



## BOOKWORKS

### LOCATION

**Aidekman Arts Center / Medford**

Tisch Family Gallery  
Koppelman Gallery

### CONTACT

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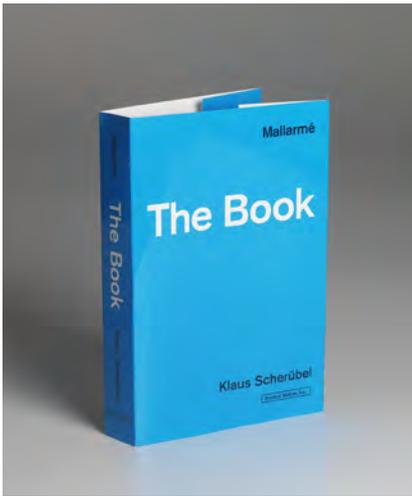
August 22 — December 15, 2019

Opening Reception: Thursday September 5, 6–8pm

**Featuring Sonia Almedia, Jen Bervin, Laura Blacklow, Carolina Caycedo, Paul Chan, Julie Chen, Eric Doeringer, John Gonzalez, Marisa Jahn, Steffani Jemison and Jamal Cyrus, Angela Lorenz, LTTR, Heidi Neilson, Dieter Roth, Klaus Scherübel, Dayanita Singh, and Chantal Zakari + Mike Mandel, among others.**

Medford, MA — *Bookworks* will present a wide-ranging exploration of the practice of artist-made books, drawing on the contemporary artists' books and special collections at Tufts University. Featuring over eighty objects, the exhibition considers book making as a distinctive art form that questions the structure, function, and value of printed matter, which has found new footing in the digitally marked twenty-first century.

A play on the term *artworks*, *Bookworks* borrows its title from Ulises Carrión (1941–1989), a champion of the book as an artwork in and of itself, rather than merely a vehicle for text. In his 1975 manifesto, *The New*



*Art of Making Books*, Carrión argued for an expanded understanding of the form's capacity—like a film or painting—to provide a unique visual and material experience. Today, as screens become the primary mode of communication for much of the world, the physicality and pacing of a book—embodied by the simple gesture of turning a page—offers a familiar but increasingly urgent alternative to the relentless speed of swiping and scrolling through information available online.

Tracing an arc from the singular book-object to the form as a collective space, the exhibition highlights key projects from the 1960s to now and feature examples of early modern material as well. Through four main themes—materiality, sequencing, communication, and gathering—*Bookworks* explores the basic characteristics of a book as a contemporary and historical format: its material make up, the ordering of its pages, the text it communicates, and the gathering of ideas it holds.

### **Material: What a Book Is . . .**



Using Carrión's list-like manifesto *The New Art of Making Books* as an organizing principle, *Bookworks* begins by exploring the vast range of materials and methods that can and do make up a book—from paper and parchment to a bound set of American cheese slices, a pair of paper pants, and a novel embedded in bars of soap. This section includes historical examples from medieval Europe and eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Japan to show the precedents artists draw from to create unexpected bookworks today.

### **A Sequence of Spaces**



Understanding a book as a sequence of spaces—perhaps as a set of bound-paper pages or something more—allows us to think about the book in broader, more time-based terms. From Carolee Schneemann's radical feminist performance *Interior Scroll* (1973) to Carolina Caycedo's *Serpent River Book* that unfolds into an entire river, objects in this section present performative experiences across time and space that can traverse real and imagined landscapes in equal measure.

### **Communication: The Language**

Artists' books can and often do push at the very core of what we expect from a book, which is, most often, a legible text. Here, artists use various forms of abstracted language—be it through signs, symbols, images, or even fabricated shapes—to question the capacity of language to communicate. Artists such as Paul Chan and Amy Borezo turn to the Judeo-Christian Bible—which many consider as one of the master texts of Western civilization and simply call “the Book”—translating it into contemporary imagery and graphics that are at once playful and critical.

### **Gathering & Community**

If a book is a collection of pages, by its very nature it is a space of gathering—of ideas, texts, voices, and knowledge. As a circulated object, whether through libraries or Amazon, a book (or any printed matter) connects a disparate group of people—shared readers—through a common language. In this section, artists use the book as a container

or catalyst for a collective experience—for example, influential artist-produced periodicals like *Aspen* (1967/1971) and, more recently, *LTTR* (2002-2007) use the magazine format in inventive ways to manifest an artistic community. Finally, *Bookworks* presents Steffani Jemison and Jamal Cyrus's reading room, *Alpha's Bet Is Not Over Yet*, a library of reproduced African American magazines dating from 1919 to 1922 that unearths the ways print journals articulated and coalesced intellectual communities in the absence of other collective spaces.

*Bookworks* is organized by Dina Deitsch, Director and Chief Curator, with Chiara Pidotella, Research Curator, and Graduate Fellows Emily Chun AG20, and Kevin Vogelaar AG20. Special thanks to Darin Murphy, Head of the W. Van Alan Clark, Jr. Library at the School of the Museum of Fine Arts (SMFA) at Tufts, and Christopher Barbour, Curator of Rare Books and Humanities Collections Librarian, at Tisch Library.



## PUBLIC PROGRAMS

### Open Book

Every Wednesdays at 12:15pm

Much of the work on view in *Bookworks* is designed to be held, flipped through, read, and discussed. Join us each Wednesday at 12:15—Tufts' Open Block Period—for lunchtime activations of the artists' books on view, faculty lectures, and performances.

Please check [artgalleries.tufts.edu](http://artgalleries.tufts.edu) for a full schedule. Highlights include:

Sept 25: Exhibiting Artist Angela Lorenz: *Chewing Tzu* performance

Oct 2: Professor and Dean Nancy Bauer: "Words as Deeds: The Ontological Power of Language (and Art)"

Oct 23: Exhibiting Artist and Professor of the Practice, Chantal Zakari: "Democratizing the Art Object: Navigating Self-Publishing"

Nov 13 : Professor Fiorenzo Omenetto: Silk Lab

### The Black Studies Reading Room (with Jovonna Jones)

Aug 28, 6:30pm Mining the Archive

Nov 14, 6:30pm Crafting the Black Public Sphere

### Tisch Library Tour: Reading and Visualizing Power Structures

Sept 18, 12-3pm Led by Darin Murphy and Martha Kelehan

### Exhibition Tours

Oct 25, 11am Director and Chief Curator Dina Deitsch

Oct 26, 2pm Graduate Fellow Emily Chun AG20

## ABOUT TUFTS UNIVERSITY ART GALLERIES

Housed within a research university and an art school, the Tufts University Art Galleries engage with artists, scholars, and works of art to provoke discourse around cultural and social contexts. Through exhibitions, programming, research, and collecting, we create a pedagogical platform for the Tufts community and wider publics.

Tufts University Art Galleries operates from two main gallery locations:

### **Aidekman Arts Center / Medford**

40 Talbot Avenue

Tuesday—Sunday, 11AM-5PM

Thursday, 11AM-8PM

Closed Mondays and university holidays

### **SMFA at Tufts / Boston**

230 Fenway

Monday—Saturday, 10AM-5PM

Closed Sundays and university holidays

FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC

**[artgalleries.tufts.edu](http://artgalleries.tufts.edu)**

Images from top: LTTR, *Cover of Do You Wish To Direct Me?no. 5*; September 2005; edition of 1000; 8.5 x 5.5 in. Liz Collins, *Merger Glove*, 2005; knit glove; edition of 1000. Courtesy of LTTR: Klaus Scherubel, *Mallarme, The Book*, 2004. A block of Styrofoam with a dust jacket; offset printed; Carolina Caycedo, *Serpent River Book*, 2017. 72 page accordion fold artist-book that combines archival images, maps, poems, lyrics, satellite photos; Ben Denzer, *Twenty Slices*, 2018. 20 slices of Kraft American singles; Julie Chen, *Chrysalis*, 2014. Letterpress printed on handmade paper using photopolymer plates.

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