

Press Contacts: Karen Gysin 612.375.7651 karen.gysin@walkerart.org  
Dina Sweeney 612.215.2528 dsweeney@mnbookarts.org

## NO READING REQUIRED: ARTISTS' BOOKS FROM THE WALKER ART CENTER'S LIBRARY COLLECTION ON VIEW AT MINNESOTA CENTER FOR BOOK ARTS

"I've always said that artists' books refuse to behave like books. Pages, text, binding, title-page information are all likely to be thrown out the window as the artist attempts to convey his or her message."

—Walker Art Center Librarian Rosemary Furtak

Minneapolis, July 30, 2004—A selection of some 150 artists' books drawn from the collection of the John Rogers Shuman Memorial Library at the Walker Art Center will be on view to the public for the first time outside the museum in the exhibition **Artists' Books: No Reading Required** presented at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA) August 28–November 6. On view in MCBA's Star Tribune Foundation Gallery as part of the Walker's year without walls, the exhibition is co-curated by Walker Librarian Rosemary Furtak and MCBA Artistic Director Jeff Rathernel. An Opening Reception from 6–9 pm Saturday, August 28, features a Curators' Gallery Talk at 8 pm, followed by a performance of John Cage's *Fontana Mix* by Mike Hallenbeck. MCBA is located at 1011 Washington Avenue South, Suite 100, Minneapolis.



Artist book by Buster Cleveland  
Courtesy Walker Art Center Library Collection  
Photo: Cameron Wittig for Walker Art Center

The artists' books, part of the Walker's 40,000-tome library, the largest regional collection devoted to contemporary art practice, will be displayed around various themes: smoking, food, mail art, local artists, the evolution of the artist's book, conceptual art, photography, and books in a box. The exhibition also incorporates an in-depth look at the prolific output in this genre by Edward Ruscha, Hans-Peter Feldmann, Dieter Roth, Richard Tuttle, General Idea, Lawrence Weiner, Hannah Darboven, Buster Cleveland, Andy Warhol, Ray Johnson, Yoko Ono, and various Fluxus artists.

A Books and Sound display case features books from the collection that are as much about sound as they are about text or image. The selection ranges from books based on musical compositions (Hildegard von Bingen and Claire Van Vliet, *Circulus*

*Sapientiae*) to creative publications of musical scores (La Monte Young and Jackson Mac Low, *An Anthology of Chance Operations*). John Cage is a recurring presence in many aspects of the exhibition, from his influence on the works of Fluxus artists as well as conceptual artists, to his own work in composition and bookmaking. *Fontana Mix* displays Cage's commitment to experimentation in both sound and visual art. The printed piece is comprised of 10 transparencies, 10 sheets of sinuous lines, one grid, one straight line, and instructions for interpreting the score. Once assembled, the performer is faced with a compelling visual object as well as a unique problem in musical interpretation. The recording of *Fontana Mix* featured in the exhibition is performed by Max Neuhaus and was distributed with the magazine *Aspen* no. 5+6, also featured in the exhibition.

A printmaker, art historian, and former teacher, Furtak responds to artists' books on a very personal level, as an artist first and a librarian second. She's lovingly accumulated them for years, and her acquisition style has always been front and center: "If artists are making books, it seems that we should be collecting them, especially if the artist is represented in the Walker's permanent holdings." Also folded into the library's 1,500-volume group of these books are works by practitioners for whom this is a primary art-making activity, such as Carol Barton, Julie Chen, and Keith Smith, and three that were commissioned by the Walker: Siah Armajani's *Bridge Book*; Laurie Simmons' *Water Ballet/Family Collision*, and Sol LeWitt's *Lines in Two Directions and in Five Colors on Five Colors with All Their Combinations*. "Our collection is somewhat quirky in that it includes multiples, artist-designed exhibition catalogues, and serial publications that feature artists' contributions," Furtak says. "For example, Joseph Beuys' first multiple, the melting chocolate bar, was made for the German publication *DE-COLLAGE*. That journal will be included in the exhibition with others such as *ASPEN*, *BLAST*, *FILE*, *ART RITE*, and *S.M.S.*"

Jeff Rathermel, MCBA's newly appointed Artistic Director, is a book-arts teacher at the University of Minnesota and Carleton College. He served as a management consultant for the Minnesota State Department of Administration for nine years before turning to art full time.

### **Artists' Books: No Reading Required**

August 28–November 6, Free

Gallery Hours: Tuesday, 10 am–9 pm; Wednesday–Saturday, 10 am–5 pm; closed Sunday and Monday

Star Tribune Foundation Gallery

Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA)

1011 Washington Avenue South, Suite 100, Minneapolis

Information: 612.215.2520

**Opening Reception**

Saturday, August 28, 6–9 pm

Curators' Gallery Talk, 8 pm

Followed by a musical performance by Mike Hallenbeck.

**Make an Artist's Book Family Event**

Saturday, August 28, 1–3 pm

Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA)

Hands-on bookmaking activities in MCBA's studios.

**The Book As Modern Art: An Interactive Event**

Friday, October 15, 6–9 pm

Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA)

Explore the book-as-art through gallery talks and hands-on demonstrations. Part of the Twin Cities Fine Arts Organization's Art on the Town event.

For information on these and other related events, including roundtable discussions and classes in bookbinding, papermaking, and letterpress printing, call 612.215.2520, or visit [www.mnbookarts.org](http://www.mnbookarts.org).

Walker information/box office: 612.375.7622.

**The Walker Art Center is located at 725 Vineland Place, at Lyndale Avenue South, Minneapolis, one block off Highway I-94.**

**For public information, call 612.375.7622, or visit:  
<http://www.walkerart.org>**