

Paulette Myers-Rich
Narrator

Betty Bright
Minnesota Center for Book Arts
Interviewer

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At the Myers-Rich Studio
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BB: My name is Betty Bright, and today, July 30, 2015 I am interviewing Paulette Myers-Rich at her studio in St. Paul. This interview is being conducted on behalf of Minnesota Center for Book Arts' 30th Anniversary Oral History Project, which has been financed in part with funds provided by the State of Minnesota, through the Minnesota Historical Society, from the Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund.

Paulette, your involvement at MCBA has reached across MCBA's thirty-year history. From working as an early MCBA studio intern, and later as an artist-in-residence and teacher, you have produced award-winning books through your own Traffic Street Press, which you founded in 1996. You also served on MCBA's board of directors from 2005 through 2010. So, we have much to discuss, and I thank you for talking with us today with your perspective.

PMR: My pleasure.

BB: To begin, could you describe the work you do at Traffic Street Press?

PMR: I have been working with both photo-based artist's books of my own work, and fine press artist's books on behalf of writers I select because I like their work. It can be a collaborative type of project, or sometimes it is just about their work, and I spent a decade producing a series of Irish poetry fine press books, through the Center for Irish Studies at the University of Saint Thomas here in Saint Paul. And those [authors] were selected by an editor, Thomas Dillon Redshaw, so we worked together on that project. Those are my two primary bodies of work.

BB: How would your artistic practice relate to the materials and processes of book art as you interpret book art? I know you have written a lot on book art as well.

PMR: Yes. For the work I do with the Irish poets or other writers, the poetry really drives a lot of the decisions and the design. And I try to find elements that are compatible or highlight certain aspects of the writing without being illustrative. I find that the

materials are really an important part of the content, but they also have to deliver the content without drawing too much attention to themselves. For my own work the material really is truly a part of the content, whether that is handmade paper or a particular book form that is used to help drive the narrative in some way, or the scale of an object. All those different things come into play, and every single project is different. I can't predict how it is going to be in the very beginning, I only have a vague idea, because the making of the piece also informs the outcome. And part of that is through the handling of the materials and the forms, and also any visual or textual narratives in the work that I am using as the basis of the book.

BB: That openhearted approach to book art is a great illustration of what book art can be. Before we go forward, I want to, could you share with us the name of your blog. I know periodically you will upload writings and I want to be sure we get that on tape as well.

PMR: It is called Object Subject Matters, and that is a fairly recent project, and I feel that writing about the intersection of craft and content, and craft as content, and how artists arrive at some of their ideas and narratives through the making of things. I really want to highlight art that demonstrates that. And as most people who have blogs: many times it is latent, then active. Right now it is latent because it is summer and I am in my studio more.

BB: Well, the great thing about blogs is that they live forever. [Laughter]

PMR: They sure do.

BB: Ok, thank you, now we are going to shift to MCBA and looking back to the beginning of your involvement there. I believe that this dates back to the first year of operation of the Center. MCBA was incorporated as a non-profit in 1983, and opened its doors to the public in 1985. We will start with that period. And why don't you start with telling us when and how you first heard about MCBA?

PMR: I believe it was on the radio. I think it was KFAI Fresh Air radio. I was riding around with [husband] David [Rich] in his van. I heard an interview about this art center that was about to open, and I became familiar with fine press book art and fine press poetry through a few fairs that were held in downtown Minneapolis in the early 1980s, and I also had been to Northampton, Massachusetts visiting, and had encountered some work there, and so I was intrigued. But the thing that really intrigued me was that they were looking for interns and had a papermaking studio. At that time as a photographer I was doing a lot of set-up photography using paper and light and objects, so I was making constructions, and the possibility of being able to learn how to make paper and use it in that was something that really appealed to me. A lot of my arts background and education came through similar forms, through art centers and working with other artists as an apprentice or an intern. I like that model of learning, of just going directly in and working on projects or learning processes directly from a master teacher.

BB: This was in 1985?

PMR: This was. And so I got in touch with MCBA and I expressed interest, and I was assigned to work with Amanda Degener who had just arrived after grad school at Yale, and was a sculptor also but papermaker, and that was her material. She set me to work right away. And the notorious or well-known story about that is, she gave me a pile of blue jeans and said, we are going to make blue jean paper, and I need you to cut these jeans up into little one-inch squares to put into the Hollander Beater to make pulp. And so I was sitting there with a pretty funky scissors, and it wasn't the best scissors, and I was cutting up these blue jeans into little one-inch squares, and she was off doing other things, cleaning the beater and doing other things to get ready, and I just sat there and I cut up all these jeans, and my hands were really sore, but it reminded me a lot of the kind of shop rituals when an apprentice goes into a trade, the first day they have them running errands, wild goose chase kind of crank things, to test your mettle and see if you are worthy, so I thought, ok, this is like that, just don't give up. And I don't think Amanda, it didn't even occur; it wasn't on her radar at all; it was just kind of for me, it had that flavor. I hung in there, and thirty years later, back in the paper studio.

BB: Now, I just want to step back a little bit. So, you heard some kind of broadcast about MCBA on the radio. When they said, Minnesota Center for Book Arts, did you understand what that meant? Were you familiar with the idea of the book arts, because it seemed like a new idea in this part of the country.

PMR: I got it when they started talking about fine press printing, because I had encountered that through some of the books. I also lived in a neighborhood with a terrific used bookstore that had a lot of these types of books. They had a really good inventory of fine press chapbooks, including Toothpaste Press, which I started collecting before MCBA was on the radar. And as I said, I had been to Northampton and been to a book fair, and encountered Barry Moser's *Alice in Wonderland* in a shop window, and all of that really appealed to me. Even though I am a photo-based artist, I am also a writer, and of course, like many people of my generation I was in love with books. So, the thought that you could actually make your own book was really remarkable.

BB: Was this Hungry Mind bookstore? Were you living in Saint Paul?

PMR: Oh yes, I lived actually a few blocks from the Hungry Mind Bookstore, but the bookstore I am talking about was on Snelling between Hague and Selby, called Booksellers et al. It was in a former grocery store, one of those little, old fashioned streetcar storefronts that became a big used bookstore, and I think its proximity to Macalester and its location really pulled in a lot of really amazing used books. And interestingly, Jim Sitter was also in that neighborhood, and Peregrine Press was up the street, and Allan Kornblum ended up living in that neighborhood. It was like this really

funny little bio-magnetic part of Saint Paul where we all were residing, but we all didn't know each other yet, which I find kind of fascinating.

BB: Yes, wonderful. So, you heard about it, you decided to reach out and get involved. Can you remember when you first arrived at the site in the McKesson Building, and what it was like the outside of it, and then walking into the building, what kind of things came to mind, or what was that experience like for you.

PMR: Well, it was wonderful. I loved the space. It was a warehouse space, a first floor warehouse space. And of course as an artist, and married to a painter, I have been in a lot of warehouses for years up to this point, and studios, so for me it felt like the perfect space, because it was set up as a working studio. I could see that it was set up as a working studio, but there were also exhibition spaces, and an office and big bindery tables, the library wasn't there yet, but it was just amazing to walk in and see all of the presses and type cabinets, the paper studio was remarkable. I could see that whoever had put this facility together had given it a great deal of thought and they really set it up for working artists or printers. And I was really excited because I could see that this was a very special facility.

BB: You mentioned that you worked with Amanda Degener. Who else did you meet right off? Did you meet with Jim Sitter when you first walked in, or did you go right to Amanda?

PMR: I can't remember the whole, I mean, thirty years is a long time. I remember going in there and being introduced to Amanda, but right next to the paper studio was the letterpress area, and Allan Kornblum and Kent Aldrich were over on that side working while we were on this side working, and that was terrific. Because my father was a machinist, and so looking at all the printing equipment for me was very appealing, and yes, it just felt like stuff was happening. You went in there and people were working and things were happening. You could just see how things came together, and that was another thing that was wonderful about it, it was open to the public and people would come in; we would have school groups come through or visitors come through, and they were able to see just what we were doing in the course of our work and get an idea of how books came into being or how paper was made. That was also a really wonderful part of that facility.

BB: Were there exchanges—it sounds like you guys would check back and forth. Would you hang out and take breaks with Kent and Allan and those around?

PMR: Oh sure, yes. We got to know each other, we definitely did.

BB: So, since you were involved as a photographer and in film, when you came to MCBA early on you had some awareness of the early art scene, at least as it was affecting your interests. Do you have any particular memories or thoughts about the arts and

cultural scene in Minnesota, right around then in the mid-1980s in Minnesota? Just trying to get a sense of the environment as MCBA was trying to start up.

PMR: Well, the Warehouse District in those days, this was before the Target Center, this was before all the freeways went through—that part of the north Warehouse District was still post-industrial, semi-industrial commercial part of the city where there had been a lot of artists holed up in those buildings, working in the Wyman Building and some of the other ones, but also there were a lot of galleries in that part of town, and there was corporate collecting, there was foundation support for the arts. WARM Gallery was over near there, there was a lot of activity, there were a number of arts publications: *Artpaper* and *New North Artscape* and *Vinyl*; it was really happening in that part of town. So MCBA's location there was a really good fit; it was a natural fit, because there was so many, it was a critical mass in those days. After the Target Center and other things came in, [Interstate] 394 pushed through right in front of Third Avenue North, where the Traffic Zone Center for Visual Arts was. That whole period of time, it started shifting and changing the gallery scene, and eventually the galleries started closing up and moving on. The artists also did, and migrated over to northeast. But at the time MCBA opened it was very, very vibrant, it was lots of activity, lots of artists on the street a lot of the time, and little restaurants and cafes and coffee shops around the neighborhood.

BB: So, tell us a little bit more about your experience as an intern. I believe you were drawn to printing after a while, when you were in papermaking. What kind of a transition was that?

PMR: Well, I studied with Amanda, and interestingly, Bridget O'Malley also arrived and was an intern, so Bridget and I and Amanda were working together in the paper studio, and I was primarily studying Japanese papermaking, the traditional form, which takes a high degree of patience and skill, and takes a while to learn. And I never did Western papermaking with Amanda, just Eastern papermaking, but at the time I also had the opportunity to go and study at the College of St. Catherine—I went there to study creative writing and library science, a double major, or information management as they began to call it in those days because of the shift to technology, so I went off to do that for four years, and stayed somewhat active with my art practice, but had to put everything into my studies.

And when I came back after graduation they needed an intern in the letterpress studio for the Winter Book, and I thought this is a perfect way to transition back. At the time I had been studying writing and, interestingly, one of my professors was Jonis Agee, and one of the very first chapbooks that I ever bought, was *Two Poems* by Jonis Agee, printed by Michael Tarachow. I bought that back in 1982 or 1983. It was another foreshadowing for me in terms of this work that I was going to undertake. When I went into Saint Catherine's I was a photographer, and doing papermaking on behalf of my set-ups, my sculptural work. When I left Saint Catherine's I was considering myself more of a writer, and went to work in a librarian job right out of college. I also wanted to reconnect with

Minnesota Center for Book Arts, with MCBA, so I signed up for the Winter book with Gaylord Schanilec.

So, my great good fortune was that I was accepted as an intern with Gaylord, and the book was *Winter Prairie Woman*, written by Meridel LeSueur and illustrated by Sandy Spieler, two people I highly admired, and I was thrilled because when I was working as an intern during my library degree I helped organize Meridel LeSeuer's private book collection in Minneapolis at the Peace and Justice Center, and after she passed away—no, she hadn't passed away because she came to the Winter Book. She had donated all of her books apparently, I think she was at this point where she was downsizing; for some reason she gave all of her private collection, wanted it archived, so I helped to organize and catalogue those books. So that was quite a project and then to get to work on this book, learn letterpress printing, that was a real exciting project for me.

BB: Winter Books have such a prominent place at MCBA, since they are created on the site and it is meant to be a production of the artist community, with interns, volunteers, working artists, it is just one of those electric kinds of enterprises. Do you remember what it was like for you throughout that process? Were there any surprises as you were working alongside Gaylord? Or was it just kind of, this is it?

PMR: You jumped right in, you get a composing stick and here is some copy, here is the lay of the case diagram, here is some type, we are going to start setting some type. Which is, yes, you learn by doing, which is really my favorite way of learning. Yes, we just jumped right in, and I learned while we hit the ground running, and I learned all kinds of really important things about printing on that project. And it is amazing to be working with someone that skilled. You are not in your own studio trying to figure out, looking at one of those old printer's handbooks trying to figure out: how do you lock up a chase, or how do you deal with a composing stick, how do you get the type from the composing stick onto the galley tray? Because frankly there are a lot of people who are really into letterpress, but they don't really have anybody to guide them or teach them. So I was really lucky that it was hands-on right away.

BB: If you think about your experience as an intern in paper and then printing, what comes to mind when you are trying to think of how MCBA shaped you in those early days?

PMR: Well, it was this really interesting combination of skill acquisition, aesthetic education, contemporary art practice and printmaking, and certainly the thing that really tipped me over from just doing photo work and moving into book work, was that when you were curating and doing these exhibits, and presenting these contemporary artists' books, many of which were documentations of conceptual performance and a lot of Fluxus work, as well as contemporary book art practice, it was amazing for me to get to see all the possibilities inherent in this medium and this format. I had moved away from film for all kinds of reasons, but the book seemed to me to be a great corollary in form to

return to being able to work in a narrative structure. Whether it was images and text, or simply text with some kind of form that supports it, or simply visual work.

So, it was this really great, holistic education, it was very organic and the kind of thing where there was a lot of discovery and inspirational moments where you think, oh, I have never seen anything like that, or I want to learn how to make that, or I am interested in that form, and it wasn't like when you are going through a more structured program, where you study Two Dimensional Design, and then you study Theory, and then you study Painting I, Painting II, or Printmaking I, Printmaking II, or this or that, it for me was really following my own path in terms of what I wanted to have happen in the work, or the kind of projects I wanted to do or was inspired to do by seeing the work that was being presented there in the galleries. So, it was a really important kind of site for bringing these two things, like craft and then the actual work, into view.

BB: And also I know that you were involved—and we will talk about this in a second—in the Artists' Cooperative forming—but before that, I am curious, can you think back before that movement really happened within the Center? How would you describe that community in MCBA in those very early days? Was it different? Were there certain aspects in it that coalesced in a certain way once you got down the road with it? What was it like to be in a founding organization in a community of artists? Probably a lot of them were in your position: they were literally walking in and discovering something new.

PMR: Well, yes, we were all kind of stumbling upon it, heard about it, or walking through the door because it was in the Warehouse District—I know that was the case with several artists. And they stuck around; they were intrigued by the whole place for the same reasons that I was, the fact that you can study the practice and the craft in these different areas but also see this amazing work. And so it was really strange to be saying in those days, I am doing letterpress printing, because people could not figure out why I would do that, because it seemed anachronistic and tedious, and why would I do that? I had to educate a lot of people about what that was, about what book art was, about artists' books, about the book arts, as we know, there is, like, it all sounds alike but they mean different, specific things. And then the people that wandered in came from so many different backgrounds, but the thing that tied us together was that we loved this place, and we loved what was going on in there. And people found their way into it from all these different ways that it was a really interesting group of people. And so many of those people are still connected, and then some of course have moved on, but you can tell by their affiliation with or connection with MCBA that it gave them something important.

Yes, so, the Artists' Co-op seemed a real natural, because it is the kind of thing that, back in the old days not that many people had complete letterpress shops, and it was a place where you could go and do these things as an artist after hours, and get some work done. So eventually that was set up as a studio. Because the people working in the studio in those days were artists-in-residence, and then they would have interns, and there would

be some adult ed classes, but there really weren't working artists in the community there yet. That was, that took time to develop.

BB: Do you remember being around when there were any discussions about the founding of the Co-op?

PMR: Oh yes, that was kind of a difficult time at MCBA, because MCBA was struggling a little bit. And the board was a big mystery to us. We didn't know what was going at the board level. We just knew there was this group of people that were charged with keeping MCBA going, and making sure that the doors stayed open, and one of the ways they considered doing that was moving the enterprise over to Minneapolis College of Art and Design, I believe it was. They were going to move it to try to save it. They were concerned about the viability of the organization, and they felt it would be better if it were housed within an academic institution. Somehow they started thinking that maybe we could make this an academic degree. I don't know what; I don't know all the details, but that was coming out of an economic crisis.

Well, at this point there were enough artists working there and involved, that we got together and talked to the board and the director, and wrote a letter, and Amanda Degener was really involved with this. [We] said, you can't send this; if you send [MCBA] over to MCAD it won't be what it is; it will just become a department within an organization that will serve that community. It is not going to serve the constituents that it is serving now, but the people that it is serving in this facility is just so much broader and more diverse; you will lose that. And, we decided that we would pitch in as artists. We were stakeholders, and we felt that we had a responsibility to help keep the place going. One of those ways was to form an Artists' Co-op where we all paid dues, which would give MCBA some money, and then we would all pitch in and help with things that needed to be done at MCBA, whether it was a mailing, somebody was cleaning—he served as the janitor—there were all kinds of people that were pitching in with whatever skills as they could.

And it was also a show of support for the organization, and a demonstration of how really important it was to the artists in the community. And low and behold, that really turned it around. I think the show of support from the artists, the fact that we pitched in and started this and helped to stabilize it. That is not the only thing that stabilized it, obviously. But it was something that the artists did on behalf of the organization and also to really create more of a community there, to bring in more people and more support. Because I think they felt that maybe they weren't getting as many people in the door, I don't know, I'm not sure of all the details at this point. But the Co-op is amazing because when you get a group of people together working in the studio on their projects, there is all of this exchange that happens. And the collegiality between the practicing artists in the book art field is amazing, because people are not really proprietary about their craft or what they know; they will help each other out often. If somebody is having a problem with any number of things, there is always somebody willing to go and help out, and then also

information-sharing about, just, what are you working on? Who are you working with? How do you start, you know, just inventing this practice together through the Co-op. I mean, that Co-op really launched a lot of people.

BB: It sounds like there is a real line that something changed dramatically once there was a commitment, once the artist community stepped up and formed, basically, into a body, that they committed to each other and to the organization as a whole.

PMR: Absolutely.

BB: You could feel that change?

PMR: I think that that commitment was always there, but this was the thing that solidified it, and really gave it a shape and made it an entity or a branch of the organization.

BB: So, from the Co-op forming in 1997, then we have a few years and MCBA is preparing to move to Open Book. It opened in Open Book in 2000. Were you around and active in those three years give or take, and do you have any particular memories about that transition? Were you around during the move itself?

PMR: Yes. I was a printer-in-residence in 1996-1997, and working in the Co-op also, so it was really my home away from home. And so, when the move was announced we went and looked at the building.

BB: What was that like?

PMR: It was amazing, because it was these three storefronts with these apartments upstairs. And it was really pretty funky, but some of us artists were always going through these buildings and trying to figure out, oh, that would make a good studio, or, what could I do to make this work? It is cheap, it is big, you can make a mess, you can fix it the way you want it. So, MCBA was looking at those three buildings in an area of south Washington that was really part of a dead zone at that time, and whoever owned them really wanted to get rid of them. So, MCBA decided in their wisdom to take it on. But that was also the partnership between the Loft, Milkweed, and forming Open Book so that was big new entity forming around literary practices. But I remember going through there and being really excited about this umbrella organization that would help stabilize all the non-profits but also bring more energy into each others' houses, so to speak.

BB: What were the artists talking about at MCBA at this time? Was everybody really just all abuzz talking about this potential move? Did most everybody walk through?

PMR: Well, we were asked. Some of the more long-term artists were asked, look at the plans, when the architect drew them up. We were interviewed and asked, what did we

need as teachers, what did we need as artists, what did we want to see happen there. We had this whole new thing we were doing for a while as an organization, now we have a chance to tweak it or improve it or add some things. So, it was really an inclusive process. And they also had a lot of artists do art within the building; they set money aside to do art that still illustrates a lot of the common spaces and the interior areas of the Open Book building. Which was an amazing thing, because it is one thing to have a place for your work, and it is another thing to honor the work that gets made and then install work in the building. And not all the people who have art work at Open Book were affiliated, but in time I think almost everybody—there were a few people who hadn't done anything at Open Book, but the ones who had their work in there, it kind of pulled them in. There were a few people like Laura Migliorino who ended up as a Jerome recipient; she takes classes there from time to time. So yes. Open Book, they treated the artists pretty well, in my memory.

BB: Were you part of the selection process, of the works on site, the artworks that were...?

PMR: No, that was a separate committee. But we did look at the studios and talk about how we wanted them to function. I remember somebody, I don't know what committee they were on, if they were an architect or board member. Somebody said, oh, we've got this multi-story building and we've got this balcony. Maybe we could put up a mezzanine and people could stand up there and watch the printmaking in the paper studios down there. The artists were, no, don't do that. We don't want people looking over our shoulders when we are working. But we don't mind when people kind of come in and walk through, but the thought of people kind of being on display made us kind of nervous, so they said, ok, we won't do that. In their mind they thought that would be really cool. In our mind, you know, I don't want to work like that, and that was an example of the design process, how they brought in our thoughts, and they listened. The letterpress studio is in the basement. [Laughter]

BB: What was that conversation like? Did they understand why the presses had to be in the basement, the architects?

PMR: Well, now, the building is pretty beefy, but it really is, I don't think it was very much of an industrial building, it is a commercial building, and it took a lot of weight, and there are presses up there, but we have a whole row of presses, and just for the sake of the equipment and for the building—that much weight—it really needed to go downstairs. And it is good, because letterpress printing is close work, you need direct light from lamps, windows aren't as significant—you know, I don't know, half of us were working late at night when it is dark out, or in winter it is dark, so windows, it would be great to have windows in there, but it was really ... the fact of the way it was laid out, and that it was quiet and contained. It was kind of set off from the hubbub. Which is really important, because you need a lot of concentration when you are printing.

BB: Absolutely. Stepping back a bit to the larger art scene right around the year 2000, do you have any particular memories of the arts and cultural scene, whether or not it was shifting, or what was going on around then?

PMR: Oh, it was shifting. Downtown, the McKesson Building area, really started becoming more of a sports bar, nightclub-y part of town. Many of the artists had left already.

BB: And they were up in northeast?

PMR: They were up in northeast. I was a member of the Traffic Zone Center for Visual Arts, which is still there in the north Warehouse District, and there're a couple of people in that building that are book artists—Harriet Bart and Chip Schilling are in that building. And I was in that building, and my press is named after the street, which was below my studio, which is basically an alley. But we almost started feeling like we were the last artists left in the north Warehouse district, and that is probably true. And I think that there would be a lot of people today surprised that there are any artists in that part of town, because it changed so drastically, so the move to Open Book up to the neighborhood it is in now, on South Washington, by the time the move happened they weren't leaving an artist area, they were leaving an area that had changed altogether. And it was sad to leave that building, there was a lot of fond memories there, but it was also obvious that things had changed quite a bit: the character, the flavor, the neighborhood was just different.

BB: How do you think MCBA's community changed, or did it, with the fact of MCBA moving from a discrete space to a shared space that has a public entrance and there are organizations, especially the Loft, gets a lot of traffic through. How did the whole experience of MCBA shift a little bit from the McKesson to this Open Book building?

PMR: I think it was really important to be integrated in with these other organizations. Together they can do things that they couldn't do on their own, and the common spaces that they share, support all the organizations and allow each organization to do things programmatically that would be really hard to do within the studios. So, the Performance Hall, the exhibition space on the second floor, those upstairs classrooms, the common space, just being able to get something to eat. When I was working at the McKesson Building we would always go to this place called Chili Time. Do you remember that little place?

BB: I don't remember Chili Time. I remember Black's Café.

PMR: Yes, we would go to Black's but that was a little spendy. We would go to this funny little café and get take out and bring it back, you know, just to get food we had to go out and get it. So having a place where you could actually just get something to eat, get a cup of coffee right there.

BB: Especially in winter.

PMR: So no, and not only that, but it also signaled the maturing and the arrival of the field, and the book art field, in giving it this profile and recognition. And then, of course, MCBA had worked with Loft writers, and the Loft in the past doing broadside suites and other projects, and so it just was such a natural fit. And having the little bookshop part of the MCBA shop was really great for Milkweed, and introduced their writers to people who weren't necessarily aware of those new writers and those new voices. And so I think it was really a brilliant decision to do that. I think it stabilized all three organizations and allowed them to be more ambitious than they would have ever been able to be on their own.

BB: So, did you go to the opening? Gosh, I should have asked you about 1985! Do you remember going to the 1985 opening?

PMR: I did not. I didn't know that much about it. I think I showed up after that opening. Maybe that is why I heard about it on the radio, because it was happening, that's probably how I heard about it.

BB: Well, how about 2000, in Open Book? Did you show up for that one?

PMR: Oh yes.

BB: So, just give us a sense of what that was like? Now you walk into a very different art space. What is it like for somebody who was in the McKesson building working, to walk in now to Open Book and MCBA? How is a different experience?

PMR: It is the most beautiful book arts center. When artists, artists are so used to working in sub par situations, you know, rooms without windows, basements, funky spaces like my old studio on North Washington was directly above a loading dock so I always had like, trains or semis idling right below my window so I would come in and there would be a film of soot on my work table, I would need to clean it off and have no water in my space. So to go to a place like MCBA and have it so beautifully designed with the artists' input but it is physically a stunning place. The architects did an amazing job of taking these three disparate buildings and opening them up and I love the way they left these former fragments and remnants of the life of the building visible which felt right in so many ways, and it was just really inspiring. Like wow, this is for us? I can't believe this place! It was really an honor. It felt very exciting.

BB: So how is the neighborhood—they call it the Downtown East neighborhood around Open Book. You have been involved at that site from the beginning, over fifteen years, how has that environment shifted and changed.

PMR: Boy. It has changed so much. When we first moved in we had the grain elevators, and the Liquor Depot and the mill were just across the street and up the block. And they were all derelict sites. The only real activity during the day was at the Liquor Depot, and at night, maybe there were urban explorers just kind of moving into these derelict warehouses and grain elevators. You know. It was a scary place in some ways. It was pretty remote. And I think I had heard that some people were kind of scared to come to MCBA and take classes at night because it was so remote.

You know, we didn't mind, we were used to the neighborhood, we were all working in warehouses in similar parts of the city. The north Warehouse District was really scruffy for a long time like that, too. But you know, where the artists go, the developers follow, the old story, and now it is, because Open Book was there, it helped to catalyze a lot of the development and changes along Washington Avenue. Not to say that it caused it, but it makes developers and residents and other people more secure when they see a commitment from a non-profit arts organization in this place. It is often the thing that sets off a wave of development. Now, the grain elevators are gone, the Liquor Depot is gone, we have all of the new loft housing across the street with retail on the street, which is really amazing. The Guthrie [Theatre] is there, the Mill [City] Museum, what was a bombed-out ruin is now a historic site that has been activated with culture, but Open Book was there first. And Minneapolis has really grown up, and part of its turn around has a large part to do with non-profit arts organizations and artistic activity, and deep time commitment of organizations to their fields, like the Guthrie, and MCBA and the Loft. All these organizations have been around for decades now, and have become really significant in their respective fields, with really good reputations outside of Minnesota. It is not surprising that development happened in the way it did.

BB: I have more general questions, and also, in a second I very much look forward to looking at some publications with you, but I do want to just step back a bit, because, in your many roles at MCBA, and you have been involved in virtually every aspect of its programming. You also served on the board of directors as one of the first artists on the board in a key role. I was wondering if anything comes to mind from the experience from being on a board of directors. I know that you brought experience from Traffic Zone, where you had been involved on that artist cooperative board. What was it like on MCBA's board and do you have any memories or stories that you can share with us from being an artist representative. Was Karen Wirth on the board before you?

PMR: She was on the board before me and then I stepped in to her role when her term was done. In my opinion, it is really important for an artist or two to represent their organization, if it is an arts organization they really need to have the voice of their constituents and their stakeholders present. People serve on boards for all kinds of reasons, and by necessity, board members come from all these different walks of life. And the thing they have in common is, they love the arts, or they want to do committee service, and do some significant kind of volunteering. They have all kinds of reasons for joining boards.

The one thing that has always been really important for the artist on the board and for me at that time was to be kind of the bell weather of what is going on down on the shop floor, as I call it, what is going on in the classrooms, what is going on in the studios, what do we need, what would we like to see, and to help just inspire the board members, to bring them along and help them understand what the stakes are, for all of the people that come in and use the facility, because we are so intimately involved with so many aspects: we teach, we show our work there, we buy supplies in the shop, we use the studios, we exhibit there. So there are all these things that the artists are engaged with, that are the board is charged with managing and overseeing, but sometimes they don't really understand exactly what the various discrete elements need, and so you really are the voice for the constituents, but you are also there as a board member representing the organization.

So I ended up as a go-between sometimes, between the artists, listening to them and bringing some of their concerns back to the board, and then other times when the board had important things that they wanted to convey to the artists I could go to the artists and say, this is what is happening, you are being heard, it is going to go slow, or whatever the case would be. I think that it was good, too, that the artists knew that they had my ear and that the board knew that I was a voice for them. So for me at that time, the board grew, we got some amazing people on the board. You and I were on the board together.

It was a challenging time because I was on the board during the economic crash. Foundations also started changing their mission, like the Bush Foundation changed their mission, and we had to transition to that money and figure out new ways of making money for the organization, and as an artist I could think of all kinds of things that another board member, wouldn't occur to them. There are ways of earning money or additional income, by maybe certain kinds of workshops, or selling more artists' books, or bringing a certain profile or bringing in certain people that people would pay to hear or work with. There were so many things that happened while I was on the board, but I think, for me, that the board got stronger, the organization got healthier, we drew some real talented community members to the board, and when I was done with my term, I was sad to go, because there was so many fabulous people on the board at that time that were working on behalf of MCBA. And then Regula Russelle stepped into my role, and I just knew we were in really good hands. I think by then we had two or three artists on the board; it was just recognized that it was good to have not just one but a few.

BB: That was an important conversation.

PMR: Yes, and so the thing that is great about MCBA is the way that the artists are integrated into a lot of the decision-making processes over the years. Their level of involvement, I think that why it is a healthy organization because if the artists feel like they have a stake in it, they feel like we need this organization, they will come through if asked.

BB: Well, I know that you have gathered a few publications here that speak to MCBA and your involvement. I would love to take some time here and look at those; I think we have them on another table here.

BB: So, let's start with this Jonis Agee chapbook, Paulette. Why is this with the group? I would love to hear the story.

PMR: *Two poems* was one of the books I mentioned earlier that I had discovered at the fine press fair. They had a fine press fair at the Butler Square Building back in the early 1980s. I loved the cover, it was the ornamentation, it was just a sweet little book, and I bought it. I had started collecting chapbooks, as I said, at the used bookstore. And as I said I ended up studying with Jonis at the College of St. Catherine—she was my writing professor. You can see, in here it says: to Paulette on the occasion of the beginning of your new life. I expect to see your work in print too. Then you'll sign a book for me. Love, Jonis. Saint Paul, December 1987. For me this was one of those really prescient moments that was really sweet. And I kept saying, maybe I will become a published poet, but instead I ended up becoming a publisher of poets, as well as publishing work in other places myself. This just appealed to me so much: the simplicity of the way the lines on the page are just floating, and the design, the type design, everything about it was just so appealing. I love the way that the colophon was set in two colors, and it is a little poem unto itself, which, many letterpress printers who love literature and poetry do things where the colophon is almost a poem.

BB: And this is Michael Tarachow.

PMR: Yes, I still have his business cards in here. Pentagram Press. He was in Wisconsin at the time.

BB: Wonderful, yes, I love the use of his [type] ornaments. Ok, so, I see we have got *Winter Prairie Woman* here, Paulette. This is one of MCBA's Winter Books, and I would love to hear a little more about how you were involved. I see you have the standard and the deluxe edition here for us.

PMR: Right. This standard edition was given to me for compensation for working on the project, which for me was just wonderful. And I love the way that these covers are printed. It is one long cover, and I actually have some of the process materials that I saved for this book in my archive, and which is also really wonderful to have, and it was worked on by many, many people. Meridel LeSueur came to the opening and signed it for me, which was amazing, and Sandy Spieler's illustrations were fabulous. And here we have a little two-color wood engraving. And you can see that this is all handset type. This is pre-polymer plates. A lot of people who do letterpress printing now use polymer plates, but in those days there was no such thing. It was in its infancy and not really worth using for such a book. So we set all of this type by hand, this is 1990, so twenty-five years ago.

And that is how long I have been doing letterpress, twenty-five years! [Laughter] But I love the illustrations with the text; it is such a beautiful book, and we damp printed, so the printing on this is especially well done, especially for a bunch of interns. It was done under the direction of somebody who really knew what he was doing, and he is such a good teacher, Gaylord is an amazing teacher and even back then when he was still a younger letterpress printer and book artist, he just really had everything under control and taught us how to print well.

BB: And all of the Winter Books, each of them, has their own character, but what I always think about this one is, the intimacy of the scale of it.

PMR: Oh, that is such a great thing to bring up, because at the opening, Meridel LeSueur, who was really advanced in age by that point—I think she was in her nineties—they wheeled her in, in a wheelchair, and she was dressed beautifully—she had on one of her turquoise squash blossom necklaces, and the first thing she said was, I want to meet the workers. Typical Meridel style: I want to meet the workers who made this book. And so I was introduced to her and she said, oh, I love this book! I slept with it under my pillow. And for me, I was just so moved, to think I helped to make a book for was such a legendary Minnesota poet and writer and activist, a hero to me. To have her say that really moved me, and it totally convinced me that what I was undertaking was really worthwhile and was going to become a way of life. This book was so important in that respect.

So this was the standard, which is what was typically done. And these were a little bit, you know, they're not inexpensive but they are not super expensive. They are more affordable. And here: Meridel LeSueur, Thanks a lot, and here's Sandy Spieler, Happy trails, Paulette, by Gaylord. So this is a very special book by mine, but the one that I was always chasing down was the deluxe, and in those days, I could not afford a deluxe. And years went by, and in my search, every once in awhile I would look in book dealers' catalogues to see if one was available, and low and behold, one year there was one on the market, and so I acquired the deluxe, and this also is, you know, it is a really lovely, it is not ostentatious, it is really perfect. This is the prospectus, which we also damp printed, and then the prints, so, I did receive a suite of prints as an intern as well, but the deluxe had this suite of prints with it. And its little illustrations from the different pages in a wrapper, so it is humble and very beautiful all at the same time. It really suits the author and the illustrator in so many ways. And then this is the hardbound version.

BB: So that fabric, is that silk? No, it is not.

PMR: No, it's linen. It looks like Canapeta linen. But I love how this is nestled in here, it is really just holding the book in this little space.

BB: Who bound this? Campbell-Logan?

PMR: Let's look. That's what the colophon is for. By Jill Jevne.

BB: Jill Jevne! Wonderful. Gosh, so she was involved very early on as well.

PMR: Yes, she was. It is a very early project where there are some lifers that got involved with this and stayed involved.

BB: And so, *Bridge Book*. You would like to say a few words about it next, right?

PMR: Sure, Yes. I really love this book, even though it is really a notorious book. It was a very challenging project. It was Minnesota Center for Book Arts and the Walker Art Center—they collaborated on it and co-sponsored this project. And the *Bridge Book* was in honor of the new bridge over Hennepin Avenue that Siah Armajani had been commissioned to design. And he had been doing a lot of public art pieces—I believe he had done other bridges—and this book was done to commemorate or honor or celebrate that bridge project. So I was an intern on this and Gaylord did a lot of the printing—many people did a lot of printing, this was a book that had many hands involved. It was challenging on a lot of levels, technically: you can see that there are these end sheets that are printed, there is vellum, there is, I think that is offset printed vellum. And then Siah—1991, right, so the year after *Winter Prairie Woman* came out. Siah made the woodblocks for printing the images, and we just—here is another, you can see it is a complex binding. We had all kinds of printing challenges with this book, so for example, you can see this is a multi-color press run, all of this had to be aligned. Siah made all of these blocks, and these were strips of wood mounted on wood, so we had to get it to be type high, we had to have it print evenly, we had to print it in register. It is very geometric so if you are off a little bit you are going to see it. But at the same time, the way he did the illustrations, if you are off a little bit it is ok, he left us a little bit of that, and I remember one time we were printing one of the pages and one of these wood pieces that was an element in the architecture started breaking apart midway through the run, because the wood was delaminating from the block. So Gaylord and I walked over to his studio. Siah had a studio on Fourth, I think. So we just walked over there and he gave us some wood pieces, and we went back to MCBA and fixed them.

We kept printing, and then every once in awhile he would come and do a press check, he was very excited about this book. And he brought us cookies, and he was very sweet to work with. Here you can see some deep embossing of type, coming through the other side. I think this is a fabulous book. Everybody who worked on it just remembers how hard this book was to make, and to pull together, and to wrangle. I find it to be an exceptional book, and a really beautiful suite of prints honoring an artist's work and also at the same time these prints are works of art on their own. So he had this opportunity to do in print what he was doing as a piece of engineering, or a piece of design, and so I think this is one of most underrated books that have ever been produced in Minnesota or at MCBA. And I am thrilled to have one. And this was another one of the books that I learned how to print on. I think that now in hindsight, now that twenty-some years have

passed, it is earlier to look at this book in this way. [Laughter] The bad dreams of the bad press runs are way in the past.

BB: Do you think it made an impact on the people working on the book? It seems almost like an atelier. The Winter Book is always a product of excellence and collaboration, but this seems—working with an artist, and trying to bring an artist’s vision forward, it seems almost like an atelier setting. Do you think that that added another layer of learning for the artists who were involved with it?

PMR: Absolutely. Typically the printer-in-residence or the papermaker-in-residence, they were also artists-in-residence, so they were used to designing and printing or selecting the people who they would work with. Commercial printing has always been, you are doing jobs for other people Fine press printing, like Coffee House Press, and before that, Toothpaste Press, when Allan Kornblum was printing books for poets, he was designing and working with maybe one or two illustrators of his choice. But to work on behalf of another artist, you are really subordinating yourself and you become their hands, you become their guide through all the different things that are possible. So, yes, it is a different role and I think it was new for all of us. We were all young and new at this, but it really offered us a new opportunity, and, Siah Armajani is a world-class artist, and I found him really a delight to work with.

BB: I hear you, it is really a beautiful book, and I’ve heard that there are still a few copies available, so people can track it down at MCBA’s shop. It’s just a fabulous book.

PMR: They should grab it up. I know that one of the people who ended up getting this book was an architect in London who was just thrilled with this book; he couldn’t believe this book. He said that this was a dream book for the kind of work that I do. And this was a great book to have as a portfolio of the kind of work that this artist did. And then of course, Siah did the same thing with the architects and engineers that he built the bridges with. So, he is somebody who has put himself in a position to have other people execute his work, which is a humbling and hard thing to do as an artist. So, you can see the many people who worked on this in here, and not everybody is listed because there were a lot of interns and a lot of hands, the primary people in here who really took on a lot of the responsibilities of overseeing the press runs and the binding are listed in the colophon. *The Bridge Book*.

BB: Great. One more Winter Book, a gorgeous Winter Book. I would love to hear about this one.

PMR: This was the first Winter Book that I was in charge of. I worked on several both as an intern and as an assistant in binding and printing, papermaking in a few cases, but this is the one where I was the print artist-in-residence, and we worked with a design team on this, so I didn’t design it, but I executed the designs of Mike Lazama. And I was in charge of rounding up interns, and the press schedule and everything. The production

schedule was my responsibility and I found some amazing interns, and one of them was Regula Russelle. And Regula ended up becoming my primary intern on this project because she really wanted to learn how to print, and she was very involved in the process and really reliable. This was also a really interesting book to print. This is not the deluxe version; this is the standard version, and then we did a chapbook version, so we did a number of these that were just the chapbook; they had a different color of paper for the cover, but this is the chapbooks that goes with this version. But as you can see this is this angel, he is floating down to sit on this chair that is how you know that this band is lined up.

BB: And what is the title?

PMR: It is *Playing Haydn for the Angel of Death*. Bill Holm is the poem, the beloved Bill Holm, and again it is so sweet to have these autographed and signed books: for Paulette Myers-Rich, What a lovely piece of work. My thanks, Bill Holm [Laughter] I thought, ok, I will take that! Yes, 1997. And this was also all handset type with ornaments in another color, which all had to be lined up, registered and so on, with a little cut on the end, this was a magnesium cut, which in those days is what we used instead of polymer plates. And again there is the angel, and then, here is another poem. So it was a real interesting and unusual format, designed like sheet music. So there is a piano, there is the sheet music, and there is the angel sitting there, listening. And then on the back we have the colophon printed on this paper, which is interestingly enough, it is Bier paper, from the Gmund, Germany paper mill, and it is made from beer bi-products, brewery bi-products, which is really kind of perfect. And it was a perfect paper for this chapbook, and not easy to print on but a really good cover paper. And then we had a suite of broadsides that was printed by different artists. This is [directed by] Mary Jo Pauly, who was Artistic Director at the time.

BB: She was the pop-up queen, as we used to call her.

PMR: Yes, she has got a few pop-ups on a few Winter Books that are just fabulous, so these are hers. And she also, like Michael Tarachow, loved ornaments, and was really fabulous with the design and printing of ornaments. Yes, I love this piece, Mary Jo's—and this was the poem that I printed, this was my page, with the little cut from the inside. Tomas Tranströmer who won eventually the Nobel Prize for Poetry. Then, each artist had a stanza or phrase from the poem and they printed a page, and they are all numbered. This is Gaylord's. You could see the variety of interpretations of the same book, and how different artists handled different broadsides. This is handmade paper and this is Bonnie O'Connell, and look at the variety here, it is just incredible. This was lovely because it brought in letterpress printers and printmakers from all over the country. And this was a book that Mary Jo, I think this was the first time where she really brought in people from the greater community, not just people from Minnesota but people from around the country that she knew, to work, which I think this book helped to bring attention to the organization in a really positive way to the outside artist community.

BB: Wonderful, thank you so much. I do want to have a few more minutes of conversation, so if we can sit back down in the other room I have a few more questions to ask you, Paulette, if you have a few minutes more for us?

PMR: Yes!

BB: Lovely. Thank you so much for showing us those books, Paulette. I love how looking at books, can lead us into your memories and your role in them. Before I move on to a few final broad questions, I did want to step back and get any impressions or memories you have about the MCBA Prize. It was you, Jeff and myself, the three of us were scheming about this and talking about it, and we finally got the first one off the ground under Jeff's leadership in 2009. It was such a key program; I would love to hear any memories you have about that process and about the fact of it out in the world.

PMR: Yes, it came at a tough time to launch something like that, because the economics of MCBA and the overall economy at that time of 2009 were really challenging. But we also felt that, in order to stay vital and relevant and keep moving forward, that we wanted to do something to raise the profile of the organization, and that would help on a lot of different levels. But the primary thing was that, twenty years out, there were all of these amazing book artists, and people working not just in Minnesota but nationally and internationally, and it was a way to honor the maturing artists in the field, to gather together all this work from different places, to really get to see things in Minnesota that we wouldn't get to see otherwise.

So, bringing everything in and looking at it, having it juried and having experts in the field coming in and looking at these submissions and the work itself was really important. Because now we are at this point where the field is mature and we have to see the activity and see who are some of the main practitioners and see what is going on. It was decided that we would do that and then couple it with the Book Art Biennial, which we would do every other year, and there would also be a symposium, there would be speakers, there would be panels, and it has been amazing. The one we just had last weekend was very strong, and the Gala was well attended, and there was a lot of excitement building around the recipient of the Prize, and we had artists coming in from all over; it was really very exciting.

It is recognized now as a really significant prize, and it has elevated MCBA's profile and also the profile of the book art arena. I hear about it when I am in New York. For example, Robin Price, who is an amazing book artist, I have gotten to know her out east, and we were at a book fair together last year, and our tables were adjoining, so I got to see this book that she had just finished. And I said, boy, you should enter this for the MCBA Prize. And she said, I will think about it. And I said, I will send you the information. And she said, I am on their mailing list; I pay attention. Oh, that is great, that was great to hear. And I did send it to her as I promised, and she did submit the book, and

she ended up being one of the finalists. And spoke very eloquently this year on behalf of the recipient, who had a family emergency and couldn't be there. And that illustrated how our community is expanding and is connected across the country and internationally. We are all getting to know each other that way, we are all getting connected, and it has all happened in a very short time. I am really happy that we did this, because it was a risky undertaking at the time. We had to round up sponsors, we had to convince people that it was really worth doing and why, and I am really happy to say we were right. It is amazing, and done on a shoestring at a time when it was risky to undertake a whole new big ambitious program like that.

BB: So, if we now step back a bit, here we have this perspective of thirty years, from your different areas of involvement, if you think back to MCBA's mission or vision as you perceived it from all your different roles, do you see whether or not it has changed or shifted over that thirty-year period? Has the core of it remained the same or has there been a shift in where MCBA has pointed itself?

PMR: I think that MCBA just continues to get stronger and not just relevant but really a leader. And the reason is that it is really bought into the notion of this arts organization on behalf of artists, on behalf of growing the field, as, now with the Certificate Program, as a center for education, which is outside of academia but is also involved with the collegiate book arts programs across the country. I think it is everything it was in the beginning but more so, and I find it to be an amazing and incredibly successful arts organization, considering all the ups and downs it has had.

So many people have come and gone through its doors at every level, whether they were artists or on the board or educators or administrators, but people seem to come back, and there are also many people that have remain connected to MCBA and love MCBA, and also have gone off and done their own thing. MCBA has actually fostered some really significant and important enterprises, where people came through as interns or young artists and then they went off in the world and started their own venture, such as Cave Paper and Boxcar Press and Midnight Paper Sales, and Nomadic Press, Kent Aldrich, and I could go on and on, Jill Jevne, many book artists and printers and printmakers and papermakers in Minnesota and nationally now, who have gone through MCBA's doors, so I think it is really fulfilling its dream. I think the founders should be proud, because they really had a vision and it was an obscure, like, what do you mean, book arts, kind of thing.

BB: That goes to another question, which is, how has MCBA contributed to the larger cultural scene in Minnesota? It sounds as though those artists who have gone through the center and moved forward, maybe keeping in touch but also starting their own enterprises. Just seeding all of that work out into the wider state and culture?

PMR: Yes, into the country. People go out into wider places, but they stay in touch. They are teaching, they are making art and they are contributing to the community at

large, and it is really a place where people can go and take a class and learn something and become a fan and they don't have to do something big. It is there for everybody. A lot of people that I have taught over the years, they take a class because they just love the book. They love the book and they just want to do something around making a book, or paper, or illustrating, and they get to study with these world-class artists that MCBA brings in, but it is also a place for really serious artists of note to do a residency. So we are still serving this really broad constituency that when we started the Co-op we wanted to make sure we were serving as wide a group of people as possible. And of course the school tours have always played a huge role in that. There are so many times I have had people come up to me when they find my affiliation with MCBA and they said, my kid did a papermaking thing, or I went with my kid, or, I took a class there and loved it. It has affected and reached a lot of people.

BB: Here is something from another point of view. Thinking about MCBA's longevity, do you see anything characteristically Minnesotan in this organization that was born, matured, and, we must be through adolescence by now? Some people might say yes or no, and now you live part time in New York, so you have that perspective as well.

PMR: That is a really interesting question because I have been in New York working for the last 3-1/2 years, and right before I returned in April to print a broadside for a poet, I was at the fortieth anniversary of Center for Book Arts in New York. All of those people know MCBA, all of those people have been through its doors, and they have a very high regard for it. They have a terrific history and facility, but definitely the culture is really different. Being in New York, the real estate is such a huge factor for everything and everyone, they can't be quite as ambitious in their programming as MCBA, and I think what is particularly Minnesotan about MCBA is that it is an organization that is very democratic: it is by the people, for the people, of the people. And serves its community really well, and the artists, there is a collegiality there, there is sharing. It is more collaborative and cooperative as opposed to competitive. There is some friendly competition, you know there are always those dynamics going on, but it is much healthier here. I think that it gets people doing their best work; it raises the bar, when you are around strong artists, and I think MCBA has that going on.

And the community support for MCBA, and of course, the Winter Book. We have this great writing tradition in Minnesota, we really support the literary arts in Minnesota, so the Winter Book has been this hallmark publication where we have honored some of our best poets in the state and continue to do that, while also bringing in people from other communities from outside of Minnesota, so we try to be inclusive. The thing that I am really happy about in Minnesota is that we are supposed to be in fly-over land but we sure are bringing an awful lot of people in from all over, and our reputation is now international. It is a really well respected organization, and I think it is because of the devotion that people here have for the arts. One of the things I remember doing, when we were talking about the MCBA Prize in 2009 that was also the year that we voted in the Legacy Fund. When we had that constitutional amendment during that election in the

state of Minnesota where we were in this horrible recession, but people voted to raise their taxes which was such a huge campaign issue: raising taxes, you just didn't raise taxes in those days. But people voted to raise a small percentage of their taxes for a constitutional amendment for arts and the environment.

BB: And those funds are supporting this series.

PMR: They are supporting this, and many, many important things. And when we realized that that passed broadly, it was such a relief for us as an organization, because we knew that the arts were going to continue to be supported in Minnesota despite the fact of those tight times. The thing is, when you have so much infrastructure built up, and you have all this investment in it, if one bad economic patch can destroy it, you can never build it up again from scratch. It takes so long and so much to bring it into being, it is important to sustain it. And I think that people in Minnesota get that, and I think that people here love their arts organizations.

BB: If I have one last question, it is a question that comes up when you have anniversaries, and that is about legacy. If you think about MCBA's legacy at this point in its history, how might you describe its legacy in Minnesota or beyond the borders of Minnesota?

PMR: MCBA could go away tomorrow but it is going to have a lasting effect through all of the artists and all the educators and all the audience that it has cultivated. Artists' books are now widely accepted and understood—it was a very emerging genre when it started out. You as a curator had a lot of explaining to do to audience, and you did a great deal of work in educating and bringing people along. For example, your book, *No Longer Innocent*, I was so happy to have that book when I came out, because when I was teaching, I had this history of contemporary practice. I know that there are people that came through MCBA like Harold Kyle of Boxcar Press who was an intern, who basically transformed contemporary letterpress printing with his innovations in the boxcar base and photopolymer platemaking and, he is running a huge business and huge shop, and he was my intern one summer when he was at Carleton College; he has made a huge impact on the field. Cave Paper, Amanda and Bridget and James go to China, and run workshops in China. I am in New York and I open up the New York Times and here is Gaylord Schanilec in a full-page article about Gaylord and his work, and internationally known, and on and on and on. People in the immediate reach of my mind who are out in the world now who came through MCBA's doors that is their legacy, it is all the people. And those people are now teaching, as you said it has been seeded out and it blooming and getting really strong.

BB: I think that is a great place to wrap this up. I want to thank you on behalf of the board, the faculty, the staff, the artists, all the kids, just the thousands of people who continue to benefit from MCBA. I really thank you for your thoughts today, Paulette.

PMR: Well, thank you, Betty, and thanks for being such a central part of MCBA yourself.