

object focus: *The Book*

*Contemporary German Artists' Books*

While the US artist-book movement of the past 30 years was focusing primarily on non-traditional book structures and materials, German book artists continued during these decades to stick with what they knew: literature, good typography, quality book design, and elegant bookbinding. The strong German guild system of the printing and binding crafts meant that experimental methods and formats were not employed in the training of young practitioners, and art schools pretty much ignored the book arts movement as part of their curriculum. Over time, as German artists became more aware of the trends in American book arts, a loosening of their training came about. A hybrid connection to the fine press artist book developed out of this, resulting in work by German book artists that is grounded in literature, but which continues to grow more experimental in design and purpose.

(Text by Barbara Tetenbaum, Head of Book Arts, Oregon College of Art and Craft)

Clemens-Tobias Lange

*OnniSanti*

**Publication:** [Hamburg, Germany]: Edizioni CTL, 2007-2008

**Description:** 1 v. (unpaged) in portfolio : ill.; 31 x 45 cm  
18 photoetchings on BFK Rives.

Each name of nine saints, printed in Georgian alphabet, is followed by a double page without margins showing the surface of a wall. The technique of the photogravure etching allows it to have a strong, tar-like black. The book was inspired by Clemens-Tobias Lange's visit to various churches in Georgia in 2007. Bound by Thomas Zwang and printed by Clemens-Tobias Lange. Edition of 15 numbered copies

Clemens-Tobias Lange, began CLT press in Hamburg in 1999. Prior to this, Lange was based first Venice and later in Munich from 1988-1999. Well-known in both the art book and contemporary livre d'artistes communities, Lange's primary body of work engages letterpress printed translations of poetry and prose through extraordinarily rich conceptual and visual strategies. He employs many techniques from digitization to etching, deliberately choosing what he determines to be the most appropriate medium for the work.

Lange visited the US and spoke at The University of California, Berkeley and Portland State University, Oregon in 2008, at which time Michael Knutson and I selected the several of Lange's works for the Reed College collection, including *OnniSanti* (All Saints), an extraordinary visual translation of a text and place.

*OnniSanti* contains 18 full-page photogravures and 20 vignettes.<sup>1</sup> The text lists the names of nine saints with corresponding churches, which are printed in a Georgian alphabet before each of the double-page images. Each church visited by Lange is represented by the floor plan embossed into a page.

The draft of *OnniSanti* was written during Lange's trip to Georgia to visit the churches. As a result of many invasions

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<sup>1</sup> A photogravure is a high quality image produced through an intaglio process. In this printmaking technique, a photographic image is etched into a copper plate, which is then inked and printed onto paper.

and occupations over the last millennium, the icon paintings of saints from numerous Georgian churches have been stolen or sold. However, people today continue to pray in front the white painted walls, burning candles in prayer which results in the black marks on the walls. The photogravures created by Lange are images taken directly from these soot-marked walls. The resulting book is visually stunning with its pure white pages embossed with the each church's floor plan juxtaposed with the black photogravure prints of the walls marked by smoke.

(Text by Geraldine Ondrizek, Professor of Art, Reed College)

### **ABOUT REED SPECIAL COLLECTIONS**

Professor Lloyd Reynolds, who taught calligraphy, letterpress printing, graphic design, and art history during his tenure at Reed College from 1929 through 1969, was the first to foster interest in the fine press book. He collected some of the college's most significant fine press books. This effort has been furthered by subsequent art department faculty, who now teach courses in illuminated manuscripts, iconoclasm, 20th century German art and Chinese art history, and have purchased book works to support their courses. The exhibition *Bibliocosmos*, curated in 2004 by Stephanie Snyder, Director and Curator of Reed College's Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, featured several of these works, as well as items from Reed's modern and contemporary Artists' Books collection.

Geraldine Ondrizek began actively building the modern and contemporary Artists' Books collection by as a resource for the course "Image Text, The Book as a Sculptural Object," which covers the history and fabrication of the book as an alternative space for art documentation and exhibition. This website supports and highlights the major historical categories taught in the course, which include the *livre d'artiste*, the *avant-garde*, the conceptualist and the contemporary. These categories, although generally used by most historians, are not clear divisions, and many books are not limited to a single category. The website subsequently lists the majority of books in the collection; a selection of the most significant bookworks have individual web pages where one can navigate the entire work.

Reed College's Artists' Book Collection has been made possible by a generous grant from John and Betty Gray and Sue and Ed Cooley to support the Art Department, Reed College.

### **ABOUT MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY CRAFT**

Committed to the advancement of craft since 1937, Museum of Contemporary Craft in partnership with Pacific Northwest College of Art is one of Oregon's oldest cultural institutions. Centrally located in Portland's Pearl District, the Museum is nationally acclaimed for its curatorial program and is a vibrant center for investigation and dialogue, expanding the definition of craft and the way audiences experience it.

### **ABOUT PACIFIC NORTHWEST COLLEGE OF ART**

Since its founding in 1909, Pacific Northwest College of Art (PNCA) has become a leader in innovative educational programs that connect students to a global perspective in the visual arts and design. In addition to its nine Bachelor of Fine Arts degrees, PNCA offers graduate education with an MFA in Visual Studies, as well as an MFA in Applied Craft and Design developed in collaboration with Oregon College of Art and Craft.

PNCA is actively involved in Portland's cultural life through exhibitions and a vibrant public program of lectures and internationally recognized visiting artists, designers and creative thinkers. With the support of PNCA+FIVE (Ford Institute for Visual Education), the College has a partnership with the nationally acclaimed Museum of Contemporary Craft. For more information, visit [www.pnca.edu](http://www.pnca.edu).

Museum of Contemporary Craft in partnership with Pacific Northwest College of Art invites you to read the exhibition guidebook during your museum visit, and to download your own copy from the Museum's website at [www.MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org](http://www.MuseumofContemporaryCraft.org).

To bind your downloaded guidebook, please consider visiting local independent resources such as **Publication Studio**, **Independent Resource Publishing Center**, **Container Corps** or **Em Space Book Arts Center** in Portland, OR