

DROP DEAD GORGEOUS:
Fine Bindings of *La Prose du Transsibérien Re-creation*

La Prose du Transsibérien is the armature on which the drop dead gorgeous bindings in this exhibit are built.

Originally folded and bound in a vellum case, the 1913 book explodes into the space you occupy when opened, forcing you to change from a private to a public viewing, a dramatic change in the reading experience.

Sonia Delaunay virtually dominates the book, commanding your attention immediately when the book opens with her vibrant, sinuous colors leading you inexorably to the Eiffel Tower.

The prose poem by Blaise Cendrars performs its own spectacle in blazing color, taking liberties with poetic form and guiding you on a journey of surprising typographic experiences.

For her second act, Sonia Delaunay penetrates the poem with color, reinforcing the shape of the poem.

A book with such vitality screams out to the binder: see what you can do with me. This exhibition was inspired by the celebrated binder Paul Bonet, who in 1964, designed an extraordinary binding for a copy of *La Prose*.

With support from twelve underwriters, I initiated my project in 2017 to re-create *La Prose* using original techniques of letterpress and pochoir.

My book, *La Prose du Transsibérien Re-creation*, would be published in an edition of 150 copies, with an additional 30 copies hors commerce for the underwriters. The regular edition is bound in a simple folded vellum cover as in the original, and the deluxe edition is bound in aluminum covers with cut-outs.

My brilliant idea to ask my underwriters (and others) to commission fine bindings for a traveling exhibit was supported enthusiastically by Simon Eccles and Toby Schwartzburg, co-curators of this exhibit. The result is the dazzling exhibition that is celebrated here.

Kitty Maryatt, Exhibition Curator
Simon Eccles, Co-Curator
Toby Schwartzburg, Co-Curator

UNDERWRITERS of the La Prose Project

Neale M. Albert, New York, NY
Mary Austin, San Francisco, CA
Servane Briand, Palo Alto, CA
John Crichton, San Francisco, CA
Simon Eccles, Boston, MA
Jack Ginsberg, Johannesburg, South Africa
Greg Krisilas, Encino, CA
Eleanore Ramsey, San Francisco, CA
Rob Saunders, San Francisco, CA
Toby Schwartzburg, Berkeley, CA
Cynthia Sears, Bainbridge Island, WA
Nancy Turner, Los Angeles, CA

The exhibit will be shown at the following venues:

San Francisco Center for the Book
375 Rhode Island
San Francisco, California
September 6 to October 6, 2019

UCLA Special Collections
Young Research Library
Los Angeles, California
October 12, 2019 to January 5, 2020

North Bennett Street School
150 North Street
Boston, Massachusetts
February 20 to April 30, 2020

Maggs Bros. Ltd. Rare Books and Manuscripts
48 Bedford Square
London, England
May 28 to June 18, 2021 (to be determined)

Atelier Galerie A. Piroir
5333 Avenue Casgrain #802
Montréal, Canada
Cancelled

Minnesota Center for Book Arts
1011 Washington Avenue South, Suite 100
Minneapolis, Minnesota
January 21 to May 9, 2021 (virtual)