presents. It is here that one finds reference for the first time to the *Project Index*, the verbi-visual map that partly diagrammatizes the project, providing a list of its various components. This *map* will be observed within the verbi-visual double spread on which it is published, highlighting the fact that the artist deliberately erased any useful clue to associate the elements of this verbi-visual list with the images in the publication. After briefly presenting the narrative syntax of the volume, the first half of the uninterrupted sequence of images in the main body of the book(let) will be exemplarily analysed in order to allow reflection upon how Barney makes use of some distinctive features of the book, such as the layout of its pages, its being a (sculptural) object characterized by a sequential reading, and the implementation within its pages of a medium that have found particular fortune in relation to the book, such as photography.⁸³² These elements are key to understanding not only how Barney uses the book, as a medium, as an object and as an instrument, but also the role that the codex plays within his intermedia practice.

To grasp the narrative unfolding throughout *New Work*, it has proved necessary to reconstruct the sculptural situations-cum-exhibitions mapped within the publication. This has been made possible by cross-referencing different documentary sources and archival materials, as well as accessing the

⁸³² See, *inter alia*, Martin Parr and Gerry Badger, *The Photobook: A History*, 3 vols (London/New York, 2004-2014); Patrizia Di Bello, Colette Wilson, and Shamooin Zamir, eds., *The Photobook: from Talbot to Ruscha and Beyond* (London/New York: Tauris, 2012). See also Theresa Wilkie, Jonathan Carson, and Rosie Miller, eds. *Photography and the Artist's Book* (Edinburgh/Cambridge, MA: MuseumsEtc), 2012.

time-based media components (i.e. the videotaped actions) presented within *New Work*⁸³³

As is the case of the description of the images which appears in the volume, also the reconstruction of the sculptural situations therein represented is addressed in this chapter by taking the point of view of an ideal visitor who is already familiar with the languages of contemporary art but, given the inaugural character of these exhibitions within the artist's career, is not acquainted with his cosmogony. This strategy allows one to offer some reflection on Barney's work, not only from the point of view of its accessibility but also of its organization in the space of the gallery, as well as in that of the publication: *New Work* embodies a spatio-temporal dimension which transcends them both.

4.3.1. Handling the Book(let)

When handling the book(let) *New Work*, the reader immediately perceives its strong visual character.⁸³⁴ The front cover shows a blurred grainy image with a dark spot approximately in the centre of the yellow field that characterizes the smooth surface (figure 4.1 a). Closer observation allows the identification of this *spot* as the figure of a crouched person taken from a high angle. Readers accustomed to American football easily recognize it as a football player, a center player wearing the jersey number 00 and holding the ball with his stretched right arm. Beyond this visual information, there is no other evidence: neither the title nor the name of the author.

The back cover shares the same blur and textured grid of the front cover while presenting a different image: the first plan is occupied by a yellow half-moon shape, the second by the bluish upper part of the naked thighs and lower abdomen of an unspecified character, while the yellow tone of the first plane

⁸³³ The author could access these materials in the library of The Museum of Modern Art, New York (Autumn 2012, May 2016), the Barbara Gladstone Gallery Archives, New York (September 2014) and at the studio of the artist, New York (December 2012, September 2014, May 2016).

⁸³⁴ Beside the fact that no text appears on the front and back covers, just 5 out of 52 pages are fully textual. While 4 pages are characterized by the coexistence of text and images, the remnant 47 present 2 graphic compositions and 56 photographic images. Different material features characterize these images: some of them are in black and white while the majority are in colour; a few of them are fully focused while most of them present a blurred checkered surface; they have different dimensions and are laid out following diverse criteria.

and the blue one of the second encounter each other and melt into the background (figure 4.1 b).⁸³⁵ A belt made of a whitish material covers the abdomen of the person at the navel. Also in this case there is no textual information whatsoever. Furthermore, despite the feeling of smoothness offered by the surface of the paper, these images are characterized by a chequered texture that seems to amplify, if not being the source of their blurred appearance.

Information related to the volume appears only on its slim spine where one can read the title of the book(let) and the name of the institution responsible for its publication. The title of the *catalogue* (MATTHEW BARNEY: **New Work**) coincides with the title of the related exhibition and corresponds to a conflation of the name of the artist (which is written in Futura Light Condensed upper-cases) and the title of the exhibition series within which his work was presented (in lower-cases).⁸³⁶ The name of the institution responsible for the exhibition and its related publication is marked on the spine in the same bold font uppercases (**SFMOMA**).

The sequence of images that opens the book presents the same texture and out-of-focus look of the ones on the front and back covers (visual index I-II). Three of them, equally large, share the surface of the interior front cover and of the flyleaf. They are displayed side by side, framed by a white band on the lower and upper edge. In the picture on the left, a muscular character is portrayed frontally from the pelvis upwards dressed in black with white bandages around the wrists and the hands, a cap, as well as 00 digits on the bust and on the shoulders. This picture shows him with the head bent in concentration as if soon piercing the surface of the page. In the image in the middle, three feet face each other. The one directed to the right rests on the ground, while the others, are slightly rising from the ground, as if they were bearing a largely backwards-unbalanced weight. A picture of two overlooking personages, almost ready for a clash, closes the sequence. The one on the left, dressed in black, can be inferred

⁸³⁵ Note, that the sex of the personage is unrecognizable while it is hidden between cushion and the legs.

⁸³⁶ Although the upper and lower case of his titles were respected, the artist was not in control over the choice of the typeface because the book was part of the *New Work* series. However, this was the only formal restriction that the museum imposed on the artist. Barney, in conversation with the author.

as being the character first encountered on the cover, while the one on the right, remains unknown. The white bands that unify the three images enhance their sequential reading, allowing interpretation of the pictures as successive moments of an action of which progression can be followed by turning the page. Here, two pictures expand on a whole page each, presenting the moment of the previously announced clash from two different points of view. On the left, seen from above, the solitary football player is now very close to his adversary. The player's right arm is stretched to a non-identifiable point between the legs and the head of the opponent. On the right, an even more blurred vertically tripartite image shows the football player's shoulder with the double-digit 00 in sight on the sleeve and his bandaged hand that, close in a fist, has reached the rival's naked abdomen. This series of blurred images ends here.

4.3.1.1 Textual Apparatuses

Turning the page, the reader finds a light grey uniform field on which two superimposed graphic objects lay, a brilliant yellow mark (an oval shape crossed with a rectilinear bar that as we will soon have a chance to see, corresponds to what the artist calls *Field Emblem*) and a black monogram composed by the numbers 00 that already appeared in white on the football player's jersey (figure 4.2, left). Within the double spread, this purely graphical page matches the frontispiece of the publication (fig. 4.2, right). Here, besides information related to the exhibition in the framework of which the *catalogue* was published,⁸³⁷ two black and white pictures are presented on the right edge of the page. The one on the top portrays a semi-naked, muscular man whose upper and lower limbs as well as his hips and neck are chained together. Unperturbed by the manifold bolts that lock the chains wrapped around his body, he proudly raises his head and gazes into the camera lens. Below, a football player wearing the 00 jersey is portrayed from the hips upwards while holding his helmet high with his right arm. The picture was taken in a stadium where the player is gazing with pride at his fans. He holds his helmet in a

⁸³⁷ These are: the name of the institution in which it took place, the dates, the name of the artist as well as the title, the names of the organizers and their respective institutional positions.

position that allows them to read the 00 digit marked on it. At this point the readers might infer that the enigmatic characters encountered *in action* in the previous pages could be identified with the two characters portrayed on the frontispiece.

The frontispiece is followed by the colophon of the publication and by a few pages of *text* (visual index IV-VI). This entails an introductory critical text by curator Robert Riley (§ 4.3.1.1.1); an untitled anonymous statement which provides the readers with relevant information regarding the structure and scope of the publication (§ 4.3.1.1.2); and a verbi-visual double spread presenting the so-called *Project Index* and *Project Documents*, as well as the drawing *STADIUM*, 1991 (§ 4.3.1.2). Note, that the eminently visual character of the publication causes the merely textual apparatuses to slip into the background. In any event, even if the readers do not read Riley's contribution where the curator makes reference to Barney's "boyhood idols Harry Houdini and [former Oakland raiders center] Jim Otto"⁸³⁸ thus intuitively providing identification of the characters pictured in b/w on the frontispiece -- the names of Jim Otto (b. 1938) and Harry Houdini (1874-1926) are to be found at the beginning of the *Project Index*.⁸³⁹ Nevertheless, the identification of these characters does not provide the reader with the tools needed to understand, even on a basic narrative level, why two people who lived in different eras are called to confront each other. Only well informed readers – readers who were almost impossible to find at this early stage of Barney's career, i.e. when the booklet was published – could know that, behind being two idols of Barney's boyhood, Otto and Houdini find their role in the artist's work in that they become allegorical images of physical control. The celebrated magician and escape artist Houdini stands for what Barney has described as "the field of preparation, where potential energy is developed and stored"⁸⁴⁰ while former Oakland Raiders center Jim Otto, a legendary player who despite multiple injuries (and knee replacements) never missed a single game between 1960

⁸³⁸ Robert R. Riley, "Matthew Barney: The Expense of Energy," in *Matthew Barney: New Work*, n.p.

⁸³⁹ Note, that the picture of Houdini on the frontispiece of this booklet was taken in 1899, the year in which entertainment manager Martin Beck who internationally launched his career discovered his talent. At that time Houdini was about the same age as Barney.

⁸⁴⁰ Barney, "Beginnings and Endings with Jonathan Bepler, 2001," 9.

and 1974, stands for “the field of competition”⁸⁴¹, a field where all energy is spent.⁸⁴² In Barney’s cosmogony Houdini corresponds to the Character of Positive Restraint, while Otto to the Character of Negative Restraint.

These characterizations are symbolized by what Barney calls the *Field Emblem*, that is a vertically oriented oval shape with an horizontal superimposed rectilinear bar. As previously anticipated, this symbol appears in the page directly on the left of the frontispiece.⁸⁴³ The *Field Emblem* is a recurring graphic symbol within the work of the artist. It visualizes the unresolved and unresolvable *state of potential* that characterizes Barney’s *Weltanschauung*, diagrammatizing the modalities through which his artistic practice develops. He conceived it and employed it already during his formative years at Yale,⁸⁴⁴ and since then it has reappeared throughout his entire *œuvre*, functioning also as an emblem in the sense as a trademark or a corporate logo.⁸⁴⁵

Through the *Field Emblem* the artist has envisioned his personal understanding of *creative process*, that is, the dialectic relationship between “the desire to make, and the discipline to continue making, while trying not to let creative energy dissipate by allowing one’s practice to take a concrete form.”⁸⁴⁶ The *Field Emblem* functions as “a flat graphic representation of the

⁸⁴¹ Barney, “Beginnings and Endings with Jonathan Bepler, 2001,” 9.

⁸⁴² On Houdini, his (hi)story and career, see Kenneth Silverman, *Houdini!!! The Career of Ehrlic Weiss* (New York: Harper Collins, 1996); on Jim Otto, his (hi)story and career see Jim Otto and Dave Newhouse, *Jim Otto: Pain to Glory* (Champaign, IL: Sports Publishing LLC, 2000). From the 1980s to the early 1990s Otto owned a series of Burger King fast-food restaurants on the West Coast, something which explains why in the *Project Index* the character is also described as The Whopper, i.e. the name of Burger King’s signature hamburger product.

⁸⁴³ Note, that the structure of this double spread is to be found symmetrical at the end of the publication where the two b/w photographs are accompanied by the production credits of the videotaped actions which are part of the project and where the *Field Emblem* appears in yellow on a blue field with white superimposed 00 digits.

⁸⁴⁴ Barney started to draw and use this symbol in 1987, around the time he initiated his *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series. See SFMOMA. “Football and Perception: Matthew Barney on the Field Emblem,” SFMOMA video, 1:54, <https://www.sfmoma.org/watch/football-and-perception-matthew-barney-on-the-field-emblem/>, last access August 10, 2016. The photographic archival material conserved in the folder “Artwork Images: Yale Years” at Matthew Barney Studio, New York, confirms this affirmation.

⁸⁴⁵ See Spector, *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us*, 7 and Joseph Bairlein, “Im Zeichen der Assoziation – zur Genese und Wirkmacht von Matthew Barneys Feldzeichen,” in *Cremaster Anatomies*, 177-190.

⁸⁴⁶ Barney, interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, in *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. I, 1987-2002*, 87-91, 88. Note, that this *procedere* is closely linked to the concept of negentropy so dear to Alice Aycock. See Hobbs, *Alice Aycock*.

DRAWING RESTRAINT concept - the body with the self-imposed resistance as an enabler for creative act"⁸⁴⁷, i.e. a concept that lies behind the entire production of the artist and metaphorically refers to the state of muscle hypertrophy within resistance training.⁸⁴⁸

In *New Work* the meaning of the *Field Emblem* is unintelligible even for the most sympathetic and patient reader (as it is the case of the entire

⁸⁴⁷ SFMOMA. "Football and Perception: Matthew Barney on the Field Emblem."

⁸⁴⁸ Especially at the beginning of his career, Barney has implemented hypertrophy as analogy for the creative process. Hypertrophy is fundamental in resistance training: within the regime of hypertrophy the muscles are stressed until the tissues break; during the successive rest phase they heal increasing in mass and strength. As one can notice reading some notes which Barney wrote on the occasion of the presentation of *Field dressing (orifill)* within the exhibition *Body as a Metaphor* (Althea Viafora Gallery, New York, September 9-29, 1990), the artist was fascinated by hypertrophy because "over time, the extended training program graphs into an increasing mass/strength sine curve with intermittent plateaus of suspended development." In the same notes the artist describes hypertrophy as "the alchemy of the body" and expand on the necessity of psychological tricks within resistance training. Matthew Barney, *Notes (1990)*, first published in Thyrza Nichols Goodeve, "Archives and Gyms; Sentences and Muscles: Vito Acconci, Matthew Barney, and sports," *Trans>Arts. Culture. Media.*, no. 9/10 (2001): 188-2001, 199. See also Arnold Schwarzenegger and Bill Dobbins, *Encyclopedia of Modern Body Building* (London: Pelham, 1985). Note, that within *A workshop with Matthew Barney*, the workshop the artist led in the framework of *Brillo / Pensiero d'artista, Festival Internazionale di Filosofia dell'Arte Contemporanea* (Torino, Fondazione Merz, November 1-2, 2008) Barney mentioned this book as one of his literary reference of the late 1980s and of the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series. The cover of *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. I*, the first book the artist dedicated to the homonymous on-going series, shows a photographic reproduction of the sculpture *PATH→*, 1991. Here the *Field Emblem's* function is similar to that of a real emblem: the graphic image is in fact accompanied by the three words constituting Barney's *Path* (an emblem is a combination of an image with a short written text, the "motto"; the emblems are derived from the *imprese* which have appeared on the coat of arms since the Middle Ages; see Pierluigi De Vecchi, *Corso di Iconologia e Iconografia* (Milano: Cusl, 2005) 21-22). The artist defines what he calls *The Path* as "a meditation on the creative process," (Barney, interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, 88) a tripartite system with strong biological connotations which is articulated in three phases: Condition, Situation, Production. In Barney's words:

Situation would be characterized as raw drive or hunger. It's where subject matter is indiscriminately consumed, driven by undifferentiated sexual energy. In this phase, the energy in the system was visualized as undirected and unable to generate form.

Condition becomes a visualization of a disciplinary funnel that could take the raw useless energy in Situation and channel it into something useful. Conditions takes content that Situation had consumed and begins to give it form.

In the Production phase, a form begins to emerge. If The Path could be visualized as a digestive tract, Production is its anal or oral output. Eventually, the goal of The Path was to abstract the form of Production, and to create a loop between Situation and Production. The form was called Bolus, and took the shape of a small hand weight. [...] The Bolus also functioned as an external connection between Situation and Condition. (Barney, interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist, 88)

Substantially *The Path* is also a borrowed biological metaphor through which the artist could temporary give shape to his *Weltanschauung*: within this system the *state of potential* at the core of his practice is destined to remain such – (trans)formative creative energy short circuits without ever resulting in a final product.

publication). This *inscrutability* offers incentive to refer to the introductory text written by one of the two curators of the exhibition to be found when turning the page.

4.3.1.1.1 *MATTHEW BARNEY: The Expense of Energy*

In the two paged-text entitled *MATTHEW BARNEY: The Expense of Energy*, Robert R. Riley, at the time SFMoMA Media Arts curator, attempts to set the art historical and the critical parameters through which Matthew Barney's work ought to be interpreted, while providing a brief overview of the San Francisco exhibition and its accompanying publication.

After mentioning, without describing, "the combination of Matthew Barney's 'facilities' *Transsexualis* and *REPRESSIA* and the video related to each"⁸⁴⁹ as the works in which "unexpected terrain in sculpture, performance, and video art is encountered", he positions the young artist's endeavors in the footsteps of body- and performance art as well as in those of Fluxus. The *non-movement* founded in 1961 by George Maciunas comes to the curator's mind because of Barney's "fascination with text and transactional objects," while artists Joseph Beuys (1921-1986), Vito Acconci (b. 1940) and Carolee Schneeman (b. 1939) are mentioned as fundamental references because of their implementation of "performance and visceral materials as expressive media". Furthermore, artists Chris Burden (b. 1946), John Sturgeon (b. 1946) as well as Marina Abramovic (b. 1946) and Ulay (b. 1943) are "directly related to Barney's art" because of their "heroic actions, their connections with the autosuggestive nature of the video, and the use of the body as a vessel of perseverance and transcendence".

Together with these purely art-historical references, Riley mentions two other interpretative clues pertaining to contemporary culture in a broader sense; that is the horror movie genre "with its themes of transformation and threatening amalgamations of man and machine" as well as telecast sport. Postponing the development of his insights on the horror genre to a later

⁸⁴⁹ Unless otherwise stated all the quotes in the body of the text of this section are from: Riley, "MATTHEW BARNEY: The Expense of Energy," in *New Work*, n.p.

section of the text, he lingers on broadcast sport to underline that since its introduction (1937),⁸⁵⁰ technology has developed to enable the viewer not only to follow the play but also to enter the “physical and psychological states of the players themselves”.

In addition, Riley provides what he seems to consider being a few handy conceptual tools through which Barney’s work “can be meaningfully deciphered”. They are: “the formal devices of division and symmetry,” the focus on the notions of the expenditure and recovery of energy, as well as what he defines the “notions of incline and decline, in sex and play.”

Without further explanation, he proceeds with a brief characterization of the show. Of the nine works that were on view in San Francisco, only four are mentioned, and just two of which with their full titles, that is, the two videotaped-actions *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR* (1991, colour video, silent, 41m 42s) and *DELAY OF GAME* (1991, colour and b/w video, silent, 3m 10s). These videos are briefly described as featuring “dual performances” running into two opposite monitors “positioned in anatomical reference to the head” and thus occupying “a cerebral space adjacent to the locus of the installation.” Riley seems to take for granted that the readers autonomously connect the so-called *locus of the installation* with the yellow foam mat and the walk-in cooler part of *REPRESSIA* and *Transsexualis*, that is the works he had just mentioned at the beginning of his text in terms of *facility*, without providing any further detail.

The videotaped-actions are both described at some length. *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR* is presented as a “strenuous interior climb” in which the artist’s body “banded with hooks and taped to sustain muscle strain [...] ascends and descends the gallery and refrigerated space [part of the installation]” with the help of climbing devices. At uneven intervals “vertical shots are intercut with perspective views” of the space in which the climb is taking place. In *DELAY OF GAME* “a series of close-up details and long-range action shots” dissolves one into another. The artist, this time appearing “in cross-dress, as a woman in a white turban, bathing suit and

⁸⁵⁰ See Dave Berkman, “Long before Arledge...Sports & TV: The Earliest Years: 1937-1947 – as Seen By the Contemporary Press.” *Journal of Popular Culture* 22, no. 2 (Fall 1988): 49-62.

wrap, in high heels, [...] drops into the frame to pantomime gestures associated with football-field strategies and penalties.”

According to the Media Arts curator, the video *DELAY OF GAME* corresponds to the “visual representation of the feminine aspect of Barney’s ‘facility’”; that is to the feminine aspect of “the configuration of the installation” and should be interpreted by opposing it to two figures which stand for the artist’s quintessential representation of masculinity; they are his boyhood idols illusionist and stunt-performer Harry Houdini and former Oakland Raiders center Jim Otto. Without further unfolding the feminine/masculine dialectic which he stresses as being constitutive of the installation’s interpretation, Riley uses the rest of the paragraph to evoke the connection between “themes of force, sublimation, and transmutation” and “societal rigors of training, dress, and [...] autoeroticism,” assuming that through his mixed-media installations Barney is questioning “received assumptions about physical strength and gender.” Furthermore he very briefly frames Barney’s implementation of “fluid substances” such as the medium of “video as well as materials transformed through hot and cold” as “metaphorical devotions to sex and penetration.”

Only at this point Riley focuses on the booklet itself informing the reader that:

the original page layout of this publication reflects the exhibition variable relationships of site and scale. Through the use of video stills and documentary photographs of his previous installations, Barney constructs a ‘third-facility’: an arena of both detailed and full-field representations in a storyboard format suspended action and emblematic contortions that render pictorially the syllogistic forms of the full installations.⁸⁵¹

Accordingly, he understands and presents the publication that the readers are holding as a *third-facility*, or, if we implement the interpretation of the word *facility* he had proposed in the frame of his description of *DELAY OF GAME*, as a third *configuration*. Therefore, the curator understands the sculptural components of the installation, as a *first-grade-facility*, while the videos (integral parts of the installation as materializations of the “cerebral space adjacent to the locus of the installation” itself) become a sort of *second-grade-*

⁸⁵¹ Riley, “MATTHEW BARNEY,” n.p.

facility. Their logic, in fact, can be grasped only in relation to the installation's sculptural elements; that is, in relation to the *first-grade-facility*.

The book published in the context of the SFMOMA exhibition therefore acquires the status of a *third-facility*, or better, that of an additional *third-grade-facility*. Within its pages, Riley describes the book as the scene (the "arena") in which "detailed and full-field [photographical] representations" of both what I would call the *first-* and the *second-grade-facility* meet. Organized in sequences, as if they were part of a storyboard,⁸⁵² the photographic representations perform the task of "render[ing] pictorially", that is, *to visualize* what Riley indicates as "the syllogistic forms of the full installations." When he speaks of "full installations" he means the *eminently sculptural* components of each installation plus the two videotaped-actions that are part of both installations. Referring to their form in terms of syllogism, he stresses their over-conceptualized structure. The SFMOMA publication seems then to be created to absolve the task of *rendering* this over-conceptualized structure in *pictures*.

Before concluding his contribution to the publication, Riley comes back to the contemporary horror movie genre linking Barney's videos to the ambivalent nature of the genre at the beginning of the 1990s. If on the one hand "action, flashback, and hallucination in Barney's electronic imagery engage the video screen as a psychotropic enclosure, much as the appearance of monsters in film and television" on the other hand, Riley reminds the readers that "entertainment culture, also objectify the subconscious." Recording the fact that "monsters are no longer zombies from other worlds, but supernatural phenomena that assume human form, or beings with mechanical features" he describes them as "visible representations of technologies run amok." These statements lead him to a reflection on the "monstrous consequences" of technological development in general, a concern that was much discussed in those years (§ 4.2). Possibly because of the context in which the short essay was produced, Riley specifically mentions three mechanical devices, that is the video camera, the film projector, and the gymnastic devices as the machines through which "the dialogue between the self and the externally perceived world expands, but grows discontinuous at the same time." In the closing remarks the

⁸⁵² On the concept and logic of the storyboard, see § 4.6.

curator recapitulates some of the material and thematic aspects of Barney's work emphasizing the intertwining between "the mechanical world" and Barney's interest in "the entertainment culture of sports, film, and sexual antagonism", as well as the medical environment and the laboratory as "avenues for transformation".

Riley's contextualizes Barney's work both within the art historical context and in that of contemporary culture. In the first case, the curator mentions the names of different artists (Beuys, Acconci, Schneemann, Burden, Sturgeon, Abramovic and Ulay) whom he seems to consider the young artist's directly antecedents and the practice of whom he considers as "directly related to Barney's art." It should however be emphasized that Barney's practice is associable to that of these artists more on an iconographic level, rather than from the point of view of their specific artistic expression and *Weltanschauung*.⁸⁵³ Note, that especially at that time, Barney did not know directly their works nor had he thoroughly *studied* their art. Rather, he drew heavily on their formal imagery as mediated in the photographic documentation of their performances and activities, especially as made accessible through the instrument of the book.⁸⁵⁴ A similar argument could be made with regard to the contextualization of his work within the cultural climate at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. As already anticipated, the artist made abundant use of the imagery in which he was immersed during those years, implementing its different elements as composition materials without ever really problematizing their meaning nor taking a consistent political position in their regard.⁸⁵⁵

⁸⁵³ See Wruck, *Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle*, 33-47.

⁸⁵⁴ Expanding on the role of photography in his formative year Barney stated: "there is something [...] about the way that the photograph becomes the legacy of something that might have been more time-based. I was always very interested in that, especially with regard to the work in the 1960s and 1970s that I was interested in and had never really seen. My understanding of Chris Burden is through a photograph [...], same thing with Beuys, Acconci, and others." Barney, in conversation with the author. The *catalogue* of Beuys's first major exhibition in the United States (Joseph Beuys, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York, November 2, 1979 – January 2, 1980), a copy of which he possessed, was also a very important reference for Barney in his formative and early career years. Barney, in conversation with the author.

⁸⁵⁵ This is not to say that Barney did not share the ideals of some of the battles of those years, as evidenced for example by the fact that he donated some works in favor of ACT UP (ACT-UP Benefit Sale at Paula Cooper Gallery, New York, December 14-21, 1991) or, in the context of

Riley's text provides very few elements with which to understand Barney's artistic vision and to frame the exhibition *New Work*. It is the untitled anonymous statement following it which provides some elements on the significance of the San Francisco exhibition and especially on the steps of the project in L.A. and in N.Y. which preceded that exhibition, thus offering the readers with relevant information regarding the structure and scope of the publication.

4.3.1.1.2 An Unsigned Untitled Statement on the Nature of *New Work*

Immediately after Riley's text, a full page is left blank in order to accommodate an unsigned untitled statement that is worthy of being quoted in its entirety, since it further frames the scope of the publication as well as of its related exhibition(s) while at the same time revealing the artist's attitude towards both:

Several of the works seen in Matthew Barney's San Francisco installation – [that is the ones entitled] *REPRESSIA*, *Transexualis*, and the video action *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT* with the *ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR* [which is] paired with *DELAY OF GAME* – were exhibited in June of this year in Los Angeles. A related, but often very different, installation, which served to complete, in a metaphorical sense, the action Barney had begun in Los Angeles, was shown in October in New York. The video actions *MILE HIGH Threshold* and *DELAY OF GAME* are shown here as recorded in Los Angeles. Although two new, purely sculptural works are included in San Francisco, the artist conceives of the exhibition as a document of the Los Angeles show. The catalogue, however, includes visual material from both the New York and the Los Angeles presentations of Barney's work, and he sees it as existing on yet another level. It constitutes a narrative of both exhibitions and is, in a certain sense, more complete than either. The images in the catalogue roughly follow the sequence of the Project Index.⁸⁵⁶

more recent works such as, for example, *DE LAMA LÂMINA* (2004-2009) and *RIVER of FUNDAMENT* (2014-) by the fact that he refers to ecological problems (e.g. the deforestation in Brazil, the greenhouse cultivation, and the environmental sustainability of aquaculture) or more generally eco-socio-economical problems (see, e.g. the choice of Detroit with its degrade and pollution as well as of New York with its polluted canals as characters for *RIVER FUNDAMENT*). On the past, present, and future challenges of the city of Detroit see, Francesca Berardi, *Detour in Detroit* (Milano: Humbolt Books, 2015).

⁸⁵⁶ Untitled statement, in "Matthew Barney: New Work," n.p.

Although the artist had created two new works for San Francisco, this location did not constitute a decisive stage in the development of the trilogy. The SFMOMA show was just a stop-over during which Barney had nevertheless the precious occasion to rethink some of his installations for a different site while reflecting and organizing the trilogy's narrative and sculptural imagery within the book format.

In hindsight, one could argue that, beyond the prestige and recognition that a solo-show in such an institution conferred to the artist and his work, the most important effect of this exhibition was that it allowed the artist to work on its *related* publication. Despite Barney considering the exhibition in San Francisco as a document of the show in Los Angeles, in the publication not only the narrative behind the Los Angeles sculptural situation but also that of the one developed in New York *found space*. Moreover, as we will see more in detail in the following, reference to *OTTOshaft*, the central part of the trilogy which will be realized only the following year in Kassel, is made indirectly in the very centre of the symmetrical booklet. Therefore, the volume cannot be considered a document of its related exhibition(s) but rather a cinematic instrument through which the different sculptural magnitude of the trilogy is visualized and made tangible through its peculiar narrative dimension.⁸⁵⁷

4.3.1.2 *Project Index, Project Document, STADIUM, 1991*

Even if the SFMOMA show seemed to epitomize a further stage of the project that Barney had started to articulate at the Stuart Regen Gallery in Los Angeles in the late Spring of that same year, and which he had further elaborated for his much attended Fall 1991 exhibition at the Barbara Gladstone

⁸⁵⁷ Note that the SFMoMA exhibition was the first real occasion in which the artist was confronted with the request to present works exhibited and activated within certain specific spaces, outside of these spaces. Beyond the two above mentioned works which the artist created specifically for the occasion (*Away Gown: JIM BLIND (fem.)*, 1991 and *DRILL TEAM: screw BOLUS*, 1991) and three works on the wall (*DELAY of GAME (manual A)*, 1991; *HYPOTHERMAL PENETRATOR*, 1991; and *STADIUM*, 1991) the San Francisco space was in fact characterized by *Transexualis*, 1991 and *REPRESSIA*, 1991 as well as by their related two videotaped actions *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR*, 1991 and *DELAY of GAME*, 1991.

Gallery in New York City,⁸⁵⁸ the artist did not intend it as such. He intended the San Francisco show as “a document”⁸⁵⁹ of his Los Angeles exhibition and the related “catalogue” as a complex instrument “existing on yet another level.” In presenting visual materials from both the L.A. and N.Y. shows the booklet aims then to go beyond documentation, offering “a narrative” which, on the one hand encompasses both, but on the other is “more complete than either.” This narrative unfolds through the images presented in *New Work*. Since “they roughly follow the sequence of the Project Index” nothing remains but to turn to it in order to orientate oneself within the flowing sequence of pictures. Having the book(let) in one’s hands at the page on which the above-entirely quoted unsigned statement is to be found (§ 4.3.1.1.2, visual index V),⁸⁶⁰ one only needs to turn the page in order to turn to the *Project Index* (visual index VI).

The *Project Index* is a list of fourteen numbered items (1 to 14), ordered in two columns laid out on the left page of the spread (figure 4.3). This list can be easily assimilated to the list of five numbered items (15 to 19) which is presented on the neighbouring page under the title *Project Documents* (figure 4.4). Indeed, the two lists could be considered as if they were one, given that the numbering proceeds undisturbed from one to the other. They could be read as just one list of items numbered from 1 to 19, or as a compilation of artworks, since next to every number one finds a title, a year of realization, information

⁸⁵⁸ In his review of this show, Benjamin Weil points out that before the New York public had actually had the chance to see Barney’s works, his name and artistic persona had already been publicized through a subtle but effective marketing campaign which dated back to the first months of 1991. According to Weil, already in March 1991 rumors spread of a show dedicated to an incredibly talented artist, which was due to open at Petersburg gallery. The exhibition was never opened given the mysterious sudden closure of the space. Weil refers also to the fact that since that moment “the name of Matthew Barney has appeared regularly in art magazines – even on the cover – usually with dithyrambic descriptions and analyses of his work.” Benjamin Weil, “Matthew Barney,” *Flash Art* 162 (1992): 102. Weil is here undisguisedly referring to the September 1991 issue of the authoritative art magazine *Artforum* in which not only the work of Matthew Barney was the subject of the *Openings* series (a series in which writers were invited to introduce the work of artists at the beginning of their careers) but which was also featured on the cover. See Lane Relyea, “Openings: Matthew Barney” *Artforum* 30, no. 1 (September 1991): 124 (and cover image).

⁸⁵⁹ Unless otherwise stated all the quotes in this section are from: Untitled Statement in “Matthew Barney: New Work,” n.p., which has been quoted in its entirety at p. 247 of the present study.

⁸⁶⁰ Note, that the statement is followed, on the lower edge of the page, by a brief note acknowledging the parties through whose support “this catalogue has been made possible,” that is, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art’s Collectors Forum, John Bransten, and Norah and Norman Stone. *Matthew Barney: New Work*, n.p.

related to materials, dimensions, and, if appropriate, duration. Items 1 to 16 are complemented by additional quizzical information which could be interpreted as descriptive *subtitles*. These subtitles are characterized by a mix of words written in capital letters as well as in lower case, enriched and kept together by different signs such as dashes, hyphens, arrows, punctuation marks, special dots, and even a symbol which clearly reminds one of the stylist Coco Chanel's interlocking Cs logo.⁸⁶¹

Despite the highly structured layout and the technical evidences they provide, the *Project Index* and the *Project Documents* are not immediately intelligible. Terms and signs used in the jargon of American football and (autoerotic) sexual conundrums, as well as in that of medicine and psychoanalysis, blend with terms and symbols relating to the fashion world. Note that, even if the graphic layout of the spread does not allow for clear distinctions, looking closely to the column in which the *Project Documents* are listed, the readers spot another list, that is, the *catalogue* of the nine works exhibited in San Francisco.⁸⁶²

Crossing the various data met up to now, even for informed readers it is almost impossible to make their way inside the *Project Index* and *Project*

⁸⁶¹ Already used as their insignia by Claude of France (1499-1524; Queen of France 1515-1524 as the spouse of Francis I) and Catherine de Medici (1519-1589; Queen of France 1547-1559 as the wife of Henry II), the two interlocking Cs' logo was popularized by Gabrielle Bonheur Chanel (1883-1971), known as Coco Chanel. She implemented it as an iconic brand for her fashion. Although there are different opinions on where she drew inspiration for her logo, many of her motifs, such as the double Cs logo that appeared as belt buckles on her dresses from the 1930s, were to varying degrees autobiographical. See Harold Koda and Andrew Bolton, eds., *Chanel* (New York/New Heaven, CT and London: The Metropolitan Museum of Art/Yale University Press, 2005). On Chanel, the myth surrounding her personality, the never-ending succes and fascination connected to her brand and aura, see also Peter Sumerauer, "Chanel: Stil und Mythos," in *Mythos Chanel*, ed. Maria Spitz, 331-339 (Mettingen: Draiflessen Collection, 2013). Also during the 1980s the brand Chanel was very popular. The fact that Barney implemented this specific logo can be linked to his past activity as a fashion model.

⁸⁶² The nine works in this exhibition check-list (four of the works in the *Project Index* and all of the five *Project Documents*) are identified by their respective numbers within the *Project Index* and *Project Documents*, their title and year, plus their provenance and courtesy. The two new works Barney had created for the SFMoMA show correspond to n. 15 and n. 16, that is the first two items in the *Project Documents* list: *Away Gown: JIM BLIND (fem.)*, 1991 and *DRILL TEAM: screw BOLUS*, 1991. Note, that only one of the nine works on show was in an institutional collection, that is, *Transexualis* (1991), a work that SFMOMA had recently acquired from the Stuart Regen Gallery. The name of collectors Norman and Norah Stone are listed as the owners of one of the works on show, *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR* 1991, something which, on the one hand justifies but on the other hand renders disputable the facts that Mr. Stone was part of the SFMOMA Collectors Forum (the group of collectors affiliated to the museum which supported the exhibition *Matthew Barney: New Work*) and that he and his wife Nora contributed to the realization of the catalogue of the exhibition.

Documents. This is mainly due to two factors. The first deals with the fact that the readers are not offered any explicit advice to connect the images in the *catalogue* with the sequence of these lists which remain then highly abstract. Given that there is neither the number of pages nor any other evident clue that permits them to do this, the 14 entries of the *Project Index* cannot perform their expected functions, that is, that which semiotician Roland Barthes defined as *ancrage* and *relais*.⁸⁶³ The *ancrage* corresponds to the control imposed by the text onto the polysemy of the image while on the contrary the *relais* implies the complementarity between text and image. Instead of being enabled to fully exploit their evocative, aesthetic, explanatory, and interpretative potential, the unusual titles and subtitles, and this is the second factor, build a sort of *encrypted narrative* that enfolds throughout the list.⁸⁶⁴ One could notice this, in that certain words and signs repeat not only in the titles but also under different headings, sometimes in different formation. In parallel, the sequence of images that characterizes the publication could be also described in terms of *encrypted narrative*, thus effectively developing a paradoxical *correspondence* between the *images in the catalogue* and the *Project Index* which the anonymous statement put forth. If the *Project Index* does not achieve what Barthes calls “les fonctions du message linguistique par rapport au message iconique”⁸⁶⁵ what is its function within the book and how can the readers rely on it to access the images of the publication?

Considering the double spread as the mode of *givenness of the book*,⁸⁶⁶ one should take into account that in the visual economy of the spread, the structure and the narrative behind the *Project Index* and the *Project Documents* mirror and are mirrored by the picture of the framed drawing *STADIUM* which occupies most of the surface of the right page of what can by now be fully described as a tripartite double spread (visual index VI). In the image, the

⁸⁶³ Roland Barthes, “Rhétorique de l’image,” *Communications* 4, (1961): 40-51.

⁸⁶⁴ On the potential of the title, see Jerrold Levinson, “Titles,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 44, no. 1 (1985): 29-39 and S. J. Wilshire, “The Roles of Titles in Identifying Literary Works,” *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 45, no. 4 (Summer 1987): 403-408. See also Arthur Danto, *The Transfiguration of the Commonplace: A Philosophy of Art* (London: Harvard University Press, 1981), 119.

⁸⁶⁵ Barthes, “Rhétorique de l’image,” 44.

⁸⁶⁶ On the meaning and relevance of the double spread see Lippard, “Double Spread.”

whitish internally lubricated plastic *frame* of the work⁸⁶⁷ is partially cut in order to allow close examination of the graphite drawing (figure 4.4). The sketch presents a mix between drawn forms, lines, arrows, and handwritten words that, in most cases, can also be found in the *Project Index* and in the *Project Documents*, thus encouraging the reader to interpret it as a sort of visualization of the lists through the practice of drawing and vice versa.

Focusing on the photographic reproduction of *STADIUM*, one notices that it condenses a varied imaginary related to the interior of the body and the architecture of the American Football field.⁸⁶⁸ Moreover, it is enriched with a number of other iconographic references that goes from the artist's *Field Emblem*, to molecular structures, to wings vaguely reminiscent of that of a bat. The multi-layered drawing presents an almost perfectly symmetrical structure that develops around a vertical middle axis. A base with two circular openings – two orifices that correspond to Otto's double zero – and a rounded upper end characterizes its phallic shape. As it is clearly marked on its upper end, this figure is designated as representing *OTTOshaft*. Through multifaceted marks on its left and right, the artist has sketched the narrative developed within *Facility of INCLINE* and *Facility of DECLINE* respectively, making of *STADIUM* not only a handwritten diagram of the entire *OTTO Trilogy*, but also the material reference through which the realization of *OTTOshaft* is prefigured in the publication.⁸⁶⁹ The fact that the hand-written words in the drawing are the same as some of the words one can find when browsing the *Project Index* and the *Project Documents* reinforces the interpretation of the drawing as a sort of *Project Drawing*, that is, a visualization of the *OTTO Trilogy* through the practice of drawing. Note, that the *Project Index* (and to a lesser extent the *Project Documents*) corresponds to the typeface transcription of the notational system developed by Barney to chronicle his works. This notational system helps him to visualize and to *phenomenologize* through hand writing, the sculptural elements and forces that

⁸⁶⁷ Note, that onto the *frame* transparent gel packs are fixed with white Velcro as if they were performing the function of keeping open the *hole* through which the drawing can be observed.

⁸⁶⁸ Spector, "Introduction," 13.

⁸⁶⁹ With Spector one should note that this "slightly smudged conceptual sketch diagrams the three-part cycle with an elusive image that layers the digestive tract over a nascent reproductive system yet to be fully differentiated." (Spector, "Introduction," 13). Already from this drawing one can clearly note that the *OTTO Trilogy* contains in *nuce* a variety of sources and drives that Barney fully exploited in his future works (i.e. *The CREMASTER Cycle*).

constitute the internal narrative of his single artworks, but also the broader narrative that they develop as an ensemble.⁸⁷⁰ It should also be noted that the titles chosen by Barney to identify his creations make clear reference to Freudian language, even if only on an evocative level.⁸⁷¹ During his years at Yale, he had come across Freudian psychoanalyst Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel's book *Creativity and Perversion*, a book by which he was fascinated and inspired.⁸⁷²

Thanks to the immediacy of "a primordial instrument of representation"⁸⁷³ such as the drawing, *STADIUM* develops its potential as a conceptual map of the project and of the publication. It does so not only by verbi-visually diagrammatizing some of their formal and conceptual features but especially by virtue of its symmetrical structure. The trilogy, as well as *New Work* and the sequence of images that appears within its pages, are in fact symmetrically structured.

Although the reader cannot make use of the *Project Index*, nor of the *Project Documents*, to decrypt the visual narrative developed throughout the publication, the *Project Index*, the *Project Documents*, and *STADIUM* play an important function through their different factual and metaphorical materialities. More than actually guiding the readers in the exploration of the publication and helping them to effectively unravel the encrypted visual narrative therein developed, they offer them an important parameter, that of symmetry, to spatio-temporally orientate in a complex narrative which plays not only in different sites but also in different temporal zones. Thanks to the

⁸⁷⁰ On the *sculptural* valence of handwritten words, see Nichols Goodeve, "Archives and Gym". See also Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, "*Thou wilt give when night is spent*: on words in the art of Mario Merz," in *Mario Merz*, eds. Pier Giovanni Castagnoli, Ida Gianelli and Beatrice Merz, 148-166 (Torino: Fondazione Merz, 2005), 155.

⁸⁷¹ Cfr. Russel, "Matthew Barney's Testicular Anxieties," 39.

⁸⁷² Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, *Creativity and Perversion* (London: Free Association Books, 1985). For a discussion of Barney's attitude toward this book see Nelson, "On Porousness, Perversity, and Pharmacopornographia," 20-23. An in depth-analysis of the value and the meaning of the titles given by Matthew Barney to his work as well as of their verbi-visual organization goes beyond the thematic focus of this work. Note, that in the huge bibliography dedicated to the artist and his work there are not specific studies on this topic. Among the various articles that briefly mention this aspect of Barney's production, the most interesting description is provided by the art critic and curator Francesco Bonami who in an early article-cum-glossary on the artist's work identifies the checklist and the title as "a somatic dat[...]a of the work[s]." Francesco Bonami, "Matthew Barney: The Artist as a Young Athlete," *Flash Art* 25, no. 162 (January-February 1992): 103.

⁸⁷³ Roberto Casati, "Introduction: The Interdisciplinary Study of Drawing," *Rivista di Estetica - Disegno* 51, no. 47 (2011): 3-7, 3. See also Giuseppe Di Napoli, "Che cos'è un disegno e perchè si disegna," *Rivista di Estetica - Disegno*: 61-81.

intermingling of different types of language and evocative forms, the *Project Index*, *Project Documents* and *STADIUM* create a system which affects the readers on a somatic level, thus offering a key to access the trilogy (and, even more, the content of the publication) that does not imply the rational attitude through which one traditionally approaches the book and more so the exhibition catalogue. This interpretation is supported also by the fact that the prosthetic plastic frame which characterizes *STADIUM* is reproduced, even if partially, in the book. It performs the function of a threshold that instead of demarcating the boundary between the readers and the drawing intimately connects them, presenting “the drawing metaphorically as a vision into the body.”⁸⁷⁴ In doing so, it also invites them to fully *enter* and *experience* what they see, somatically.

4.3.2 Retracing the History of Book(let)’s Production

Before proceeding with the analysis of the book, it is worth briefly reflecting on the history of its production. This will allow us to focus on its timing as well as on some of its features and purposes. Retracing the events related to its production it becomes clear that, contrary to what one might think while turning its pages and referring to the paratextual data which they present, this *exhibition catalogue* was published only after the end of the show and therefore set aside any possibility of being spatio-temporally related with it.

If the SFMOMA had truly aimed at the production of a traditional *catalogue*, its time of production would certainly had been different, given that most of the iconographic materials therein presented were already available prior to the opening of the exhibition. Its *delayed* production was due to the fact that the artist had a clear idea of what the publication had to be. For example, as we have already anticipated, the images of the artworks were to function independently without captions, without being associable to the artworks’ titles nor even being traceable through page numbers. As an *exhibition catalogue* *New Work* never had the opportunity to perform its primeval function: it was not produced to guide the *lecteur-visiteur* within the exhibition spaces. Its

⁸⁷⁴ Isabelle Dervaux, “Introduction,” in *Subliming Vessel*, 44.

primary purpose was and remains in fact quite different: *New Work* maps the already completed stages of a project which at the time of this mapping was still under construction. However, the booklet does not provide a clear and immediately readable map of this work but a portfolio of the imagery and the narrative unfolded by the artist, corroborated by the authoritativeness of the institution which published it and the reputation of its curator(s).

Already at the end of August 1991, the artist, the Barbara Gladstone Gallery and the SFMOMA were working on what they called the “Matthew Barney Publication”.⁸⁷⁵ On August 22, Richard Flood (at the time director of the Gladstone Gallery) faxed John Caldwell the “specs and bids” he had obtained in New York “for a Barney artists book.”⁸⁷⁶ As agreed with Caldwell some time before, Flood had commissioned graphic designer Bethany Johns an estimate for a book which should accompany Matthew Barney’s show in San Francisco.⁸⁷⁷ The specifications and bids provided by Johns were predicated on a book of 48 pages plus cover, which reflected the ideas Barney had funnelled in “a rough mock-up,” that is of “what Matthew ideally wanted”.⁸⁷⁸

According to the documents conserved in the “Matthew Barney 1991 SFMOMA Book” folder in the Barbara Gladstone Gallery Archives (henceforth BGGA), by the end of November 1991, the actors involved in the production of the book were working on the section of the publication entitled “Matthew Barney: New Work, CATALOGUE CHECKLIST.”⁸⁷⁹ This list was divided into two sections, the second of which was entitled “CHECKLIST (manual)”. The first listed fifteen numbered items (from 1 to 15) while the second just three (from 1 to 3). Every item corresponded to a work of art and was correlated with the following information: number, title, year of realization, technique and materials, edition number (if edited), measures, as well as the name of the collection of which it was part or the courtesy of the person who encouraged or

⁸⁷⁵ Richard Flood to John Caldwell, 22 August 1991, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, Barbara Gladstone Gallery Archives (henceforth BGGA).

⁸⁷⁶ Richard Flood to John Caldwell, 22 August 1991, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁷⁷ It is interesting to note that in her estimate Johns refers to the Barney’s book as the artist’s “San Francisco exhibition catalog[ue]”. See: Bethany Johns to Richard Flood, 13 August, 1991, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁷⁸ See Richard Flood to John Caldwell, 22 August, 1991, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁷⁹ Peter Samis to Jay Tobler, 22 November 1991, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

allowed its exhibition. Furthermore, at the bottom of every listing, the lettering “illus. page__” clearly suggested that it was expected to add the number of the page on which the correspondent work was illustrated.

On November 22, that is 19 days before the opening of the show, Jay Tobler (then gallery assistant at Gladstone), faxed Peter Samis (at the time interdepartmental curatorial assistant at SFMOMA) the amendments to the “Matthew Barney: New Work, CATALOGUE CHECKLIST” that the artist had previously discussed with Richard Flood.⁸⁸⁰ Barney asked to delete the title of the show/publication from the header of the page as well as all the captions “Collection of...” and “illus. page__”. Moreover, he decided to replace the wordings “CATALOGUE CHECKLIST” with “PROJECT INDEX” and “CHECKLIST (manual)” with “PROJECT DOCUMENTS”. Then, he requested the works previously listed under the number 1, 2 and 3 to be numbered 16, 17, 18. Moreover, the artist was unsatisfied also with the closing paragraph that the SFMOMA staff had planned to place at the bottom of the list. It read:

Work numbers 2 TRANSEXUALIS, 3 MILE HIGH THRESHOLD, 5 REPRESSIA, 6 DELAY OF GAME from the Checklist and numbers 1 DELAY OF GAME (MANUAL A), 2 HYPOTHERMAL PENETRATOR and 3 STADIUM of the Checklist (Manual) comprise the exhibition presented at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, December 12, 1991 – February 9, 1992. Works # 4 CASE BOLUS, 8 UNIT BOLUS, and 10 CONSTIPATOR BLOCK are included for archival purposes in documenting this body of work.⁸⁸¹

The paragraph was simplified and reformulated in order to inform the readers that the exhibition presented in San Francisco comprised works from the *PROJECT INDEX* and the *PROJECT DOCUMENTS*.⁸⁸² As already mentioned above, these works were to be listed after this elucidatory text, this time having care of mentioning their respective lenders.⁸⁸³

⁸⁸⁰ Jay Tobler to Peter Samis, 22 November 1991, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁸¹ Peter Samis to Jay Tobler, 22 November 1991, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁸² Note that in the end, works number 4, *case BOLUS*, 1989-91; 8, *unit BOLUS*, 1988; and 10, *CONSTIPATOR BLOCK: shim BOLUS*, 1991 were not exhibited at SFMOMA. They were replaced by *DRILL TEAM: screw BOLUS*, 1991 and *Away Gown: Jim Blind (fem.)*, 1991, the two new *project documents* which premiered in San Francisco.

⁸⁸³ Handwritten note by Richard Flood on the fax sent by Peter Samis to Jay Tobler, 22 November 1991, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

The exhibition opened as expected on December 12, 1991 but, as lamented by art critic David Bonetti, on the pages of the *San Francisco Examiner*, neither the book or any other museum statement were ready: “if you are curious what the museum thinks about Barney or why they chose him for the ‘New Work’ series, you are out of luck.”⁸⁸⁴

As communicated via fax by Jay Tobler to Barbara Gladstone, Stuart Regen and Matthew Barney, on January 15, 1992 “an official cost breakdown”⁸⁸⁵ was not yet made up, but the estimate was now predicated on a book of 52 pages plus cover to be printed in a run of 2500, which should cost 15 dollars each.

When the exhibition closed, on January 30, 1992, the publication was still not ready.⁸⁸⁶ It was only on February 27, 1992, that Kara Kirk, at the time the director of publications and graphic design at the SFMOMA, was able to send six copies of the book “hot off the press”⁸⁸⁷ to the gallery in New York. They arrived at their destination the day after. The gallery’s team was very satisfied and the artist himself, who “stopped by” that same afternoon appeared to be “thrilled”.⁸⁸⁸ By mid March 1991 the 800 out of 2500 books that were due to the gallery had reached New York, enabling its staff to organize their distribution. On March 24, 1992, Jay Tobler wrote to the ICA in London following up on the request to purchase five copies of Craigie Horsfield’s recent exhibition catalogue. He seized the occasion to appraise them “of the recent publication of an artist’s book by Matthew Barney”, describing the book as “a softcover volume chronicling the artist’s project to date with images from his installations and the accompanying videos.”⁸⁸⁹ The day after it was the turn of Walter König in Cologne. Tobler described the book in the same terms anticipating to the

⁸⁸⁴ Bonetti, “This Kid’s Just a Jock,” E2.

⁸⁸⁵ Jay Tobler to Barbara Gladstone, Stuart Regen, Matthew Barney, 15 January 1992, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁸⁶ The exhibition closed 10 days before the date mentioned in the fax papers exchanged the previous November and 3 days before the date mentioned in Bonetti’s article.

⁸⁸⁷ Kara Kirk to Jay Tobler, 27 February 1992, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁸⁸ Jay Tobler to Kara Kirk, 28 February 1992, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁸⁹ Jay Tobler to Ragnar Farr, 24 March 1992, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA. Tobler offered to his contact at ICA, to place an order at a “40% off the retail \$20.00” or eventually to “work out an exchange with the Horsfield catalogues.” Jay Tobler to Ragnar Farr, 24 March 1992, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

Cologne's publisher Barney's "upcoming participation in Documenta IX."⁸⁹⁰ Around the same time, the book was also submitted to be considered for Printed Matter's distribution program, without success.⁸⁹¹ Meanwhile, following a practice that is very reminiscent of the widespread and strategic distribution organized by Ruscha to promote his books or by Siegelau to promote *his* artists, a list of the most influential exponents of the contemporary art world was made, to whom the "Barney catalogues"⁸⁹² were sent. The name of Wim Beeren (the director of the Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam) opens the list and the one of Nicholas Serota (the director of the Tate Gallery, London) closes it. The other 29 names all belong to curators and museum's directors, as well as diverse art professionals working in the U.S. and in Europe, with the sole exception of Tokyo-based curator Funio Nanjo.⁸⁹³

By April 14, 1992, the book project could be considered finished except for one detail: even if Kara Kirk had returned "all of the photographs and slides

⁸⁹⁰ Jat Tobler to Walther König, 25 March 1992, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁹¹ John Goodwin to Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 25 April 1992, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁹² Handwritten, unsigned, and undated list, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

⁸⁹³ Handwritten, unsigned, and undated list, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA. The names listed are, in order of appearance: Wim Beeren, Helen van der Meij (gallerist and art dealer based in The Netherlands), David A. Ross (who in 1991 had taken the position of Director of the Whitney Museum of American Art, after having directed The Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston for many years), Klaus Kertess, (independent curator based in New York), Thomas Amman (art dealer based in Switzerland), Jan Hoet (appointed curator of the forthcoming *documenta IX*), Corinne Diserens (curator at the IVAM-Institut Valencià d'Art Modern), Red Burns (the chairman of New York University's Interactive Telecommunications Program), Peter Noever (director of MAK – Austrian Museum of Applied Arts/Contemporary Art) Catherine David (curator at the Galerie Nationale du Jeu de Paume, Paris), Christos Joachimedes and Norman Rosenthal (independent curator based in Berlin and curator at the Tate Gallery respectively, who gained prominence at the beginning of the 1980s when they started to curate exhibitions together), Berenice Rose (curator in the MoMA Department of Drawings), Ann Temkin (curator at the Philadelphia Museum of Art), Fumio Najo (who, after having worked for years as an officer of the Japan Foundation and as the director of the ICA Nagoya had just founded Najo and Associates, International Art Consulting Office), Patterson Sims (curator at the Seattle Art Museum), Robert Storr (recently appointed curator in the Department of Painting and Sculpture at MoMA), Kathy Halbreich (director of the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, MN), Elizabeth Sussman (who had recently joined the curatorial staff of the Whitney Museum of American Art following David Ross), Diego Cortez (born James Curtis, artist, writer, curator and art dealer based in New York), Chris Dercon (co-founding director of the Witte de With Center for Contemporary Art, Rotterdam), Patrick Murphy (director of the ICA Philadelphia), Pier Luigi Tazzi (art critic and curator, who served as an associate director of *documenta IX*), Christine Van Assche (chief curator at Centre Pompidou, Paris), M. Burgi, Jean François Chevrier (art historian, art critic, instructor and curator based in Paris), Kaspar König (independent curator and director of the Städelschule, Frankfurt am Main), Walther König (art publisher, Cologne), Jean-Christophe Amman (director, MMK, Museum für Moderne Kunst, Frankfurt am Main) James Lingwood (co-director of London-based arts organization Artangel), Nicolas Serota.

used in the making of the Matthew Barney publication,” Tobler was trying to track down “the original mechanical for the book” asking Kirk to send them directly “to Matthew Barney in care of the gallery” or to help him in finding “its whereabouts”⁸⁹⁴.

4.3.3 An Uninterrupted Sequence of Images

Leaving behind the double spread on which the *Project Index*, the list of the *Project Documents* and *STADIUM* are to be found, one encounters the first pictures of an uninterrupted thirty page long sequences of images (visual index VII-XXII). The first fifteen pages present images related to *Facility of INCLINE* (visual index VII-XIV), the body of works which Barney exhibited at the Stuart Regen Gallery in Los Angeles, while the following fifteen pages present images related to *Facility of DECLINE* (visual index XIV-XXII), the corpus presented at the Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York.

For someone who could not see the shows and does not *know* the exhibited works, the experience of the book is quite disorientating, if not hermetic and inaccessible. To analyse the publication’s operating modes it is therefore necessary to take a step back and focus on the *exhibitions-cum-sculptural situations* which *New Work* reworks through images, embodying and completing their narrative while, at the same time, transcending it. In the following, the L.A. exhibition will be exemplary *reconstructed* and described, putting emphasis on the experience that visitors could have within its spaces.

4.3.3.1 *Matthew Barney: Exhibition, Los Angeles, Stuart Regen Gallery, May 22 – June 22, 1991*

As announced in the press release diffused by the Stuart Regen Gallery in the late spring of 1991, the debut solo exhibition of New York-based artist Matthew Barney encompassed “a mixed-media installation in both the main and

⁸⁹⁴ Jay Tobler to Kara Kirk, 14 April 1992, Matthew Barney - SFMOMA Book, 1991, BGGA.

auxiliary galleries”⁸⁹⁵ of the Beverly Hills exhibition space. The exhibition should be considered as an expanded sculptural situation that unfolded through the main and rear galleries, as well as the entrance room. Six works with a strong sculptural presence were scattered through the gallery space: *The Jim Otto Suite*, 1991, *unit BOLUS*, 1988, *Anabol [A]: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL*, 1991, and *case BOLUS*, 1989-91, plus *REPRESSIA*, 1991 and *Transexualis*, 1991 which included the videotaped actions *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR*, 1991 and *DELAY OF GAME*, 1991.⁸⁹⁶ All these works were made of materials and assembled using objects that do not traditionally belong to the realm of sculpture, but that of medicine, sports training, and human consumption such as polyethylene (e.g. internally lubricated plastic, or prosthetic plastic), gynaecological speculums, a wrestling mat, gel packs, sugar, as well as petroleum jelly, to name just a few. Moreover, as noted by the art writer Lane Relyea in an early article on Barney’s work largely based on the work presented in his first solo show, most of these materials and objects were “meant to be engaged with manually rather than visually.”⁸⁹⁷

Entering the gallery on 619 North Almont Drive, the visitors were welcomed by a sculptural object stranded between the floor and the wall in

⁸⁹⁵ “Matthew Barney Exhibition,” Stuart Regen Gallery press release, undated (May 1991?), on the Regen Projects website, <http://www.regenprojects.com/exhibitions/matthew-barney/press-release>, last access August 8, 2016.

⁸⁹⁶ Note, that in the section “Exhibition History” of the book *The CREMASTER Cycle* (2002) three more works are mentioned among the ones on show in L.A. They are: *HYPOTHERMAL PENETRATOR*, 1991 – a b/w publicity photo of Jim Otto framed with internally lubricated plastic; *HYPOTHERMAL PENETRATOR (dorsal)*, 1991 – a drawing on paper framed with prosthetic plastic, and *DELAY OF GAME (Manual A)*, 1991 – a b/w photograph referring to the videotaped action *DELAY OF GAME* framed with internally lubricated plastic). See, Spector, ed., *The CREMASTER Cycle*, 514. In a 1991 early critical assessment of Barney’s work, art writer Lane Relyea reported that “a wall mounted publicity photo of Jim Otto” (i.e. *HYPOTHERMAL PENETRATOR*) served as a trigger for the entire exhibition. Relyea, “Openings,” 124. During the research carried out in the framework of this study it was not possible to identify the location of these works within the exhibition. Considering that they are not visible in any images of the spaces that it was possible to find, one can speculate that these three works, as well as four other works (which were not mentioned by Spector in 2002 but which are listed on the price list of the show) were present in the gallery, but probably exposed in a space almost hidden from view (the office or the back office?). The four additional works to be found in the price list are: *COVER – cadence*, 1991 – a Raiders’ tabloid framed in internally lubricated plastic; *TRANSEXUALIS (Manual A)*, 1991 and *TRANSEXUALIS (Manual B)*, 1991 – drawings framed in internally lubricated plastic; and *DELAY of GAME (Manual B)*, 1991 – a b/w photograph related to the videotaped action *DELAY OF GAME* framed in prosthetic plastic. See “Stuart Regen Gallery - Matthew Barney: Pricelist,” Matthew Barney - S. Regen Gallery, 1991, BGGG. Apart from *HYPOTHERMAL PENETRATOR*, whose exact position in the exhibition remains to be confirmed, these works seem not to have been physically included in the sculptural situation.

⁸⁹⁷ Relyea, “Openings,” 124.

front of the gallery desk. It resulted from the combination of four elements: a tripartite flesh-coloured body, that reminded one of a locker, the three-dimensional structure of which was developed on a plane; a black 00 football jersey reporting the name Otto; a white hydraulic jack; and a white sport pad. On either side of this *object*, just behind two of the three darkened skylights which usually allowed the clear Californian light to illuminate the entry space, two monitors were hung from the ceiling using brackets. Raising their head as in a (sport) bar or in a betting room, one could follow two silent videos that were running in loop. Together with the above-mentioned objects, the two videos entitled *OTTOblow* and *AUTOblow*⁸⁹⁸ formed *The Jim Otto Suite*, a mixed-media installation which, given its position at the entrance (coinciding with the exit) of the gallery, should be considered as the sculptural *prologue* and *epilogue* of the expanded sculptural situation entitled *Facility of INCLINE* (figure 4.5). Note, that although all the works in the exhibition had a specific title, there were no labels in the exhibition and even the videos showed no title. Even if the fact that they were exhibited in a commercial gallery might overshadow this *detail*, this strategic move reflected the artist's understanding of the exhibition as a unitary sculptural situation in which every single element was functional to the whole ensemble.

In the monitor which was already visible from the entrance of the gallery, one could follow the action carried out by a muscular character wearing a 00 football jersey, i.e. the center Jim Otto, here interpreted by Michael Petty. In this video – *OTTOblow* (1991, colour video, silent, 3m 26s) – the images unfold through a series of rhythmical succession of slow motion and real-time pictures in which static shots (from the side or from the top) prevails, together with paced zoom-ins and -outs. A sort of basic geometric aesthetical attitude

⁸⁹⁸ As art historian Dorothea Vischer aptly noted, the titles of these two videos are “phonetisch identisch.” Dorothea Vischer, *Fremdkörper, Corps Etranger, Foreign Body* (Basel: Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 1996), 21. This intentional phonetical characteristic can be linked to the name and the career of the *owner* of the suite, Jim Otto. The American Football League allowed Otto his unusual jersey number 00 because it was an acoustic pun on his name (aught-oh). As the *Project Index* attests, Barney was profoundly fascinated by the synesthetic and plastical links that can be made between words, numbers, signs, symbols, sounds and the events to which they relate. Note, that the word blow is a slang name for oral sex on a male body. The dream of auto blowing, that is self sucking, can be linked to Barney's struggle for a closed system.

characterizes the photography of the video where vertical and horizontal lines prevail, together with symmetry.

The action unfolds in two moments that are introduced, divided, and concluded by dreamy video-white fields in which the images dissolve. Initially, Otto is portrayed in an undefined space described by a yellow horizontal basement and a vertical metallic wall. Here, he positions himself as if he was on the line of scrimmage ready to start a game. Framed from above, his silhouette lies on the uniform yellow ground that occupies the entire screen. Unlike the situation that occurs on the playing field where the eleven players of the team who possess the ball take their positions following the chosen offensive formation, Otto stands alone in the middle of the yellow field. There are no guards or tackles in his sides. There is no quarterback behind, no one ready to call the coded signal corresponding to a game, receive the snap and either throw the ball, hand it off, or run with it. The camera portrays the crouched Otto from behind, zooming back from the ball he is holding in the hand until his backside is completely framed and a white superimposed 00 digit appears in correspondence of his anus. From this moment onward Otto starts a rabid run leaving the ball unattended. A second character, portrayed from above, appears on the screen with naked chest and the head wrapped in a cap. It is Harry Houdini, i.e. the Character of Positive Restraint, interpreted by the artist himself. Otto runs toward him loading a punch and propelling it in his abdomen. The very gesture of throwing a punch to the helpless Houdini, whose abdomen is greased with a whitish substance, is exceptionally dilated spatio-temporally through a succession of slow-motion images taken from different angles. In this way the attention of the viewer is canalized onto this precise gesture that corresponds with the climax of the video narration. In the subsequent video segment, the camera frames from the side and from above the abdomen of Houdini, zooming in, and out. Despite the terrible blow, he is still breathing. Bandaged fingers, to be reconnected with the hand of Otto, enter the frame from its upper edge. The index finger dives in the gelatinous substance sprinkled on Houdini's abdomen in correspondence to the navel, rhythmically starting to massage the cavity as if it was trying to further dig the hole. Then, the index performs a wider convolution, the thumb reaches it, and the two fingers grasp a

portion of the material lifting it upwards. It is so viscous, that a thick filament forms. The hand disappears from the upper edge of the screen that turns white.

As in *OTTOblow*, also *AUTOblow's* (1991, colour video, silent, 10m 8s) initial and final sequences fade in and out white video fields. The narration begins in slow motion with a close-up of the breathing abdomen of the Character of Positive Restraint who sits astride on a yellow cushion. A thick layer of gelatinous material covers his chest. After 51s a white vertically oriented oval shaped form with a superimposed rectilinear bar appears (the artist's *Field Emblem*), approximately at the centre of the screen, that is, at the height of the character's abdominal region. A large hydraulic jack enters the frame from its upper side, held by the hands of the artist. After having manoeuvred it rhythmically in front of his abdomen, he raises it with both arms making it disappear again from the frame. The camera zooms out up to frame the character in the solitary environment in which he is performing his action. When the zoom stops, the *Field Emblem* completely hides his chest and face; then, after a couple of seconds in which this symbol seems to be equated to the personage, it disappears. The environment in which the protagonist of the video performs his personal ritual is a room characterized by metallic walls and a basement where the yellow sport cushion on which he sits is the only element of furniture. The camera zooms again in to shoot the character while he orients the hydraulic jack towards his abdomen and moves the lever that activates its piston. At 6m 17s the images stop running in slow motion and the action continues in real time. The frame expands and, changing angle a couple of time, the camera shoots him on profile and three quarters while he is busy with the jack. These images are interspersed by close-ups on the character's left foot which rests and relies heavily on gel packs, the artist's hands which interact with the jack, and the piston which slowly gains the abdomen. The video ends with a close-up image of the piston that has finally reached the abdomen.⁸⁹⁹

⁸⁹⁹ Considering that it is reported that Houdini died for the consequences of a punch into the abdomen, this sequence can be interpreted as a metaphorical reenactment of the episode which brought to an end to the life of the escape artist, but also a ritualistic attempt to restore, bringing the character *back to life*, the initial state of potential, i.e. a state in which everything is still possible.

Entering the main gallery the visitors found them in a broad space inhabited by a peculiar constellation of objects (figures 4.6 a). More or less at the centre of the large room one encountered *Anabol [A]: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL* – a zoomorphic entity made of whitish plastic which could be identified as a blocking sled partially lifted up by a minimal sucrose wedge and additionally accessorized with a reddish oval semi-transparent cast sucrose capsule (figure 4.6 b); and *REPRESSIA* – a yellow wrestling mat in which a metallic sternal retractor was keeping open an hole. In this hole a salt-water pearl mounted on a gold chain laid on the ground while a shiny whitish gelatinous substance connected the interior of the cavity with an orange ceramic trapshooting target (figure 4.6 c). Hanging from a prop fixed on the ceiling and leaning in mid-air in the room almost in correspondence of this hole, a Teflon bar supported a cast wax and petroleum jelly Olympic curl bar which far ends were covered with sport socks. Looking at the white plastic prop that kept these elements floating in mid air, one also noticed a series of plastic blocks irregularly fixed on the ceiling. Ice climbing screws and carabiners were hanging from each of them.

In the corner between the Eastern and the Northern walls of the room, one encountered *unit BOLUS*, 1988 – a stainless *plinth cum table* with a petroleum jelly dumbbell placed on the top of it (figure 4.6 d). An electrical cable extended from the base of this metallic object since electrical power was needed to activate the refrigeration unit that kept the metal plate on the upper end of the stall refrigerated, thus preventing the melting of the eight-pound free weight.

The pentagonal glass case part of *case BOLUS*, 1989-1991, leaned against the southern wall of the room, held in place by a “L” shaped flesh-coloured plastic bracket fixed on the wall and by a white cast sucrose edge partially supporting its black base (figure 4.7 a). Within the vitrine, a cluster of cast petroleum wax and petroleum jelly eight-pound dumbbells was accumulated onto two deformed cast paraffin and Vaseline forty-five pound Olympic weight plates. Shiny transparent mouth guards, fixed by a thin plastic band to the dumbbells, were scattered all around inside the case. In the middle of this messy assemblage, a gynaecological speculum was stuck into the central hole of the

weight plates. Looking inside this lozenge-shaped medical instrument, one gaze's was sucked into its shiny inner descendant walls which being embedded in petroleum jelly, at the same time embedded a small mussel-like portion of the shiny material (figures 4.7 b-d). Two foam and nylon grey pads were hung on the same wall, at the height of the vitrine, thanks to a couple of thick white binding belts, one seemingly protecting its left side, while the other, on the right side, was installed relatively far from it, that is, in correspondence of the doorjamb of the gateway that led to further exhibition areas. These two voluminous pads seemed to encompass a virtual protected area for the glass-case, *framing* it.

Intrigued by the trajectory drawn by the plastic blocks of which the holes were filled with petroleum jelly) and the climbing tools hanging on the ceiling, the visitors passed the door that gave access to the rear gallery, whose upper corners were rounded by two blue clothed foam pads. Initially they found them in an area lit by natural light coming from a large skylight. Here, on the walls, one could notice not only white plastic climbing blocks but also two blue gel packs and a lot of irregular scuff marks. Proceeding further in exploration of the space it became apparent that the shutters of a big door had been removed to make room for a large industrial freezer, the external wall of which delimited the area. The open doorway of the industrial freezer commanded the visitors to cross the threshold. A fan and nozzle system surmounted the entry. Creating a protective air shield by blowing jets of high velocity air across the opening, this invisible air curtain divided the naturally lit outside space from the artificially lit inside space, minimizing the transfer of heat. Here, on the ceiling, one noticed again the presence of white plastic blocks, some of them accompanied by screws and carabiners. What caught the attention of the visitors was the whitish zoomorphic object that laid on the ground in correspondence of a reiteration of Barney's *Field Emblem*, this time painted directly on the floor. This object (*Transexualis*, 1991) had the form of a weightlifter decline bench but its thick petroleum jelly surface denied its function (figure 4.8 a).⁹⁰⁰ A gynaecological speculum, an object that the visitors had previously encountered in *case BOLUS*,

⁹⁰⁰ Through the use of a decline bench one can develop mass and strength of the muscles in the lower section of the chest.

was inserted into the surface of the bench. It held a vial containing Human Chorionic Gonadotropin, a hormone derived from the urine of pregnant women that is used as a synthetic steroid to build muscle mass.

A second aperture, equally invisibly secured by a shield of blowing jets of high velocity air, encouraged the visitors to leave the walk-in cooler to enter the rear zone of the gallery (figure 4.8 b). According to the dramaturgy of the expanded sculptural situation, they found themselves in a secluded space that one could leave only by retracing their steps. The volume of the massive 3,66 x 4,27 x 2,59 m industrial refrigerator they had just left importantly affected this quadrangular space, shaping it *in negative* by the jutting metallic object. Here, on the external metallic wall of the walk-in-cooler, one could not only see one's blurred mirrored image, but also the faint reflection of the very space one inhabited. Within this enclosed space, one's attention was caught by the two mute videos that ran in loop into two monitors supported by brackets on the top of two opponent walls. As in the case of the videos running at the beginning of the show, also the initial and ending sequences of these videos fade-out and - in dreamy white video fields.

On the screen nearby the refrigerator's door, a 41m 42s colour video documented an action which had already happened in the cooler and the previously encountered gallery spaces as one could deduce linking the moving images to what one had *seen* up to that point in the exhibition (visual index VII-X). The action starts in the refrigerator, where the artist, completely naked except for a cap and a harness, stands up on a man that is lying on the ground, apparently shooting with the camera he holds in the right hand. Equipped with abundant ice screws and carabiners, Barney/Houdini/the Character of Positive Restraint momentarily connects his mouth to his anus by inserting into the two bodily openings large ice screws (suitably treated!) that are linked together by a thread of transparent plastic material. After performing this ritual (and extracting the objects from his orifices!) he hangs himself to the ceiling of the walk-in-cooler. He screws the ice screws into the white plastic blocks and he begins his fight against gravity negotiating his position in space using his arms and legs. Basically, the artist treaded backwards and in mid-air the path the visitors had just made with their feet on the ground. The climbing tools

previously installed on the walls and ceiling of the gallery (plus the ones he carried on his harness), as well as his bodily strength and mental concentration allowed him to engage with this physical and durational task. The action ended in proximity to the Teflon bar where the artist let himself go. The outcome of his fall was not recorded: the video ends with slow motion pictures of the very moment in which he detached himself from the ceiling and, caught by the force of gravity, begun to fall.

Looking at the video, the visitors unequivocally recognized the space of the gallery where (most of) the previously encountered works already inhabited their respective positions. Just two *details* were flagrantly different from what they had just seen *in real*: the blocking sled *Anabol [A]: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL* was placed in a rear-facing position and was not equipped with its characteristic red capsule while the Teflon bar hanging over the yellow wrestling mat (*Repressia*) was not complemented by its cast wax and petroleum jelly attributes.

MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR (1991, colour, 41m 42s) was shot in real time by two cameras.⁹⁰¹ The primary camera angle approximates an *objective* angle similar to the one of a surveillance camera. Its footage intersperses with that of the second camera, that is, the one held by the character encountered in the walk-in-cooler which can be recognized as Jim Otto, given that he wears a white Oakland Raiders away uniform marked with his distinctive 00 number. Otto, who was positioned on his back on a dolly, tracked Barney's climb from below.⁹⁰² In the video Otto's footage is characterized by a double zero digit appearing on the right lower corner of the screen.⁹⁰³

⁹⁰¹ Note, that a brief portion of the footage shot by a third camera is also mounted in the video. This camera shortly followed the action from outside the recessed skylight in proximity of which the artist rested for a short while, leaning his back against the wall and relying on the legs.

⁹⁰² Note, that Otto's action is inevitably documented by the primary camera which, shooting from a high angle, frequently frames him in the background.

⁹⁰³ Behind the camera held by Otto was Robert (Bob) Wysocki, who also interpreted the character. The artists instructed him "to stay beneath the climber [...] he had to negotiate his way through the space, so he would, at times, rotate, which [...] [made] the camera turn, but he was not really making any aesthetic choices" (Barney, in conversation with the author). Behind the primary footage camera was Peter Streitman who shot the action with the help of a rolling ladder and a movable scaffold. Streitman began in that occasion his ongoing collaboration with Barney. Considering that he was directing his camera, one could affirm that Streitman was

On the opposite monitor one could follow the 3m 10s edited sequence entitled *DELAY of GAME* (1991, colour; visual index XI-XIII). It begins with a dreamy fade-in on *Repressia*. Even if the images, in slow motion, are in black and white, one can nevertheless clearly recognize the mattress, the sternal retractor (that keeps a hole open in its surface), and the suspended Teflon bar. Two feet in women's summer shoes descend from the top edge of the frame to go to rest on a minimal volume placed on the mattress nearby the opening (the wedge resembles the one one had just seen lifting the plastic blocking sled in *Anabol [A]: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL*). The field widens until one sees the artist stylishly clad in a feminine outfit characterized by a white swimsuit, bathrobe, evening gloves, turban, earrings and sunglasses.⁹⁰⁴ He is attempting to unstitch a pearl fastened to his right glove. A close-up in colour briefly shows a detail of the gloved fingers while they twist the pearl. Then, the video goes back to b/w. The character is again taken in full and the camera slowly rotates toward left. He manages to remove the pearl from the glove and juts forward as if throwing it in the opening of the mattress. Another close-up in colour is shortly interspersed into the b/w images. This time, one sees gloved right fingers twirling the pearls against a yellow background which, one infers, coincides with the yellow mattress of *Repressia*. Without providing any certainty about the position of the pearl (after all one did not *witness* the very moment of its launch), the video turns again in b/w. The camera keeps rotating further towards the left, opening the field up to framing also *Anabol [A]: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL* that this time appears to be in the same position in which the visitors had encountered it in the gallery, even if on screen one does

making aesthetical choices; however one should also take into account that it was one of Barney's Yale fellows, Michael Joaquin Grey who maneuvered the ladder. Barney, Streitman and Grey "talked about the intention of there being a kind of balance between a sort of wide view where the figure becomes very small, and in other cases where the camera would come right up into the figure, but it was not scripted [...], but there were limitations because of the objects on the floor. There were limitations of where the camera could get tight and where it had no choice but to be wide." (Barney, in conversation with the author). As it is possible to hear in the not silenced version of the video, during the action the three men talked together intermittently to coordinate at best the shooting.

⁹⁰⁴ This West Coast outfit is modelled after the iconic attire worn by Lana Turner in *The Postman Always Rings Twice* (directed by Tay Garnett, Beverly Hills: MGM, 1946). See Richard Flood, "Notes on Digestion and Film," in *PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*, 30 and Matthew Barney, "PLAYBOOK 91-92," in *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 176.

not see its reddish attribute.⁹⁰⁵ With deliberate moves Barney observes the opening in which the pearl is expected to be (after all, within the show, the visitors have just seen it there!). Suddenly, an object launched from out-field towards the character quickly traverses the space (and thus the frame) going to crash on the floor. Three close-ups, two in b/w (the first and the third in order of appearance) and one in colour, follow this moment. The first shows a deformed half-body portrait of the feminine character – deformed because it is videotaped through the Teflon bar; the second, the position of the pearl that, contrary to all expectations, lays on the yellow mattress; the third presents again the deformed half-body portrait of Barney. From this position close to the Teflon bar, the camera turns slowly left to shoot the artist from behind while he slowly turns towards *Anabol [A]: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL* and with a jump pushes its extremity. In the closing sequence he traverses the frame from left to right, calmly pushing the blocking sled that now is equipped with its red attribute. He looks in the camera and elegantly greets the lens with a big smile before fading-in in a white video field.

4.3.3.1.1 Considerations on the L.A. Exhibition and Link to the N.Y. Show

Through the videos, the visitors were able to *formally understand*, at least partially, what they had seen in the exhibition. However, the story, the reasons, and the meanings implied by the videos and the objects on show were far from clear. Not all the steps and the narrative reasons that lead the installation to appear as it looked like were explicitly *shown* in the videos. The forms and the narrative built in and within the sculptural situation seemed to be shaped by the results of different (videotaped) actions carried out (mainly) within the exhibition space. However, the entire process that brought the installation to its final appearance remained hidden in the spatio-temporal interstices created between the sculptural situation, the experience of the same, and the perception of the videotaped actions. The *eminently* sculptural components of the mixed-media installation were in fact not props or relics of

⁹⁰⁵ Note, that in the video the corner between the Eastern and the Northern walls of the main gallery is empty – *unit BOLUS* has not yet be put in place.

the actions but partly the preconditions and at the same time partly their results: results that would seem predisposed to further transformations; results of which the unwinding process remained hidden. In fact, as the artist himself has underlined expanding on this body of work “the objects [...] turn a corner, they change after the actual action takes place.”⁹⁰⁶

Those who experienced the exhibition found themselves in an environment characterized by what the contemporary reviewer Kristine McKenna described as “rivetingly weird piece[s.]”⁹⁰⁷ On the one hand, the videos seemed to provide a narrative explanation to the complex choreography of the installation; on the other, disavowing the apparent documentary character of the medium, they added a further element to its complexity, showing the visitors a dimension of the installation which was hidden within its sculptural nature and not merely represented by its components. What the visitors experienced was the precarious result of a process which one partially witnessed through the mediation of the videos but which, at the same time, one also witnessed as in transformation: nobody could be ever sure it was fully ended. Moreover, the fact that the dramaturgy of the sculptural situation started and ended in *The Jim Otto Suite* accentuated the circular and potentially never ending character of the *piece*, something which was already suggested by the looped videos.

The way in which the various sequentiality and temporality at work within the exhibition intersect with each other can be interpreted as the staging of a new narrative level which art historian Ursula Frohne and Lilian Haberer have defined in terms of “Meta-Inszenierung[...] filmischer und narrative Räume.”⁹⁰⁸ More than the sum of their different elements, Barney’s sculptural situations correspond to the meta-narration created by the interaction and the hybridization of the same. The visitors are thus confronted with the tension at play between the different temporalities and dynamics of the videos as well as

⁹⁰⁶ Barney, interview by Glen Helfand, 41.

⁹⁰⁷ Kristine McKenna, “Body and Soul,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 4, 1991, F4.

⁹⁰⁸ Lilian Haberer and Ursula Frohne, “Kinematographische Räume: Zur filmischen Ästhetik in Kunstinstallationen und inszenierter Fotografie,” in Frohne and Haberer, eds., *Kinematographische Räume: Installationsästhetik in Film und Kunst* (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 2012), 47-48.

between the different dynamics and temporality of the *eminently* sculptural elements of the installation.

In this respect, one should also stress the relevance of a constitutive element of the sculptural situation whose importance and effects were largely undervalued by the reviewers of the time (and still are by contemporary critics and commentators), that is, temperature. In pieces such as *unit BOLUS* and even more in *Transexualis*, temperature is an essential compositional element because it permits the signally sculptural bodies (a petroleum jelly dumbbell in the first case, and a Vaseline jelly decline bench in the second) to elicit intimate corporeal sensations while at the same time preserving their shape in a “state of suspended animation.”⁹⁰⁹

One may share the opinion of Nitsche-Krupp, according to which “Barney uses video to destabilize our experience of sculpture and establish material as the locus of his propositional approach and thus the means by which ambiguity enters the work.”⁹¹⁰ However, before they even have access to the videos, the visitors feel the specific temperature that characterizes some *zones* of the sculptural situation, and they are thus led to perceive the *materiality* of the objects that compose it. *Transexualis* is the best example in point, given that entering its enclosed refrigerated space one is affected by its internal temperature and intimately confronted with the shimmering Vaseline bench that inhabits it.⁹¹¹

The considerations developed for the L.A. installation can be extended to the New York exhibition. The dramaturgy of the East Coast show and the body of work exhibited there *mirrored* the Los Angeles exhibition, functioning as its counterweight. As had already happened in L.A., *The Jim Otto Suite* was exhibited also in New York at the entrance/exit of the Barbara Gladstone

⁹⁰⁹ Nitsche-Krupp, “Bound and Undetermined.” In her essay, Nitsche-Krupp expands on the “cultural significance” of a material such as Vaseline, i.e. petroleum jelly. Vaseline is not only present in sports and medical environments (e.g. the locker room, the doctor’s office) but also within the domestic sphere where it is used to treat wounds or to lubricate the skin. Note, that this material is so diffused that the name of its original trade brand (Vaseline) is commonly used to name it.

⁹¹⁰ Nitsche-Krupp, “Bound and Undetermined.”

⁹¹¹ Temperature is a basic element of the environment’s perception. It precedes every other thematic perception and determines the feeling of wellness. It may induce states of greater attention (cool) or drowsiness (warmth) but, above all, it is linked to qualitative connotations (pleasant or unpleasant) that greatly affect our perceptions and actions.

Gallery,⁹¹² serving as the prologue and at the same time the epilogue to the sculptural situation *Facility of DECLINE*.

Facility of DECLINE was composed of six *sculptures*⁹¹³ and two *works* mounted on the wall.⁹¹⁴ The climax of the exhibition resided in the gallery's lower level that the visitors reached after having explored the main gallery. Here, they were invited to enter the walk-in-cooler of *Transexualis (decline)*, 1991 (visual index XII, right). The setting was very similar to that of the L.A. *Transexualis*, except that this time the artist's *Field Emblem* was painted in a corner of the walk-in cooler and that a petroleum jelly incline bench (whose surface was likewise characterized by a speculum and a vial), was placed over it in the opposite direction to its Western counterpart.⁹¹⁵ After having traversed the refrigerated space, the visitors encountered two monitors positioned on opposite walls at about eight feet above the floor.⁹¹⁶ On these monitors two videotaped actions that had taken place in the New York gallery space before the opening of the exhibition run in loop. The structure, technique, and pace of the videotaped actions *BLIND PERINEUM* (1991, colour video, silent 89m 20s) and *RADIAL DRILL* (1991, colour and b/w video, 4m 59s) equal that of their corresponding L.A. counterparts *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR* and *DELAY of GAME*, except for the fact that their plot seems to mirror that of their L.A. iterations.

⁹¹² Note, that in New York a small gel pack kept the right panel of the locker slightly uplifted.

⁹¹³ case *BOLUS*, 1989-1991, unit *BOLUS*, 1988, *Anabol [A]: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL (équipe)*, 1991, *CONSTIPATOR BLOCK: shim BOLUS*, 1991, *Repressia (decline)*, 1991 and *Transexualis (decline)*, 1991 with the two related videotaped actions *RADIAL DRILL*, 1991 (color and b/w, silent, 4m 59s) and *BLIND PERINEUM*, 1991.

⁹¹⁴ According to the section "Exhibition History" within Nancy Spector's book *The CREMASTER Cycle* the exhibition encompassed *HYPOTHERMAL PENETRATOR*, 1991 – a b/w publicity photo of Jim Otto, with the quarterback's dedication and signature to "Matt," framed with internally lubricated plastic and *STADIUM*, 1991. See Spector, ed., *The CREMASTER Cycle*, 514. Conversely, Nitsche-Krupp mentions the presence of "seven drawings lined of the walls" though without specifying further. Nitsche-Krupp, "Bound and Undetermined," n.p. As reported by art critic Brooks Adams, *HYPOTHERMAL PENETRATOR*, 1991 was to be found at the entrance of the gallery. See Brooks Adams, "Matthew Barney: Nouvel androgyne," *Artpress*, no. 167 (March 1992): 36-39, esp. 38. During the research carried out in the framework of this study it was not possible to identify the location of *STADIUM*, nor the titles and the location of the other drawings mentioned by Nitsche-Krupp.

⁹¹⁵ Through the use of an incline bench one can develop mass and strength of the pectoral muscles (upper and middle regions) and front deltoids. Note, that in New York, a silicon gel pectoral mold rested on the ground beside this zoomorphic sculpture.

⁹¹⁶ The artist himself in the installation and maintenance instructions he compiled for these works specified this height. See Matthew Barney – Binders/Maintenance, 1991, BGGA.

In *BLIND PERINEUM*, the artist starts his climb through the N.Y. gallery from *Repressia (decline)*, which occupies most of the main space and ends it in *Transexualis (decline)*, which, as already anticipated, was installed in the basement (visual index XIX-XXII). As had happened in L.A., the action was videotaped by two cameras (one from high angle and one from above, hold by Jim Otto-alias Wysocki, in black home jersey). It begins above the pink wrestling mattress of *Repressia*, where Barney hangs on the ceiling, nearby a structure which holds a Teflon bar and ends in *Transexualis* when he lets himself go on the breast of Otto and closes his anus with an ice screw. An implied relationship between the artist's actions and the sculptural works exhibited in the main gallery was indicated by the marks left on the walls and by the transformations that these objects experienced, apparently as *a result* of the two videotaped actions.

As in *DELAY of GAME*, also in the slow motion *RADIAL DRILL* the physical language and trappings of football as well as sports training pervade the video (visual index XIV-XVIII). Here, the chase between the Character of Positive Restraint and the Character of Negative Restraint continues. The artist (alias the Character of Positive Restraint) acts in white lingerie, shoes and turban as if he was running away from someone or something, soon reappearing onto the screen in a black evening gown.⁹¹⁷ This transformation parallels the one performed by Otto that transitions from his white away jersey to the black home one. The transition is well rendered through the medium of the video: images of Jim Otto in white uniform dissolve in images of Otto in black. This sequence is characterized by the rotation of the personage from left (West) to right (East) and thus visually *performs* the geographical, topological, and timely transition that subtends and nourishes the narrative of the piece.

⁹¹⁷ The gown is modelled after the iconic little black dress worn by Audrey Hepburn in the introductory sequence of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* (1961). Barney has defined the actress a "metropolitan New York archetype." See *Breakfast at Tiffany's*, directed by Blake Edwards (New York: Paramount Pictures, 1961) and Barney, "PLAYBOOK 91-92," 182. On the relationship between Barney's oeuvre and hollywood cinema, see Flood, "Notes on Digestion and Film," in *PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*, 29-35; Hansmartin Siegrist, "Barney im Kino: Synthesen im Zwischenraum," in Theodora Vischer, ed., *Cremaster 1, Matthew Barney*, 9-19 (Basel: Museum für Gegenwartskunst, 1998); Alexander Horwath, "LE CRÉMYSTÈRE: Einige Bilder zu Matthew Barney Cremaster 1 und Kino," in *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*, n.p.

4.3.4 Analysing the Booklet

The description of the L.A. exhibition and consequently of that of N.Y., as well as the considerations developed within the same, allow better understanding of the long sequence of images at the center of *New Work* which will be analyzed here. Moreover, knowing the dramaturgy of the exhibition permits greater comprehension of the strategic positioning of images related to *OTTOblow* and *AUTOblow* within the publication (visual index *front cover-II*, *XXV-back cover*). They *open* and *close* the publication, thus not only evoking the sculptural relevance of *The Jim Otto Suite* – of which eminently sculptural instantiation there is no trace in the book(let) – but also the *looped* nature of the installations, as well as of their book counterpart.

In what follows, the double spreads within the sequence at the centre of *New Work* will be exemplarily analysed in order to allow reflection upon Barney's implementation of the book as an object, a medium, and an instrument. This will be done, assuming that the symmetric booklet can be considered, in many respects, as the matrix of the compositional, material, and editorial strategies that Barney will further develop in *his* future publications. Digressions on these publications will accompany the analysis of the different double spreads taken into consideration to make their comparison more immediate.

4.3.4.1 Book/Screen Format

As already anticipated, the sequence of images in *New Work* mirrors the symmetrical system that characterizes the narrative of the *Otto Trilogy*. The front cover and the few following pages as well as the back cover and the few preceding pages show images taken from *OTTOblow* (visual index *front cover-II*) and *AUTOblow* (visual index *XXV-back cover*) respectively, that is, the videos whose narrative content is conceptually represented by the objects that, together with the videos, constitute *The Jim Otto Suite* (figure 4.5).⁹¹⁸ Through

⁹¹⁸ Note that *The Jim Otto Suite*, which was exhibited at the *entrance* of the gallery spaces in L.A. and in N.Y. and which accordingly, Barney has recently defined as the “prologue” of the entire project was not exhibited in San Francisco. Barney, “PLAYBOOK 91-92,” 175.

static matters, moving images, and even more through their interrelation, *The Jim Otto Suite* conflates the cause and the effect of the entire trilogy's narrative: the boundless chase between the Character of Negative Restraint and the Character of Positive Restraint – a metaphor of the *constant collision course* between the (increasingly technologized) body and mind.

The horizontal format of the booklet reminds one of the video screen, something which is particularly evident when looking at the front and the back covers, each of which consists of a key image of *OTTOblow* and *AUTOblow*, respectively. On the front cover, Otto seems ready to start the action and thus invest all his stored energy (figure 4.1 a); on the back cover one sees the abdomen of the Character of Positive Restraint protected by a thick intact layer of petroleum jelly, as if to ensure the storage of all the potential energy (figure 4.1 b).

Not only the format, but also the materiality of these images enacts the medium of the video and brings about the state of its *technological identity* at the beginning of the 1990s.⁹¹⁹ The images in question are in fact chequered and slightly out of focus, something that attests to the fact that at the time of their realization, when obtaining a static image from a video one could still chose whether to photograph the screen or to mechanically output a still. Barney opted for the first possibility. He did so for a precise aesthetical reason: in so doing “the resolution lines would become more present.”⁹²⁰ Stopping the flow of images at the desired moment and photographing the screen he could obtain a picture whose texture incorporated and revealed the materiality of its *medium of provenance*, thus incorporating its presence and durational qualities on the printed page.⁹²¹

⁹¹⁹ For a concise and impressive historical account on this medium, see Michael Z. Newman, *Video Revolutions: On the History of a Medium* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁹²⁰ Barney, in conversation with the author.

⁹²¹ For these formal and material features, i.e. format and materiality of the image (as well as for its loose relationship with the domain of sports), *New Work* recalls a 1985 black and white publication by Nancy Holt (1938-2014) bearing the title *Time Outs*. See Nancy Holt, *Time Outs* (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop, 1985), offset-printed, perfect bound, 28 x 21,5 cm, 64 pp. On a biographical level *Time Outs* celebrates Holt's juvenile addiction with Baseball (which was boycotted by her parents worried about this *masculine* passion). It partially evolved from her book *Ransacked* (1980) as well as her videotapes *Revolve*, 1977 and *Underscan*, 1974. Through the interaction of photographs and texts, *Ransacked* collects and documents the visual and emotional memories related to the sad history of Ethel Holt Tate's death (1901-1979) (the artist's aunt and only living relative), and the falling apart of her house. See Nancy Holt,

In the publication, all the video stills are characterized by this materiality. Barney combines them according to a few different compositional schemes to isolate key narrative moments but also to narrate the evolution and to evoke the temporality of the works they represent. The *narration* of *OTTOblow* is a good example in point (visual index *front cover-II*). The development of the action shown in the video is synthetized into the two double spreads which follow the front cover. In the first double spread, three stills from the video are laid out side by side, framed by a white band on the lower and upper edge, in order to facilitate their cinematic reading (visual index I). From the left to the right one finds: a still which frames frontally Otto's rabid run, the image of the confronting feet of Otto and that of the Character of Positive Restraint, as well as a still of the two overlooking personages framed from above. In the videos these images pertain to slow motion sequences, something which is ambivalently presented on the printed page: on the one hand, the fact that the three stills isolate three moments of these sequences seems to further slow down the action, dilating its temporality and permitting a thorough exploration of the blurred pictures; on the other, their layout suggests a faster reading of the sequence and urges one to turn the page. Doing so, one finds the double spread in which two stills are presented in full page: on the left, the moment in which Otto's blow reaches the Character of Positive Restraint's abdomen is framed from above, while, on the right, Otto's fist reaching the rival's abdomen is immortalized from the side (visual index II). The layout in full page of these two images seems to counterbalance the faster reading suggested by the layout of the previous spread, while at the same time making it evident that compared to the video, the printed unit of the double spread allows for the contemporary reading of the different moments of a narrative which the

Ransacked (New York: Printed Matter/Lapp Princess Press, 1980), offset-printed, perfect bound, 21,5 x 25,4 cm, 38 pp. In *Revolve* (b/w video, sound, 77m), Holt used multiple camera angles and slight repetitions to modulate her friend David Wheeler's personal account of his struggle against leukemia. In *Underscan* (b/w video, sound, 9m 12s), b/w photographs of Holt's aunt's home in New Bedford, MA where videotaped and the images later transformed through video underscanning, i.e. a device that enables one to visualize the complete video signal on a monitor. For the book *Time Out* Holt reversed this process: b/w photographs were shot at different speeds off the television screen, the video image at times being altered by adjustment of the television controls. Note that Barney did not know of Holt's publication (Barney in conversation with the author) and did not share her conceptual engagement with the medium or with the technology of video.

tape, despite the multifaceted possibilities offered by the montage, can present only through a scattered temporality. The reading implied by the book is then different from the sequentiality proper of mediums such as the video. This is something which Barney exploits in order to twist the spatio-temporal narration developed in his videos and reframe it, while isolating the moments in which the driving forces of the narrative are at work.

This first sequence of images welcomes the readers before they reach the frontispiece, that is, well before providing them with information such as the title of the book(let) and some data to contextualize its publication. This procedure has a parallel in the commercial movie context.⁹²² Starting from the 1980s and progressively up to become the standard at the end of the 1990s, the film credits have ceased to be presented at the beginning of the movie (front opening credits), to be presented at the end of the film (end titles or end credits).⁹²³ Meanwhile, the opening credits have been substituted by one or more sequences that precede the title of the movie. When these appear on the

⁹²² See Coers, *Kunstkatalog – Katalogkunst*, 38.

⁹²³ See Vinzenz Hediger, "Now, in a world where: Trailer, Vorspann und das Ereignis des Films," in Alexander Böhnke, Rembert Hüser and Georg Stanitzek, eds., *Das Buch zum Vorspann: »The Title is a Shot«*, 102-122 (Berlin: Vorwerk 8, 2006), 121. This, again, has a parallel in *New Work* (and in other books by Barney). Here, at the end of the long uninterrupted sequence of images at the centre of the publication, in a double spread characterized by the same two b/w portraits of Houdini and Otto which appear on the frontispiece and a blue uniform field on which a white 00 monogram superimposed to the artist's yellow Field Emblem lie, one finds the credits. Note, that they are not the publication's credits (they are to be found at the beginning, in the page which precedes Riley's text) but what one could define as the *sculptural situations' credits*. They acknowledge all the people who contributed to the realization of the sculptural situations in studio and *in situ* (in L.A. and in N.Y.) and start from those who directed (Barney and Grey), produced (Streitmann), and interpreted (Michael Petty) the videotaped actions, part of *The Jim Otto Suite*. They continue mentioning all the people responsible for the realization of *Facility of INCLINE* and *Facility of DECLINE* in their respective locations. The videos direction was entrusted to the artist as well as Michael Joaquin Grey and Peter Streitmann; whereas the videos production to Streitmann and Bob Wysocki for what concerns the L.A. actions and to Streitmann, Rick Groel and Wysocki for those in N.Y. The list includes the names of those responsible for the still photography (Streitmann, Grey and Jay R. Gray in L.A. as well as Grey and a non better specified photographer credited as Lamé in N.Y. – note, that he is Larry Lamay, a photographer who will collaborate with Barney in a number of his subsequent projects. Moreover, as is usual for film productions, the names of the stylists, hairdressers, and make up artists, as well as those of the interpreters are mentioned. Note, that only the name of the person who interpreted Jim Otto a.k.a. the Character of Negative Restraint in studio (Michael Petty) and in *situ* (Bob Wysocki) are listed, while no reference is made to the name of the artist who, as we have seen, interpreted the Character of Positive Restraint and its feminine iterations.

screen, the spectators are already *in medias res*: they have already been introduced into the action through pictures (and music).⁹²⁴

Concerning Barney's book production, this is not only the case of *New Work*, where the sequence of images of *OTTOblow* opens the publication, welcoming the readers before they reach the frontispiece, but also that of most of *his* subsequent publications. This is all the more true for the *book counterparts* of the five episodes of *The CREMASTER Cycle*. This is not surprising, given that through the interaction of film stills, posed photographs as well as details of the more eminently sculptural works which are integral part of the narrative (they arise from it and at the same time trigger it), they attempt to distil the salient moment of the filmic narration in order to provide a visual map to the readers, through which they can retrace and explore its multifaceted form while loosely reconstructing the narrative path. As in the five movies, all five books are introduced by images which are central in setting the parameters and the cardinal points of the multifaceted work therein mapped.

Especially from the point of view of the layout, the first book of the series, *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4* (early 1995)⁹²⁵ – as well as the almost contemporary publication *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7* (late 1995)⁹²⁶ – could be considered as transitional volumes between *New Work* and the remaining books of *The CREMASTER Cycle*.⁹²⁷ A good number of pages in both publications still present a layout characterized by large white (horizontal) bands (figures 4.9; 4.10). These are functional to the sequential reading of the stills from video which isolate consecutive moments of the narration and bind them together, suggesting the approximation of filmic encounter experienced over time. They disappear in the subsequent *CREMASTER* books, where the stills increasingly occupy the entire length of the page. Although, at a first

⁹²⁴ See Roger Odin, "Der Eintritt des Zuschauers in die Fiktion," in *Das Buch zum Vorspann*, 34-42, especially 38-39 and Dirk Schaefer, "Bluesteel: was die Tonspur mit dem Vorspann macht," in *Das Buch zum Vorspann*, 83-89. The author thanks artists Jennifer Allora and Guillermo Calzadilla for the productive discussion on the concept of *in medias res*.

⁹²⁵ See *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4*.

⁹²⁶ See *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*.

⁹²⁷ See *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 5*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 2*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 3*.

glance, this may be at the expense of the already low-resolution of the stills,⁹²⁸ this *shift* seems to depend on an awareness toward the more properly temporal, sculptural, and aesthetic dimensions of the experience elicited by the images in full page: nothing separates them from the edge of the leaf, thus providing their more immediate perception while calling the direct confrontation with the screens from which they have been outsourced. They are video screens, in the case of *New Work* and *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*,⁹²⁹ and cinema screens in the case of the *CREMASTERS* (figures 4.11 a-g).⁹³⁰ Even if the experience implied by these two different technologies are diverse under different aspects – *in primis* because in the cinema the spectators are more isolated and *faced* with the *œuvre*, while in an installative context characterized by multi-screen projections, their attention tends to disperse⁹³¹ –, the format of the book evokes and somehow unifies them, referring to their lowest common denominator: the rectangle of the screen.

The format of the volumes plays a fundamental role in the interrelation between book and screen. In *New Work*, for example, it clearly communicates the idea that the videos that animate *The Jim Otto Suite*, i.e. *OTTOblow* and *AUTOblow*, are the alpha and omega of the entire *OTTO Trilogy*, being the prologue and at the same time the epilogue of the entire narration; the cause

⁹²⁸ A factor that, as previously mentioned, Barney implemented in its favor, highlighting the aesthetic relevance of their scattered materiality and a factor which will become irrelevant in the late 1990s when the stills from video are more *clean* and defined.

⁹²⁹ The format of the two publications almost perfectly embodies the 4:3 ratio of the standard TV screen (*New Work* = 28:20,2 cm; *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7* = 30,3:23 cm). This happens to be true with a slight approximation in the case of *New Work* while it functions impeccably in the case of *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*.

⁹³⁰ All the five *CREMASTER* movies were shot using video and then transferred to 35 mm film to be projected as films. *CREMASTER 4*, the first of the series, was shot on video with the intent of broadcasting it on television during the Tourist Trophy 1995, something which had never happened given that, as reported by Barney, he “couldn't convince a tv station to do this”. It was transferred to film only because the Film Forum in New York offered to play it on screen but did not have a video projector. This episode served as a precedent for later realizations. See Tar Art Rat, “Barney at the Babylon Theatre Transcript from Post-Film discussion Wednesday 25 October,” *Post-Goole*, October 26, 2006, <http://tarartrat.blogspot.de/2006/10/matthew-barney-at-babylon-theatre.html>, last access November 24, 2016. Within Barney's aesthetic, the choice of video technology should not be interpreted in media-reflective terms but in very pragmatic ones; it is a much more agile and controllable medium. Moreover, Barney recurs to special effects only when they cannot be created with the help of masks, scenography, stunts, etc., video offers considerable advantages in this sense and in the post-production phase. For a detailed analysis of *The CREMASTER Cycle's* production aesthetics, see Wruck, *Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle*, 53-61.

⁹³¹ See Peter Osborne, “Distracted Reception: Time, Art and Technology,” in *Time Zones*, ed. Jessica Morgan, 66-75 (London: Tate Publishing, 2004).

and, at the same time, the effect of the drives that power the multi-part project. The front and back covers (as well as the pages that immediately follow and precede them) provide insight and clearly perform what at the level of the installation one could physically achieve only partially, given that *The Jim Otto Suite* was presented at the entrance (which coincided with the exit) of the L.A. and N.Y. exhibitions. The covers, thus, underline a detail of the dramaturgy of the exhibitions that might not have been blatant during its physical exploration: *OTTOblow* was clearly visible as one entered the exhibition space, while *AUTOblow*, flowing on the opposite monitor, faced the visitors directly before they left the show (figures 4.1 a-b; 4.5).⁹³²

The five *CREMASTER* books share the same exact format (24,5 x 29,5 cm), something which, in addition to embodying a direct link to their cinematic dimension, makes them clearly recognizable as being independent parts of the same work (figure 4.11 c-g).⁹³³

Despite the association of the format of these books with that of the screen seeming imperative, the artist has never directly made reference to it. Especially at the beginning of his career, he was rather interested in producing books which should embody the format and the scope of the “manual.”⁹³⁴ A *manual* could be considered as “a book for instruction, esp. for operating a machine or learning a subject.”⁹³⁵ Traditionally, *operating* manuals tend to have a horizontal format which allows for the juxtaposition of written instructions and explanatory pictures. They are meant to illustrate, step by step, the operations to be performed in order to make mechanical objects function (as their best). *Learning* manuals tend to have a vertical format and to be identified as books that, in a small *volume*, *expose* the fundamental information around a certain subject or discipline in a quite extensive manner, nonetheless allowing a prompt, immediate, and easy consultation.

⁹³² This was the case of the L.A. show. Apparently, in N.Y. the two videos ran on monitors which were hung on the same doorframe, something which seemed and still seems today to be a consequence of the spatial constraints of the gallery space.

⁹³³ Note, that the same goes for the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series of books which are characterized by vertical format.

⁹³⁴ See Barney, “Beginnings and Endings with Jonathan Bepler, 2001,” 30 and Barney in conversation with the author.

⁹³⁵ Oxford Dictionary. *Manual* comes from the Latin adjective *manualis* (from *manus*, hand) which connotes a handmade thing or operation. This well corresponds to Barney’s production aesthetic (see footnote 927).

Barney's books respond well to the double acceptation of this word, conflating its meaning: they resume the purpose and format not only of the operation manuals but also of the learning manuals. They do so in not merely illustrating but also in enhancing and literally performing their *operation* modes through the organization of visual, verbi-visual, and textual apparatuses within the object, medium, and instrument of the book.

4.3.4.2 The Uninterrupted Sequence of Images: Descriptive Analysis

In the following, the *first half* of the long uninterrupted sequence of images at the centre of the publication is exemplarily analysed, highlighting the strategies implemented by the artist to render his *project* (visual index VII-XIV). Given that the structure of the booklet presents an almost perfect symmetry, it has been considered appropriate to focus on these *first* images, investigating their significance within the double spread in which they are presented, as well as in the sequence of double spreads to which they pertain and within which they develop their performative qualities. The reflections presented here apply to the publication as a whole. In the context of this study, they serve as a starting point to dwell on how the aspects that characterize them will be implemented by the artists, with different degrees of elaboration, within his subsequent publications.

The first double spread of the sequence in question brings the readers, visually and somatically, within *Transexualis* (figure 4.12; visual index VII; see figure 4.11).⁹³⁶ It does so, by conflating stills from the videotaped action *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR* and a picture of the Vaseline decline bench that inhabits the room, while at the same time taking advantage of the apparently inert expressiveness of the white paper of the pages.⁹³⁷ On the left-side leaf of the first spread, the external half page is left

⁹³⁶ Vivian Sobchack provides an interesting reading of the relevance of somatic perception which even if focused on the moving image makes sense also in this context. See Vivian Carol Sobchack, "What My Fingers Knew: The Cinesthetic Subject or Vision in the Flesh," in Sobchack, *Carnal Thoughts: Embodiment and the Moving Image Culture* (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA/London: University of California Press, 2004), 41-60.

⁹³⁷ On the expressivity and possible meanings of the white page, see Brogowski, *Éditer l'art*, 169-211.

blank. The *emptiness* of this surface should be interpreted by making reference of the etymological meaning of the word *blank* (from the Old French, *blanc*, i.e. white). In fact, this white surface stands for the dreamy white screen field from which the videotaped action fades out. Two stills, respectively presenting two consecutive moments of the action's beginning, are paginated one above the other, occupying the rest of the sheet. In the okra toned pictures on the top, one recognizes the Character of Positive Restraint taken from the side, crouching over the laying figure of Jim Otto. Otto holds the video camera with which is filming what one can see in the bluish images below.

On the right leaf, a picture of the Vaseline decline bench, taken from a high angle in order to portray at best its features and to clearly show its position on a big white *Field Emblem*, presents the *locus* in which the metaphorical chase between the Character of Positive Restraint and the Character of Negative Restraint starts. The opaque white of the *Field Emblem* contrasts with the gleaming white of the zoomorphic sculpture, highlighting its sticky materiality.

In the three subsequent spreads *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR* is described through video stills and b/w photographs (figure 4.13 a-c; visual index VIII-X). The artist chooses three different layouts to distil the 41m 42s action, videotaped in real-time. Initially, he proposes a tripartite layout in which the two external half of the loaves are *left blank* to frame four video stills at the centre of the spread (figure 4.13 a; visual index VIII). The yellowish stills in the upper area are characterized by a wider framing and provide some basic parameters to locate the place as well as to describe the space in which the represented action is taking place. On the upper left picture, one sees the Vaseline decline bench in the foreground. Greatly shortened, it guides the eye of the readers to the body of the artist, hanging from the ceiling. The edge of the petroleum jelly sculpture frames the external border of the image on the upper right: the Character of Positive Restraint, now anchored on the ceiling of the metallic room, heads towards one of its entrance/exit doors. On the lower margin of the image, partially cut outside the framing, one recognizes Jim Otto aka the Character of Negative Restraint. He still holds the camera being responsible for recording the bluish

images which are paginated below and characterized by his distinctive overlaid 00 digits on the bottom right corners.

Instead of standing for the white dreamy fade out at the beginning of the video, the half-white pages here have a different task: enclosing the four stills in the centre of the spread, they constrain them, acting as the dyke which keeps together a bi-dimensional quadrangular multifaceted-image which evokes the tri-dimensional quadrangular space in which the distilled action is carried out. Their icy colour intersperses the information provided by images, by invoking the concept of hygiene but also the materiality of the *objects* that *animate* the stills: the Vaseline bench, the ice screws, and the naked body of the artist – frozen in what we know to be a walk-in cooler.

Although the book can not transmit the temperature of the space, we can mediate perceive it thanks to the sensations elicited by the icy *blanc/k* surfaces, the properties of the object we recognize in the pictures (i.e. the big metallic ice screws), and by the contrasting tonality of the four video stills (the warm okra of the upper ones, whose virtues seem disavowed by the depictions and the cold blue which characterizes the filming of Otto, on the bottom). Even more than in the previous double spread, the readers are confronted synesthetically with the smooth glossy printed pages.

The following spread is the first in which b/w photography and a still from video are juxtaposed (figure 4.13 b; visual index IX). On the left page three black and white vertical format pictures immortalize the Character of Positive Restraint in three consecutive moments of his climb up to a skylight window. On the right leaf, in the middle of a full-page bluish video still, the silhouette of his body, shown from below, rests hanging from the centre of the window he has finally reached. This architectural niche functions as a frame within the frame of the page. The brightness coming from the window, accented because shot in backlight, translates the luminosity of the video screen which originally projected this image now printed on paper – thus evoking not only the framing, frame, and format of the video but also the intrinsic luminescence of the screen.

The three b/w photographs on the left were taken during the Character's climb.⁹³⁸ They are laid out by leaving an ample white margin around them in order for the readers to explore the plastic qualities of the images as well as of the spaces and the sculpted body that they *freeze in time*.⁹³⁹ Beyond accentuating the plastic qualities of photography as a medium and of the images this medium produces, the implementation of black and white importantly refers to the aesthetics of the documentation of the performance of the 1960s and 1970s,⁹⁴⁰ as well as to the imagery displayed in contemporary resistance training manuals where b/w pictures enhance the sculpted bodies of the body-builders.⁹⁴¹

The last spread dedicated to the action brings the reader into the main gallery, whose space and the different components of the sculptural situation therein displayed are to be seen in the background of three video stills which are laid out following the same tripartite structure encountered in the internal front cover and consecutive flyleaf: they are side by side, framed by a white band on the lower and upper edge, once again suggesting their cinematic reading (figure 4.13 c; visual index X). The last image of the sequence shows the space (taken from the top down) in all its depth, while at the centre stands the Character of Positive Restraint (in shortened position, with open legs). Turning the page, it is the image on the right leaf that first catches the attention of the readers (figure 4.14 a; visual index XI). Here, a fully focused wide-angle photograph in colour shows us the main exhibition space, that is, the set of the action, seen from the opposite side and framed from below upwards. On the ceiling, one clearly recognizes the blocks that enabled the Character to climb throughout the space and the carabiners he had left behind after disappearing from the screen. The picture is laid out in the middle of the leaf, surrounded by white margins that seem to recall one of the white fade-out in which the

⁹³⁸ This was confirmed by the artist; Barney, in conversation with the author.

⁹³⁹ On the varied temporalities implied by medium of photography, see Jan Baetens, Alexander Streitberger, and Hilde Van Gelder, eds., *Time and Photography* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2010).

⁹⁴⁰ See Nat Trotman, "ritueller Raum/plastische Zeit," in *Barney/Beuys: All in the Present Must Be Transformed* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2006), 140-159; Valentina Valentini, "Performing Media," in *Matthew Barney: polimorfismo, multimodalità, neobarocco*, 17-29 and Cosetta G. Saba, "The Path. Situation, Condition, Production nell'opera di Matthew Barney," in *Matthew Barney: polimorfismo, multimodalità, neobarocco*, 47-87, especially 59-63.

⁹⁴¹ See footnote 845.

videotaped action vanishes.⁹⁴² Above the yellow mattress of *Repressia*, a transparent (Teflon) pole on which an opaque bar (a cast wax and Vaseline Olympic curl) is fixed, dangle from the ceiling almost dividing the images in two equivalent parts. Their lower extremities point to an area of the mattress in correspondence of which unidentifiable objects lay, that are presented in close-up on the opposite page. On this leaf, a detail of *Repressia* is coupled with the picture of *DELAY of GAME (manual) A*, 1991, i.e. a b/w photograph framed in white prosthetic plastic. In the first image, one recognizes the extremities of the above-mentioned bars in the proximity of which a metallic sternal retractor frames, *keeping it open*, an elliptical hole carved in the sports mattress. In the pit, a pearl rests on the ground while a shiny whitish stratum of Vaseline connects the cavity and a red circular object partially covering, and thus greasing it. The b/w photo (with white margins, framed in white, leaving an additional white margin) portrays the protagonist of *DELAY of GAME*, on the set of the action before it takes place (the Teflon bar is indeed still virgin and there is no trace of any object around the sternal retractor which opens the cavity in the mattress).⁹⁴³ The action, in fact, visually *takes place* in the following double spread (figure 4.14 b; visual index XII). It is divided horizontally into two stripes. The upper one showcases four b/w pictures taken during the action, on a white background.⁹⁴⁴ Each image distils a moment of the narrative that corresponds to a colour picture presented on the lower band. Three of these colour images are stills from *DELAY OF GAME*. Providing details, *in real time*, of what *is going on* on the images above, they *deconstruct* what in the videos is *constructed* through montage, bringing the attention of the readers to the pearl which the Character of Positive Restraint is manipulating in feminine disguise. Within the sub-narrative developed in the video – which, as the title suggests, is

⁹⁴² In this installation view, one can locate: on the right, in the foreground, *ANABOL [A]: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL* (note, that it was slightly visible in the previous image, where it occupied a different position); on the left along the wall, *case BOLUS*; and in the background, *Repressia* whose yellow mattress covers much of the cement floor of the gallery.

⁹⁴³ Note, that just behind the upper left edge of the frame one can spot a circular dot which, given the reflection of the light preserved in the published photographic image, one recognizes as a cavity filled with Vaseline.

⁹⁴⁴ The artist considers these pictures as video stills (Barney, in conversation with the author). The fact that he *confuses* photographs taken during the actions with video stills can be considered symptomatic of his attitude to consider moving and still image as being interchangeable.

metaphorically related to the rules of American Football – the pearl becomes a substitute of the football. The Character of Positive Restraint (alias Houdini, alias the quarterback, alias the artist) fumbles⁹⁴⁵ with the pearl, causing it to roll across the mattress (eventually, as we know from the precedent spread, it will reach the orifice of *Repressia*). Reaching down as if to recover the *pearl* but ultimately hesitating and refusing to put the *ball* into play, the protagonist incurs in a delay-of-game penalty.⁹⁴⁶ An orange ceramic skeet, whose upper surface is portrayed in detail in the fourth colour image, is thrown at him, literally materializing, i.e. not only substituting but materially enacting, the traditional delay-of-game penalty signal, i.e. the waving of an orange penalty flag.⁹⁴⁷

The following double spread presents, laid out in full page on the left leaf, a still from the same video (figure 4.14 c; visual index XIII). The still enacts the very moment in which the Character of Positive Restraint leaves the state of grace and evasion offered and symbolized by his feminine disguise just before continuing his escape. The delay of game penalty has in fact ended his safety space and time – he is now again vulnerable to the attack of Otto. The Character is portrayed partially behind the Teflon bar of *Repressia*, his figure refracted and split in two by the passage of the light through the transparent material, so visually materializing his shifting condition. On the right leaf, one encounters a detail of *Delay of Game (manual) B*, 1991, a gelatine silver print in prosthetic flesh-coloured plastic frame. The b/w picture, framed within the frame of the page, is a posed picture in which one sees the Character of Positive Restraint – still in his feminine disguise – leaned on *ANABOL [A]: PACE CAR FOR THE*

⁹⁴⁵ In American (or Canadian) football, the situation in which a player (the ball carrier or passer) drops the ball, thus losing its possession, before being tackled or scoring is called *fumble*.

⁹⁴⁶ In American football, the offensive team is penalized five yards if it delays the game, that is, if they fail (deliberately or not) to put the ball in play by snapping it or kicking it before the delay of game timer (or play clock) expires (this time vary from 20 to 40 seconds according to the league and the country).

⁹⁴⁷ This object is the same that readers accustomed with shooting training might have already recognized in the previous spread as a shooting target. Here the mark *White AA flyer* leave no doubt. White AA flyers are 108mm orange clay targets for expert shooters. Each clay weights 98 grams and is characterized by a *golf ball dimple* design. Given their petroleum pitch composition, when hit, they produce black smoke. Note, that White AA flyers are available only in Central and Eastern U.S. (Brian Skeuse, Regent Chemical, e-mail to author, February 2, 2015). This information produces a further twist with respect to the geographical connotation of the piece.

HUBRYS PILL, metaphorically taking possession of the *car*, just before using it to leave the scene.⁹⁴⁸

The subsequent double spread corresponds with the exact half of the book (figure 4.15; visual index XIV). It presents the passage between the narrative developed in *facility of INCLINE* and *facility of DECLINE*, enacting its geographical, topographical, and topological settings. It shows two video stills from a sequence which one sees at about *the end* of *RADIAL DRILL*'s (3m 59s - 4m 27s) looped narrative. Otto, in white away uniform, taken from the knees to the neck, holds the Teflon bar in the hands, slowly rotating around it from left to right. Once he has rotated about 180° his uniform turns black (home) and he continues the rotation. On the left leaf, in full page, one sees one of the initial moments of Otto's rotation, while on the right, always in full page, one is confronted with the very moment in which the character's uniform has turned black. The two images are almost symmetrical. Their mirror character is accentuated by the light blue uniform background, by the vertical, central position of the Teflon bar, and by the inversion of the colours in the player's jersey (white with black digits on the left, black with white digits on the right).

Within the artist's cosmogony the merging of these two pages in the binding should be interpreted as the metaphorical (reflective) border between the Western (L.A.) and the Eastern (N.Y.) parts of the trilogy, as well as the slit in which *OTTOshaft* will find place. This is a physical and at the same time an imaginary space into which the central element of the trilogy should be situated.⁹⁴⁹ It will be materially developed by the artist in the months following the exhibition in San Francisco and completed in Kassel between May and June 1992.

⁹⁴⁸ This picture, as with the other posed photographs that appear in the book in which the artist wears female clothes, could be iconographically connected to the debate on the relationship between the concept of *pose*, gender roles, and sexuality as well as the latter's representation which was much discussed in the 1980s and, with slightly different language, in the 1990s. See Craig Owens, *Beyond Recognition: Representation, Power and Culture* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), especially 201-217.

⁹⁴⁹ Note, that the object of the book seems to formally meet a central aspect of the trilogy, that is the imaginary nourished by anal penetration which is reflected within the work at the iconographic as well as at the sculptural level (and which seems the morphologic engine of the narrative). Holding *New Work* open in correspondence of the median double spread and looking the profile of the volume, one recognizes the stylized profile of a human body's rear end. The binding of the book corresponds to the line where the buttocks meet: it is between them that *OTTOshaft* will take place.

For the purposes of this study it has been sufficient to describe the first half of the book(let), since the second distils a narrative symmetrical with respect to that developed in Los Angeles. Barney stresses this symmetry by repositing the same style of images and layout. In the following, attention will be dedicated to some general and theoretical considerations on this volume that will enrich those developed so far, taking care to make specific references to subsequent publications of the artist.

4.3.4.2.1 Synesthesia and Design

As evidenced by the exemplary analysis of *New Work*, synesthesia can be considered as a key element of the refined design of Barney's publications.⁹⁵⁰ The ability to elicit somatic sensations is a central aspect in Barney's artistic practice. This not only happens thanks to the materials and the processes he implements, but also through the plastic and synesthetic properties of the (still or moving) images which he creates, selects, and organizes within his intermedia work.

Since the beginning of his artistic career, within *his books*, this task has mainly been entrusted to the expressive and haptic qualities of the paper (smooth and glossy throughout the first two decades of his activity), of the graphic design and especially of photography. In this respect, Barney seems particularly attracted not only to the so-called *transparency* of the photographic image (i.e. the possibility of seeing and implementing the photographic medium as an efficient and objective way of recording visual information) but also to its *revelatory* potential.⁹⁵¹ A good example in point is to be found in the book counterpart (1995-1996) of his *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, 1993.

DRAWING RESTRAINT 7 is an intermedia sculptural situation comprising a three channels video in which one can follow three satyrs, a hairless kid-satyr

⁹⁵⁰ For an exemplary reading of the role of synesthesia in contemporary art, see Caroline A. Jones, ed., *Sensorium: embodied experience, technology, and contemporary art* (Cambridge/London: The MIT Press, 2006).

⁹⁵¹ Raymond Bellour describes the photographic process as the combination of "enregistrement et révélation". See Raymond Bellour, "Quand s'écrit la photo du cinéma," in *L'Entre-images: Photo, cinéma, vidéo* (Paris: La Différence, 1990), 69, previously published as "Quand s'écrit la photo du cinéma. À propos de 'Proust et la photographie' de J. F. Chevrier," in *Cahiers du cinéma*, no. 342 (July 1982): 44-45.

(interpreted by the artist) plus two adult specimens, a ram and a ewe, engage in different conflictual actions. The main narrative strand sees them in action in a limousine entering Manhattan. While in the front seat the kid chases his tail, the two adults wrestle on the back seat. The ewe tries to draw a ram horn in the condensation that has formed over the surface of the moon roof, using the tip of the ram's horn. Curator Klaus Kertesz has described those mythological characters as "figures of friction, embodiments of the struggle of art-making processes."⁹⁵² Especially the struggle between the ram and the ewe metaphorizes resistance as "the essence of the act of drawing": friction develops "between the drawing tool and the surface to be drawn up, between the conception and the physical realization, between the maker and the making."⁹⁵³ In the homonymous publication, the narrative behind the work is distilled and linearized.

The moon roof becomes drawable due to condensation that is created in the cockpit. The water vapour emanated by the transpiring bodies of the satyrs under stress solidifies in contact with the cold glass of the window, returning to its state of water because of the difference in temperature of the environments inside and outside the glass. For example, this transformation process is made photographically explicit in the book by letting a double spread in which one sees a prosthetic plastic surface covered with tiny droplets of water follow another double spread in which two video stills (in full page) show details of the clouded moon window. Prosthetic plastic, a malleable material that can enter the body and become one with it, is paradoxically presented in all its impermeability as the background of an image which metaphorically refers to the living and transpiring body which is, on the one hand, pledged to leave a mark, i.e. to trace a drawing but, on the other, the living entity through which the very drawable surface could be created.⁹⁵⁴

In cases like this one, we have the impression that Barney not only capitalizes on the *transparency* of the photographic medium (we do not see the

⁹⁵² Klaus Kertesz, "F(r)iction," in *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, n.p.

⁹⁵³ Kertesz, "F(r)iction," n.p.

⁹⁵⁴ Further examples of this attitude could be the photographic rendering of the silky qualities of the *CREMASTER's* flags as they appear in the book counterparts of *CR1* and *CR3*, but also that of the different tribes referenced in *CR2*, as well as the portraits of the bouquets in *CREMASTER 3*. Here not only the plastic and haptic qualities play a role, but also the olfactory ones.

photograph as such, but we directly perceive its content) but that through this medium he also tends to dematerialize the book, i.e. the very interface that allows us to confront with the image.⁹⁵⁵

In addition to relying, more or less consciously, to the multifaceted qualities of photography as a medium as well as to that of glossy paper and graphic design, throughout his career Barney has resorted to the expressive and haptic character of: plastic clippings,⁹⁵⁶ jackets,⁹⁵⁷ (embossed or shaped) covers,⁹⁵⁸ and slipcases;⁹⁵⁹ (embossed) cloth covered cardboard covers;⁹⁶⁰ and, especially in recent years, to rough uncoated (sometimes very finely crafted) paper.⁹⁶¹

Accurate design and finishing is a characteristic feature of Barney's intermedia production. At first sight this could be symptomatic of the tendency towards the aestheticization of everyday life which has interested art and culture at the turn of the 2000s (and beyond). According to art historian Hal Foster, the concept of *total design* (of "object[s] treated as mini-subjects") is not new, but would seem "to be achieved in our own pan-capitalist present."⁹⁶²

In the essay *Letting Loos(e): Institutional Critique and Design*, art historian Helmut Draxler aptly notes that "to see the world as contaminated by design is, in itself, the expression of a totalizing approach [...] [where] capitalism

⁹⁵⁵ Media theorists Jay David Bolter and Brian Grusin have described this utopic but very real human attitude as "the logic of transparent immediacy". Jay David Bolter and Brian Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media* (Cambridge, MA/London: MIT Press, 1998), 21, see also 21-31.

⁹⁵⁶ See *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, of which fifty copies were issued with a plastic clipping.

⁹⁵⁷ See Spector, ed., *The CREMASTER Cycle* which hardcover version is characterized by a thin jacket of soft opaque transparent plastic. Note, that the publication was also commercialized in a softcover edition whose cover partially shares the main features and texture of the hardbound edition (less the plastic jacket).

⁹⁵⁸ See *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint Vol. II*, *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint Vol. III*, *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint Vol. V*.

⁹⁵⁹ See *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 2* which is characterized by a protective slipcase in coarse bluish transparent opaque plastic, embossed with the *emblems* of the movie.

⁹⁶⁰ See Spector, ed., *The CREMASTER Cycle*, which is the first book within Barney's publications that, also because of its size and scope, was hardbound and covered with a whitish silky fine cloth on which the *emblems* of the five episodes of the series are slightly embossed and coloured; see also *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint Vol. IV*; *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint Vol. VI*; Dervaux, ed., *Subliming Vessel*; Enwezor, *Matthew Barney: RIVER OF FUNDAMENT*.

⁹⁶¹ See *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint Vol. IV* and *Matthew Barney: Drawing Restraint Vol. VI*.

⁹⁶² Hal Foster, *Design and Crime: and other diatribes* (London/New York: Verso, 2002), 14, 19.

appears as the agent of the whole, and aestheticization as its most powerful weapon.”⁹⁶³ Reconsidering the critical terms through which the division between design and art has been often addressed, Draxler proposes to think of this division

[not] in terms of a rigid oppositional dualism, but a bipolar set of relations, in which various options are expressed as to what can be seen as art within bourgeois societies, and which also define a certain cultural «running room» within which it is possible to negotiate, and where it is possible to distinguish between autonomy and function, self-realization and commissioned work, production and criticism. This distinction should not be made categorically within the continuum of art and design with its various political and aesthetic implications. Instead of creating rigid divisions, it would make more sense to introduce subtle distinctions as to what art and design are each able to achieve [...].⁹⁶⁴

Draxler’s essay focuses on artworks and practices that have been developed since the late 1960s and historicized under the label of Institutional Critique,⁹⁶⁵ tracing an arch that reaches our days. He emphasizes that the problems inherent to all these artistic approaches, (among which he mentions the exhibition and the catalogue *design* seen as an original artistic contribution)

is not a matter of design, but the self-understanding of artistic work, whether these practices are taken to be a new aspect of work or genre within the art business or a one-dimensional service similar to that of the cleaning staff or the museum guards. [...] What, however, makes all of these tasks so attractive is the tension between institutional logic and the artistic intervention and not the assumption of a unique or absolute standpoint that is deemed to be correct. Only where this tension is preserved can these interventions ultimately make sense as «works,» and this is significant insofar as the transgression of the notion of the work, as of art in general, still depends on whatever is to be transgressed and therefore cannot ever arrive at some kind of realm beyond. This can at least be understood as an opportunity to no longer see the work as an autonomous whole, but rather, as the

⁹⁶³ Helmut Draxler, “Letting Loos(e): Institutional Critique and Design,” in *Art After Conceptual Art*, eds. Alexander Alberro and Sabeth Buchmann, 151–60 (Cambridge, MA and London/Vienna: The MIT Press/Generali Foundation, 2006), 152.

⁹⁶⁴ Draxler, “Letting Loos(e),” 154. For an overview on different positions related to the debate on the (inter)relationships between art and design, see Alex Coles, ed., *Design and Art* (London/Cambridge, MA: Whitechapel/The MIT Press, 2007); note, that Foster’s essay *Design and Crime* has been reprinted in this *speculative anthology* (66–73).

⁹⁶⁵ He specifies that “the concept of institutional critique includes a lack of clarity as to which [sic] understanding of the institution it refers to, whether institutions are taken to be concrete entities such as museums, movie theatres, or galleries whose selection and presentation policies are to be questioned; whether it is a matter of the institution of art as a whole [...]; or even whether we are dealing with every conceivable form of institution and anarchistic politics.” Draxler, “Letting Loos(e),” 158.

interface where discourses, practices, and institutional and design initiatives meet.⁹⁶⁶

Even if Barney's work can't be ascribed to the *tradition* of Institutional Critique, Draxler's reflections are useful also within *his* book production. Barney's publications (whether they are intended as exhibition catalogues, artists' books, and/or *Künstlerkataloge*) should not be regarded as mere objects of design, created to meet institutional needs and market priorities, but rather as *facilities* to map, express, promote, and communicate his work as well as the imaginary therein developed which flows from it. One can certainly argue that the work of Barney is commercial, linked to the world of entertainment, and has had great market success.⁹⁶⁷ However, this does not negate its intrinsic relevance and neither diminishes the significance of *his* publications.

4.3.5 The Ontological and Bibliographical Status of *New Work*

Although between the 1980s and 1990s exhibition catalogues began to be equipped with additional images of artworks to contextualize and present the works of the artist/s beyond those which comprise their related exhibitions, *New Work* can not properly be considered as such. If, generally speaking, it is not surprising that the images and installation views usually presented within exhibition catalogues make reference to previous exhibitions, in the case of *New Work* one should remark that this choice was in no way dictated by the tight schedule of its realization. Moreover, even if it was technically and timely possible to insert pictures of the two new works created for the San Francisco exhibition, i.e. *DRILL TEAM: screw BOLUS*, 1991 (figures 4.21 a-d) and *Away Gown: Jim Blind (fem.)*, 1991, this did not happen.

Following the ideologically restricted understanding of the artist's book that in the context of this study is exemplarily analysed by referring to the theories of Anne Moëglin-Delcroix (§ 2.3.2 and 3.4.1) and the curatorial

⁹⁶⁶ Draxler, "Letting Loos(e)," 157

⁹⁶⁷ See, *inter alia*, Keller and Ward, "Matthew Barney and the Paradox of the Neo-Avant-Garde Blockbuster" and Liz Kotz, "Video Projection: The Space Between the Screens," in *Art and the Moving Image: A Critical Reader*, ed. Tanya Leighton, 371-385 (London: Tate Publishing/Afterall, 2008), 381.

approach of Anne Dorothee Böhme (§ 3.4.2), *New Work* can not be truly considered as such. Partly because a recognized art institution published it as the catalogue of one of its exhibition, the book(let) does not seem an autonomous artwork but a by-product of this event. Within its pages one can find what Mœglin-Delcroix referred to as “la trace” of different artworks and “la mémoire” of (at least) “une exposition”⁹⁶⁸. It contains a critical introductory text by one of the curators of the exhibition, presenting, although more in practice than in theory (the text is not truly interpretative), the negative intermingling “entre la réalité de l’œuvre et son interprétation.”⁹⁶⁹ The artist did not share exclusive responsibility for this publication. Even if he conceived it and carefully followed all the steps of its realization – not infrequently intervening on domains, such as that of the exhibition checklist, which would seem to be up to the curator/s or strictly dependent on their authority –, the booklet was created through to the collaboration of different actors: the artist, the institution and its staff (the curator/s, the editor, the designer...), as well as the gallery and its staff, to name a few.⁹⁷⁰

New Work does not properly perform the function neither of an exhibition catalogue, nor can it be considered an artist’s book in the ideological sense of its definition. In this respect, it is worth returning to the concept of *document*. To fully recognize the narrative dimension that is latent to all time-based (media) artwork, Mœglin-Delcroix suggested focussing on the meaning of the transitive form of the verb *to document*, that is, to attest the existence of

⁹⁶⁸ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d’art et inversement,” 96.

⁹⁶⁹ Mœglin-Delcroix, “Du Catalogue comme œuvre d’art et inversement,” 96.

⁹⁷⁰ Note, that the Barbara Gladstone Gallery has been a key and constant reference point for Barney from the beginning of his career. Since 1991, the gallery has carried out important management and communication functions, as well as it has assisted the artist in controlling the image and discourse around his creations. In this respect, it should be noted that Barney is part of a generation of artists who have tended more and more to actively supervise these *ancillary* functions to the sale, making of them an integral part of the scope of their artistic activity. In this respect the tight collaborative relationship between Barney and the Barbara Gladstone Gallery is a very interesting case study in point which deserves attention that goes beyond the scope of this study. Exploring the documents conserved within the BGGA, one can see how, from the beginning of his career and through the intermediary of the gallery, Barney has personally controlled the selection and sometimes even the editing of the images to be published in the press articles devoted to his work and artistic persona. Another artist pertaining to the same generation whom could be mentioned here as a relevant example in this direction is Olafur Eliasson. During the 1990s and 2000s however Eliasson has progressively internalized in his studio all the activities related to the communication of his artistic *Weltanschauung*. Note that in the early 1990s, at the beginning of his career, Eliasson was skeptical *vis à vis* art publications but, by the mid-2000s, he had fully internalized their production within his studio.

something. Referring to Baumgarten and Oppitz's *T'e-ne-T'e* she implemented this definition to demonstrate how through artistic action an exhibition catalogue could become an autonomous work, an artist's book (§ 3.4.1.2). However, the close-reading of *T'e-ne-T'e* which has been put forward in the context of the third chapter of this study (§ 3.4.1.2) suffices to show that Baumgarten and Oppitz's booklet cannot be considered an autonomous work of art *per se*, but an integral part of a much more complex *œuvre* composed by their *Hommage-Kasten Broodthaers* (1973), its temporary installation/exhibition, and the related publication.

Matthew Barney's *New Work* functions in a manner which is similar to *T'e-ne-T'e*: neither the *document* of an exhibition (i.e. a *traditional* exhibition catalogue), nor an *autonomous* work of art (i.e. a *traditional* artist's book), but an interrelated instance of their realization. As a whole, *New Work* does not properly document the SFMoMA show of which it is supposed to be the *catalogue* but it narrativizes, while displaying it through verbi-visual and visual materials, the complex and ambitious *Weltanschauung* which Barney had already starting to deploy during his final years at Yale.⁹⁷¹

In the Summer of 1991, when the artist began working on a book related to the *OTTO Project* and glimpsed the possibility of its publication in the framework of his first solo exhibition in a museum institution, the multipart work was still in expansion. In November 1991, Barney had already realized two of its parts, one in Los Angeles and one in New York. The exhibition in San Francisco but above all the preparation of its *catalogue* allowed him to better visualise this tripartite project whose drawing *STADIUM*, 1991, is the most comprehensive index, that is, the most complete conceptual map (figure 4.4). He will carry out the third part only six months after, in Kassel within the framework of his participation at the *DOCUMENTA IX*. Even more than being a *document*, *New Work* is the *instrument* through which Barney begins to map the *OTTO Trilogy*, his less known project to date. This book occupies a *meta*-dimension not only *vis-à-vis* the works therein represented, but also *vis-à-vis* the possibility of properly documenting the exhibitions in San Francisco, New

⁹⁷¹ See Saltz, "Notes on a Sculpture."

York, and Los Angeles. *New Work* is the instrument through which Barney reprocess something which is already happened but also what will be.

According to the traditional and common sense understanding of this *genre* of publications, *New Work* is not a catalogue. Of course, if we consider the list of the exhibited works as being the lowest common denominator of what can be defined as an exhibition catalogue, we find that *New Work* totally meets this criterion. However, as we have seen in § 4.3.1.2 this list refers to and is embedded in a broader system of *lists*, i.e the *Project Index*, the *Project Document*, and *STADIUM* (figures 4.3, 4.4; visual index VI). These *verbi-visual* lists, together with the images presented in the book, link but at the same time detach the publication from its *related* exhibition.

Moreover, if we consider the exhibition catalogue as an instrument to be published contextually to the opening of the exhibition, probably not really to be *used* within the exhibition but at least to be flipped through and eventually *read* after its visit, archival research allowed us to understand what no text or paratext of the volume reveals: although it was already in preparation during the summer prior to the exhibition and although it contains no picture of the “two new, purely sculptural works”⁹⁷² exhibited in San Francisco, this catalogue was published only after the closure of the SFMOMA exhibition (§ 4.3.2).

According to the different categories under which the publication is usually listed, its *status* seems rather controversial. Given that Barney laid out the image and set the main characteristics of the booklet by himself, it is sometimes considered as one of the “artist’s projects and books.”⁹⁷³ The fact that most of the paratextual apparatuses traditionally characterizing the exhibition catalogue accompany it, lead the publication to be often considered *just* as an exhibition catalogue. However, given its inscrutability and reduced number of pages, it tends to disappear in selected bibliographies.

Surveying the biographical and bibliographical apparatuses of the publications *dedicated* to the work of Matthew Barney (where present), one notices that the first time that *New Work* was listed not only as an exhibition catalogue coincides with the small exhibition catalogue of the Barcelona

⁹⁷² Riley, “MATTHEW BARNEY,” n.p.

⁹⁷³ Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 517.

exhibition *Matthew Barney*.⁹⁷⁴ Here the book(let) is referenced within the section “llibres de l’artista / Catàlegs”⁹⁷⁵. This interesting, spurious section does not mention only *New Work* but all the books designed by Barney (with the eventual subsidiary support of different professional designers) from 1991 to 1997.⁹⁷⁶

In the selected biography published in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* – the authoritative volume released on the occasion of the homonymous monumental exhibition organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, New York in 2002⁹⁷⁷ – *New Work* is listed within the “artist’s projects and books”⁹⁷⁸ section. This list also references several magazine pages and interventions conceived and visually laid out by the artist up to 2002.⁹⁷⁹ The volumes created by Barney as *book instantiations* of intermedia projects such as, in order of appearance, *CREMASTER 4*, 1995, *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, 1995, *PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*, 1995, *CREMASTER 1*, 1997, *CREMASTER 5*, 1997, *CREMASTER 2*, 1999, *CREMASTER 3*, 2002 are included in this list too.⁹⁸⁰

For the purpose of this study, the above-mentioned bibliographical lists are particularly relevant because they recognize that, at least up to 2002, the *paratextual* elements that characterize the publications conceived and laid out by Barney are rarely a constitutive part of the publication as such. These elements are added by virtue of the praxis that every book published on the occasion of an exhibition contains at least an introductory text and includes the necessary information to anchor the related exhibition not only in space and

⁹⁷⁴ *Matthew Barney*, Barcelona, Sala Montcada de la Fundació “la Caixa”, June 30 – July 8, 1998. See Juan Antonio Álvarez Reyes, ed., *Matthew Barney: Cremaster 1 / Cremaster 5* (Barcelona: Fundació “la Caixa,” 1998).

⁹⁷⁵ Álvarez Reyes, ed., *Matthew Barney: Cremaster 1 / Cremaster 5*, 36.

⁹⁷⁶ See *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4*; *Matthew Barney, DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*; *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 5*.

⁹⁷⁷ See Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*.

⁹⁷⁸ Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 517.

⁹⁷⁹ See Matthew Barney, “Headlever Near Side Cradle,” *Verbal Abuse*, no. 2 (Fall 1993): 26-27; Matthew Barney, “Statement,” *Flash Art* 32, no. 201 (Summer 1998): 78-79; Matthew Barney, “Die Verwandlung,” *Süddeutsche Zeitung Magazin* (November 13, 1998), 1-33; Matthew Barney, “Art in the News,” *The Tampa Tribune* (March 21, 1999), 9; Matthew Barney, “Untitled intervention,” *Der Standard* (September 2-3, 2000), 8-9.

⁹⁸⁰ Note, that among all these books, *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4*, *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*, *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*, *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 5*, and *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 2* are additionally identified by the wording (exh. cat.) after their titles.

time but also to the institution (or the institutions) that made its realisation possible, thus documenting the *having taken place* of this event. If this is not self-evident within *New Work*, where these apparatuses occupy a relatively prominent and stable place in the book, it becomes clearer with the subsequent publications.

If one takes these apparatuses or the fact that a book has been published within the framework of the exhibition or to *accompany* it as a discriminating factor to understand if a volume should be considered as an *autonomous* artist's book or a *mere* exhibition catalogue, this difference results ineffective.

The bookish instantiations of the five episodes of *The CREMASTER Cycle* are the best example in point (figures 4.11 c-g). The artist created every volume of the series as an *album d'images* through which he distilled the salient moments and actions at the same time presenting the characters and the forces which shape the narration of each episode.⁹⁸¹ Although all these books have been published contextually to the exhibitions within which the respective movie of the series and the artworks that originated from them have been first made public,⁹⁸² the volumes and their constitutive visual character maintain a high degree of autonomy from the *paratextual* apparatuses which traditionally characterize the exhibition catalogue. These apparatuses are in fact easily physically detachable from the volumes and/or hidden in the interior of the folding flaps of their covers. Moreover they never include a list of the exhibited work.

In *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4* (figure 4.11 c), for example, the basic paratextual information related to the exhibition (title, dates and institutions, sponsors) as well as to the *catalogue* production and publication (credits, copyright, publishers, ISBN) have been printed on the internal part of the folding flap of the cover, making sure that they do not disturb the strong visual

⁹⁸¹ Note, that only in the case of *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1* the sequences of images include sculptures conceived by the artist as integral parts of the filmic narration. See *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*.

⁹⁸² This is true for all the books, except for *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*. Even if the movie premiered in 1995 (*CREMASTER 1*, New York Video Festival, Walter Reade Theater, New York, October 7-9, 1995), its related exhibition/s and publication date to 1997. This was due to the fact that around the time *CR 1* premiered in New York the artist was invited to do a show at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum upon completion of the Cycle and so he decided to "slow down with exhibitions" (Barney, in conversation with the author).

character of the volume (figure 4.16; cfr. figure 4.9). The *album* was published in 1995 on the occasion of Matthew Barney's *CR 4* exhibitions at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris and at the Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, as well as on the occasion of the London presentation of the movie by the non-profit organization Artangel.⁹⁸³ At the time of its publication it has been complemented by an introductory text by Artangel co-director James Lingwood. This text is printed on a folded sheet, the pages of which have almost the same dimensions of the book's format and is loosely inserted in the publication, as a detachable textual insert.

In the case of *CREMASTER 1* the two institutions which hosted the show and published the book handled the policy related to the critical or introductory texts which are usually an integral part of an exhibition catalogue, very differently. *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1* (figure 4.11 d) was published in 1997 in the framework of the homonymous exhibition organized by the Kunsthalle Wien and the Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emmanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel.⁹⁸⁴ Also in this case, the essential paratextual information related to the exhibition have been printed on the internal part of the folding flap of the cover. For what concerns the critical apparatuses, in Vienna, as it had previously happened in the case of *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4*, the publication was complemented by a "Supplement zum Katalog der Ausstellung", that is, a loose folded sheet easily detachable from the book with texts in German by the curator of the exhibition and the director of the Kunsthalle Gerald Matt, as well as by film critic Alexander Horvath.⁹⁸⁵ Note, that this supplement does not include a list of the exhibited work. On the contrary, in Basel, the *album d'images* was left *wordless* (except for the above mentioned information printed on the internal folding flap of the cover). A small brochure with texts in German and English by Dorothea Vischer,

⁹⁸³ *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4*, Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, Paris, March 3 – April 16, 1995; *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4*, Barbara Gladstone Gallery, New York, April 8 – May 6, 1995. *CREMASTER 4*, Metro Cinema, London, May 9-14, 1995. Note, that the three institutions did also produce the movie.

⁹⁸⁴ *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*, Kunsthalle Wien, November 28, 1997 – February 8, 1998; Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emmanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Öffentliche Kunstsammlung Basel, March 28 – June 28, 1998.

⁹⁸⁵ See "Cremaster 1, Matthew Barney: Supplement zum Katalog der Ausstellung in der Kunsthalle Wien," in *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*, n.p.; Horvath, "LE CRÉMYSTÈRE."

the curator of the Basel stage of the exhibition, and by film and media theoretician Hansmartin Siegrist was published to autonomously accompany the “Bilderband zu Cremaster 1, der von Matthew Barney konzipiert wurde.”⁹⁸⁶ Note that, unlike the case of Vienna, this supplement comprises also a list of the works on show.

Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 5 (figure 4.11 e) and *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 2* (figure 4.11 f) both present paratextual information related to the exhibition in the context of which they were published as well as short critical text on the internal part of their folding flaps while *CREMASTER 3*'s book history (figure 4.11 g) is similar to that of *CREMASTER 1* because it was equipped or non-equipped with interpretative materials depending on the context of its distribution.

In none of the *CREMASTER*'s books are textual and paratextual apparatuses part of the pagination of the books. They are printed on sheets that have been successively inserted in the books and fixed with a thin layer of glue or printed in the hidden interior part of the folding flaps of their cover in order to avoid disturbing the visual narration. They are *part* of the book but they are at the same time easily removable or hidden from view. The readers acknowledge at a first glance that this *paratextual* information is *foreign* to the articulated sequences of pictures that characterize the five books.

Coming back to the status of *New Work*, one should note that its bibliographical reference curiously disappears from the list of Barney's artist's books already in the publication which immediately followed Nancy Spector's comprehensive monographic volume dedicated to *The CREMASTER Cycle*. *Matthew Barney - The Cremaster Cycle* is the smaller exhibition catalogue which accompanied the homonymous exhibition held in Oslo in the Autumn 2003.⁹⁸⁷ This show could be considered as the last reiteration of the monumental touring exhibition *The CREMASTER Cycle* which was organized by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum (in cooperation with the Museum Ludwig,

⁹⁸⁶ Vischer, ed., *Cremaster 1, Matthew Barney*, n.p.; Siegrist, “Barney im Kino.”

⁹⁸⁷ *Matthew Barney - The Cremaster Cycle*, Oslo, Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, September 13 – November 16, 2003. See Marit Woltman, ed., *Matthew Barney - The Cremaster Cycle* (Oslo: Astrup Fearnley Museet for Moderne Kunst, 2003).

Cologne and the Musée d'Art Moderne de la Ville de Paris) in 2002/2003.⁹⁸⁸ The sudden disappearance of this bibliographic record is somehow surprising, if one considers that this booklet was published shortly after the monumental Guggenheim's monography devoted to *The CREMASTER Cycle* – a volume to which it seems to owe not so much in terms of format and encyclopaedic ambition but in textual content, given that the introductory text consists of a reduced version of Spector's long scholarly essay for the Guggenheim catalogue. In this thin book there is no trace of *New Work* in the list of Barney's "artist's books"⁹⁸⁹. Only the five *CREMASTER* books appear there. Since the publication does not include a proper bibliographic section but only a biographical one which is divided into education and prizes, selected solo and group exhibitions, there is no mention of *New Work* as there is no mention of the other projects and books by the artist.⁹⁹⁰

Equally, in the only publication so far dedicated to the work of Matthew Barney in which a bibliographical section appears including the artist's *artist's books*, that is the catalogue produced in the context of the exhibition *Matthew Barney: Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail, New Work* is not listed.⁹⁹¹

⁹⁸⁸ Note that a mention of this cooperation is included only in the German version of the exhibition catalogue. See Nancy Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER CYCLE*, trans. Bernhard Geyer and Uta Goridis (Köln/Ostfildern-Ruit: Ludwig Museum/Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), viii.

⁹⁸⁹ Woltman, ed., *Matthew Barney – The Cremaster Cycle*, 75.

⁹⁹⁰ Only the homonymous exhibition held at SFMOMA is mentioned in the rubric "Solo Exhibitions (Selected)". Woltman, ed., *Matthew Barney – The Cremaster Cycle*, 74.

⁹⁹¹ In the catalogue of the exhibition *Matthew Barney - Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail, New Work* is not mentioned in the rubric "Artist's Books by Matthew Barney". This rubric includes just the five *CREMASTER*s books, *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7* and the volumes I-V in the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series. See Isabel Friedli, ed., *Matthew Barney: Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail*, Schaulager-Hefte 5 (Basel: Schaulager/Schwabe Verlag, 2010), 158. Within the selected bibliography published in *Subliming Vessel: The Drawings of Matthew Barney*, *New Work* is mentioned as exhibition catalogue. See Dervaux, ed., *Subliming Vessel*, 241. In the *exhibition catalogue* published on the occasion of the exhibition *Matthew Barney: RIVER OF FUNDAMENT* at Haus der Kunst there is no bibliographical section. From the analysis of the bio/bibliographical apparatuses of the publications related to Barney and his work it is not clear which role this book(let) plays, given that it is not always taken into consideration and, if it is, in the majority of the cases it is regarded as a *mere* exhibition catalogue. This happens also within *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRYS PILL*, where the bibliography section includes only articles that have appeared in newspapers and magazines; the existence of *New Work* is attested only by the wording (cat.) next to the title of the homonymous exhibition in the rubric "Einzelstellungen/Solo Shows". *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRYS PILL*, 85. Note, that despite the bio/bibliographical apparatuses present a section dedicated to the Barney's "Künstlertexte/Writing by the artist" (*Matthew Barney: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRYS PILL*, 87) no rubric is specifically dedicated to the books by the artist. In the apparatuses of the publication which accompanied Barney's 2007 exhibition

4.4 *OTTO Trilogy*, 1991-2016

Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy is the 200-page, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inches) horizontal format hardcover publication created on the occasion of the exhibition *Matthew Barney: Facility of DECLINE* (figures 4.17 a, b). The show opened in September 2016 at Barbara Gladstone Gallery in New York to celebrate Barney's and Gladstone's twenty-fifth anniversary of collaboration (1991-2016).⁹⁹² The book is published by Barbara Gladstone Gallery and distributed by Yale University Press, the publishing house of the school where Barney did his B.A. It has been available at the gallery from the very opening of the exhibition but started to be officially distributed only shortly after its end.

The publication incorporates each episode of the multipart intermedia artwork, thus encompassing also *OTTOshaft* – the segment that was not explicitly included in *New Work*. Here the trilogy is ordered and presented anew through a long sequence of images which constitute the core of the volume. They present all the works, in all the mediums, which are part of it.

In contrast to *New Work*, within *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy* the *Project Index* and the *Project Documents* are no longer laid out as unitary elements. Moreover, diagrammatic descriptions of *OTTOshaft* are published here for the first time (figures 4.19 a, b). These verbi-visual references are scattered throughout the publication, accompanying the pictures of their related works and thus functioning as descriptive, even if largely enigmatic, labels. These references are also indexed at the end of the book, where information regarding their respective works' measures and actual location is

at the Sammlung Goetz (*Matthew Barney*, München, Sammlung Goetz, November 3, 2007 - March 29, 2008) *New Work* is the first title in the list of the "selected publications" (note, that the book is backdated to 1991). Karsten Löckemann, Stephan Urbaschek, eds., *Matthew Barney* (München: Kunstverlag Ingvild Goetz, 2007), 219. Within the publication issued by the Merz Foundation as a diary of the multifaceted (exhibition) project *Matthew Barney – Mitologie contemporanee* (2008), the very succinct bibliographical section contains only the "Cataloghi delle mostre personali/Solo Exhibitions Catalogs" and two titles within the section "Scritti d'artista/Writings by the Artist"; *New Work* is the first title to be listed in the first section. Olga Gambari, ed., *Matthew Barney – Mitologie Contemporanee* (Torino: Fondazione Merz/Hopeful Monster, 2009), 194.

⁹⁹² *Matthew Barney: Facility of DECLINE*, New York, Barbara Gladstone Gallery (24th Street), September 9 - October 22, 2016. The exhibition reunited most of the works exhibited in New York in Autumn 1991 and some of those presented in San Francisco at SFMOMA shortly after.

provided together with the number of the page in which they are *illustrated* within the volume.⁹⁹³

For the occasion, Barney systematizes his work as follows: *OTTOblow* and *AUTOblow* are presented in reverse symmetry in respect to *New Work*. They are not *shown* already on the front and back covers, but just on their succeeding and preceeding pages. The front and back covers show the same graphics that accompanied the frontispiece and the production credits of *New Work*, a *Field Emblem* on a homogeneous ground with superimposed 00 digits (figures 4.17 a, b). This time the ground is light blue and the *Field Emblem* is yellow on the front cover and white on the back cover, while the digits are white on the front cover and yellow on the back cover. This colour organization suggests a polarization but also reminds one of the front and back covers of the book *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4*, the publication related to the first movie of his well-known cycle, on which the artist officially started working in 1994 but whose conceptual origins are embedded in the *OTTO Trilogy*.⁹⁹⁴ Note, that two smaller *Field Emblems*, one yellow with black superimposed 00 digits and the other black with yellow digits, appear on the very first and very last printed pages of the publication, respectively, thus additionally framing its content.

Each episode of the trilogy is introduced by a double spread in which on the left leaf one finds a black and white picture of its virgin main site, and on the right, the episode's title with a short description indicating the date of realisation and a very brief script.⁹⁹⁵ The addition of these images emphasizes the *empty* space of the gallery, stressing its intrinsic sculptural value (figures 4.18 a-c).

⁹⁹³ Note, that a small black *Field Emblem* accompanies the references of the works that were part of the 2016 show at Barbara Gladstone Gallery.

⁹⁹⁴ Note, that a yellow field emblem on a blue field also stood in the hallway of the Barbara Gladstone Gallery during the sculptural situation cum exhibition of 1991. The same graphics, with the same colours appears on the front and back covers of the publication *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4*. Here, a Manx triskelion (three armoured legs with spurs) with a trilobo orifice in its center substitutes the 00 digits, transposing the field of the action on the Island of Man whose flag, since 1932, is characterized by a triskelion on a (red) uniform field.

⁹⁹⁵ Note, that although *The Jim Otto Suite* was officially part of both *facility of INCLINE* and *facility of DECLINE*, just a partial installation view that shows only its merely sculptural components is included in the volume within the section *facility of INCLINE*. See *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 53.

The centre of the volume is occupied by *OTTOshaft*, i.e. by the representation of its multifaceted components and narrative through images.⁹⁹⁶ As already anticipated, this sculptural situation was realized and installed in Kassel on the occasion of *DOCUMENTA IX* (1992). As soon as the artist was invited to take part in the exhibition he made a proposal to create “a work” involving “the Documenta site in some way.”⁹⁹⁷ Barney inspected the site in November 1991⁹⁹⁸ and quickly elected a newly built (not yet fully operational) underground parking house in the Friedrichplatz as the main locus of his installation.⁹⁹⁹ In Kassel, *OTTOshaft* presented itself as an expanded sculptural situation which metaphorically linked the underground car park and its elevator with the elevator shafts of the three main documenta exhibition sites (i.e. the documenta Halle, the Neue Galerie, and the Fridericianum Museum) ideally transforming them in the bag, drones, and chanter of a bagpipe (or, in Nancy Spector’s words of an “environmental bagpipe”¹⁰⁰⁰). The installation consisted of different sculptural elements and three looped videos. In the two chambers “shaped like wedges with curved sides”¹⁰⁰¹ beneath the curved exit and entry ramps of the lowest level of the carpark, Barney installed what he defined “The Jayne Mansfield Suite” and “The Al Davis Suite.”¹⁰⁰² *The Jayne*

⁹⁹⁶ Note, that the almost symmetrical stills from *RADIAL DRILL* paged at the centre of *New Work* and metaphorically opening the slit in which *OTTOshaft* would have taken place (§ 4.3.4.2) are positioned in the *right place* within the sequence of images to which the narration of *RADIAL DRILL* is entrusted in the publication *OTTO Trilogy* (see *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 144-45).

⁹⁹⁷ Matthew Barney, letter to Jan Hoet, October 11, 1991, BGGA, Documenta Archiv, Mappe 79, Matthew Barney.

⁹⁹⁸ See Susanne Müller, fax to Matthew Barney, October 31, 1991, Documenta Archiv, Mappe 79, Matthew Barney.

⁹⁹⁹ Documenta team member Thomas Büsch, Fax to Matthew Barney, November 27, 1991, Documenta Archiv, Mappe 79, Matthew Barney.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Spector, *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us*, 15

¹⁰⁰¹ Sean Rainbird, *A Twentieth-Century Enigma: Matthew Barney's Ottoshaft 1992* (London: Tate, 2001), 7.

¹⁰⁰² *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 88 and 92. Jayne Mansfield (born Vera Jayne Palmer, 1933-1967) was an American film, theatre and television actress as well as Hollywood celebrity in the late 1950s and 1960s whose bodily figure and biography fascinated Barney. See Rainbird, *A Twentieth-Century Enigma*, 12. Metaphorically alluding to Jayne Mansfield’s thin and compressed waist, her *suite* stands for the state in which the body is totally sealed and energy is preserved. Al Davies was the principal owner and general manager of the Oakland Raiders (NFL) from 1972 to 2011. Nicknamed “the Machiavelli of football” he was an ambitious character coach known for his total inspiration to victory as well as for his “martial” spirit and “monastic” attitude. See Mark Heisler, “The Machiavelli of Football,” *Los Angeles Times Magazine* (December 15, 1991): 18-24, 70-72. In antithesis to the *Jayne Mansfield Suite*, the *Al Davis Suite* spatializes the opposite state, i.e. the spasmodic expense of energy.

Mansfield Suite is characterized by a wrestling mat in the form of a *Field Emblem* covered with tapioca pearls and complemented by appendages shaped like the drones and the chanter of a bagpipe (figure 4.19 a). *The Al Davis Suite* hosts sculptural objects of dubious materiality recalling one of the shape of the locker and that of a football tackling sled, enriched by details made of Vaseline (figure 4.19 b). Above each of the entrance doors of the *suites*, two monitors hung transmitting three videos in loop: *AUTOdrone* and *OTTOdrone* in the first case, and *OTTOshaft* and *OTTOdrone* in the second. Additional sculptural elements (small whitish sculptures “shaped to form herniated intestines”¹⁰⁰³ in glass jars) were installed onto the ceiling of three lifts in the documenta Halle, the Neue Galerie, and the Fridericianum.

As had already been the case in the L.A. and N.Y. instantiations of the trilogy, *OTTOshaft* implied and offered a bewildering experience. Art historian Sean Rainbird, at the time Tate curator of modern and contemporary art, recalled:

once in the carpark, to which one gained access by a glazed entrance at ground level, it was easy to think a misprint had occurred in the catalogue, that in fact Barney’s work must be elsewhere. Apart from a sculptural installation by Cady Noland sited conveniently and visibly near the lift, each level was largely empty of cars and apparently of other art. On finding Barney’s installation, in two chambers on the lowest level of the carpark, one discovered that in order to view it one had traversed, in real time and as unremarked experience, the vacant spaces Barney had filmed to make the video elements of *Ottoshift*.¹⁰⁰⁴

The narrative deployed in *OTTOshaft* opens in *AUTOdrone* (1992, colour video, silent, 2m 21s), as the Character of Positive Restraint prepares himself for a new conflict with Jim Otto, sealing the orifices of his body with silicone castings of bagpipe drones and thus preventing energy from escaping.¹⁰⁰⁵ The

¹⁰⁰³ Rainbird, *A Twentieth-Century Enigma*, 13.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Rainbird, *A Twentieth-Century Enigma*, 7.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Similarly to what happened in the previous videos of the trilogy, the images unfold through a series of rhythmical successions of slow motion pictures which fade in and out from white fields. The images in which one sees the Character of Positive Restraint (i.e. the artist) sealing his orifices are interspersed by the images on which one sees (from different angles) a wrestling mat in the form of a *Field Emblem* falling on the ground of a dark space. First, one sees only the falling mattress, then one sees it containing a series of small pearls that scatter after the crash, and last, one sees the Character of Positive Restraint (with sealed body), wrapped in it, falling onto the floor. The video ends when the legs of a character in a kilt (i.e. Otto, here played by Don Guarnieri) enter the frame and kick the artist on the abdomen, aiming to deflate his body. The photography of *AUTOdrone* was directed by Peter Strietman, as it is the case of all the videos

story evolves in *OTTOdrone* (1992, colour video, silent, 18m 46s) where Oakland Raiders's ambitious coach and executive Al Davis¹⁰⁰⁶ trains Otto to play the bagpipe and gives him the "mission of hijacking the Pace Car [with which the Character of Positive Restraint had escaped *facility of INCLINE*] and taking the Hubris Pill hostage: now the Pace Car will be repurposed as a bagpipe, and the Hubris Pill will be the energy source to power the performance of [the American popular Christian hymn] 'Amazing Grace'."¹⁰⁰⁷ At this point, all the characters undergo a transformation: Otto's white away jersey mutates into the black home jersey and then into the uniform of the Scottish Black Watch Regiment, Davies coaching uniform changes into the tartan and hat of the Black Watch Regimental Drum Major, while the Character of Positive Restraint dresses the white Stewart tartan.¹⁰⁰⁸ The Pace Car transforms into a three persons tackling sled: it will be pushed around the carpark by three identical Black Watch members (all embodying Otto and his drive) in the aim of chasing the Character of Positive Restraint. In the video, images of this chase are interspersed with images related to the transformation of the Hubris Pill, which goes from its initial state of sucrose to that of pound cake, passing for different stages and materials, among of which is Vaseline. While this chase takes place, "an image of two kilts of Black Watch and dress Stewart appears [...]. Two pairs of hands emerge and begin sewing together the hemlines of the two kilts. The image proposes a unity between the two factions, just as their conflict intensifies."¹⁰⁰⁹ This very image is presented at the beginning of the publication *Matthew*

comprehending *OTTOshaft*. Note, that scenes of *AUTOdrone* and *OTTOdrone* were videotaped in New York between March and April 1992, in the artist's studio, in a subway tunnel nearby the artist's studio, and in a garage made available to Barney by artists Jasper Johns and Julian Lethbridge (the rental agreement for the space is conserved in the BGGA). Note, also that Barney used the same garage to realize some of the scenes of *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7* (Barney in conversation with the author). The remnant scenes of *OTTOdrone* and *OTTOshaft* were videotaped in Kassel in May 1992. The three videos were edited in the second half of May in New York at Electronic Art Intermix. See Matthew Barney, Fax to the Team of documenta, February 26, 1992, Documenta Archiv, Mappe 79, Matthew Barney.

¹⁰⁰⁶ For the occasion he was interpreted by Marsha Gibney, the artist's mother.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Matthew Barney, "PLAYBOOK 91-92," 181. See *Amazing grace! (how sweet the sound)*, http://www.hymnary.org/text/amazing_grace_how_sweet_the_sound, last access November 12, 2016.

¹⁰⁰⁸ As the artist explains "the Balck Watch, or Royal Highlanders, were a line regiment in the British Army and protectors of the Scottish Highlands during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The dress Stewart tartan is a whitened version of a clan tartan, associated with the royal family and typically reserved for women." Barney, "PLAYBOOK 91-92," 181-182.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Barney, "PLAYBOOK 91-92," 182.

Barney: OTTO Trilogy, on the left side of the table of content, where it works as an emblem of the paradoxal unity between two factions in eternal conflict – thus picturing Barney's poetics in nuce (figure 4.20).¹⁰¹⁰

As soon as the pill reaches its state of pound cake (a protein rich cake which stands for "the state of hubris"¹⁰¹¹) the Character of Positive Restraint destroys it – the conjoined kilts separate and Barney escapes into an open elevator shaft climbing up to the kaleidoscopic dodecagonal glass dome of the parking shaft. Once he has reached the top, he plugs different spheric objects in correspondence of the very top of the dome, on whose exterior Otto sits with two bagpipe drones in his mouth. At this point the narration ends with a fade out on a yellow video screen. The chase, however, continues in *OTTOshaft* (1992, colour video, silent, 8m 11s). This slow motion video is subdivided in three moments that fade in and out from greenish video fields. Initially, Barney escapes using the elevator of the documenta Halle. He stands on the outside of the machine and bents to seal an imaginary hole with his head. Then he climbs an elevator shaft situated in the Neue Galerie closing its extremity with his feet which are covered by oversized shoes reminiscent of that of a clown but whose materiality recalls one of the metabolic transformation traversed by the hubris pill in *OTTOdrone*. Finally, he reaches the top of a Fredericianum's elevator shaft that he seals with a big whitish field emblem. Closing the drones of the expanded bagpipes ideally created by the underground garage, its elevator shaft, as well as the elevator shafts of the three main documenta exhibition sites, the artist – alias the Character of Positive Restraint – prevents the opposite faction from performing *Amazing Grace*, that is, to reach its scope: consuming the energy put into action.

In the book *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy* (henceforth *OTTO Trilogy*), Barney maintains the exact same format of *New Work* thus evoking the screen and its metaphorical dimensions (§ 4.3.4.1). The works which compose the sculptural situations are presented within the 2016 publication through a much wider selection of images than that of 1991-1992. This applies also to the videotaped actions. However, in *OTTO Trilogy* the resolution of the video stills

¹⁰¹⁰ See *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 10.

¹⁰¹¹ Barney, "PLAYBOOK 91-92," 182.

is much higher than in *New Work*. This is to the detriment of what Barney held to be a precise aesthetical strategy in order to show the mediality of the video. On the other hand, in so doing, Barney prioritizes a clearer comprehension and a straightforward historicization of his works, something which is also reinforced by the textual apparatuses of the publication.

Beside an authoritative introduction by curator Nancy Spector¹⁰¹² and a critical text by writer Maggie Nelson,¹⁰¹³ the book also collects the trilogy's *playbook*,¹⁰¹⁴ and a selected bibliography. While in *New Work* the artist prioritized the rendering of the project's narrative through images, in *OTTO Trilogy* he also verbally deploys the entire plot of the project: *PLAYBOOK 91-92* is the text in which Barney describes each episodes' narrative paths, also providing information about the content and the narrative meaning of their components, and sometimes even referring to their sources. *OTTO Trilogy* is therefore a much more educational instrument. Moreover, the higher presence of installation views and details allow the readers to re*visit* the sites where the sculptural situations were staged and to *map out* the entire project.

The *Playbook* is interspersed with details and big format pictures of *DRILL TEAM: screw BOLUS*, 1991,¹⁰¹⁵ a work which the artist created *ad hoc* to be exhibited in San Francisco in 1991 (figures 4.21 a-d). Not one image of it is featured in *New Work*, while in *OTTO Trilogy* the sculpture is even granted the only two folded pages within the booklet (figures 4.21 b, c). Note, that in *New Work* Barney did not yet recur to folded pages but, as we will briefly see in the following (§ 4.5.3.1), these have been almost a constant of the book parts of his projects, already from the publication of *CREMASTER 4* (1995).¹⁰¹⁶

Despite sharing the same format and content, compared to *New Work*, *OTTO Trilogy* is a very different book. First, it encompasses a richer iconographical apparatus and a stronger presence of (explanatory) text – even including a playbook written by the artist himself. Additionally, the fact that in

¹⁰¹² See Spector, "Introduction," in *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 13-15.

¹⁰¹³ See Maggie Nelson, "On Porousness, Perversity, and Pharmacopornographia," in *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 18-27.

¹⁰¹⁴ See Barney, "PLAYBOOK 91-92," 174-183.

¹⁰¹⁵ See *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, 177-180.

¹⁰¹⁶ Exception are: Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* and the six volumes of the series *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT*.

OTTO Trilogy the pages are numbered and all the works comprising the oeuvre are shown, labelled, and listed at the end of the publication permits the readers to recognize the different components of the three sculptural situations. Its hardcover also suggests the desire to create a solid volume, intended to last. *OTTO Trilogy* presents itself as a sort of *catalogue raisonné* of the tripartite work, twenty-five years after its realization. It functions as a systematic map of its different medial and narrative components that *New Work* evoked and mapped only in a metaphorical and allusive way.

4.5 On the Fruition of *Barney's books*

4.5.1 The Inherent Temporalities of the Book

As we have seen while analysing Barney's first publication, commenting on his subsequent endeavours, and comparing the volumes *New Work* and *OTTO Trilogy*, the object, medium, and instrument of the book is particularly congenial to enfolding his intermedia work and, at the same time, to mapping and communicating his *Weltanschauung*.

This is especially true for the tension intrinsic to the different temporal structures implied by the different mediums that are reflected within Barney's book production, i.e. moving images (video, film), photography, drawing, sculpture, and their installation. As in the case of the narrative behind the multi-part work *OTTO Trilogy*, the book format is characterized by an inherent symmetry. Moreover, one can stress another similitude between the trilogy's videos, Barney's poetics, and the book: their content can be accessed and perceived *circularly*, or in loop.

Art historian Alexander Streitberger underlined that video and film as mediums are traditionally characterized by a narrative linearity that implies temporal progression.¹⁰¹⁷ On the contrary, within the book this *linearity* can be undermined:

¹⁰¹⁷ See Alexander Streitberger, "Vidéo et livre d'artiste à l'ère des medias de masse: *Venise* un livre cinématique de Victor Burgin," in Leszek Brogowski, ed., *Le Livre d'artiste: quels projects pour l'art?* 107-117 (Rennes: Éd. Incertain Sens, 2013).

en ce qui concerne le recoupement et la dissémination des éléments au niveau spatial et temporel, le film [et la vidéo] se distingue[nt] donc radicalement du livre où la juxtaposition de deux pages permet une simultanéité d'images tout en gardant la possibilité des allers et retours par la manipulations des pages.¹⁰¹⁸

Barney's publications exploit precisely this feature of the book, that is, the possibility of the synchronic reading of elements that otherwise would be accessible only diachronically. The book is thus the object, medium, and instrument through which he provides a reading key to reflect, both synchronically and diachronically, on the circularity, the cyclicity, and the reversibility that characterizes his work and narrative paths. Moreover, the book allows one to linger on and to return to images and aspects that, within the flow of images in loop come back onto the screen on the basis of a temporality which is extraneous to the timing which characterizes the visitors' attention. The *lecteurs-visiteurs* (§ 3.2.4.1), on the contrary, can freely handle and flip through the pages of the book: they are sovereign in the enjoyment of the volume.

As highlighted by Klaus Kertess in the introductory essay of *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, the

book form imposes a more linear and sequential narrative on the action. The video is more circular with fewer of the implications of closure inherent to the structure of the book. The action is here stilled and must be (re)activated, drawn, and completed by the viewer.¹⁰¹⁹

Especially for those projects that do not constitutively implement looped video (e.g. the five episodes of *The CREMASTER Cycle*,¹⁰²⁰ *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9*,¹⁰²¹ and Barney's latest movie-opera *RIVER of FUNDAMENT*¹⁰²²), the book allows one to linger freely on different aspects of their intricate narrative, well after the oeuvre reaches its end. Given that neither Barney's videos nor his

¹⁰¹⁸ Streitberger, *Vidéo et livre d'artiste*, 111.

¹⁰¹⁹ Kertesz, "F(r)iction," n.p.

¹⁰²⁰ See Matthew Barney, *CREMASTER 4*, 1995, colour, sound, 42m; Matthew Barney, *CREMASTER 1*, 1996, colour, sound, 40m; Matthew Barney, *CREMASTER 5*, 1997, colour, sound, 55m; Matthew Barney, *CREMASTER 2*, 1999, colour, sound, 1h 19m; Matthew Barney, *CREMASTER 3*, 2002, colour, sound, 3h 2m. Note, that when shown in the context of an exhibition the single episodes of *The CREMASTER Cycle* are usually projected in loop and on monitors, thus accentuating the hybrid character of these artworks.

¹⁰²¹ See Matthew Barney, *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9*, 2005, colour, sound, 2h 30m.

¹⁰²² See Matthew Barney, *RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, 2014, colour, sound, 5h 50m.

movies are released on DVD, and considering that his works are rarely accessible (and this is all the more true as of their complex installative dimensions), the book becomes a fundamental tool not only for their mediation but also for their very access and enjoyment.

Additionally, as aptly noted by Kertess, the book favorably enhances the sculptural dimension of Barney's production: the stillness of the images therein presented "makes the recorded figures seem even more sculptural than in the sculpture brought to life (or life brought to sculpture) seen in the soundless video."¹⁰²³ This appears to be true also for his other movies.¹⁰²⁴

4.5.2 Installation Views and their Role

As we have previously seen, in *New Work* Barney juxtaposes video stills and installation views. This will be a constant in a number of his subsequent publications, among which *OTTO Trilogy*, i.e. the last in terms of realization. This juxtaposition suggests that not only video stills but also installation views can be read and explored cinematically. Elaborating on arguments outlined by art historian Briony Fer in her essay *The Somnambulist's Story: Installation and the Tableau*,¹⁰²⁵ curator Sotirios Bahtsetzis stresses "dass fotografische Dokumentationen von Installationen formal gesehen wie Filmstills wirken, und dass sie visuelle Verschiebungen und Rekontextualisierungen erlebbarer Erfahrungen darstellen."¹⁰²⁶ As installation views could be read as filmstills, the reading of Barney's sculptural situations through his books offers a mediated experience of his work, or rather, a special recollection, guided by his author. Note, that especially in the case of *New Work*, the exploration of the sculptural situations through the book takes place after the eventual visit of the exhibitions

¹⁰²³ Kertesz, "F(r)iction," n.p.

¹⁰²⁴ An exception would be made for *RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, 2014 the movie-opera by Barney and composer Jonathan Bepler, in which music plays an entirely new and unusual role, becoming the carrier and the molding force of the narrative not only on an auditory level, but also visually. Note, that during the action musical instruments are constructed *live*. Moreover, the characters as well as the architecture and the landscape function as *organs* for music production.

¹⁰²⁵ See Briony Fer, "The Somnambulist's Story: Installation and the Tableau," *Oxford Art Journal* 24, no. 2 (2001): 77-92.

¹⁰²⁶ Sotirios Bahtsetzis, "Installation als meta-kinematographisches Dispositiv," in Frohne and Haberer, *Kinematographische Räume*, 70-90, 77.

(in L.A., in N.Y., and even in San Francisco, given that the book was published after the closure of the show it was supposed – and it pretends – to accompany). Fer underlines that between the exploration of an installation and its *reading* through images there is a spatio-temporal gap which she defines in terms of “the dislocation between event and memory”¹⁰²⁷. While, as already pinpointed by artist and writer Brian O’Doherty in the 1970s, within the exhibition the “original audience is often restless and bored by its forced tenancy of a moment it cannot fully perceive”,¹⁰²⁸ the *lecteurs-visiteurs* of *New Work* might have privileged access to the narrative implied and offered by the work as laid out by its very *author*. If one considered the book as a mere memory of the experience offered by the installation/s (i.e. as a *document* of its/their experience), one could agree with Fer when she writes that photography “plays an important but curious role [...], as a kind of primordial fact of experience that is necessarily in the past, and often lost. [...] The photograph both cancels and animates the phenomenal character of the installation and vice versa.”¹⁰²⁹ However, if photography served only to reinforce previous experience, its function would be equated to and consisted of its very transparency, that is, it would be a medium whose function would be that of a mere *souvenir*. What is to be sustained through the analysis of *New Work* and its understanding as a matrix of Barney’s subsequent books, is that they are not only mnemotechnic instruments through which images merely serve as place holders for memories or past experiences. Rather, the images and the materiality of *Barney’s books* guide the readers’ imagination.

As mnemotechnic instruments, photographic images enable one to travel through real existing spaces anew (i.e. spaces which existed or still exists), *as if* one were experiencing them, i.e. perceiving them. Within *Barney’s books* photography goes beyond the exploration of real spaces – it functions like a kaleidoscope. It permits the readers to explore imaginary dimensions that are not primarily and necessarily related to physical spaces. The interpretation of

¹⁰²⁷ Fer, “The Somnambulist’s Story,” 81.

¹⁰²⁸ O’Doherty quoted in Fer, “The Somnambulist’s Story,” 81. See Brian O’Doherty, *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space* (1976) (Berkeley/Los Angeles, CA/London: University of California Press, 1999).

¹⁰²⁹ Fer, “The Somnambulist’s Story,” 81.

Barney's books as kaleidoscopic instruments differs from the Deleuzian reading of cinema in terms of crystal-image.¹⁰³⁰ While philosopher Gilles Deleuze expounds on the temporality of film and on the collision of present, past and future, actual and virtual dimensions, the concept of kaleidoscope is implemented here precisely not to stress the spatio-temporal continuity projected by the viewers, but rather to highlight the discrete and scattered nature of Barney's montages.

Barney's books bring the readers in a meta-space that is much *broad*er than that related to the installative dimension of the intermedia works to which they refer. Following Alexander Streitberger, one could note that the book "offre un espace alternative et complémentaire à la vidéo pour jeter une nouvelle lumière sur la relation complexe entre l'expérience temporelle et l'expérience spatiale, entre l'espace physique et l'espace virtuel."¹⁰³¹ In *Barney's books* this goes not only for their relation to moving images (video and film) but also for the other medial components of his sculptural situations. As in a kaleidoscope, in *his* books many different images that also refer to different media (film, video, sculpture, drawing, photography) edited together provide access to the global vision of a multifaceted *œuvre* which can be valorised as such for its very kaleidoscopic-nature, that is in the interweaving of its various points of view and entrance. Thus, Barney's books are not only *auxiliary tools* for memory but *necessary instruments* of the imagination.¹⁰³²

4.5.3 The Book as *Architecture*

The book as instrument of imagination exists *in between* the physical and the imaginary world, showing peculiar characteristics of both of them. As Streitberger puts it,

¹⁰³⁰ See Gilles Deleuze, *Cinéma 2: L'image-temps* (Paris: Minuit, 1985), especially 92-128.

¹⁰³¹ Streitberger, "Vidéo et livre d'artiste à l'ère des medias de masse," 111.

¹⁰³² According to ethnologist and historian François Sigaut, tools and instruments could be divided into two groups: "*outils-prothèses*" and "*outils-vrais*". Sigaut, "Les outils et le corps," *Communications* 81 (2007): 9-30, 18. Sigaut considers the *outils-prothèses* as "auxilières", because they make "une operation plus facile ou moins douloureuse, mais on peut s'en passer." (19) On the contrary, the *outils-vrais* are "nécessaires" (18), because they make "possible une operation qui ne l'était pas" (19).

le livre [...] se situe dans un *état d'entre-deux*, entre l'objet matériel et l'image ou le texte virtuel, entre le monde physique et le monde imaginaire. Souvent associé à l'architecture, le livre a le statut ambivalent d'un environnement physiquement construit, offrant tout de même une ouverture vers les dimensions imaginaires et virtuelles attribuées au roman, au film, à la photographie et à la bande dessinée.¹⁰³³

Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle is the best example in point to highlight how a book can embody architecture both in its physical, imaginary, and epistemological dimensions (figures 4.22-4.25). With its 530 pages, 23,5 x 32,5 cm format, plastic jacket, satin cloth embossed cover, and sculpted profile, the volume has undoubtedly monumental appearance and could indeed be fully described, in its conceptual, material, and imaginary features, as a *catalogue-document/monument* (§ 3.3).¹⁰³⁴ As already anticipated, this lavish publication was prepared on the occasion of the completion of the best-known epic saga and its related travelling exhibition.¹⁰³⁵ The elaboration of the book went hand in hand with the preparation of *The Cycle* comprehensive exhibition at the moment of its completion, that is, during the final phases of the realization of the *CREMASTER 3*, the last episode of the saga.

Already in the second half of the 1990s, when Barney won the first edition of the Hugo Boss Prize¹⁰³⁶ and his *CREMASTER 1* was featured at the Soho-branch of the Guggenheim Museum,¹⁰³⁷ curator Nancy Spector had offered the artist a big solo show entirely dedicated to *CREMASTER*, to be held at the museum once *The Cycle* was concluded.¹⁰³⁸ Barney seized the occasion to incorporate Frank Lloyd Wright's vitalistic architecture in his epic cycle.¹⁰³⁹

¹⁰³³ Streitberger, *Vidéo et livre d'artiste*, 111-112.

¹⁰³⁴ See *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*. Note, that the book was released in hardcover (price: \$65) and softcover (price \$45). The print run of the first American edition was of 10.000 units. The publication had at least three editions. Abbot J. Miller, graphic designer and since 1999 partner of Pentagram (the world's largest independent design consultancy), in conversation with the author, New York City, December 17, 2012.

¹⁰³⁵ See footnote 26.

¹⁰³⁶ The Hugo Boss Prize is an international biennial prize sponsored by the homonymous German fashion brand and administered by the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. Founded in 1996, it honours outstanding achievement in contemporary art, celebrating the work of remarkable artists (with no restrictions on age, gender, nationality, or medium). It carries an award of \$100,000 which is assigned by an international jury formed by distinguished museum directors, curators and art critics.

¹⁰³⁷ *The Hugo Boss Prize 1996: Matthew Barney*, Guggenheim Museum Soho, New York, November 19, 1996 – February 16, 1997.

¹⁰³⁸ Joan Young, Director of Curatorial Affairs, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, in conversation with the author, New York City, December 12, 2012. Young joined the Guggenheim in 1995 and

The Order, the 31' *intermezzo* which precedes the finale of *CREMASTER 3*, takes place in the Guggenheim Rotunda and ascendant ramp.¹⁰⁴⁰ It works as a *pars pro toto* of the five *CREMASTERs*. A level of the Rotunda is dedicated to each of them (1 to 5). There, characteristic elements and more or less direct references with the corresponding episode of the saga, i.e. condensed representations of the key figures, drives, and narrative forces which lay behind each *CREMASTER*, are to be found under the form of an ordeal. The main character of *The Order*, the Entered Apprentice, can be defined as a transfiguration of the protagonist of *CREMASTER 3* (who bears the same name and is also interpreted by the artist). At each level of the Rotunda he has to pass through the correspondent test as if he were the hero of a videogame or a sports challenge TV show.¹⁰⁴¹ The ordeals must however be solved in a determined amount of time, i.e. before the melted Vaseline poured along a specially designed duct along the Rotunda's parapet reaches the bottom level. Vaseline is put into play by the sculptor Richard Serra: at the top of the ramp, he plays

provided curatorial support for the exhibition *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* and its related publication, working as assistant curator for Nancy Spector.

¹⁰³⁹ On Wright and the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum's architecture, see Francesco Dal Co, *Frank Lloyd Wright e il Guggenheim Museum* (Milano: Electa, 2004).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Note, that *The Order* is the only segment of *The CREMASTER Cycle* which was released commercially. See Matthew Barney, *The Order* (New York: Palm Pictures & Arthouse Films, 2003), DVD.

¹⁰⁴¹ See Spector, *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us*, 54-55; Wruck, *Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle*, 93. Especially in the case of the videogame, this association is explicitly suggested by the fact that the structure and the music of the *intermezzo* models the aesthetics and functioning modes of electronic games involving human interaction with a user interface to generate feedback on a TV screen or other display screens. The interactive aspect proper of the videogame emerges in this case only through the interface of the DVD. See Nicola Dusi, "Lo spettatore incompetente e la flagranza della performance: 'Cremaster 3' di Matthew Barney, tra cinema e videoarte," *EC-Rivista dell'Associazione Italiana di Studi Semiotici*, 2, 2008, http://www.ec-aiss.it/index_d.php?recordID=70, last access October 27, 2016. Note, that the very element of the ordeal binds this interlude to the *fil rouge* that guides the plot of *CREMASTER 3* - inspired by the process of Masonic initiation, growth and rebirth. *CREMASTER 3* takes place in the Chrysler Building and makes of the edifice one of the main characters of the narrative. As the median axis of the saga, *CREMASTER 3* function as a "double mirror" (Spector, *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us*, 41) which reflects and in which are reflected the preceeding (1-2) and succeeding (3-4) episodes of the saga. For a thorough description and analysis of *CREMASTER 3* and *The Order*, see Spector, *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us*, 41-58, esp. 53-57 and Wruck, *Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle*, 87-100, esp. 93-97. In the context of this study it is interesting to note also that, as attested by an unpublished sketch conserved in the BGGA and dated July 6, 1991, Barney had already thought of using the Chrysler Building for *OTTOshaft*, the median axis of the *OTTO Trilogy*. Then, when the opportunity to take part in *DOCUMENTA IX* came up and he could find appropriate spaces and elevator shafts there he decided to make *OTTOshaft* take place in Kassel rather than in New York (Barney, in conversation by the author).

himself,¹⁰⁴² pseudo re-enacting the making of the *Splashings* (1968-70) and *Casting* (1969) – pieces which he realized at the end of the 1960s, throwing melted lead onto the corner between the walls and the basement of different spaces.¹⁰⁴³

The architecture of the museum not only triggers the narrative path of *The Order*, but also functions as narrative matrix of the exhibition *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*. As the artist explained,

The Guggenheim has always functioned for me like a hive. It is a place where a honeycomb could be built to systematize the individual parts and make a whole. This is realized in the Order, which is a chorus of the Cremaster tribes, and where the adhesive jelly between the levels is stronger than the individual levels. The 'Order' sequence in the film is a model of, or rehearsal for, the Cremaster Cycle exhibition.¹⁰⁴⁴

Barney uses the spiralling architecture of the museum as a tool for spatializing the various intermedia components of the five individual *CREMASTERS* – to *make a whole* but also to visualize and comprehend them as a whole.¹⁰⁴⁵ Covered in blue Astroturf (*CREMASTER 1*), the Rotunda and the High gallery floors are transformed in a playing field. The flags of the five *CREMASTERS* grace the vertical axis of the atrium while the oculus is partially obscured by a *Field Emblem* overseeing the whole structure (figure 4.23, left). Suspended in the center of the Rotunda, *The Order* runs in loop on five monitors arranged in a

¹⁰⁴² In *CREMASTER 3* Serra plays the role of the Architect/Hiram Abiff, that is, within the Masonic allegory, the “purported chief architect of Solomon’s temple, who possessed knowledge of the secret mysteries of the universe.” Spector, *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us*, 44. In the ascending narrative of the movie, the Architect and the Entered Apprentice are both at work to build the Chrysler building, the first to design it and the second to construct it.

¹⁰⁴³ The iconography of this scene derives from one of the black and white photographs that have preserved the pathos of Serra’s gesture to posterity. The picture, taken in 1969, portrays Richard Serra in protective overalls, mask, gloves, and knee pads in the act of throwing molted lead with the help of a big industrial spoon during the *performance* of *Casting* at Leo Castelli warehouse. Note, that in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* this image counterpoints a portrait of Richard Serra entitled *CREMASTER 3: The Slope of Hiram*, 2002.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Matthew Barney quoted in Spector, *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us*, 54.

¹⁰⁴⁵ Note, that the dramaturgy of the exhibition loosely recalls one of that of the retrospective show dedicated to the work of Joseph Beuys which was organized at the museum in 1979. Barney has always been fascinated by the structure per stations of this exhibition which he could access only through its catalogue. The artist remembers: “I had a copy of the Guggenheim catalogue of Beuys from 1979 (see Tisdall, *Joseph Beuys*). That book was really interesting to me. The way that it was . . . the obscurity of the documentation . . . the way that it was set up as . . . the stations of the cross. The exhibition as well as the catalogue were set up that way, and there were nearly no master shots in it – like something where you could see the whole work.” Barney, in conversation with the author.

pentagonal structure. White athletic paddings cover the parapet of the museum's ramp. Just below, the visitors find the duct full of solified Vaseline. Drawings, photographs, and sculptures related to each *CREMASTER*¹⁰⁴⁶ are displayed along the ramp and in the galleries, following the numerical order of the episodes (and not their chronological development). The five movies are screened on monitors in loop throughout the installation and twice a day in the Peter B. Lewis Theater.

Although presented and described as artists' books within the publication *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, the five book counterparts of the five episodes of the cycle, that is, the four the artist had created between 1994 and 1999 and the one issued on the occasion of the release of *CREMASTER 3*, were not officially part of the site-specific installation-cum-exhibition.¹⁰⁴⁷ However, besides being displayed for purchase in the bookshop, they were on view in the Aye Simon Reading Room on the second level of the museum's spiral ramp.¹⁰⁴⁸

Taking a decade to be developed, the cycle and its key ideas have evolved with its creation. If Barney began taking the biological model of the functioning of the cremaster muscle and of the reproductive system "as a way of organizing a story, [a way of] making a structure for a story" at the end the cycle, the underlying meaning of its generative metaphor has reached an existential amplitude, being described as "a system [...] to go into the dark hole of ideas and pull something out to make it clear."¹⁰⁴⁹

The Order and, even more, the exhibition at the Guggenheim, where each *CREMASTER*, in the multiplicity of its intermedia manifestations, occupied a

¹⁰⁴⁶ Note, that the sculptures introduced in *The Order* as symbol for each *CREMASTER* are exhibited in the context of their respective chapter alongside earlier works.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Young, in conversation with the author. See also "Matthew Barney: The Cremaster Cycle opens at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in February following successful European Tour," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum press release, December 12, 2002, Box 3228/3229, Coll. A0003, Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum Archives.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Young, in conversation with the author. Intended by Wright as a room for archival storage and research, the room was converted in a reading room by architect Richard Meier in 1978. As denoted by the signature keyhole-shaped entrance, its resources should be considered as "keys to knowledge." "Education Facilities: Aye Simon Reading Room," Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum, <https://www.guggenheim.org/for-educators/education-facilities>, last access October, 29, 2016.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Matthew Barney, interview by Matt Wallin, "I DIE DAILY: What is Cremaster?" *I DIE DAILY: The Making of Matthew Barney's "Cremaster Cycle"*, <http://mattwallin.com/i-die-daily/>, last access October 27, 2016.

level of the museum, seem to respond to the artist's fear of not being able to master his protean creature, to lose control of it, if he had not mapped it. Barney has described this "fear that I wouldn't find my way back to it if it isn't mapped out" also as "an interest in mapping the location of that hole and knowing how to get back to it everytime."¹⁰⁵⁰ Thus, the book can be interpreted as the object, the medium, and the instrument that allows the artist to sublimate this fear.

Already from its outer look, that is, as a physical object, *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* makes explicit not only the design of the museum but also the amount of information, references, and knowledge mapped out and developed in the framework of the exhibition. It is a sort of *catalogue raisonné* of the entire cycle and the first publication which embodies the ambition of interpreting the cycle's content, relevance, and meaning, systematizing its encyclopedic imagery.

Beside an introductory essay that could be considered the first truly scholarly attempt to embrace and understand the cycle,¹⁰⁵¹ the book offers a glossary in which the cultural and narrative imagery of the artist is enucleated, mainly thanks to a series of erudite quotations, flanked by their bibliographic references.¹⁰⁵² These textual apparatuses precede the main section of the volume. This 343 page long section presents itself as a long sequence of images, divided in five sectors corresponding to the respective episodes of the saga (1 to 5).¹⁰⁵³ Each sector is clearly locatable from the outside of the volume whose ribbed and stepped profile evokes the architecture of the museum, but also the organic forms which characterize the entire saga (figure 4.22).

During one of the first meetings to discuss the features and the general organization of the volume which took place at the artist's studio in 2001, curator Nancy Spector and graphic designer Abbot J. Miller were fascinated by the storyboard of *CREMASTER 3* that they could observe on one of the walls

¹⁰⁵⁰ Matthew Barney, interview by Matt Wallin.

¹⁰⁵¹ See Spector, *Only the Perverse Fantasy Can Still Save Us*.

¹⁰⁵² See Neville Wakefield, "The Cremaster Glossary," in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 93-114. The above mentioned quotes go, for example, from Bataille to Nietzsche passing by Freud, Steiner, René Girard and Paul Virilio. They include also quotes from novels (here J.C. Ballard takes over) plus some references to history and cultural studies manuals and books, as well as to pop-culture sources such as, for example, Death metal websites. Note, that still images from the movies appear only within this section.

¹⁰⁵³ See Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 116-459.

(Barney was finishing the last episode of the saga in that period). Eager to show this aspect of his work which had not yet been exhibited before in any publication, all three collaboratively decided that the artist should work on a section of the book where these materials would have found place. As recalled by Miller,

when we started working on the project we would have meetings in his [Barney's] studio and the curator, Nancy Spector, was there and we were talking about how can we organize the book in a way that avoids the very predictable – here's some drawings, here's some photography, here's sculpture and here's film. In his studio there were these walls plotting the film that he was working on. And what was really interesting about it was that it was in the kind of sequence of the story of the film but one would be, like, a little ripped out fragment of a magazine and another one would be like a little drawing on an index card, and then another one would be, like, some stills from some makeup sessions for trying to figure out people's makeup. And the whole thing was following the narrative but you were going back and forth between something that looked like a piece of art, something that looked like a planning document, something that looked like something else.¹⁰⁵⁴

Barney had kept all materials related to the storyboards of the different *CREMASTERS*. He took on the task of reassembling them on panels, to be photographed and converted into spreads of the book (figures 4.24 a, b). Moreover, he sequenced the book, dialoguing with the curatorial and the design teams to figure out how best to tell the story, while keeping the organization of the materials consistent (starting from the landscape, one passes to the characters, then to source materials and so on). Once the photos of the panels were ready, they were to be brought to the linearity of the book. As Miller underlines, this translation requires a decision that is as much aesthetic as conceptual:

once we got the system down, it was more about just deciding, you know, what should follow what. So that made it interesting, because it was much more of a direct mapping of one onto the other. From his planning document to the book. So that was sort of intriguing.

For the first time, the artist then had the opportunity to work on a systematic, not chronological overview of his imaginary. It is important to note that this

¹⁰⁵⁴ Miller, in conversation with the author.

idea and task arose from the dialogue between the artist, the curator, as well as the designer of the book, and that their implementation was made possible thanks to the close cooperation among the parties. Nevertheless, Miller emphasizes the care and constancy with which Barney followed the individual steps to get to the realization of the volume, always maintaining an overview of the final product:

it was much more of a collaboration than in other books where the artist doesn't necessarily get involved with the layout. We might take all the elements and then do a layout and then they respond. He wasn't standing back and saying 'do something about my work'.¹⁰⁵⁵

The part that was much more Miller's contribution was what he has defined a "sort of very exaggerated thumb index,"¹⁰⁵⁶ which he wanted to do so that one could really understand the sections of the sequence of images *assembled* by the artist (figure 4.25). The graphic designer aimed to reflect the systematization process through which the artist went through to map his oeuvre in a very formal manner, "almost like an encyclopedia."¹⁰⁵⁷ Barney "liked that idea" because in so doing the *catalogue* could become "like an atlas to his work."¹⁰⁵⁸

The section that acts as a visual index of the artist's pages well reflects this encyclopedic inspiration.¹⁰⁵⁹ Here, the archival, documentary, and production photographs as well as the drawings and the other materials related to the storyboards of the five *CREMASTERS* are indexed and accompanied by appropriate captions. This aspect as well as the quality and way of presentation of the images reveal a systematizing drive not only from the curatorial sight but, above all, from that of the artist. Barney had just reached the end of a long creative phase which saw him busy with a nine-year long project. He positively welcomed the proposal to visually map the work of those years, creating a visual archive in the book format. This systematic archival drive will be

¹⁰⁵⁵ Miller, in conversation with the author. Note, that Barney imposed his vision on a series of aspects and details, such as, for example the cover and the jacket. Young, in conversation with the author.

¹⁰⁵⁶ Miller, in conversation with the author.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Miller, in conversation with the author.

¹⁰⁵⁸ Miller, in conversation with the author.

¹⁰⁵⁹ See Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 460-479.

reflected in almost all his subsequent publications, finding its apex in *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy* (2016) (§ 4.4).

The collaborative and collegial nature of the cycle, that is, the fact that it was realized thanks to cooperation among different *actors*, materializes within a dedicated section of the book entitled *Personal Perspectives*, as well as in the production credits of the five movies which directly follow this section. *Personal Perspectives* introduces the experience of some of the professionals with whom Barney collaborated for this intermedia work: i.e. the composer Jonathan Bepler (*CR 1, 2, 3, 5*), the prosthetic make up and special effects artist Gabe Bartalos (*CR 2, 3, 4, and 5*), the graphic designer Tony Morgan (book design, *CR 1, 2, 3, and 5*), the photographers Michael James O' Brien and Chris Winget (still photography, *CR 1, 2, 4, and 5*; still photography and light design, *CR 2 and 3*, respectively), the material specialist, sculpture fabricator, and production design expert Matthew D. Ryle (*CR 1, 2, 3, and 5*), to mention but a few.¹⁰⁶⁰ The list of the works in *The CREMASTER Cycle*,¹⁰⁶¹ plus Barney's exhibition history¹⁰⁶² and selected bibliography,¹⁰⁶³ as well as the *CREMASTERs* screening history,¹⁰⁶⁴ wrap up the publication.

As seen in chapter 3 of the present study, these apparatuses are an integral part of the *catalogue-document/monument*. They attest to the validity of the knowledge collected within the publication, legitimising the work of the artist within the system of knowledge of which the curator/s of the volume are held to be the depositaries (§ 3.2.2.3.1). The book as architecture should not only be understood in formal terms, but rather as a veritable epistemological construction.

¹⁰⁶⁰ See "Personal Perspectives," in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 482-503. In this section also the following talk about their experience of working with Barney: actress Ursula Andress (Queen of Chain, *CR5*), performance artist Marti Domination (*CR 1*), set and prop fabricator Thomas Kearns (*CR 1-5*), costume designer Linda LaBelle (*CR 1, 2,3, and 5*), writer Norman Mailer (Harry Houdini, *CR 2*), paralympic athlete, model, and actress Aimee Mullins (The Entered Novitiate, Oonagh MacCumhail, and herself, *CR 3*), Chelsea Romersea (production assistant, *CR 1*, line producer *CR 5*, associate producer *CR 2 and 3*), artist Richard Serra (Hiram Abiff and himself, *CR 3*), director of photography Peter Streitmann (*CR 1-5*), digital effects artist Matt Wallin (*CR 2, 3, and 5*). Note, that the testimonies are edited from dialogues that took place between March and November 2001.

¹⁰⁶¹ See "List of Works in the CREMASTER Cycle," in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 510-513.

¹⁰⁶² See "Exhibition History," in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 514-516.

¹⁰⁶³ See "Selected Bibliography," in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 517-518

¹⁰⁶⁴ See "CREMASTER Screening History," in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, 519-520.

4.5.3.1 The Folded Pages

The artifice of the folded page fits particularly well to the idea of book as architecture. Moreover, it seems particularly appropriate to Barney's aesthetics and practice. In the *CREMASTER's* books, for example, the folded pages recall one of the sculptural features of the camera movements within the movies. As described by art critic Philippe Dagen, Barney's movies are characterized by very slow camera movements which enhance their plastic qualities:

les films tiennent d'abord par cette qualité plastique et celle du montage en alternance sèche d'un registre à l'autre, d'un motif à l'autre, sans explication fournie, sans lien visible. La réussite est là: cette pratique systématique de la fragmentation, au lieu d'exasperer, fonctionne et fascine.¹⁰⁶⁵

Within Barney's book production, the folded pages highlight the artist's systematic implementation of fragmentation. In this respect art historian Eva Wruck refers to the *Theorie der Leerstelle*, a theory that was developed both within the context of art historical research and film studies.¹⁰⁶⁶ In the first case, the *Leerstelle* (literally, empty space) invites the perceivers to fulfill their fragmentary experiences by actively combining the discrete views offered by the artwork.¹⁰⁶⁷ Similarly, in film studies this concept refers to the viewers' effort in bridging the gap (or *Leerstelle*) between discrete cut-offs.¹⁰⁶⁸ Breaking the sequentiality of browsing the pages of the book, the folded pages slow the reading down and bring the readers to focus on privileged moments of the visual narration. Therefore, they can be considered as the artifice through which the readers are confronted with the *Leerstelle*.

A good example in point is to be found within the book *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1* (1997). As in the movie, where a sequence of images precedes its title, also the book opens with images which set the parameters of the narration,

¹⁰⁶⁵ Philippe Dagen, "L'Art total de Matthew Barney," *Le Monde*, October 13, 2002, 21.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Wruck, *Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle*, 64-65.

¹⁰⁶⁷ See Wruck, *Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle*, 64-65 and Gottfried Boehm, "Kunsterfahrung als Herausforderung der Ästhetik," in *Ästhetische Erfahrung*, ed. Willi Oelmüller, 13-28 (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1981).

¹⁰⁶⁸ See Wruck, *Matthew Barney's Cremaster Cycle*, 65 and Bellour, *L'Entre-image*.

showing the main site and the main spaces in which the action takes place, while briefly introducing the central characters. Just before the frontispiece, a double spread with folded pages presents, if closed, two Goodyear zeppelins symmetrically flying above the Bronco Stadium (the stadium of Boise, ID, the city in which Barney grew up, i.e. the American football stadium where *CREMASTER 1* plays) (figure 4.26 a). Once the readers unfold the folded pages, they face, at the centre, this very playing field, and on the left and right sides of it two intimate views of a female character in a snow white space (figure 4.26 b). Carefully observing this tripartite image the readers notice that the character in white, standing in the middle of the playing field and surrounded by a group of dancers, is the same as seen in the lateral views. The woman holds two ropes connected to the zeppelins in her hands, as if they were two balloons that she could steer. Unfolding these pages, the readers at once encounter four different moments of the narrative. The folded pages within the book perform what in the movie is entrusted to the montage. However, it is within the book that Barney's aesthetic of fragmentation reaches its apex. Distilling salient moments of the movie the artist further fragments the narration therein developed. In so doing he exasperates the role of the *Leerstelle*, highlighting the gaps that the montage is able to bridge.

Within Barney's book production the folded pages are employed not only in the publications which are usually and more easily considered as *artists' books* but also in the ones which are *traditionally* seen as *exhibition catalogues*. Note, that before the publication of *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1*, Barney had already used this artifice to introduce, in a slightly different manner, the very same imagery within *PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*, i.e. the *Kunstlerkatalog* he had produced on the occasion of his homonymous solo exhibition (figures 4.27 a-c).¹⁰⁶⁹

In Barney's implementation of the artifice of the folded page, it is possible to retrace his attempt to visualize and articulate the plot of his pieces, as if they were the physical instantiation of their respective storyboards.

¹⁰⁶⁹ See *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*; *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*, Rotterdam, Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, October 21, 1995 - January 1, 1996.

4.6 The Logic of the Storyboard

Besides making reference to the instrument of the *manual* (§ 4.3.4.1), Barney often describes the visual narrative developed in *his* publications, referring to the concept of *storyboard*.¹⁰⁷⁰ Storyboards are series of drawings, comparable to comic books, which represent the sequences of shots in finished screen-works.¹⁰⁷¹ In addition to the drawings, they usually provide information about duration, sounds effects, dialogue, the movement of objects within the frame, and camera movement. There is not a single format (or, nowadays, software) used for storyboards. They all respect their primary purpose, that is, the visualization and sequencing of the screen-work in order to optimize and facilitate the process leading to the final product.¹⁰⁷² However, Barney has a very personal understanding of the meaning and scope of storyboarding that has transformed during the years and especially since the advent of the Internet. Note, that the systematic employment of web sources did not affect the relevance of drawing within the artist's practice.¹⁰⁷³ Barney considers drawing not merely as a preliminary step of his work but rather as an on-going process that permits him to purify and distil the narrative behind his oeuvre. In an

¹⁰⁷⁰ Barney, interview by Glen Helfand, 40.

¹⁰⁷¹ Indeed, it is believed and generally accepted that the practice of storyboarding was developed in the early 1930s in the Walt Disney Studios where comic-book-like sketches were used as a starting point for the first cartoon short. See John Canemaker, *Paper Dreams: The Art and Artists of Disney Storyboards* (New York: Hyperion, 1999). As pointed out by film writer and critic Fionnuala Halligan, however, it is almost certain that some of the greatest silent films have been developed using storyboards, although none of these materials survived. See Fionnuala Halligan, *The Art of Movie Storyboards: Visualising the Action of the World's Greatest Films* (London: Ilex, 2015), 14. Halligan specifies that the practice of animation film is different from that of the "live-action work"; in fact, there are not "full scripts for animated films; the story and characterization are fleshed out by heads of story and their storyboard teams before their work goes through to be animated. They have significant responsibilities when it comes to character, plot, and particularly gag development. On a big animated studio feature, up to thirty storyboard artists can work, collaboratively, on a 'story crunch.' Live-action filmmaking generally uses the services of two or three storyboard artists, each with their own scenes to develop, scaling up according to the size of the production and the amount of stunt work or CGI [Computer Generated Imagery] involved." Halligan, *The Art of Movie Storyboards*, 14.

¹⁰⁷² See Mark Readman, *Teaching Scriptwriting, Screenplays and Storyboards for Film and TV Production*, Teaching Film and Media Studies (London: BFI, 2003), 54-55. Note, that in the history of cinema, storyboarding tended to be an American and a UK practice. It has spread internationally only in recent decades. The internationalization of the movie market has led to storyboarding being extensively adopted especially at the high end of the international marketplace, notably for effects shots as a fundraising instrument. See Halligan, *The Art of Movie Storyboards*, 18, 167-168 and Benoît Peeters, "Le cinéma dessiné. Histoire du cinéma: allers-retours," in Benoît Peeters, Jacques Faton and Philippe de Pierpont, eds., *Storyboard - Le Cinéma Dessiné*, 11-31 (Paris: Yellow Now, 1992), 24-25, 30-31.

¹⁰⁷³ See Dervaux, ed., *Subliming Vessel*.

interview with curator Isabelle Dervaux he answers the question “How would you describe the relationship of your drawings to your works in other media?” by relating this process to a visual metaphor:

I would describe a system that I’ve always visualized as an inverted pyramid, where the narrative is at the widest point, at the top of the structure. The narrative in most projects is film-based, video-based, in some projects performance-based, but it’s the most developed aspect of the project. From there a process of distillation happens. Sculpture comes next in the sense that sculpture often tries to articulate a relationship in the narrative between characters or between places. Drawing is at the bottom of this structure and is the most distilled aspect of it. In that way it’s one of the more rewarding—possibly the most rewarding part of the process, to get down to the purest form, the most distilled form of the narrative.¹⁰⁷⁴

Drawing is a fundamental element of storyboarding. Barney’s work begins and ends within the realm of drawing. Both drawing and storyboarding allow him to imagine further developments and new beginnings. It is through this practice that he isolates, groups, orders, and reorders the different temporal, spatial, and sculptural aspects of his single projects but also of the larger narrative they create as an ensemble. In this respect, it is relevant to underline that the artist describes the functioning of the book, evoking once again the process of distillation. Expanding on the way *his* books relate to his photographic work, he explains that it is about

slowing the image down and trying to articulate certain details, or intersections in the story, or points where two characters meet... to distill the story down to kind of key moments. I think that the photographs did that also, particularly when they were made into diptych or triptych groupings. They were about those intersections in the story, usually. I would relate the books to that.¹⁰⁷⁵

Speaking on distillation, Barney attempts to conceptualize how the logic of storyboarding deployed within the book enables him to achieve a general overview of his work, within which specific moments and characters of its narrative are put into closer focus.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Isabelle Dervaux, “From Residual Marks to Drawing as Meditation: An Interview with Matthew Barney,” in *Subliming Vessel*, 53-60, 54.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Barney, in conversation with the author. Interestingly, the artist has also added that he considers photography as “secondary information, and this is one of the reasons why I stopped making photographs.” Barney, in conversation with the author.

His first works (e.g. *OTTO Trilogy*, *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*) usually started with schematic drawings which he has referred to in terms of “preliminary structural maps”¹⁰⁷⁶ (e.g. *STADIUM*, 1991). For what concerns the videos of the above-mentioned projects, these *maps* were complemented by a series of sketched drawings through which the development of the actions was articulated with certain detail. The drawings, usually traced on white piece of papers about the format of an index card, show relatively detailed information about the position and movement of objects within the frame and, at times, the effects through which they shall appear on screen. Postcards and photographs from different sources accompany the drawings in order to pictorially and emotionally enhance the *character* and the *feeling* that different aspects of the narrative and its related scenes are meant to communicate.¹⁰⁷⁷ Starting with the *CREMASTERS*, the presence of such *preparatory storyboard-drawings* has tended to decrease, leaving space to an even more varied incidence of postcards, photographs and paper clippings. This practice was improved when Barney started to make intensive use of the Internet to look for the *visuo-somatic* images through which to develop the narrative of his successive projects (e.g. *DE LAMA LÂMINA*, *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9*) and even radicalized when he started working on *RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, for which the storyboards are mainly clippings from the Internet (figure 4.28).

If the pre-Internet storyboards had the main scope of “reducing something through drawing or through finding one text, one image,”¹⁰⁷⁸ many more materials characterize the post-Internet storyboards. Internet allows him to do

more and more image searches for the same scene if I’m not satisfied with the emotion in the clipping, even if it really has nothing to do with the shot that we’re doing after. It’s about trying to locate the emotion of that scene and trying to find something in an image search that represents that somehow. Or it will mark it for

¹⁰⁷⁶ Dervaux, “From Residual Marks to Drawing as Meditation,” 54. Barney defines these maps as “an initial understanding of what the form of the thing is”. Dervaux, “From Residual Marks to Drawing as Meditation,” 54.

¹⁰⁷⁷ This loosely connects to what in film parlance is called *concept art*, that is an image or a series of images which work(s) as “a scene-setting tool to provide visual keys and inspiration” Halligan, *The Art of Movie Storyboards*, 10.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Barney, in conversation with the author.

me so that I don't forget what that feeling is that I want the scene to have, when we get around to filming it.¹⁰⁷⁹

On a morphological level, Barney's pre- but most of all post-internet storyboards very much resemble the constellation of images which art historian and cultural theorist Aby Warburg (1866-1929) collected and organized in different thematic panels for his unaccomplished *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* project (figure 4.29).¹⁰⁸⁰

In the second half of the 1920s Warburg and his assistants focused on this ambitious project, placed under the auspices of *Mnemosyne* (the Greek goddess of memory and mother of the muses), with the intent of researching and visualising how the pictorial world of antiquity had returned to the European cultural sphere, leading the medieval world into the rebirth, i.e. the Renaissance. In doing so, they collected almost a thousand pictures (mainly photographs but also illustrations from books, prints, newspaper clippings, and even promotional flyer and stamps) and organized them into different thematic panels. In the last phase of the project, which remained unaccomplished after Warburg's death, the picture were arranged onto sixty-three vertical panels which should have been photographed and presented to the public in the form of an extensive book.

The concept of bipolarity that Warburg aimed to study and visualise through the *Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* seems very close to Barney's ambivalent vision. Bipolarity refers to the fact that images are constituted by conflicting forces and that the same *Pathosformel* (i.e. "an emotionally charged visual trope"¹⁰⁸¹) can express liberation or degradation, depending on the context.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Dervaux, "From Residual Marks to Drawing as Meditation," 58.

¹⁰⁸⁰ See Aby Warburg, *Gesammelte Schriften, vol. 2,1, Der Bilderatlas Mnemosyne*, ed. Martin Warnke (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2000); Dorothee Bauerle, *Gespensstergeschichten für ganz Erwachsene: ein Kommentar zu Aby Warburgs Bilderatlas Mnemosyne* (Münster: Lit, 1988); Ernest H. Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (London: The Warburg Institute of London, 1970), especially 283-306. See also Philippe-Alain Michaud, *Aby Warburg et l'image en mouvement* (Paris: Macula, 1998). Alex Heil and Roberto Ohrt, *Aby Warburg, Mnemosyne Bilderatlas: Reconstruction – Commentary – Revision* (Karlsruhe: ZKM, 2016); Mnemosyne Research Group | 8. Salon, *Aby Warburg. Mnemosyne Bilderatlas: Rekonstruktion, Kommentar, Aktualisierung* (Karlsruhe: Kartoffelverlag/Universal-futur-Bitch-press/ZKM, 2016).

¹⁰⁸¹ Colleen Becker, "Aby Warburg's *Pathosformel* as methodological paradigm," *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 9 (December 2013): 1, <https://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2013/12/becker.pdf>, last access October 18, 2016.

Another element of similarity with Warburg's panels and their operation mode, corresponds to the *mobile* character of the constellation of pictures and their configuration: as Warburg did, Barney is inclined to configure and reconfigure the images he employs to organize his narrative. Juxtaposing images from different contexts, Barney, as Warburg, reinforces the expressive elements of his narrative.¹⁰⁸² These images are arranged and occasionally rearranged according to a kaleidoscopic architecture that requires a synoptic reading, both diachronic and synchronic. This enables the reader to embrace his polysemous and polyhedral work. Barney's publications can therefore be interpreted as a progressive attempt to thematize his *modus operandi*. This *modus* nourishes and develops itself through a continuous association of motives, themes, and images which are mapped and visualized within his dynamic storyboards.

Barney's *mobile-storyboards* function as an open system that reproduces itself on the basis of the same narrative matrix. Through this operating mode, he can create an infinite number of configurations, some of which are fixed and made *accessible* within his books.¹⁰⁸³ Note, that the storyboards have been recently exhibited on their own within the show *Subliming Vessel: The Drawings of Matthew Barney*¹⁰⁸⁴ (figure 4.30) and also framed as finished works in purposely-designed vitrines for the exhibition *Matthew Barney: RIVER of FUNDAMENT*¹⁰⁸⁵ (figure 4.31). The aesthetics of the vitrine reinforces the

¹⁰⁸² Thorough research on the correspondence between Warburg's and Barney's approach to images, their meanings, and constellations goes far beyond the thematic scope of this study. This topic does, nevertheless, deserve further exploration.

¹⁰⁸³ The first time that the artist employed this operating mode to reconfigure the order and narrative of his projects is *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL* (1995). Especially through photography, folded pages and their sequencing the artist systematized anew the works he had created up to that moment. Within the book they are presented in the following order: *CREMASTER 1* (1995), *facility of INCLINE* (1991) *OTTOshaft* (1992), *facility of DECLINE* (1991), *CREMASTER 4* (1994), *DRAWING RESTRAINT 7* (1993). See *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR for the HUBRIS PILL*, especially 90-91.

¹⁰⁸⁴ *Subliming Vessel: The Drawings of Matthew Barney*, New York, The Morgan Library & Museum, May 10 - September 2, 2013; *Matthew Barney, La Chambre de Sublimation. Dessins de Matthew Barney*, Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France | François Mitterand, October 8, 2013 – January 5, 2014.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *Matthew Barney: RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, Munich, Haus der Kunst, March 16-August 31, 2014. Ozman, Tasmania, Museum of Old and New Art, November 22 – April 13, 2015; Los Angeles, The Museum of Contemporary Art, September 13, 2015 – January 18, 2016. Within the family of objects produced by the artist in the context of *RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, the storyboards are presented as assemblages of bi-dimensional and tri-dimensional images-cum-objects related to the narrative developed in the work. See Enwezor, ed., *Matthew Barney: RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, 295.

archival drive that is already implied in Barney's handling of his storyboards. In the framework of the exhibition *Subliming Vessel*, curators Céline Chicha-Castex and Marie Minssieux-Chamonard¹⁰⁸⁶ have associated Barney's storyboards with the concept of "archive-artworks":

In presenting the storyboards [...] Barney reveals the genesis of his works. In this regard, they help us to decipher the films through the gathered documents. Nevertheless, in selecting a portion to exhibit in an institutional setting when they are usually pinned to the studio wall, in juxtaposing them within carefully thought-out installations, Barney diverts their primary archival function. For the duration of the exhibition, they become 'archive-artworks.'¹⁰⁸⁷

The underlying thesis of this chapter is that Barney, well before exhibiting his storyboards in the institutional context of the museum, has first of all presented them within his book production. The artist seems to have increasingly become aware of this starting from the collaborative exchange with the curatorial and design teams during the preparation of *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* (figure 4.32 a). Especially from that moment onwards, he has gradually recognized and exploited the aesthetics of his storyboards within his publications and exhibitions. While until *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* storyboarding remained an implicit characteristic of his publications, starting from this lavish encyclopedic volume, the storyboards themselves, in their multiple and mutating configurations, as well as in their materiality, have been explicitly portrayed within the pages of *his* books.

The volumes of the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series (figures 4.32 b-g) are examples for this varied practice. On the occasion of a series of exhibitions dedicated to the project that took place in Asia, America, and Europe between 2005 and 2010, Barney worked on different publications which function as a single open book series, consisting so far of six volumes.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Céline Chicha-Castex is chief curator of the Département des Estampes et de la Photographie, estampe moderne et contemporaine at the Bibliothèque nationale de France; Marie Minssieux-Chamonard works as conservateur des bibliothèques (réserve des Livres rares) at the Bibliothèque nationale de France.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Céline Chicha-Castex and Marie Minssieux-Chamonard, "Matthew Barney's Storyboards: Between Archive and Artwork," in *Subliming Vessel*, 69-74, 74.

Through brief textual descriptions, photographic documentation, a fictional text by writer and curator Francis McKee,¹⁰⁸⁸ and an illustrated interview with the artist by curator Hans Ulrich Obrist,¹⁰⁸⁹ i.e. the editor of the volume, *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. 1, 1987-2002* presents itself as an *archive* of the first eight iteration of the project (figure 4.32 b). The second volume of the series¹⁰⁹⁰ re-proposes almost verbatim the formal structure of the artist's pages and the thumb index which appear in *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle, storyboarding* anew the 9th, 10th, and 11th iteration of *DRAWING RESTRAINT* (figure 4.32 c). *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. III, 1987-2005* recapitulates for the Korean public (it is published in fact only in Korean) through texts and images the core concept of the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* series, evoking its first twelve iterations (figure 4.32 d). The fourth volume is dedicated to *DRAWING RESTRAINT 13* (figure 4.32 e).¹⁰⁹¹ The key narrative revolves around the re-enactment of a beach landing by General Douglas McArthur on Luzon, Philippine Islands, on October 20, 1944 and the signing of the Instrument of Surrender, the document attesting Japan's surrender at the end of World War II. Barney, who here plays General McArthur, wanted to insert this scene within *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9*, something which did not happen and thus gave birth to a new episode of the series.¹⁰⁹² *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT, Vol. V, 1987-2007* visually mimics the third book of the series, presenting however different storyboard configurations (figure 4.32 f).¹⁰⁹³ Finally, the sixth volume of the series, *Matthew Barney:*

¹⁰⁸⁸ See Francis McKee, "The Ladder of Darkness," in *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. I*, 9, 19, 29, 37, 45, 53, 61, 71.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Barney, Interview with Hans Ulrich Obrist. On the (strategic) relevance of this kind of interviews within the *Künstlerkataloge*, see Coers, *Kunstskatalog – Katalogkunst*, 48-51.

¹⁰⁹⁰ See *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT, Vol. II*.

¹⁰⁹¹ See *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT, Vol. IV*.

¹⁰⁹² Mike Bellon, Barney Studio manager, in conversation with the author, New York, December 6, 2012. For a thorough description of *DRAWING RESTRAINT 13* see Matthew Barney, *Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail*, 71.

¹⁰⁹³ Between the books *DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. III* and *DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. V* there are similarities and differences, such as, the fact that images related to the storyboards of the *DRAWING RESTRAINTs* therein represented are displayed on flesh-coloured boards in *Vol. III* while they are differently configured and displayed on black boards in *Vol. V*. When asked to expand about similarities and differences between the two volumes, the artist explained: "Well, first of all, I made those plastic boards just for the book. They were designed so that you could remove an image and put another image in and sort of shuffle images through from page to page. I think the *DRAWING RESTRAINT* books [*DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. III* and *DRAWING*

DRAWING RESTRAINT, Vol. VI, 2010 cinematically narrates, through chronologically ordered images, the dramatic content of *DRAWING RESTRAINT 17* (figure 4.32 g).¹⁰⁹⁴ Set in Switzerland, the narrative is a variation of the painting *Der Tod und die Frau* by Renaissance artist Hans Baldung Grien. It revolves around the story of a young woman who travels from the Goetheanum in Dornach to the Schaulager in Basel where, while climbing one of the walls of the museum she falls, breaking a white plastic membrane which protects big pieces of wood disposed to form a pentagon on the floor.¹⁰⁹⁵ The visual choreography of this story is enhanced through the performative and haptic character of coloured handmade Lama-Li papers that are interspersed to the images and eventually hand torn to highlight precise details.¹⁰⁹⁶

Especially concerning these publications, it is worthwhile to briefly take a look at the concept of “archive-works”.¹⁰⁹⁷ According to philosopher Olivier Corpet, that of “archive- œuvre” is an active concept through which the notion of archive is to be intended not only as the “asymptote de l’œuvre” but, and above all, as its “ré-invention”.¹⁰⁹⁸ He contends that

le rapport de l’œuvre à son archive est encore plus prégnant et problématique lorsque survient ce que j’ai appelé le moment des œuvres complètes – qu’il s’agisse [...] pour un artiste de l’organisation d’une grande rétrospective, ou de l’élaboration d’un catalogue raisonné. Moment crucial, en fait, de récapitulation, de réorganisation, de reclassement. Moment d’une nouvelle forme, d’une nouvelle logique de l’œuvre – et donc, ipso facto, moment d’une nouvelle lecture et d’une nouvelle réception de celle-ci.¹⁰⁹⁹

RESTRAINT Vol. V] are parallel narratives [...] [that relate] to the piece while also being independent from the piece.” Barney, in conversation with the author.

¹⁰⁹⁴ Matthew Barney: *DRAWING RESTRAINT, Vol. VI*, 2010 was produced in a limited edition of 1000 copies, 100 of which are signed by the artist.

¹⁰⁹⁵ For a thorough description of *DRAWING RESTRAINT 17* see Matthew Barney, *Prayer Sheet with the Wound and the Nail*, 75.

¹⁰⁹⁶ See “Matthew Barney, Drawing Restraint Volume VI,” *Schaulager/Publikationen/Künstlerbücher*, <http://www.schaulager.org/de/schaulager/publikationen/online-bookstore/2/kunstlerbuecher>, last access November 1, 2016. Note, that this volume and *Vol. IV* are the books within the series that most recall one of the bibliographic tradition of rare books.

¹⁰⁹⁷ Note, that this concept has been put in relation to Barney’s oeuvre for the first time by curators Chicha-Castex and Minssieux-Chamonard. However, they refer to it without really making it productive within their reflections on Barney’s work; they refer to it only in the title and in the very final words of their essay.

¹⁰⁹⁸ Corpet, *L’Archive-œuvre*, 43.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Corpet, *L’Archive-œuvre*, 42.

Given the open nature of Barney's artistic practice, one should add that this moment of recapitulation, reorganization, and recursive reading comes not only after the accomplishment of a corpus or series of artworks (that is, what Corpet defines as *le moment des œuvres complètes*), but it is rather a constitutive operating mode of his artistic *Weltanschauung*.

Barney understands the storyboard as a conceptual and material operative tool which he implements to orient himself within his own production as well as to further develop it. The more he has become aware of the potentialities of this tool the more he has explored its aesthetic and epistemic values making it accessible for the public. Storyboarding, understood as an attitude of mapping, plastic visualizing and thinking, as well as originating, guiding, recapitulating, and communicating his projects is the backbone of Barney's practice. As we have seen, the book, as an object, as medium, and as an instrument is the privileged, material and imaginary space to put the storyboard and its inherent logic at work.

Conclusions

Overviewing the historical and intellectual necessities that caused the birth, development, and spread of the art book, the first chapter of this study has introduced it as the instrument that grants access to the artworks, the networks in which they are created, presented, and communicated, as well as to the horizons of meaning from which they originate and to which they contribute. This has allowed us to indulge in and shed light on the circumstances that made art books become one of the main instruments with which to *read art*.

The second and the third chapters have been dedicated to the *artist's book* and the *exhibition catalogue*, historically reconstructing as well as theoretically framing the fact that since the 1960s the relationship between artists and books has become ever closer, to the extent that the book has been largely internalized in the practice of contemporary artists, especially in the format of the exhibition catalogue. Questioning Barbara Bader's, Anne Moëglin-Delcroix's, and Cornelia Lauf's understanding of the artist's book, in the second chapter we have demonstrated that a normative understanding of the matter does not allow for comprehending the features and potentialities of artists' books. In the third chapter we have discussed the exhibition catalogue, not only as an essential instrument for the legitimation and historicization of art as well as for the writing of its histories, but also as an *essential tool in the practice of contemporary artists*.

The first part of the research (chapters 1, 2, and 3) has highlighted that in order to understand the relevance of the book as *an essential instrument* for and in the *making of* (contemporary) art, the spread of the art book, the rise of the artist's book and the transformation of the exhibition catalogue cannot be addressed separately. Only in addressing these typologies in their interrelationship can one understand why the book as an object, as a medium, and as an instrument has increasingly gained importance in the twentieth century, becoming an essential tool within the intermedia practice of a large number of artists who have arrived on the art scene since the 1990s. Matthew

Barney's book production, to which the second part of the research is dedicated, is a representative example in point (chapter 4).

Since the 1960s, challenging formalism, artists experimented with a variety of mediums, amongst which is the book, in order to express the transmedial legitimacy of their artistic vision. In expressing their artistic message through different mediums and believing that in changing their support their message would remain unaltered, they were forced to experience the creative restraints implied in the process of translation. By the 1990s, artists, more or less aware of this, started to put to test the very translatability amongst different mediums, making of these intermedia translations the obligatory passages with which to access the complexity of their work. These different medial components could be interpreted as different moments of the same work which function at their best only in their intermedial articulations. Amongst these medial moments, the book seems to have a privileged position. The advent of the internet, with its constant flux of content and its non-linear structure has amplified the need to create books as stable, privileged, and authoritative instruments of orientation within artists' aesthetical and medial domains.

In the second part of the research (chapter 4), the first book *by* Barney, i.e. *Matthew Barney: New Work*, has been considered and analysed as the matrix of the compositional, material, and editorial strategies that the artist has further developed in *his* future publications, some of which are also exemplarily examined in the chapter.

Situating the book, especially in the format of the exhibition catalogue, within the multiplicity of the medial iterations which characterize the work of the artist, it emerges that Barney's books function like a map. Enabling the reader to enter and navigate the artist's *œuvre*, they allow one to experience it in its aesthetical, conceptual, and medial density. The book proves to be the object, medium, and instrument through which Barney manages to embrace, express, and communicate the diverse temporal structure at play in his intermedia work. By means of photography and thanks to the implementation of the installation view, the artist makes of the book a mnemotechnic tool. His books function as maps through which he aims to guide the reader's

imagination within his multifaceted production and within the epic narrations therein at play.

Asked to expand on the implementation of the book within his intermedia production Barney has stated:

my relationship to book making is something like my relationship to photography, and that's about trying to distil something out of the larger form. The way photography function for me is that it removes the characters from the context of the narrative and allows for a kind of relationship to be made between characters, objects, and places, that wasn't possible within a narrative and that feels useful to me. I think that the books are similar in that way... it's another way of mapping. In the same way the films are a way of mapping this creative process, the books might be a way of mapping that map.¹¹⁰⁰

Barney has defined the book as the instrument through which he is able to map the complexity of his intermedia production as well as the creative process that guides it. In this respect, one can not underestimate the importance of his storyboards and of his peculiar approach to storyboarding. Storyboarding is the backbone of Barney's practice. The book is the privileged, material and imaginary space through which the artist puts *at work* the logic which inform his practice of storyboarding. Within his work, storyboarding represents an attitude of mapping, plastic thinking and visualizing as well as initiating, guiding, summarizing, triggering and communicating the spatial, temporal, sculptural, and narrative dimensions of his projects as well as their intermedia amplitude.

From the analysis of Barney's multifaceted book production it emerges that *his* books function like maps through which he isolates, groups, orders, and reorders his projects' diverse spatial, temporal, and sculptural dimensions, triggering and at the same time providing for the synchronic and diachronic reading of the narratives therein developed, as well as of their intermedia amplitude.

The analysis of Barney's book production reflects and allows one to test first-hand the process of mutation that has affected the status of the work of art in the last decades. This mutation has brought elements once considered

¹¹⁰⁰ Matthew Barney, Q&A with the author, published in *Matthew Barney – Mitologie Contemporanee*, 177-178.

peripheral and secondary to the artwork and its ontology, such as the exhibition catalogue, to the heart of contemporary art making.

Against the background of the historical, theoretical, and critical reflections conducted in the first part of this study, the considerations developed within the analysis of Matthew Barney's book production allow us to outline a new understanding of the role of the object, the medium, and the instrument of the book within contemporary art which goes beyond the normative understanding of the art book, the artist's book, and the exhibition catalogue. This research proposes that these books indeed have a pivotal relevance within (contemporary) art and its domains. The book intended as a physical entity with specific characteristics (i.e. an object), as a means by which something is communicated or expressed (i.e. a medium), and as a necessary tool for accessing a body of knowledge that allows one to go beyond the very tool itself (i.e. an instrument) cannot be understood as a genre among other artistic genres. Rather, it should be understood as a tool that, functioning like a map, enables the reader to enter and navigate the *œuvre* of artists such as Barney, experiencing it in its aesthetical, medial, and conceptual complexities.

Approaching one of the elements in the medial chain that constitutes Barney's artworks, the reader of his books does not only have a privileged *access* to his work in other mediums but also the possibility of experiencing first-hand his *modus operandi*. Moreover, in realizing *his* books the artist pursues the opportunity to observe, reflect, and comprehend not only his *œuvre* and creative process but also the *results* of the latter. In the specific case of Barney, the outputs of the creative process are never final results but rather intermediate stages of an unbounded opus in continual evolution.

The work done on the typologies of the art book, the artist's book and the exhibition catalogue as well as the analysis of Matthew Barney's book production allow us some general considerations on the nature of the book as a tool. Art books, artists' books, and exhibition catalogues circulate. They are vehicles of information. They are instruments of knowledge. They are sources of inspirations for their readers, being these artists, scholars, or the general public. They are collectibles. They are work material for art professionals. Especially in

the format of the exhibition catalogue, they witness having taken place of temporary art events, of which they are the most accessible traces.

In being (printed) visual inscriptions, books can be considered as *immutable mobiles*. In his essay *Visualisation and Cognition* sociologist Bruno Latour reflects on the persuasive power of inscriptions.¹¹⁰¹ Inscriptions are fundamental tools within the rhetoric of science, that is, they are the instruments through which the authority of knowledge can be staged, affirmed, and imposed. According to him, in order to be effective within the flow that “allow harder facts to be produced”¹¹⁰² inscriptions must be readable, comparable and/or combinable, as well as mobile (i.e. able to travel) and immutable (i.e. printed on a stabile – flat – surface).¹¹⁰³

Although Latour is primarily referring to persuasion through the technology of inscriptions as an inherent moment of science, his reflections can be easily transposed to the domain of art. As “scientists start seeing something once they stop looking at nature and look exclusively and obsessively at prints and flat inscriptions”¹¹⁰⁴, books have similarly become the main instruments through which to access and get to know artworks.

The centrality of the book in contemporary art is well recognized by the artists themselves. Since the 1960s, an increasing number of artists have implemented the book as one of their vehicles of expression, up to fully internalizing this instrument within their creative practice. The book, as an object, as a medium, and as an instrument is a tool of artistic expression also because it allows artists to better understand, communicate, and control their artistic output as well as its reception.

Books, as collections of visual (and textual) inscriptions, enable one to bridge the gap between what Latour calls “watching confusing three-dimensional objects [...] [and] inspecting two dimensional images which have been made less confusing”¹¹⁰⁵. In his essay, Latour sheds light on the interplay between the experimental setting and the technologies of visualization of the

¹¹⁰¹ See Latour, *Visualization and Cognition*.

¹¹⁰² Latour, *Visualization and Cognition*, 16.

¹¹⁰³ See Latour, *Visualization and Cognition*, 19-20.

¹¹⁰⁴ Latour, *Visualization and Cognition*, 15.

¹¹⁰⁵ Latour, *Visualization and Cognition*, 15.

results of scientific experiments that are embodied and diffused by inscriptions in the form of immutable mobiles. Analogously, the way in which a consistent number of contemporary artworks are realized seems to increasingly depend on their possible fruition and translation into photography as well as on their transmission, especially through the book.

At the beginning of the 1990s, art historian Michel Frizot noted that

En conséquence de l'accumulation médiatique de la photographie, et par un sorte de retournement des données, n'y aurait-il pas dans la 'sculpture' contemporaine, les installations, les 'performances' même, une tendance à les concevoir en fonction de cette image photographique qui leur survivra? Il existe un espace topographique dans lequel se développe et vit la sculpture, distinct de l'espace photographique dans lequel elle est perçue organiquement à chaque instant par l'œil du spectateur, espace lui-même rétrogradable en une image plane, unique; *un faible écho*. Avec la vogue des catalogues d'artistes, catalogues d'exposition, catalogues de musée, catalogues de collection, la photographie est la manière d'être et de paraître des œuvres d'art.¹¹⁰⁶

However, as my research highlighted, photographic representations of artworks within artists' books and catalogues should not be considered as a *faible écho* of the works of art but rather as practical and cognitive visual means which actively contribute to the artworks' imagination, creation, and fruition. Implementing photography not as single images but as groups of pictures displayed within a sequence of pages, the book enhances their expressive potentials according to its architecture. This architecture is to be intended both as a physical and as an imaginary construction through which artworks can be experienced, put into a system of knowledge, and so develop their own environment of meaning.

Travelling as immutable mobiles, books embody a crucial tool for accessing, experiencing, and understanding artists' work and *Weltanschauungen*. Artworks are nowadays always more kaleidoscopic intermedia constellations, revolving around complex imaginary worlds. Within this context, books assume a unique role as aesthetical instruments of knowledge. As *immutable mobiles*, they are necessary tools for imagination, both for the artists and the addressees of their work.

¹¹⁰⁶ Michel Frizot, "Un Lexique et quelques remarques à l'usage commun du photographe et du sculpteur," in *Photographie/Sculpture*, 15. Italics by the author.

As exemplarily highlighted in analysing Barney's book production, on the one hand, the book allows the artist to map, archive, and embrace their creations, thus visually and haptically grasping them in their intermedial amplitude; on the other hand, its readers can mediate access to the various components of the *œuvre* and so immediately approach the multifaceted imaginary of their *Weltanschauung*.

To address and analyse Matthew Barney's book production with a new awareness, it has been necessary to retrace and clarify the history, the concept, and the scopes of the art book, the artist's book, and the exhibition catalogue. Especially for the latter, given the little scholarly attention which has until present been paid to it, this research has allowed us to study this instrument in its multiple characteristics, highlighting its relevance both as a practical tool for the *making* of art and as an epistemic tool within art and its histories. This study has surveyed and critically discussed the fragmented and scattered reflections produced until present on this multi-layered instrument. As we have seen, they have been written in different languages, times, and contexts. The third chapter of the present research could be taken as the starting point from which to develop the debate on the exhibition catalogue on a larger basis.

In the context of this dissertation, Matthew Barney's book production has been analysed through the lenses of *Matthew Barney: New Work*.¹¹⁰⁷ This approach has enabled us to address the general traits of his book production. While much more could be said individually on each of Barney's books, through this overview a key element of his artistic practice emerges, i.e. the implementation of the storyboard and the relevance of storyboarding as a fundamental drive towards an effective way to map, think, and visualize, as well as to initiate, guide, summarize, and communicate his projects. Having put aside any effort of interpretation of the content of Barney's work since the beginning, this has brought us to disclosing a constitutive aspect of his artistic practice, that is the implementation of plates and combinations of images shaped and put together on the basis of thematic variations of expressive elements which recalls one of Aby Warburg's art historical operative method. The in-depth analysis of this operative analogy represents one of the future lines of research

¹¹⁰⁷ See *Matthew Barney: New Work*.

opened up by the present research. It deserves to be explored not only on the basis of formal criteria but also content-wise. Warburg's art anthropology relies on a dynamic concept of culture. Accordingly, culture could develop in the space of thought (*Denkraum*) between ecstasy and abstraction. The articulation of this space of thought is shaped by what Warburg calls *Pathosformeln*, i.e. the interferences between emotional energies and cultural processing patterns which are crystallized in images and figures.¹¹⁰⁸ In developing the analysis of Barney's *œuvre* through the lenses of Warburg's theory of *Pathosformeln* particular attention should be devoted to the expressive role of the lived body and its metamorphic transformations.

Another aspect of Barney's production that could not be addressed in the present study is the prominent role played by music and sound within his work. On the one hand, the book does not easily allow sound and music to be immediately included in its mediality; on the other hand, the artist has only recently openly recognised the constitutive relevance of sound and music in his production, elaborating new strategies to implement and communicate them within his books. This is the case of the volume part of the project *RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, 2007-2014.¹¹⁰⁹ *RIVER of FUNDAMENT* encompasses a three-act operatic film by Barney and composer Jonathan Bepler,¹¹¹⁰ as well as artworks

¹¹⁰⁸ See Hartmut Böhme, "Aby M. Warburg," in *Klassiker der Religionwissenschaft: von Friedrich Schleiermacher bis Mircea Eliade*, ed. Axel Michaels, 133-156 (München: Beck, 1997).

¹¹⁰⁹ See Okwui Enwezor, *Matthew Barney: RIVER OF FUNDAMENT*.

¹¹¹⁰ See Matthew Barney and Jonathan Bepler, *RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, 2014, color, sound, 5h and 50m. *RIVER of FUNDAMENT* is loosely based on Norman Mailer's novel *Ancient Evenings* (New York: Little, Brown and Company, 1983). Set in ancient Egypt, the book focuses on the triple reincarnation process undertaken by Menenhet I to be reborn from the womb of his wife and achieve the status of pharaoh, i.e. immortality. Barney and Bepler replace Ancient Egypt and its glorious history with the United States and the character of Menenhet I with Mailer, whose triple reincarnation would lead to become the pharaoh of American literature, surpassing Ernest Hemingway. In the book, as well as in the movie, the protagonist does not pass the third phase of reincarnation, thus nullifying the entire process. Frame and leitmotif of the entire work is the mercy seat banquet held in the house in which Mailer (1923-2007) died. Meticulously reconstructed for the occasion on a barge sailing the East River (a reminder of the Nile river but also the river of feces of Mailer's novel), the home is the place where the three reincarnations of Mailer (who are interpreted by Mailer's son John Buffalo Mailer, by jazz musician Milford Graves and by the Indian chief Dave Beautiful Bald Eagle, respectively) come to life. Meanwhile, New York intellectuals of Mailer's times (but not only, as the presence of Lawrence Weiner and Salman Rushdie attests) and characters of *Ancient Evenings* (interpreted by actors Ellen Burstyn, Paul Giamatti, and Elaine Stritch, among others) discuss life, death, faith and magic, participating with the widow of Mailer (interpreted by vocalist and composer Joan La Barbara) to the funeral lament whose texts are taken from passages by Mailer, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson and William S. Burroughs. All this is marked by rites in which time is beaten by

in other mediums (e.g. sculpture, performance, book, website) by Matthew Barney.

In *RIVER of FUNDAMENT* music and singing are the *deus ex machina* of the filmic narration and the main sculptural forces through which the latter develops in images. Moreover, the operatic movie is the first piece in which Bepler – long-time collaborator of Barney – is recognised as co-author.¹¹¹¹ In the book element of the project, the musical genre to which the work hints (i.e. the

organic and inorganic liquid and solid matters. The banquet is punctuated by three flashbacks that correspond to the documentation of three performances. They are titled after three of the seven parts in which the Egyptians believed the soul to be divided. *REN* (name/personality) took place in Los Angeles in 2008 in the form of a ceremonial parade characterized by Mexican tones. Centerpiece of the procession was the sacrifice of the remains of one of the 1967 Chrysler Imperial appeared in *CREMASTER 3. KHU* (vital spark) took place in Detroit in 2010 and starred a 1979 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am, i.e. the automotive reincarnation of the spirit of Mailer. The city of Detroit, rich in raw materials and water, has been the cradle of the car industry (i.e. the core industry of modern civilization) as the lands made fertile by the Nile have been the cradle of the Egyptian civilization. Despite the crisis of the automotive industry having dragged the city into a dire economic depression, Barney chose it for its glorious past and the great creative potential (i.e. the rebirth potential) that has been invested in recent years. In *KHU*, Barney (who interprets Norman Mailer's Khu or Ka) metamorphoses into the Egyptian god Osiris. Wearing the clothes of artist James Lee Byars (who was born in 1932 in Detroit and died in Cairo in 1997), he re-enacts the artist's performance *The Death of James Lee Byars* (1982/1994). Actualizing the myth of Isis and Osiris, Barney-Byars is closed in the above-mentioned Pontiac Firebird Trans Am which dramatically falls in the Detroit River – a sacrificial act that reminds one of Houdini's performances (note that he also died in Detroit). Meanwhile, the Chrysler Imperial of *REN* emerges from the same river some miles away. It is broken up into 14 pieces and then melted in a monumental furnace. The metal is forged in the form of a Djed pillar, the pillar that in the myth of Isis and Osiris contains the sarcophagus with the body of Osiris. Isis (interpreted by Paralympic athlete, actress and fashion model Aimee Mullins, i.e. the other half of Mailer's Ka) tries in vain to resuscitate the body of her beloved, becoming impregnating by him. The third performance, *BA* (personality) took place in New York in 2013. It is focused on the battle for the imperial power between Seth, brother of Isis and Osiris, and Horus, their son. As the two face each other in a Brooklyn dry dock, in a nearby garage, a ritual marked by physical force and sexual perversion, leads to the creation of a royal crown (in the form of the cooling grill of a Ford Crown Victoria Police Interception) that Isis allows Horus to obtain. Despite the huge deployment of narrative forces and energies, Norman is unable to complete his third and final reincarnation passage. *RIVER of FUNDAMENT* ends on the Redfish Lake in Idaho (where Hemingway had a retreat for hunting in which he took his life) with the images of the annual ascent of salmon for spawning, suggesting an ecological reading of the alchemy epic.

¹¹¹¹ Bepler has collaborated with Barney since the mid-1990s, signing the soundtracks of three of the five *CREMASTERS* (*CREMASTER 5*, 1997; *CREMASTER 2*, 1999; *CREMASTER 3*, 2002). See Brandon Stosuy, "Formulas Fatal to the Flesh – On the Sound of CREMASTER Cycle," in *Matthew Barney*, 180-195. However, only recently have the two artists started to collaborate on an equal basis. Note, that also in *DRAWING RESTRAINT 9* (color, sound, 2h 30m), music plays a fundamental role. For this occasion, the popular eclectic singer-songwriter, multi-instrumentalist, producer and actress Björk (at the time the wife of the artist) was involved in *DR9* in the dual role of actress and author of the soundtrack. She wrote the majority of the songs with Matthew Barney. Eleven traces out of the eighteen which form the soundtrack of the film were released as: Björk, *Drawing Restraint 9*, with Matthew Barney © 2005 by One Little Indian, Polydor 9872853, CD.

Opera of Wagnerian fashion¹¹¹²), is evoked through the insertion of some pages of the musical scores and three booklets recalling one of opera librettos. They are elaborations of the guides distributed to those who took part in the three performances whose documentation constitutes and beats the time of the three acts epic.¹¹¹³ These *librettos* contain diverse textual elements, e.g. playbills, critical texts and introductions to the work, screenplays, short biographies of the interpreters, and credits but are mainly characterized by the presence of visuals, such as, for example, maps of the sites in which the performances were developed, archive photographs, film stills, production photographs, details of artworks and/or of the sculptures created during the performances, portraits of the main characters.

To conclude, I would like to go back to the questions that have been raised at the beginning of the fourth chapter: what do we *experience* when we flip through the pages of Matthew Barney's books? How? What are the (additional) values and potentialities of these tools? Furthermore, what is their relevance within art and its *making* as well as for the *making* and writing of art history?

Flipping through Matthew Barney's books, an inattentive reader might have the impression of dealing merely with the mediate representation of his work. However, thanks to the peculiar physical and imaginary architecture of the book as well as to Barney's storyboarding practice and its inherent networked emblematic logic, the very mediation at play within the books becomes a foundational aspect of his *œuvre*.

Within Barney's intermedia *œuvre*, the book is not only an instance in the medial chain which characterizes the artist's work but it is the privileged object, medium, and instrument through which one can experience the very translation processes at play throughout the chain. Through the book we can thus access Barney's *œuvre* in its medial and epistemic complexities. In this respect, books are often the only available maps with which to orientate within the artworks and the different moments which characterize contemporary

¹¹¹² This aspect was enhanced by the fact that the European premiere of the work (March 16, 2014) took place in an opera theater, i.e. the Bayerische Staatsoper (Munich).

¹¹¹³ *REN*, Los Angeles, May 18, 2008; *KHU*, Detroit, October 2, 2010; *BA*, New York, June 29, 2013. See footnote 1007.

intermedia productions, and which are not only far in time and space but also frequently no longer (or no easily) physically accessible.

This research contributes toward generating greater awareness of the relevance of the diversity of the book production *by* contemporary artists. Only by going beyond the traditional understanding of art book, artist's book, and exhibition catalogue, it is possible to recognise and account for the variety of features that characterize the book as an object, as a medium, and as an instrument for and within contemporary art, thus acknowledging its pivotal epistemic relevance in the field.

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Siegelau, Seth. Letter of invitation to artists for *July, August, September 1969 / Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969 / Juli, August, September 1969*. Folder I.A. 63.

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- Barney, Matthew. *DELAY of GAME*, 1991. Colour and b/w video, silent, 3m 10s.
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Matthew Barney's Book Production

* Note, that for different reasons it has not always been possible to retrieve information regarding the print run and the original price of the publications listed below. In the case of *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 3*, and *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle*, no evidence regarding the print run is found in the database of the Hatje Cantz Verlag (Helge Baumgarten, Key Account Manager Hatje Cantz Verlag, e-mail conversation with the author, March 21, 2017). Skira Rizzoli Publications keeps the print run figures of its books confidential. The Barbara Gladstone Gallery never replied when asked to provide information regarding the print run of its publications. In all the other cases, the publishers have not been able to retrieve the required information.

Matthew Barney: New Work. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992; offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch), 52 pp, n.p. Print run: 2500 (price \$15).

Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4. Paris/New York: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain/Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 1995; offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29,5 x 1 cm, n.p. Print run: unknown (price £20, inc. postage and packing).

Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7, edited by Cristina Bechtler. Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1995; offset, perfect bound, 30,3 x 23 x 0,7 cm, n.p. Print run: unknown (50 books were released with a plastic clip).

Matthew Barney: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL, edited by Karel Schampers. Rotterdam: Museum Boymans van Beuningen, 1995; offset, perfect bound, plastic case, 24 x 17 x 0,8 cm, 92 pp. Print run: 2500.

Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1. Wien/Basel: Kunsthalle Wien/Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel, 1997; offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29, 5 x 1,2 cm, n.p. Print run: unknown.

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Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. IV. New York: JMc&GHB Editions, 2007; offset, sewn bound, embossed cover 25 x 17,5 cm, 74 pp. Print run: unknown.

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Dervaux, Isabelle, ed. *Subliming Vessel: The Drawings of Matthew Barney.* New York: Skira Rizzoli Publications/The Morgan Library & Museum, 2013; offset, embossed hardcover, 22 x 29,5 cm, 243 pp. Print run: unknown (price: \$55/44€).

Enwezor, Okwui. *Matthew Barney: RIVER OF FUNDAMENT*, edited by Louise Neri. New York/München: Skira Rizzoli Publications, Inc./Haus der Kunst, 2014; offset, embossed hardcover, 23,5 x 30 x 3,3 cm, 311 pp. Print run: unknown (price: 95\$/75€).

Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy, edited by Mamie Tinkler. New York/Brussels: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 2016; offset, hardcover, 20,9 x 28,6, 200 pp. Print run: unknown (price 65\$/49,90€).

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3.2 a), b), c) Willem Sandberg, "Mondrian: L'organisation de l'espace," *Quadrum*, no. 2 (1956): 119-126.

3.3 "The Responsive Eye," *Quadrum*, no. 18 (1965): 169.

3.4 Laurent Busine, ed., *L'Exotisme au quotidien* (Charleroy: Palais des Beaux Arts, 1987), front cover reporting the title of the exhibition and the picture of Paul Gauguin's *Le Sorcier d'Hiva-Oa*, 1902 (oil on canvas, 92 x 72 cm, Musée d'Art Moderne de Liège).

3.5 Remo Guidieri, "*Parau ne te varaua'ino*," in *L'Exotisme au quotidien*, ed. Laurent Busine, 64-93 (Charleroy: Palais des Beaux Arts, 1987); a) 64-65; b) 92-93.

3.6 a), b) "L'Exotisme au quotidien (List of the exhibited works)," in *L'Exotisme au quotidien*, ed. Laurent Busine, n.p. (Charleroy: Palais des Beaux Arts, 1987).

3.7 Lothar Baumgarten, "Eine Reise oder Mit der MS Remscheid auf dem Amazonas, 1971-1972," in *L'Exotisme au quotidien*, ed. Laurent Busine, 94-99 (Charleroy: Palais des Beaux Arts, 1987); a) 94-95; b) 96-97; c) 98-99.

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3.9 Dieter Roth, *Dieter Roth: Boeken* (Stuttgart: Hansjörg Mayer, 1975), offset, staple-bound, 33,5 x 23,5 cm, 16 pp., n.p.; a) back and front covers; b) internal pages.

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3.12 "Boîtes éditées par le musée de Mönchengladbach," in Anne Mœglin-Delcroix, *Esthétique du Livre d'Artiste: Une Introduction à l'art contemporain*, 2nd rev. ed. (Marseille/Paris: le mot et le reste/Bibliothèque nationale de France, 2012), 124; photo Hubert Renard.

3.13 Joseph Beuys, *Beuys*, ed. Johannes Cladders (Mönchengladbach: Städtisches Museum Mönchengladbach, 1967), 20 x 16 x 3 cm, n.p.; a) felt pad; b, c) folded leporellos.

3.14 "Joseph Beuys – Katalog Museum Mönchengladbach," *The Joseph Beuys multiples website*, <http://pinakothek-beuys-multiples.de/de/product/katalog-museum-monchengladbach/>.

3.15 "Joseph Beuys – Katalog Museum Mönchengladbach," *The Joseph Beuys multiples website*, <http://pinakothek-beuys-multiples.de/de/product/katalog-museum-monchengladbach/>; a), b) details of the two leporellos.

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3.18 Jean Christophe Ammann (and Marianne Eigenheer), eds., *Ben Vautier, Christian Boltanski, Jean Alain Le Gac (Legac), John C. Fernie* (Luzern: Kunstmuseum Luzern, 1972), n.p.

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3.22 Lothar Baumgarten and Michael Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e: eine mythologische Vorführung* (Düsseldorf: Konrad Fischer, 1974), offset, glue-bound, 21 x 14,8 cm, 48 pp., n.p.

3.23 Lothar Baumgarten and Michael Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e: eine mythologische Vorführung* (Düsseldorf: Konrad Fischer, 1974), offset, glue-bound, 21 x 14,8 cm, 48 pp., n.p.

3.24 Lothar Baumgarten and Michael Oppitz, *T'e-Ne-T'e: eine mythologische Vorführung* (Düsseldorf: Konrad Fischer, 1974), offset, glue-bound, 21 x 14,8 cm, 48 pp., n.p.

3.25 Douglas Huebler, *Douglas Huebler*, ed. Seth Siegelau (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1968), offset, stapled, 20,2 x 20,2 cm, 20 pp., n.p.; a) front and back covers; b) catalogue.

3.26 a), b) Douglas Huebler, "Boston - New York Exchange," 1968, in Douglas Huebler, *Douglas Huebler*, ed. Seth Siegelau, n.p. (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1968), offset, stapled, 20,2 x 20,2 cm, 20 pp.

3.27 Seth Siegelau, ed. *January 5-31, 1969* (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969), offset, comb-bound, 17,5 x 20,8 cm, 24 pp., n.p., front cover.

3.28 Floor plan for the exhibition *January 5-31, 1969* by Seth Siegelau, pen on paper, 21,1 x 23,2 cm. Seth Siegelau Papers, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. (© The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY).

3.29 Installation view of *January 5-31, 1969*: Barry, Huebler, Kosuth, Weiner, with temporary receptionist Adrian Piper, Seth Siegelau Papers, The Museum of Modern Art Archives, New York. (© The Museum of Modern Art/Licensed by SCALA/Art Resource, NY).

3.30 a), b) "Robert Barry," in *January 5-31, 1969*, ed. Seth Siegelau (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969), offset, comb-bound, 17,5 x 20,8 cm, 24 pp., n.p.

3.31 a), b) "Douglas Huebler," in *January 5-31, 1969*, ed. Seth Siegelau (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969), offset, comb-bound, 17,5 x 20,8 cm, 24 pp., n.p.

3.32 a), b), c) Seth Siegelau, ed., *March 1969 [One Month]* (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969), offset, stapled, 17,8 x 21,5 cm, 68 pp., n.p.

3.33 Douglas Huebler, "14th March 1969," in *March 1969 [One Month]*, ed. Seth Siegelau (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969), offset, stapled, 17,8 x 21,5 cm, 68 pp., n.p.

3.34 Allen Ruppersberg, "26th March 1969," in *March 1969 [One Month]*, ed. Seth Siegelau (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969), offset, stapled, 17,8 x 21,5 cm, 68 pp., n.p.

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3.36 Seth Siegelau, ed., *July, August, September 1969 / Juillet, Août, Septembre 1969 / Juli, August, September 1969* (New York: Seth Siegelau, 1969) offset-printed, stapled, 21,2 x 27,5 cm, 26 pp.; a) front and back covers; b) acknowledgements.

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4.1 *Matthew Barney: New Work* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992), offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) 52 pp., n.p.; a) front cover; b) back cover.

4.2 *Matthew Barney: New Work* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992), offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) 52 pp., n.p.; left, *Field Emblem*, n.p.; right, frontispiece, n.p.

4.3 *Matthew Barney: New Work* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992), offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) 52 pp., n.p.; *Project Index*, 1991, n.p.

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4.5 Matthew Barney, *Jim Otto Suite* (detail), 1991, prosthetic plastic locker, home NFL jersey, hydraulic jack with glucose syrup, petroleum jelly, two 3/4-inch videos, dimensions variable; photo: Regen Projects Archives.

4.6 Matthew Barney, *Facility of INCLINE*, 1991; a) installation cum exhibition view; photo: Regen Projects Archives; b) Matthew Barney, *Pace Car for the Hubris Pill*, 1991, self-lubricating plastic sled with teflon fabric on sugar wedge, 1,3 x 1,8 x 1,2 m (50 1/2 x 71 x 48 inch); photo: Regen Projects Archives/Barbara Gladstone Gallery Archives; c) Matthew Barney, *Repressia*, 1991, floor: wrestling mat, sternal retractor, skeet, salt water pearl; ceiling: cast internally lubricated plastic curl bar, cotton socks, binding straps, titanium ice screw, carabiners + 2 video monitors, 2 video players, 2 video loops, dimensions variable; photo: Regen Projects Archives; d) Matthew Barney, *unit BOLUS*, 1988, stainless steel rack, cast petroleum jelly dumbbell, electric freezing device 0,7 x 0,45 x 0,25 m (26 x 18 x 9 3/4 inch); photo: Regen Projects Archives/Barbara Gladstone Gallery Archives.

4.7 Matthew Barney, *case BOLUS*, 1989-1991, glass case with cast Olympic barbells, dumbbells, mouthpieces, speculum, cast sugar, 4 foam nylon pads with binding belts, dimensions variable; a) installation view; photo: Regen Projects Archives; a) installation view; b), c), d) details; photos: Barbara Gladstone Gallery Archives.

4.8 Matthew Barney, *Transsexualis*, 1991, walk-in cooler, formed and cast petroleum jelly decline bench, human chorionic gonadotropin, speculum, self-lubricating plastic flight blocks with videotapes: *MILE HIGH Threshold: FLIGHT with the ANAL SADISTIC WARRIOR* and *DELAY OF GAME*, 3,66 x 4,27 x 2,59 m (145 x 170 x 102 inch); a) interior view; b) exterior view; photos: Regen Projects Archives.

4.9 *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4* (Paris/New York: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain/Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 1995), offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29,5 x 1 cm, n.p.

4.10 *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, ed. Cristina Bechtler (Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1995); offset, perfect bound, 30,3 x 23 x 0,7 cm, n.p.

4.11 Matthew Barney's book production (1991/1992-2002):

a) *Matthew Barney: New Work* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992), offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) 52 pp, n.p.

b) *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4* (Paris/New York: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain/Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 1995), offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29,5 x 1 cm, n.p.

c) *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT 7*, ed. Cristina Bechtler (Ostfildern: Cantz Verlag, 1995); offset, perfect bound, 30,3 x 23 x 0,7 cm, n.p.

d) *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL*, ed. Karel Schampers (Rotterdam: Museum Boymans van Beuningen, 1995), offset, perfect bound, plastic case, 24 x 17 x 0,8 cm.

e) *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 1* (Wien/Basel: Kunsthalle Wien/Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel, 1997) offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29,5 x 1,2 cm, n.p.

f) *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 5* (Frankfurt am Main/New York: Portikus/Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 1997), offset, perfect bound, plastic cover, 24 x 29,5 x 1,1 cm, n.p.

g) *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 2*, ed. Kathy McLean (Minneapolis, MN: Walker Art Center, 1999), offset, perfect bound, embossed plastic case, 24 x 29,5 x 1 cm, n.p.

h) *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 3*, ed. Edward Weisberger (New York: D.A.P., 2002/Ostfildern/Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002), offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29,5 x 1,9 cm, n.p.

4.12 *Matthew Barney: New Work* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992), offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) 52 pp., n.p.

4.13 a), b), c) *Matthew Barney: New Work* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992), offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) 52 pp., n.p.

4.14 a), b), c) *Matthew Barney: New Work* (San Francisco, CA: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, 1992), offset, perfect bound, 27,9 x 20,3 cm (11 x 8 inch) 52 pp., n.p.

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4.16 *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER 4* (Paris/New York: Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain/Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 1995), offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29,5 x 1 cm, n.p.

4.17 *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, ed. Mamie Tinkler (New York/Brussels: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 2016), offset, hardcover, 20,9 x 28,6, 200pp.; a) front cover; b) back cover.

4.18 *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, ed. Mamie Tinkler (New York/Brussels: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 2016) offset, hardcover, 20,9 x 28,6; a) 28-29; b) 74-75; c) 130-131.

4.19 *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, ed. Mamie Tinkler (New York/Brussels: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 2016) offset, hardcover, 20,9 x 28,6; a) 88-89; b) 92-93.

4.20 *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, ed. Mamie Tinkler (New York/Brussels: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 2016) offset, hardcover, 20,9 x 28,6; 10-11.

4.21 *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, ed. Mamie Tinkler (New York/Brussels: Barbara GladstoneGallery, 2016) offset, hardcover, 20,9 x 28,6; a) 176-177; b) 178; c) 179; d) 180-181.

4.22 Nancy Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum/Harry N. Abrams, 2002; Köln/Ostfildern-Ruit: Ludwig Museum/Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), offset, embossed cover, plastic jacket, 23,5 x 32,5, pp. 529.

4.23 Nancy Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum/Harry N. Abrams, 2002; Köln/Ostfildern-Ruit: Ludwig Museum/Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), offset, embossed cover, plastic jacket, 23,5 x 32,5, frontispiece;

4.24 Nancy Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum/Harry N. Abrams, 2002; Köln/Ostfildern-Ruit: Ludwig Museum/Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), offset, embossed cover, plastic jacket, 23,5 x 32,5; a) 312-313 (*CREMASTER 3*); 312: *CREMASTER 3: The Slope of Hiram*, 2002, 1 of 3 C-prints in acrylic frames (shown unframed); 313: concept drawing on index card: The fifth degree in The Order, tools used in the murder of Hiram Abiff; photocopy: Richard Serra throwing molten lead for *Castings* at the Castelli warehouse, New York, 1969; photo: High-density polyethylene plates; b) 306-307; 306: magazine cover: Aimee Mullins; clipping: Chanel perfume advertisement; clipping: Cheetah facial makings; 307: concept drawing on index card: Third degree insignia "I die daily"; photocopy: Third degree Masonic initiate.

4.25 Nancy Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum/Harry N. Abrams, 2002; Köln/Ostfildern-Ruit: Ludwig Museum/Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), offset, embossed cover, plastic jacket, 23,5 x 32,5, 470-471.

4.26 a), b) *Matthew Barney: CREMASTER I* (Wien/Basel: Kunsthalle Wien/Museum für Gegenwartskunst der Emanuel Hoffmann-Stiftung und der Öffentlichen Kunstsammlung Basel, 1997) offset, perfect bound, 24 x 29, 5 x 1,2 cm, n.p.

4.27 *Matthew Barney: PACE CAR FOR THE HUBRIS PILL*, ed. Karel Schampers (Rotterdam: Museum Boymans van Beuningen, 1995), offset, perfect bound, plastic case, 17 x 24 x 0,8 cm; a) 38, 43; b) 39-40, 43; c) 37, 41-42.

4.28 Storyboard for *RIVER of FUNDMENT*, Matthew Barney Studio, New York, November 22, 2012.

4.29 Aby Warburg, *Mnemosyne Atlas*, 1924-1929; *Tafel* no. 79, 1926;
photo: <http://www.medienkunstnetz.de/works/mnemosyne/images/7/>

4.30 *Subliming Vessel: The Drawings of Matthew Barney*, The Morgan Library & Museum, New York, May 10 - September 2, 2013, installation view; photo: Philip Greenberg © The New York Times.

4.31 *RIVER of FUNDAMENT*, Haus der Kunst, Munich, March 16 - August 31, 2014, storyboards (detail); photo: Silvia Neri.

4.32 Matthew Barney's book production (2003-2016):

a) Nancy Spector, ed., *Matthew Barney: The CREMASTER Cycle* (New York: The Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum/Harry N. Abrams, 2002; Köln/Ostfildern-Ruit: Ludwig Museum/Hatje Cantz Verlag, 2002), offset, embossed cover, plastic jacket, 23,5 x 32,5, pp. 529.

b) *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. I, 1987-2002*, ed. Hans Ulrich Obrist (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2005) offset, perfect bound, plastic cover, 24 x 17 cm, 96 pp.

c) *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. II* (Tokyo: Uplink Press, 2005), offset, perfect bound, embossed plastic cover, 24 x 17 cm, 164 pp.

d) *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. III* (Seoul: Leeum Samsung Museum of Contemporary Art, 2005), offset, perfect bound, perforated plastic cover, 24 x 17 cm, 212 pp.

- e) *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. IV* (New York: JMc&GHB Editions, 2007); offset, sewn bound, embossed cover 25 x 17,5 cm, 74 pp.
- f) *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. V* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2007), offset, perfect bound, perforated plastic cover, 24 x 17 cm, 232 pp.
- g) *Matthew Barney: DRAWING RESTRAINT Vol. VI* (Basel: Schaulager, 2010), offset, embossed silk hardcover, 17,8 x 24, 7 cm, 146 pp.
- h) Isabelle Dervaux, ed., *Subliming Vessel: The Drawings of Matthew Barney* (New York: Skira Rizzoli Publications/The Morgan Library & Museum, 2013), offset, embossed hardcover, 22 x 29,5 cm, 243 pp.
- i) Okwui Enwezor, *Matthew Barney: RIVER OF FUNDAMENT*, ed. Louise Neri (New York/München: Skira Rizzoli Publications, Inc./Haus der Kunst, 2014), offset, embossed hardcover, 23,5 x 30 x 3,3 cm, 311 pp.
- J) *Matthew Barney: OTTO Trilogy*, ed. Mamie Tinkler (New York/Brussels: Barbara Gladstone Gallery, 2016), offset, hardcover, 20,9 x 28,6, 200 pp.

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