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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### MINNESOTA CENTER FOR BOOK ARTS ANNOUNCES WINNER OF INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS' BOOK PRIZE

(MINNEAPOLIS, MN) Minnesota Center for Book Arts is proud to announce Veronika Schäpers (Tokyo, Japan) as the winner of the inaugural MCBA Prize, for her work *Durs Grünbein: 26°57.3'N, 142°16.8'E*.

A new biennial initiative from Minnesota Center for Book Arts, the MCBA Prize is the first in the United States to recognize excellence in book art from across the field and around the world. The winning artist also received a total \$2500 cash prize. The award ceremony celebration was held on Saturday, July 25, 2009, with a sold-out crowd filling MCBA's studios and the Open Book performance hall in Minneapolis.

Schäpers was born in Germany and has lived and worked in Tokyo, Japan since 1997. She studied at the Hochschule für Kunst und Design Burg Giebichenstein in Halle, Germany, specializing in painting and artist's books. Her work has been exhibited internationally across Europe, Asia and the United States. *Durs Grünbein: 26°57.3'N, 142°16.8'E* contains three poems by Berlin-based poet Durs Grünbein, printed in German with Japanese translations by Yuji Nawata. The coordinates in the title represent a location in the northwest Pacific Ocean where Japanese researchers first photographed a giant squid – the first time the legendary animal had ever been seen alive by humans. Inspired by this event, Grünbein wrote "Architeuthis," a seven-verse text. This poem and two others about deep-sea fish — "Sous les Mers," reminiscent of Jules Verne's Captain Nemo; and "Remora," which Grünbein wrote specifically for this work — comprise the content of this artist's book. The book was letterpress-printed on gossamer-thin 50 year-old Toshaban-Genshi paper, illustrated with nautical charts and scientific data, produced in an edition of 36 Arabic numbered copies and 8 Roman numbered copies.

Three jurors were selected to reflect varied perspectives and considerable expertise in book arts: artist, designer and educator Scott McCarney; artist and Arizona State University professor John Risseeuw; and Wellesley College special collections librarian Ruth Rogers. The jury selected Schäpers from a field of five finalists, which they had previously selected from 113 submissions from 10 nations around the world. A combined jurors' statement noted that "all five finalists represent the level of concept and craft" that the MCBA Prize was created to recognize and celebrate. "Selecting one among [the five finalists] for special recognition was enormously difficult," the statement continues, "[but Schäpers' work] embodies all the qualities we respect, searched for and found in the finalists to the optimum."

"All of the entries embodied our goals for the MCBA Prize: to recognize book art from across disciplines and to celebrate the diversity of the art form," MCBA Artistic Director Jeff Rathernel stated. "We were impressed by the quality of work presented, the array of creative methods used, and the mix of traditional and contemporary approaches."

To view images of the winner's work and learn more about the content of the book; view the work of the four finalists; and see all other submitted works, visit [www.mnbookarts.org/mcbaprize](http://www.mnbookarts.org/mcbaprize).

The event coincided with MCBA's **Book Art Biennial**, a day of academic presentations and panel discussions on the role of art — and artists' books in particular — as agents of social change, advocacy and activism, as well as the contemporary practice of and current issues in book arts. More information about Book Art Biennial is available on MCBA's website.

**BACKGROUND:** 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 for adults, youth, families, K-12 groups 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](http://www.mnbookarts.org).

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