



Minnesota Center for Book Arts
At Open Book
1011 Washington Ave S Ste 100
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Telephone: 612 215 2520
Facsimile: 612 215 2545
www.mnbookarts.org
mcba@mnbookarts.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Page 1 of 2

Date: June 25, 2009
Contact: Curt Lund
Phone: 612 215 2527
Email: clund@mnbookarts.org

**MINNESOTA CENTER FOR BOOK ARTS EXPLORES
ART AS A TOOL OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND ACTIVISM
AT BOOK ART BIENNIAL 2009**

The strength of an artist's book lies not only in the marriage of form and craftsmanship, but also in well-developed content. A combination of presentations by leaders in the field and peer discussion sessions, Minnesota Center for Book Arts presents **Book Art Biennial 2009** on Saturday, July 25, 2009, from 10am to 4:30pm at MCBA's studios and galleries in the Open Book building, downtown Minneapolis. Biennial participants will explore the theme "Mature Content: the Artist's Book as Advocate" with special emphasis on the efficacy of art as an agent of social change and activism.

Books and art often make a difference, we think. But are they in fact "agents of social change"? Keynote speaker **John Risseeuw** will examine why books and art with political and social themes are made, what purposes they serve, and what lasting effects they have. From Holbein, Goya and Picasso to Susan King, Eric Avery and Combat Paper, graphic mediums have provided the means and opportunity to communicate with large numbers of people. Using these examples and his own works like the Paper Landmine Print Project, he will pose questions and challenges for those creating artist's books.

For over four decades, artist and Arizona State University professor John Risseeuw's work has touched on political and social themes including corruption, equal rights, fascism, illegal wars and arms proliferation. Through compelling content and unique creative approaches, Risseeuw offers a distinctive perspective on the role of art as an agent of social change.

Book Art Biennial continues with two engaging panel discussions expanding upon questions posed by Risseeuw:

Artists have used structural enhancements, humor, surprise and shock in addition to image and text to raise social awareness. What else comprises the artists' tool kit when shaping a voice in service to a message? Explore "**Artists' Books as Agents of Social Change**" with artist, gallery owner and social advocate Susan Hensel; sculptural and altered book artist Jennifer Hibbard; and printmaker and political artist Mike Elko. The panel will be moderated by celebrated book artist, designer and educator Scott McCarney (Rochester, NY).

What are the strengths and challenges of working with an interactive, time-based, sequential artwork whose strengths lie in a one-to-one, intimate connection with a viewer/reader? This question will be explored through the lens of craft and ephemerality and the material aspects of books that contribute to their effectiveness in "**Book: The Object.**" Panelists include Wellesley College Special Collections Librarian Ruth Rogers (Wellesley, MA); Minneapolis College of Art and Design fine arts chair Karen Wirth; and sculptor and University of Minnesota art professor Tom Rose. Moderating this engaging topic will be the 2009 Minnesota Book Artist Award winner, artist and educator Paulette Myers-Rich.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 2)



Minnesota Center for Book Arts
At Open Book
1011 Washington Ave S Ste 100
Minneapolis, MN 55415
Telephone: 612 215 2520
Facsimile: 612 215 2545
www.mnbookarts.org
mcba@mnbookarts.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Page 2 of 2

Date: June 25, 2009
Contact: Curt Lund
Phone: 612 215 2527
Email: clund@mnbookarts.org

**MINNESOTA CENTER FOR BOOK ARTS EXPLORES
ART AS A TOOL OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND ACTIVISM
AT BOOK ART BIENNIAL 2009**

MCBA will also host several exhibitions addressing some of the questions raised during Book Art Biennial 2009. On view in the Open Book Cowles Literary Commons, view an exhibition based on the Biennial's theme ***Mature Content: The Artist's Book as Advocate***. This collection of artists' books and prints demonstrates the power of art in the fields of public advocacy and activism.

Independent Variables: Contemporary Zine Publications, an interactive celebration of independent voices and democratic art, will be on view in the Open Book Lobby Gallery. Work from the five MCBA Prize finalists will also be presented in the Open Book Lobby (more below). In our main gallery, MCBA hosts the Guild of Book Workers triennial exhibition ***Marking Time***, a nationally touring exhibition of work inspired by the notion of time.

Participation in Book Art Biennial 2009 is only \$20. For more information or to register, call 612 215 2520 or visit the Book Art Biennial 2009 webpage at <http://www.mnbookarts.org/events/bookartbiennial.html>.

At the close of Book Art Biennial, join artists, art enthusiasts and national book arts luminaries for the unveiling of the inaugural MCBA Prize winner. **The MCBA Prize** is the first honor in the United States to recognize book art from across the field and around the world. This prize celebrates the diversity of book art and encourages discussion rather than limiting recognition to one aspect of this vital field. A jury of three distinguished leaders in the field of book arts reviewed over 110 submissions from 10 nations around the world. The jury narrowed the field to five finalists, which will be on display at MCBA during Book Art Biennial:

Panorama by **Julie Chen** (Berkeley, California)
Avalanche by **Clifton Meador** (Chicago, Illinois)
Requiem by **Jan Owen** (Belfast, Maine)
Bomb by **Simon Redington** (London, United Kingdom)
Durs Grünbein: 26°57.3'N, 142°16.8'E by **Veronika Schäpers** (Tokyo, Japan)

At the MCBA Prize Celebration, enjoy cocktails, hors d'oeuvres and live jazz while you mingle with artists and special guests in MCBA's gallery. Then attend the evening's program and witness the presentation of the inaugural MCBA Prize. Stay and celebrate with champagne and a dessert buffet following the ceremony. Tickets to attend the MCBA Prize celebration evening are \$50 per person. A \$10 discount is available to Book Art Biennial attendees. View the works, learn more and purchase tickets online at www.mnbookarts.org or by phone at 612 215 2520.

BACKGROUND: Minnesota Center for Book Arts (MCBA)

As the largest and most comprehensive center of its kind in the nation, Minnesota Center for Book Arts celebrates the book as a vibrant contemporary art form that takes many shapes. From the traditional crafts of papermaking, letterpress printing and hand bookbinding to experimental artmaking and self-publishing techniques, MCBA supports the limitless creative evolution of book arts through book arts workshops and programming adults, teens, youth, families and teachers. MCBA is located in the Open Book building in downtown Minneapolis, along with The Loft Literary Center, Rosalux Gallery and Milkweed Editions. For more information, visit www.mnbookarts.org.

###