

# The Museum of Modern Art

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## ARTISTS' "BOOKWORKS" TO BE SHOWN IN MUSEUM EXHIBITION

Between March 17 and May 31, 1977 in The Museum of Modern Art's Paul J. Sachs Galleries there will be an exhibition of more than 200 artists' "book-works" from the Museum's growing collection of this new and innovative genre. Focusing on the mass-produced, under-\$25 book conceived and designed entirely by artists in the last fifteen years, the show, which is being curated by Barbara London of the Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, will include works by Vito Acconci, John Baldessari, Marcel Broodthaers, Hanne Darboven, Gilbert & George, Dick Higgins, Ray Johnson, Dieter Rot, Telfer Stokes, and Lawrence Weiner, among others. The works will be on view in bookcases, under plexiglas on the wall, and on shelves where Museum visitors will be able to pick them up to read. A selection will also be available for sale in the Museum Bookstore.

The modest "bookwork" genre started to flourish during the prosperous 1960s and broke down certain artistic barriers, often to incorporate aspects of other disciplines such as mathematics, philosophy, and sociology. For some it was a reaction against the older, expensive "illustrated book," for others it was a continuation of the Blue Rider book and Futurist manifesto tradition, while for other artists it presented a means of circumventing the gallery system. No matter what the orientation, as readily accessible means of articulating visual ideas artists' "bookworks" have been sold either in bookshops or directly by mail, at prices low enough (often no more than \$3 or \$5) so that collectors with very limited budgets could afford original artwork.

Dieter Rot, the inventive, prolific artist who lives in Iceland, England, and Germany, in 1957 began making "bookworks" and has published independently as well as with Hansjörg Mayer. In America during the sixties Ed Ruscha, a

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Los Angeles-based artist with a printmaking background, began experimenting with small format offset books based on photographic series. For subject matter he selected such mundane items as gasoline stations, palm trees, parking lots, and apartment buildings. Ruscha's work manifested aspects of both Pop and Conceptual art. Another sixties book phenomenon grew out of the Fluxus art movement in the form of the Something Else Press, spearheaded by Dick Higgins. Works by Higgins, George Brecht, Robert Filliou, Dieter Rot, Alison Knowles, and Allan Kaprow were among the sixty-odd hard- and soft-cover books and pamphlet-manifestoes published. It was in 1966 that Sol LeWitt produced his first "bookwork" with Aspen Magazine, an artist's boxed periodical published for several years, edited by Brian O'Doherty. LeWitt's visual ideas, generally realized as large wall drawings, are based upon logical progressions and permutations, and become permanent in book form. Since the mid-sixties, LeWitt has produced twenty-two "bookworks."

In the past fifteen years many small dealer-publishers in the United States and Europe have motivated artists to experiment with articulating ideas in book form. These include: Seth Siegelaub, New York; Kasper and Walter König, New York and Cologne; Gian Enzo Sperone, Turin; Nigel Greenwood, London; and Michael Werner, Cologne. More recently, two New York-based organizations run by artists have begun selling and publishing "bookworks" -- Printed Matter and the Collation Center.

Ms. London notes: "Today many artists are quietly and independently producing their own "bookworks," and the Museum's exhibition will reflect a considerable variety of subjects and styles. Now, when works on paper are more accessible while purse strings are tighter, "bookworks" offer a special first-hand art experience. Standing in the gallery or bookstore or sitting comfortably at home, it is a treat to discover the panoply of ideas revealed in each turn of the page."