



**"INFORMATION REVISITED"
ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA®
PROJECT**
BELSKIE MUSEUM OF ART
JUNE 2010





"INFORMATION REVISITED" ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA PROJECT

JUNE 6 - JUNE 27, 2010

WHAT IS IT? "Information Revisited" is an exhibition of recycled Encyclopedia Britannicas, which have been transformed from **books of words to works of art**. Twenty-three national and international artists are participating - each with a unique slant to produce artwork relevant to the theme, which includes the importance of environmental concerns, the concepts of recycle, reuse and reinvent, technology vs humanism, and retrieval of information past and present.

HOW WAS THE SHOW ORGANIZED? Each artist submitted a proposal indicating how he or she would approach the theme and then were given one or more volumes of the encyclopedia to carry out the concept. Artists selected came from many different disciplines (sculptors, painters, collagists, fiber and altered book artists), many different ethnic backgrounds (Chinese, Korean, English, American, German), and areas of the country (New York, New Jersey, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, Texas). As a result each artwork retains the individuality of its creator and provides the viewer with a new way of seeing similar objects.

WHAT IS THE ARTWORK LIKE? Some artists treated the book as raw material for their ideas: Karen Arp-Sandel used volume D for Dada to paint and collage images relating to her early twentieth century ancestor, Jean Arp; Won Ju Seo interlaced silk fabric using the Korean Pojagi technique of her homeland to create new pages like stained glass windows; Pam Cooper cut out pages, pulped them as handmade paper, and created new images on them.

Others, including the curators, Noelle McGuire and Irmari Nacht, used the concepts of deconstruction in their work. McGuire removed pages and combined them with

sculptural elements to bridge the knowledge gap. Nacht exposed four volumes to the elements (water, fire, air and earth) over a eight month period to render them mostly unreadable, while still retaining their book-like form. Ramon Lascano took the pages from the book and intricately folded each in various sizes to form a multi-level wall piece.

Sculptors Alexandra Limpert, Elisa Chalem, and Betty McGeehan used the books in an auxiliary manner. Chalem constructed a 6' megabyte man made of hundreds of CD's to show how knowledge is now imparted. McGeehan, using volume O for Ocean, focused on environmental concerns with materials recycled from the sea. Limpert used both new and recycled steel to make a life size human form, incorporating the encyclopedia, which can be manually manipulated to "read its insides."

Returning the book to its genesis as plant material, Michelle Wilson used the pulp of the book's pages to become a source of regrowth as a plant rises from between its covers. Several artists, including HeeJung Kim, Gerda Quoohs, Elizabeth Duffy, and James Prez used humor to make their point. Many of the artists, including Doug Beube, Cara Barer, Wendy Wahl, and Scott McCarney, have national and international reputations in the world of book arts.

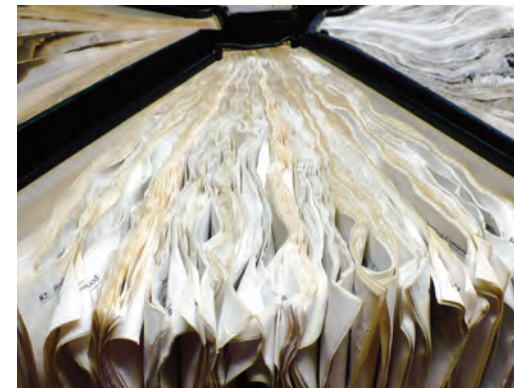
HOW DOES IT RELATE TO TODAY'S WORLD? Ordinary people are affected by technological changes; with today's electronic media, information is no longer received only through the written word. We are all affected by changes in the environment and are beginning to realize the need to recycle to protect our future. The object of this exhibition is to increase awareness of these changes and to get people thinking about recycling and reusing.

- Irmari Nacht, co-curator



ALICE HARRISON *aMUSEment*, 2010, 25 x 19 x 5"

When given the encyclopedia to alter, I thumbed through the volume. Since I work intuitively, I waited for the book to speak to me – and she did. I found an illustration of the painting by Maurice Denis "The Muses" – and then found several muses – dancers, singers, poets, prose writers to inspire me. I must say there were a dearth of females and a multitude of male images, but enough. Other than the "pearls of wisdom" and the mask, all the materials used were parts of the book. The mask I created could be me, you or any woman – with most knowledge flowing into her, but some spilling onto the book, making the process interactive.



IRMARI NACHT *Elements*, 2009, 12 x 20 x 20"

Technology the Fifth Element? Has technology become yet another element, like earth, fire, water, and air - destroying, changing, and revaluing? The written word in book form is being transformed by today's use of the internet. Hardly anyone wants a set of encyclopedias when they can get the information with a few clicks on the keyboard.

Four encyclopedias were exposed to the elements over an 8 month period: buried in the earth, set afire, immersed in water, and blown with air. The methodology is explained in a small accordion book.



LEILEI GUO *Honeycomb* 蜂窝, 17.7 x 11.4 x 2.3"

"information revisited" revisits the globalization of population. Today we see different nation's people living and combining together. Through science and technology, the latest news of a country arrives by Internet. Boundaries of nations are blurring and we see western people in Asia, and eastern people in the West. Many people have two or more languages; some have different color of faces but use the same language.

The original Encyclopedia Britannica was used. The holes in the book, hand cut like a nest of bees, are shaped like a map of the world. Bees use a honeycomb to store honey; to me the world is like a huge honeycomb, storing many different cultures, customs, languages, and thoughts. I used the ancient Chinese book binding, called ordinary binding (Jian Ce Zhuang), and put 35mm slides into the holes; the slides are photos of daily life in Beijing and Chinese culture.



BETTY MCGEEHAN *The Ocean and You, 2003, 63 x 13 x 8.5"*
Two thirds of the earth's surface is water. The future of our planet depends in many ways on the health of the oceans, which are threatened by pollution, global warming, over fishing, oceans used as dumping grounds for our discarded wastes, and oil tankers flushing their tanks into the ocean. Tanker spills like the Exxon Valdez is an example of what great damage spills can cause to the ocean ecosystem. New environmental regulations in many countries are trying to prevent such damage. These issues do affect every living thing on this earth.
This bronze sculpture contains a whiskey bottle found on a beach in a badly polluted area. It is held upside down, indicative of mankind polluting the earth and its oceans.



HEATHER COX *Encyclopedia Project, 2010, 17¼ x 11¼ x 7"*
Heather Cox has incorporated her own profile into the Encyclopedia Project. When the book is opened, the viewer finds that the pages are glued together to form a paper latticework, reminiscent of tissue paper party decorations. The book's spine creates a strong support for the connected pages. Just how much information can one head hold? It is certainly an issue in this information-rich culture we live in. The physical nature of books and even our own physical bodies are almost old fashioned considering the current virtual world of information storage and knowledge sharing we inhabit.



JAMES PREZ *Volume 29, 2009, dimensions variable*
The point of departure for this piece was the Encyclopedia Volume that covered Washington DC. After working on a series of 120 booktutes, I had many left over tchotchkes. Some of those objects included Avon bottles of Washington, Jefferson, the Indian miniature, black elephant, dice and rubber stamps. The miniature Indian garment represents North America before it was invaded by Columbus; the elephant (Democratic party symbol) represents Barack Obama; the dice the idea of Liberty and Justice for most, if you are lucky enough to have a lot of money.
My booktutes project came about after 20 years of bookmaking. I became more interested in using the book as an element in my sculptures. My art materials were limited to stuff I found at garage sales, flea markets, thrift stores and street shops - many different cultures, customs, languages, and thoughts combined together.



KAREN ARP-SANDEL *Who Is Your DADA?, 2010, 24 x 24 x 24"*
In thinking about how my family trait of artistic self-expression passed through the lineage of DADA art, via Jean Arp, I created a tribute to the most revolutionary period of avant-garde art in the 20th century.
The encyclopedia, as a source of information, is rapidly being replaced by easy access to digital information and wikipedia. The encyclopedia I altered embodies the essence of DADA, a movement that invited international participation among artists all over the globe at a time when war was causing great suffering, loss and immigration. The Dadaist Manifesto resulted in wild, innovative creativity and new forms of expression across the spectrum of the arts: visual, performance, literary and multimedia. 21st Century art owes a great deal of its freedom of expression to this visionary and radical group of artist activists.



GERDA QUOOHS *Book Burning, 2010, 28 x 17 x 5"*
The idea to recycle an outdated encyclopedia appealed to me immediately. I have loved books with a passion from early childhood on and get distressed about discarding books.
Book burning, as well as censorship of other art forms, reminds me of the horrors of political and religious persecution that goes together with destroying people and humanity.
With my piece called "Book Burning", I would like to pay homage to Marc Chagall, called by some the painter poet, who translated stories, legends, and fantasies into lines and glowing colors. The pictures seen through the "windows" in my piece are from his 1913 painting "La maison brûle", which he painted in Paris at the onset of the first World War.



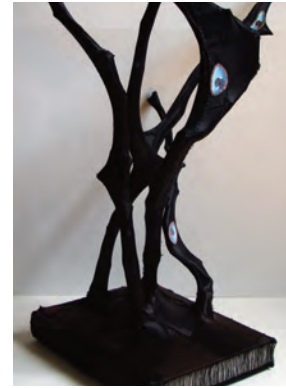
RAMON LASCANO *Terra Incognita, 2010, 45 x 58 x 5"*
As a child, our family encyclopedia held a sacred place. These were the finest books we owned and were kept under lock and key, which added to their mystery. I thought of them as magical; through them I learned about people and places far from my little village in the Pampas. They held my dreams, and the promise of what my future might hold.
The Internet has made encyclopedias obsolete. It filled me with sadness to find them piled up at house sales and garbage dumps, so I started saving them for my work. For me their magic is still intact, firing my imagination and curiosity. I feel the spirits of the books as I fold and twist and assemble their pages. Through them I travel to new and unknown places, new topographies — only now the journey is internal, leading me to discoveries about myself.



ELIZABETH DUFFY/BRIAN MILLER

Mimicry: Metaphysics to Norway, 2010, 2 x 18 x 11.5"

Mimicry - What is unnatural? We hypothesize that given enough time the natural world and the man-made world will overlap. Thus it stands to reason that animals would find it advantageous to hide within the distinctly man-made. With relentless human encroachment into their natural world, animals will need to evolve different systems of camouflage and mimicry for their own protection. Mankind has already evolved to use the text as a form of defense—so why not nature?



HEEJUNG KIM *Growing Curiosity, 2010, 38 x 24 x 16"*

I have been making art based on ideas that have come from my kaleidoscopic inner world in conjunction with Eastern philosophies, especially Buddhism. The major form of my art since 1991 has been artist books.

This work shows humanized trees with eyes attached growing out of a book that symbolizes the compilation of human knowledge. The process of my making art is involved with repetition of the same movement. Similar to monks who meditate upon emptiness, sitting on the same spot and facing the wall for days, months, or years, I repeat the same movement, mostly sewing, for hours and hours in order to complete my work. While doing so, my mind becomes empty, losing track of time, and eventually, the repetition of the same movement is transfigured as one of the methods for meditation.



MICHELLE WILSON *Earth Volume, 2008, 16 x 25 x 16"*

Earth Volume is made from Volume 6, Earth-Everglades, of the Encyclopedia Britannica. To make this piece, the textblock pages were removed from the cover, shredded, and composted. After a period of several months, the former pages had transformed into an "earthen" state, and were returned to the cover in a Plexiglas box the shape of the former textblock. Into this, plants were sowed, and now the former pages are the actual "earth" from which they grow. No longer a vessel of information, the encyclopedia is now alive, growing and changing as a small but complex ecosystem.



WENDY WAHL *from her Rebound series, 2009, 50 x 78 x 17"*

Conceptually, a deep concern for nature and culture remains at the core of my direction. I began collecting discarded encyclopedias to use as the building material because of the obvious meanings that they carry, their physical qualities and to pay tribute to their existence. Pieces in the "Rebound" series are inspired by the shape of something bowed, bound and restructured to create the visual metaphor. It is vital to question the boundaries of what is seen, alter perception and challenge assumptions about our surroundings. While this work is made of paper, I continue to think of it as string winding upon itself to find its form.



WON JU SEO *The Words in My Colors, 2010, 5½ x 8 x 2"*

The various colors in my work represent words, knowledge of life and my everyday occurrences. The square colored shapes evoke different chapters of my life. In each chapter, the words from the old encyclopedia are reborn in these colored squares.

I used the traditional Korean quilt technique, called as Pojagi. I also use scrap materials from making Han-Bok, which is Korean clothing made out of silk or ramie fabric in Korea, and thread.

"The Words in My Colors" is sewn by hand and created without pre-existing pattern or plan until it is finished.



ALEXANDRA LIMPET *Oracle, 2010, 30 x 16 x 10"*

I am a New York figurative metal artist who creates sculptures with mechanical movement. Much like the encyclopedia, I see the human body as an open book full of meaning. While the figure in art is continually being reinterpreted, the encyclopedia takes many forms from compendium, tome and collector's item to online ephemera. My sculpture *Oracle* is a personification of the encyclopedia. She is a steel bust of a woman resembling a robotic fortune teller. At the turn of a crank her eyes seem to scan the world around her trying to make contact. But as we look at the mechanics behind her mask-like face our self-awareness comes into view. Whether we are admiring art or absorbing knowledge, we inevitably change along with our perception.



DOUG BEUBE *Dehiscence, 2010, 11 x 9 x 2"*

Since to the advent of the computer, I transform books by challenging their mechanical aspects as a technology to perpetuate ideas, culture and history. The book itself as a reading document has become antiquated in the digital age. Even so, for me, the codex remains a tactile, verbal and sensual experience. By layering a text, for example, through cutting or gouging out its pages, a utilitarian object, meant only to be read, becomes an unsettling archeological exploration into a recorded history where its altered structure gives a visual interpretation to the original author's theme.



GABRIELLE SENZA *Dig, 2010, 10 x 18 x 18"*

Information has never been so instantly available to the point of throwing last week's news into archive status. Gone are the days of wading through the library stacks and thumbing through encyclopedias to research a project. Just as our earth's resources are drying up, the paper page is becoming more and more rare as we now frequently resort to accessing information via electronic online resources. Digging for resources today, is a completely different experience than it was just twenty years ago. Encyclopedias may well soon be forgotten tomes of information.

All sizes are in inches - height, width, depth - unless otherwise noted

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SOME LINKS TO INFORMATION ABOUT ARTIST BOOKS

<http://www.centerforbookarts.org/>
<http://artistbooks.ning.com/>
<http://www.mnbookarts.org/>
<http://centralbookingnyc.com/>
<http://www.kalbookarts.org/>

"Information Revisited" Encyclopedia Britannica Project
June 6 - June 27, 2010 during regular hours and in July by appointment

OPENING RECEPTION - SUNDAY, JUNE 6 FROM 1-5PM

The exhibition may travel to museums and college galleries around the country
(to be announced)

MARTIN HICKS GALLERY
AT

BELSKIE MUSEUM OF ART

MUSEUM HOURS: SAT & SUN 1-5 PM
HOURS BY APPOINTMENT MAY BE ARRANGED

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