

PUBLISHING MANIFESTOS

and publishing | oswald de andrade | archive books | art-rite | rasheed araeen
tauba auerbach | michael baers | bibi bakare-yusuf | ricardo basbaum | derek
beaulieu | bernadette corporation | anita di bianco | riccardo boglione | bombay
underground | jorge luis borges | bpnichol | kate briggs | broken dimanche press
eleanor vonne brown | urvashi butalia | ulises carrión | mariana castillo deball | paul
chan | chimurenga | arplta das | guy debord | constant dullaart | craig dworkin
ntone edjabe | zenon fajfer | robert fitterman | marina fokidis | general idea | annette
gilbert | girls like us | gloria glitter | marianne groulez | alex hamburger | karl
holmqvist | lisa holzer | mahmood jamal | tom jennings | ray johnson | david jourdan
sharon kivland | kione kochi | kwani? | bruce labruce | tan lin | el lissitzky
alessandro ludovico | sara mackillop | steve mcaffery | jonathan monk | simon
morris | mosireen | león muñoz santini | takashi murakami | deke nihilson | aurélie
noury | johnny noxzema | clive phillpot | michalis pichler | vanessa place | seth price
queeres verlegen | riot grrrl | carlos soto román | allen ruppersberg | joachim
schmid | oliver sieber | paul soulellis | matthew stadler | gertrude stein | paul
stephens | hito steyerl | mladen stilinović | katja stuke | temporary services | nick
thurston | tiqqun | elisabeth tonnard | v. vale | eric watier | erik van der weijde
lawrence weiner | eva weinmayr | jan wenzel | stephen willats | gil j wolman | zubaan

**an international anthology from artists and writers
edited by michalis pichler**

Publishing Publishing Manifestos

Michalis Pichler

The majority of the work compiled in *Publishing Manifestos* stems from the twenty-first century. Because that is our context, as artists, and just as people—but it also reflects the explosion, in recent decades, of independent publishing, art publishing, publishing as artistic practice, alternative media, publishing in or as counterculture, and zine-, DIY- and POD-scenes. *Publishing Manifestos* features key texts of critical engagement with publishing from protagonists of the field, arranged in chronological order. It will function as a reader and collection of source material, that is characterized by heterogeneity and incoherence.

In addition to revisiting historical texts, we asked artists and publishers:

- Do you have a manifesto?
- A mission statement?
- Why do you (or do not) publish; what keeps you going?
- Who are the giants or dwarfs, or normal-sized, self-chosen historical predecessors and relatives, on whose shoulders one is standing today?
- Which related ideas have been formulated and deserve to be remembered or improved?

Manifestos, traditionally, have taken the form of a declaration of ideals and intentions that call for urgent change, often addressing political and social questions, the *Communist Manifesto* being an urtext of the genre.

While the title of this book can be read in different ways—equally as indicating “manifestos about publishing” as well as the “publishing of manifestos”—we should be clear that not all of the texts reproduced here are manifestos in the strict sense. Some are proclamatory, some are written in retrospect to control the meaning of one’s activity, some are playful, and some just push the borders. Ultimately, those borders are all to the point.

One implicit aim of this publication would be to address and overcome the confinement of an Anglo- and Eurocentric perspective, which often comes all too “naturally” and enforces a white canon. One aim is to crack open the understanding of who independent publishers are, and to argue for a global perspective.

Against Alienation

In *Power Relations within Existing Art Institutions*, Adrian Piper analyzes “the process by which individuals are recruited into the ranks of art practitioners as artists (and also, secondarily, as critics, dealers, etc.) within existing art institutions and thereby abdicate their social, intellectual, economic, and creative autonomy.”¹ She calls this process aesthetic acculturation. Piper goes on to analyze how the division of labor between artists and other art practitioners often relegates the conceptual articulation, evaluation, and validation of artworks to art critics, thus promoting a critical hegemony of Eurocentric, formalist art values which in turn leads to the invisibility of much non-formalist art. Moreover, the legal control over the distribution, exhibition, and exchange of artworks is often left solely to art dealers.

In radical publishing, especially self-publishing and zine culture, this division of labor is reversed, with artists and authors engaging in all sorts of different and unalienated roles: creators, designers, producers, printers, publishers, and distributors. Such practices heed the call of →Riot Grrrl: “We must take over the means of production in order to create our own meanings [...] Because we are interested in non-hierarchical ways of being.” Twenty-five years later, →Temporary Services describe “crafting a variegated approach to how you create, publish, distribute, and build a social ecosystem around your efforts” and encourage the exploration “of the ways it can build up and strengthen the community around these printed forms,” while →Joachim Schmid praises “the flexibility of being able to make a book within one week if necessary, instead of waiting years for a publisher’s approval.”

Indeed, one is tempted to say that in publishing as practice—perhaps more than in any other art field—artists have been able to assert the aesthetic value of their own socio-politically informed concerns and to engage, often under precarious conditions, in cultural activities fully aligned with their political values.

The economics of publishing are a concern, both in terms of production and sustenance. Can one pay to print? Can one pay the rent—not just for a studio, but also for housing? When making books and/or art, is one living *for* or *from* it? Why does everybody always want to prove that one’s own publishing activity pays for itself, that one does (or at least theoretically *could*) “break even”? Does this desire arise from mere optimism, or naiveté, or does it betray a more emancipative impulse? As →Tauba Auerbach puts it: “It’s not a priority to make it work financially, other than the fact that I would like to prove to myself that it’s possible to have a viable business that isn’t compromised.”²

Seriosity Dummies

When Ulises Carrión (→IDEA POLL) issued his warning that “the only trouble with artists’ books is that they have gained the attention of museums and collectors,” he was mainly

referring to the rising exchange value of artists’ books as commodities. Today, the situation has intensified, as the art world has become acutely aware of the symbolic capital and distinctive value of art publishing. To conceive of the scene of independent publishing as a protected niche, accordingly, has become increasingly difficult. When I was growing up in West Berlin in the 1980s, a popular bumper-sticker read: “Stell Dir vor, es ist Krieg und keiner geht hin” (Suppose they gave a war and nobody came). The slogan appeared to strike a cocky, tongue-in-cheek tone. Only years later did I realize that the phrase came from a poem attributed to Bertolt Brecht, where the line actually continues: “dann kommt der Krieg zu Dir” (then war will come to you).³

The art world and art press really only express interest in the established names, which are usually represented and marketed by commercial galleries, as if the supremacy of wall pieces and “gallery art” over “book art” was more than a misunderstanding. When only commercially successful names get canonized, it distorts our perspective of the range of works actually produced, as when it recuperates a culturally diverse scene only to have market forces and the celebrity system brought down on it. Some of the most interesting artists are involved with publishing today and operate unaffiliated with galleries.

For this reason, artists and authors must not leave the field of contextualizing and theorizing publishing practice to scholars or other interested players of the art world (dealers, collectors, curators, and so on). If one hesitates to participate in the rather questionable process of canonizing, one might recall Mike Kelley’s argument for radically subjective histories and canons in “Artist/Critic”: “Most of the artists that influence *me* are absent from these accounts. Historical writing becomes a duty for the artist at this point.”⁴

The coffee-table book *Artists Who Make Books*, edited by a major collector, an art critic, and a dealer of antiquarian commodities, gets a lot of things right: it argues for a perspective that perceives books as artworks in their own right. Also, it argues against the supremacy of wall pieces over publications. Still, it should have rather been called *Blue Chip Gallery Artists Who Make Books*, since that seems to have been part of the editorial selection (and exclusion) criteria. To reverse and expand Baldessari (→IDEA POLL) and phrase this critique differently: No artist should need to have an expensive line—as seriosity dummies, just in order to be considered serious, important, or to be considered at all—as that would keep art overblown and away from being ordinary.

There are other forms of exclusion as well, and they arrive with the insidious and “natural” ease of the ideological. The better art book fairs argue for an egalitarian and inclusive approach, but they only partly achieve it. For instance, the two largest art book fairs—the New York Art Book Fair and Miss Read, with 363 and 267 exhibitors in 2018 respectively—did not include even one publisher from Africa in their

most recent editions. Even this observation, however, betrays complexities, as there were exhibitors with African backgrounds. "Due to slavery, colonialism and their resultant mass displacements and diaspora of African peoples and cultures, it is no longer possible to speak of Africa or African as a mere geographic entity."⁵ →Bibi Bakare-Yusuf implicitly acknowledges this diaspora when she claims that "the time has come to build a new body of African writing that links writers and readers from Benin to Bahia." →Marina Fokidis makes a similar point when she argues for "the concept of the South as a 'state of mind' rather than a set of fixed places on the map."

Still, one wonders why so much slips through the cracks. Is this due to the dominance of Anglo- and Eurocentric perspectives? "Which references? The English people have their own references—that certainly exclude ours, somehow," says →Ricardo Basbaum, and, in the words of →Alex Hamburger, addresses "problems related to the Third World artist (of course, in this particular case, Brazilian), and the tribulations faced in the so-called civilized world." How can we do something about it? A first step would be to admit one's own limitations and to listen to people grounded in and familiar with "non-Western" contexts.⁶

A Short Walk Through a Historical Arc of Tension

Publishing Manifestos spans over a century of statements, beginning with →Gertrude Stein and →El Lissitzky, who serve here as paradigms of the early modernist avant-garde, and the latter of Russian Constructivism also. The focus shifts to →Oswald de Andrade, a protagonist of Brazilian modernism, but also an early advocate of what we would today term *appropriation*; the concept, germane to marginal publishing practices, arises from de Andrade's argument that the strongest aspect of Brazil's culture is its history of "cannibalizing" other cultures, which in turn serves as a means for cultural assertion against the European model of cultural domination. As his "Anthropophagic Manifesto" posits, in short: "Tupi or not Tupi, that is the question." In English, in the original, the line performs the manifesto's central argument: simultaneously referencing the indigenous Tupi people of the southern Amazon, while also cannibalizing Shakespeare's "Hamlet." The bibliomaniac →Jorge-Luis Borges might not, at first glance, seem an obvious choice for manifestos on publishing; however, when participants at Berlin's annual Miss Read interview series⁷ were asked about their ideal utopian library, they frequently cited the writer's "Library of Babel," often framing the question: "Borges" or "not Borges."

"The bourgeoisie, [...] by the immensely facilitated means of communication, draws all, even the most barbarian, nations into civilization. The cheap prices of commodities are the heavy artillery with which it batters down all Chinese walls,"⁸ pronounce Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*. Performing their own argument about appropriation and repurposing, →Debord and

Wolman take this up in "A User's Guide to Détournement," détourning the earlier text by replacing "bourgeoisie" with "détournement": "The cheapness of its products," in their revision, "is the heavy artillery that breaks through all the Chinese walls of understanding." Cheapness, as a strategy, will be a frequent key to the cultural battles waged by the publishing practices documented here.

"The New Art of Making Books" by →Ulises Carrión, has come to serve as a cornerstone of the critical discourse around (artists') books, and it accompanied his opening of Other Books and So in Amsterdam in 1975. The first bookshop, project space, and, later, archive entirely dedicated to the research and dissemination of artists' books, Other Books and So preceded Printed Matter, Inc. (New York), Zona Archives (Florence), and Art Metropole (Toronto). Until recently, Carrión, who never worked with a commercial gallery, was largely forgotten. Indeed, in 2009, when the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) mounted an exhibition called "In & Out of Amsterdam: Travels in Conceptual Art, 1960–1976," it omitted Carrión altogether, despite the fact that he was a primary protagonist in Amsterdam during that time frame. Absent from both the exhibition and the accompanying catalog, the omission was all the more glaring given that the name of Carrión's Amsterdam-based publishing house, founded in 1972, was In-Out Productions. I guess the MOMA now owes us a Carrión show.

At the same time, Carrión might serve as a role model not only for the poet-artist, but also—in contrast to Marcel Broodthaers, who also comes to mind when considering the figure of the poet-artist—of the *independent* artist: the one who operates outside the commercial gallery system. Even though he had few illusions about the pitfalls of this (in)dependence, he insisted that "there will always remain a surplus of unsalable beauty." (→IDEA POLL)

In 1976, the cheaply produced newsprint journal *Art-Rite* conducted an →IDEA POLL and collected *Statements on Artists' Books by Fifty Artists and Art Professionals* connected with the medium, which is reproduced in its entirety here, thanks to Walter Robinson (whose attitude toward free distribution, a hallmark of *Art-Rite*, continues to this day, as evinced even in his permission: "Sure go ahead And good luck W Sent from my iPhone"). Conducted at a time when the hype around Conceptual art and bookworks had reached its climax, the survey responses include many insights and pithy slogans; or could one put it any better than →John Baldessari: "Every artist should have a cheap line." Accordingly, →Adrian Piper thoroughly examines the social and economic conditions that a *Cheap Art Utopia* would presuppose, among them people who "would be able to discriminate value in art without the trappings of preciousness, such as the gilt frame, the six-figure price tag, the plexiglass-case, the roped-off area around the work, etc."

In the present volume, the *Art-Rite* statements, along with texts by Ray Johnson, Stephen Willats, Ulises Carrión, General Idea, Rasheed Araeen, Allen Ruppersberg,

Lawrence Weiner, and a diagram by Clive Phillpot, represent the phase circa 1967–82, which now strikes us as the heyday of artists' books. In part, it saw an opening up of art toward the wider world, not just the art world, and, in part, it saw the art world's abolishment.

Artist's Book as a Term Is Problematic

According to Stefan Klima, three issues dominated the debate around artists' books (from about 1973 to 1998): publishing as an explicitly political act and the desire to challenge an art establishment; publishing as an implicitly political act and its challenge to imagine a new kind of reading; and finally, the very definition of what an "artist's book" might be.⁹ While the first two issues are still pressing today, the term "artist's book" now sounds outdated.

To talk about *the* artist's book in the singular (as opposed to artists' books as a collective plural) was always paradoxical, because the field has always been extremely heterogeneous. That heterogeneity might be aptly described by the term *bibliodiversity*. With an allusion to the (post)Darwinist concept of biodiversity, François Benhamu has described a publishing environment wherein one finds "several species, but some are present in huge numbers while others are very scarce, and the ones with many copies are likely to eat or prevail over the others. This is what is happening in the book world."¹⁰ In contrast to commercial, mainstream, mass-market publishing of normal and normative books and publications, the bibliodiversity is much greater in the realm of publishing as artistic practice, artists' books, conceptual publications, cuckoo's eggs, wolves in sheep's clothing, sheep in wolves' clothing, art as books, books as art, books as something else, primary information, bookworks, catalog exhibitions, and hybrid and entirely unclassifiable cases.

"Artist's book" as a term is problematic because it ghettoizes, enforces the separation from broader everyday practices and limits the subversive potential of books by putting an art tag on them. Robert Smithson discusses this process of cultural confinement when he critiques the "portable object or surface disengaged from the outside world [...] Once the work of art is totally neutralized, ineffective, abstracted, safe, and politically lobotomized, it is ready to be consumed by society. All is reduced to visual fodder and transportable merchandise."¹¹ Even when books are housed (entombed) in institutional libraries, their sequestering in "special collections" and "rare book" collections means that access to them is usually further complicated, typically putting restrictions, rules, limits, and the protocols of institutional bureaucracies between interested readers and the books they might want to experience. Any institution (including art libraries, exhibition spaces, and schools) that is serious about such material should acquire at least two copies of each item—and keep one of them on an unrestricted open shelf.

While extended discussions have taken place around the term, including heated debate over whether and where to

put the apostrophe in "artist's book," Lawrence Weiner once cut through the Gordian knot by concluding: "Don't call it an artist's book, just call it a book."¹²

A book is a sequential collection of pages, loose leaf or bound, and it is circulating in multiple reproductions. But today, we are no longer only talking about books anymore—more capacious than *book*, the term *publication* is better because it can encompass digital files, hybrid media, and forms we have yet to imagine.

Publishing or *publications* as an umbrella term would include any form of circulating information, including books, zines, loose-leaf collections, flyers, e-books, blog posts, social media, and hybrids, as long as they are (or are meant to be) viewed or read by multiple audiences.

Moreover, the beauty of publications in contrast to white-cube gallery exhibitions lies in their ability to circulate in less controlled and potentially uncontrollable ways: "Words on paper seem to be not such a bad historical recording mechanism, because I know my books have gone all over the world, and they can't kill them all." (→V. Vale)

The other beauty of publishing is that it permits a great degree of efficiency, or, even better, sufficiency, if one's life-work fits into a plastic bag—and one is proud of that.

Materialzärtlichkeit

→Carrión, →bpNichol, and →McCaffery all question the notion of the book as a neutral container of language (or images), and they elaborate on the ways in which the material form of text—including, in most cases, the form of the book itself—can and should be consciously engaged and explicitly considered as an integral part of the overall work of art. In this tradition, →Zenon Fajfer invents the term "liberature," a portmanteau/*Wolpertinger*¹³ combining "liber" and "literature" in order to signal a literary practice that makes conscious use of the book as a compositional entity.

The weaknesses of "the book"—its precarious assembly of materials—are, simultaneously, its strengths. All aspects of its materiality contribute to the book's value, from paper, ink, and typography to its format and binding, and beyond, various structural elements (pagination, cover, end-papers, gutter, etc.), even its modes of distribution. Ideally, if one consciously treats these elements as an ensemble, one can begin to articulate the book in terms of *Materialzärtlichkeit* (material tenderness). Anke te Heesen has used the term in the context of the everyday practice of collecting newspaper cut-outs as performed by several agencies in the early twentieth century and has argued that the operation of the newspaper cut-out constituted a re-singularization of the mass-produced object.¹⁴ I would argue here for an expanded notion of the term *Materialzärtlichkeit* to include the conscious orchestration and use of material, structural and social elements, within the process of producing multiple books.

One should point out that *Materialzärtlichkeit* can then, accordingly, exist in the realm of digital publishing, which involves its own set of unique structural elements. Our

consciousness of that is still rare and vague, in part because we have yet to establish a critical vocabulary to describe its phenomena. In a step toward building that vocabulary, →Alessandro Ludovico attempts to dialogically juxtapose one hundred differences and similarities between digital and analog publications in an index in *Post-Digital Print*. For the time being, most e-books are digital files that seek to mimic a book, even though they are fundamentally different. Digital publishing has yet to blossom, like an ugly duckling whose potential and beauty is yet to be discovered.

Paradigm Shift and Post-digital Turn

There was a paradigmatic shift in art production in the late 1960s that can be summarized as a “linguistic turn” that led to the formation of Conceptual art, argues Liz Kotz in *Words to Be Looked At*.¹⁵ Did we experience another paradigm shift as well around the turn of the millennium? With the advent of the internet, and the digital and post-digital world it ushered in, publishing as an artistic practice has been challenged and spurred into a new era of proliferation. In 1935, Walter Benjamin declared that “to an ever-increasing degree the work reproduced becomes the work designed for reproducibility.”¹⁶ If, as Benjamin argues, mechanical reproduction (in contrast to manual reproduction) destabilizes the hierarchy between original and reproduction, then digital reproduction (in contrast to mechanical reproduction) destabilizes the hierarchy between a physical copy (what Benjamin calls “reproduction”) and a data file.

This dynamic finds a clear expression in Print on Demand (POD), in which publication is located in the interface. With POD, the text as a data file is already published once it has been uploaded to a distribution platform—it can be printed, to be sure, but it does not need to be. It might be read on a screen without ever setting ink to paper. During its availability (what for earlier modes of publishing we would have thought of as being “in print”), these files can be changed, without being marked as a new edition or “print-run.” Therefore, through the destabilization of the hierarchy between data file and (physical) reproduction, the status of the work becomes more fluid and indeterminate. The same holds true not just for POD books, but for any digital artifact: there is a destabilization of the hierarchy between data files and their (digital) reproductions or alterations. As →Hito Steyerl notes: “You can keep the files, watch them again, even reedit and improve them if you think it necessary. And the results circulate.”

Striving for success goes almost always along with striving for seriosity. Peter Sloterdijk calls this “serio-ism” and gravity of normalization. A book with a spine is more serious than a stapled one. A big publisher is more serious than a small publisher. Fighting against that gravity, certain communities have adopted an aesthetic announcing their anti-serioist stance, such as self-publishing on POD-platforms,

circulating the PDF for free, and opting for a generic layout even in hard-copy production, with cheap materials and technically non-exquisite execution. In the process, they acknowledge in the logic of the post-Benjaminian regime that “digital—and of course not only digital—reproducibility eludes the whole sphere of limitation.” (→Michalis Pichler)

The spread of POD has had contradictory effects: far more is published, but far less is printed. Even as texts are still designed to be like printed books, and formatted to the structure of the codex, they are increasingly read only on the screen. This economy of POD circulation and consumption has unintended side effects; book-swapping among authors, for instance, has become increasingly rare, in part because the unit costs of production are much higher than those of an offset publication.

In *A History of Reading* Alberto Manguel points out that the Gutenberg revolution that followed the invention of the printing press did not actually obliterate handwriting but, on the contrary, sparked an interest in handwriting, which pushed the art of calligraphy to new heights in the coming decades. As →Tan Lin observes, paraphrasing Marshall McLuhan, “An era is defined not so much by the medium it gains as by the medium it gives up.” Accordingly, e-publishing is far from replacing printed books, and it “still has a long way to go before it reaches the level of sophistication which printed pages have achieved over the course of a few centuries,” as →Alessandro Ludovico argues. Ludovico goes on to predict that printed books may soon become vintage status objects, since “the real power of digital publishing lies not so much in its integration of multiple media, but in its superior networking capabilities.” According to this logic, the most interesting digital publications will be those that involve community formation, networked activity, or open up new “processual” publishing practices. Simon Worthington imagines digital publications with references inline, where “any media cited or referenced should be available in full for transmedia publication,” and attests that “the most high profile impediment to the transmedia publication has been copyright.”¹⁷

Art Book Fairs as Public Spheres

Even if the buzz of interest in publishing as an art practice around the turn of the twenty-first century resembles the hype around the “artist’s book” in the 1970s, the phenomenon of art book fairs in this quantity and intensity is something new. Since 2006 or so, independent art book fairs have been spreading like mushrooms. Every time you turn around, a new book fair has been founded. The way these fairs function is significantly different from the institutions (initially bookstores and often later archives) that emerged in the 1970s, such as Other Books and So, Printed Matter, Inc., Art Metropole, Zona Archive, Franklin Furnace, Archive for Small Press & Communication, Artpool Archive, and others.

Art book fairs today are not only a venue for representing a separate, prior publishing scene, they are also a central forum for constituting and nurturing a community around publishing as artistic practice. A global phenomenon, these communities take the form of agile, adaptable, and wide-ranging networks. Miss Read in Berlin and other comparable events in New York, Tokyo, Mexico City, Tehran, Moscow, London, Leipzig and elsewhere around the globe are culmination points of dispersed activities: periodically recurring meeting places in real time and real space, where people travel to gather together. One could say that art book fairs today serve the function of marketplaces, but not primarily in the economic sense; rather, they are marketplaces in the sense of the ancient agora: a physical place accessible to the common public, and a public sphere for negotiation and exchange.

It remains questionable in how far these events reach beyond their own primary demographic to involve communities beyond the upper and middle classes. However, the entrance barriers are, relatively, rather low. No gallery backup is needed. There are artists who have participated in numerous book fairs and whose works and ideas circulate without ever having worked with commercial galleries and are hence never shown at art fairs.

Art book fairs constitute their own global art circuit even though they are not as economically sustainable as the more profitable art fairs. When book fair exhibitors talk about “breaking even,” they usually mean that they covered the table fee, perhaps travel expenses, and—if it went well—accommodation expenses; but they often neglect to take into account the production cost of the publications on display, much less the time and labor spent working at the fair. The economics, indeed, are rather precarious and often euphemistically called gift economies.

“A further caution,” as →Michael Baers warns, “would concern the way critical art’s resistance to cooptation has been eroded. [...] In fact, the culture industry has proved quite adept at assimilating any insurgent notions artists might entertain.” The role of book fairs is thus somewhat a paradox, oscillating between creating open spaces for critical debates on the one hand and being primary examples of neoliberal event-driven culture on the other hand. At the same time, larger art fairs have been increasingly eager to embrace book-fair sections under their roofs as a sort of intellectual fig-leaf, while museums have come to welcome the visitors and energy that such fairs bring with them.

Miss Read initially came about when the kw Institute for Contemporary Art, Argobooks, and I (an institution, a publisher, and an artist, respectively) joined forces in 2009. kw stayed involved as a host for three years. The fair grew rapidly and, or so it seems, the scene around it, likewise. In 2014 we drew a Caucasian Chalk Circle, and since 2015,

when Yaiza Camps and Moritz Grünke joined the core team, Miss Read is artist-run.

From the start in 2009, however, it had an egalitarian and an inclusive approach. It was important to us that everybody had the same table size, whether they were a micropress zine or a large established publisher like the Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, or the MIT Press, for that matter. Moreover, we kept the table cost close to nothing. This inclusive approach extended to the audience as well, meaning that barriers to entry were absent both in economic terms (free admission) and in architectural terms. One driving incentive, to be sure, was to create and co-create a context for one’s own work, but also for other people. It took a few years to realize that this was necessary—and possible. Something similar could be said about this book.

“Once you busy yourself with art, you will always fall from one catalogue to the next,” Marcel Broodthaers once said,¹⁸ lamenting the lost potential for pursuing other kinds of publications. The same is true, alas, for book fairs. *Publishing Manifestos*, in a sort of beta version, first came about in 2018 when the Miss Read team had become increasingly bored with the usual book fair catalogs that we, like most other fairs, kept producing every year. There had been attempts to play with the genre of “the catalog,” for instance, by running artistic or literary texts—or what Seth Siegelau would term *primary information*—through Miss Read catalogs.¹⁹ The footnotes seemed to be an obvious choice for creating a subtext. These interventions seem to have gone unnoticed, but that’s fine with us; they were a way to subvert the status of the publication a bit, and an attempt to turn it into a hybrid between exhibition catalog and *catalog exhibition*, providing a platform for a parasitic literary work, a clandestine B channel, an echo.

Possible Paths through *Publishing Manifestos*

The following list provides recurring themes, tags, and categories, with reference to texts (within this book) for further reading. Most of the texts could pop up under more categories than they are actually listed. The category “political” does not show up; it would be a fit-all term.

Structural Analysis of the Book

→El Lissitzky, →Ulises Carrión, →bpNichol, McCaffery, →Zenon Fajfer, →Erik van der Weijde, →Alessandro Ludovico

(Artists’) Books and the Book as Alternative Mise-en-scene

→Ulises Carrión, →IDEA POLL, →Clive Phillpot →Lawrence Weiner, →Erik van der Weijde, →Paul Soulellis, →Kione Kochi, →Sara MacKillop

Appropriation

→Oswald de Andrade, →Guy Debord, Gil J Wolman, →Seth Price, →Anita Di Bianco, →Michalis Pichler, →Hito Steyerl, →AND Publishing, →Lisa Holzer, David Jourdan, →Tan Lin, →Aurélie Noury, →Mariana Castillo Deball

Conceptual Writing

→Anita Di Bianco, →Tan Lin, →Riccardo Bognione, →Robert Fitterman, Vanessa Place, →Michalis Pichler, →Derek Beaulieu, →Aurélie Noury, →Paul Stephens, →Elisabeth Tonnard

Reading

→Jorge Louis Borges, →Ulises Carrión, →Anita Di Bianco, →Lisa Holzer, David Jourdan, →Tan Lin, →ed. Ntone Edjabe, →Matthew Stadler, →Aurélie Noury

Distribution

→Ray Johnson, →BIMBOX, →TIQQUN, →Riot Grrrl →Seth Price, →Matthew Stadler, →Mosireen, →Eleanor Vonne Brown, →Jan Wenzel

Self-publishing

→General Idea, →Tom Jennings, Deke Nihilson, →Riot Grrrl, →Joachim Schmid, →Bognione, Dworkin, Gilbert et al., →Temporary Services, →Tauba Auerbach, →Gloria Glitzer, →Sara MacKillop, →Bombay Underground, →V. Vale

Feminist

→Riot Grrrl, →AND Publishing, →Girls Like Us, →Urvashi Butalia, zubaan, →Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, →Arpita Das, →Queeres Verlegen

(Queer) Identities

→General Idea →BIMBOX, →Tom Jennings, Deke Nihilson, →Bruce LaBruce, →Karl Holmqvist, →Girls Like Us, →Arpita Das, →Queeres Verlegen

Social Context, Publishing, and Public Space

→Stephen Willats, →IDEA POLL, →Rasheed Araeen, Mahmood Jamal, →Riot Grrrl, →TIQQUN, →Anita Di Bianco, →Seth Price, →Kwani?, →Bernadette Corporation, →Hito Steyerl, →Matthew Stadler, →Chimurenga, →Eva Weinmayr, →Temporary Services, →Girls Like Us, →Jan Wenzel, →Sara MacKillop, →Bombay Underground

Tackling Western-Centrism

→Oswald de Andrade, →Rasheed Araeen, Mahmood Jamal, →Ricardo Basbaum, Alex Hamburger, →Mladen Stilinović, →Kwani?, →Marina Fokidis, →ed. Ntone Edjabe, →Bibi Bakare-Yusuf, →Urvashi Butalia, zubaan

(Not-)Corrupted Economies

→IDEA POLL (Adrian Piper, Ulises Carrión), →BIMBOX, →Riot Grrrl, →Mladen Stilinović, →Michael Baers, →Karl Holmqvist, →Tauba Auerbach, →Broken Dimanche Press, →Temporary Services, →Matthew Stadler, →Paul Chan

POD

→Joachim Schmid, →Paul Soulellis, →Alessandro Ludovico, →Mathew Stadler, →Tauba Auerbach

Internet and (Post-)Digital Publishing

→Seth Price, →Joachim Schmid, →Alessandro Ludovico, →Riccardo Bognione, →Constant Dullaart, →Paul Soulellis, →Derek Beaulieu, →Michalis Pichler, →Hito Steyerl, →Katja Stuke, Oliver Sieber, →Eric Watier

Poetics of the Everyday

→Gertrude Stein, →Guy Debord, Gil J Wolman, →Ray Johnson, →Allan Ruppersberg, →Hito Steyerl, →Elisabeth Tonnard

Material Conditions of Producing This Book

In 1961, Robert Morris produced a *Box with the Sound of Its Own Making*. The otherwise ordinary wooden box included internal speakers with an audio recording of the sound of the box's own construction. In 1979, Seth Siegelau produced the anthology *Communication and Class Struggle* as a sort of book with the sound of its own making, explicitly discussing the conditions of its material production. The preface concedes that the book "in its 'editorial' and in its 'material' production, [...] does not escape the ruling economic laws of monopoly capitalism."²⁰ He went on to list general overhead, administration, authors, translators, permissions as "editorial," typesetting, printing, binding, delivery, and storage as "production costs proper," and he expanded a sense of production to include the significant cost of distribution (retailers' rebates, distributors' shares, etc.), which itself amounts to as much as 50% of the cost. As Johanna Drucker wryly quipped, "The 'democratic' multiple has to be highly subsidized to be affordable."²¹

In their "Reproduction Pricing Guideline for Artists," reproduced within this book as a sort of institutional critique, →Paul Chan and Badlands Unlimited discuss the political economy of actual existing arts publishing and argue that "publishing in the artworld echoes exploitative aspects of social media. Institutional and commercial publishing in contemporary art largely rely on—and sometimes demand—artists release the rights of their images for free. The 'acclamative' value of being published is assumed to be enough."

The phenomenon is hardly new and hardly confined to the art world. Siegelau goes on to write in his preface from 1979 that "normally the problem is solved [...] by decreasing, as much as socially possible, all the labor

costs attached,” which then means that the “subsidy” has come in direct form from little or no payment to authors, contributors, and editors. The same is true for *Publishing Manifestos*, which has been funded by the generosity of the authors with their reproduction permissions. Beyond that subsidy, this book (its beta version in 2018) was partly funded by an Interdisciplinary Grant by Senatsverwaltung für Kultur Berlin and by a production team that was equally generous with its time and energy: at the MIT Press, acquisition editor Victoria Hindley; in the core Miss Read team Yaiza Camps and Moritz Grünke, joined by Natalia Saburova, Olivia Lynch, Alexander Zondervan, and Raúl Fernandez Gil as interns. There was some money paid, but it was more a symbolic gesture than a wage.

This copublication between Miss Read and the MIT Press is an attempt to build an alliance between different publishing institutions: Miss Read is paying for the production cost of the book, including general overhead, administration, editing, copyediting, proofreading, design, printing and binding, and the distribution of contributor’s copies, and will receive 30% of net profits. The book is subject to an industry standard discount of 40–50%, which means that, after expenses are deducted, any potential profit margin is likely to come down to 15–17% of the retail price for Miss Read, and not much more for the MIT Press either. The latter is paying for (its) project management, the shipping costs, warehouse storage, order fulfillment, global dis-

tribution, and publicity. Marketing will be carried out by the MIT Press through sales representatives, catalogs, book fair participation, and the distribution of review copies, and by Miss Read and, presumably, by all contributors within their respective networks.

At a print run of 2000 copies (plus 200 reference copies) printed in Warsaw, and a retail price of \$30, if the print edition sells out, both copublishers hope to break even, as far as costs proper are concerned.

There is a conflict between the desire to produce an affordable book—or producing a book at all—and real payment for real work of all people involved.

Have We Won?

For many people, their publishing practice is part of an attempt to find out. “We need a pool of ideas, concrete attempts and experiences. A new system cannot be designed on a drawing board,” says Fabian Scheidler,²² and he claims that we need *topias* rather than utopias—that is, concrete visions for real places and conditions.

We have reached a privileged historical moment when running a publishing house—or a book fair—can be art work. At the same time, it is *Sozialarbeit* (social work), a mode of production analogous not to the creation of material goods but to the production of social contexts. (→Seth Price)

To be continued

Author’s Note:

This text is built somewhat modular, the order of its chapters flexible. If read in a different order, that should also work (differently). During the process of writing, this text benefited greatly from discussions with Eleanor Vonne Brown, Craig Dworkin, Martin Ebner, Annette Gilbert, Victoria Hindley, and Olivia Lynch.

1 Adrian Piper, “Power Relations within Existing Art Institutions,” (1983) in *Out of Order, Out of Sight*, vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), 63.

2 Tauba Auerbach, “A Conversation with Tauba Auerbach,” *Artists Who Make Books*, ed. Andrew Roth, Philip E. Aarons, Claire Lehmann (London: Phaidon, 2017), 17.

3 In actuality, the phrase has been attributed to various authors; the first part comes from a poem by Carl Sandburg; the latter appears to stem from an anonymous author.

4 Mike Kelley’s essay “Artist/Critic” was first published in German as the introduction to John Miller, *When Down Is Up: Selected Writings* (Frankfurt: Revolver Press, 2001) and is quoted here in *Social Medium: Artists Writing, 2000–2015*, ed. Jennifer Liese (Brooklyn: Paper Monument, 2016), 32.

5 Salah M. Hassan, in *Diaspora Memory Place*, ed. Cheryl Finley and Salah M. Hassan (Munich: Prestel Verlag, 2008), 130.

6 For *Publishing Manifestos*, valuable advice came from numerous people, especially from Tau Tavengwa, scholar at the African Centre for Cities in Cape Town; Chiara Figone, Archive Books, Berlin; Regina Melim, par(ent)esis, Florianópolis; John Tain, Head of Research at the Asia Art Foundation in Hong Kong; Sneha Ragavan, Asia Art Foundation Researcher in Delhi; and Siddhartha Lokanandi, bookseller in Berlin.

7 See the Miss Read website at missread.com/interviews/. Hedieh Ahmadi (Bongah, Tehran), Derek Beaulieu (no press, Calgary), AA Bronson (Berlin), Eleanor Vonne Brown (X Marks the Bökship, London), Mariana Castillo Deball (Berlin), Jesper Fabricius (Space Poetry, Copenhagen), Chiara Figone and Paolo Caffone (Archive Books, Berlin), Eugen Gomringer (Rehau), Marc Herbst (Journal of Aesthetics & Protest, Leipzig and Los Angeles), Takashi Homma (Tokyo), Miyuki Kawabe (commune Press, Tokyo), Sharon Kivland (MA BIBLIOTHEQUE, Sheffield), Son Ni (nos:books, Taipei), Lexu Miller (Undertone Collective, San Francisco), Jonathan Monk (Berlin), León Muñoz Santini (gato negro, Mexico City), Paul Soulellis (New York), and Tony White (Watson Library, New York).

8 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) (London: Red Republican, 1850).

9 Stefan Kläma, *Artists Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature* (New York: Granary Books, 1998), 7.

10 Françoise Benhamou, “Les assises et leurs suites. Comptes rendus des assises internationales de l’édition indépendante et programme prévisionnel d’action 2008–2009 de l’Alliance des éditeurs indépendants” (Paris: International Alliance of Independent Publishers, 2009), 28–29.

11 Robert Smithson, “Cultural Confinement,” *The Writings of Robert Smithson*, ed. Nancy Holt (New York: New York University Press, 1979).

12 Lawrence Weiner, in conversation with the author, unpublished interview, November 25, 2013.

13 In German folklore, a *Wolpertinger* is a fantasy animal said to inhabit the alpine forests of Bavaria. In taxidermy, it is a body comprising body parts from various animals.

14 Anke te Heesen, *Der Zeitungsausschnitt. Ein Papierobjekt der Moderne* (Frankfurt: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2006), 18.

15 Liz Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007).

16 Walter Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility” (1935), *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, 3: 1935–1938, ed. and trans. Michael Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006), 256.

17 Simon Worthington, *Book to the Future: A Manifesto for Book Liberation* (Hybrid Publishing Consortium, 2012), 23.

18 Marcel Broodthaers, leaflet published by Musée d’Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Sections Art Moderne et Publicité, 1972.

19 In 2011, the German artist Achim Lengerer had already created column titles as an intervention in the catalog, which were comprised of excerpts from *Ästhetik des Widerstands* (*Aesthetics of Resistance*) by Peter Weiss. In 2016, Cia Rinne inserted footnotes comprised of her *missing notes from notes for soloists*, and in 2017 Simon Morris supplied footnotes from his book *Re-Writing Freud*: in 2018 Elisabeth Tonnard included *The Bird*, an adapted chapter of her book *They Were Like Poetry* as footnotes.

20 Seth Siegelau, “A Communication on Communication,” *Communication and Class Struggle* (Amsterdam: International General, 1979), 20.

21 Johanna Drucker, “Artists’ Books and the Cultural Status of the Book,” *Journal of Communication* 44, no. 1, (Winter 1994): 39.

22 Fabian Scheidler, “Chaos: Das Neue Zeitalter der Revolutionen” (Vienna: Promedia Verlag, 2017).