

Bibliotekarstudentens nettleksikon om litteratur og medier

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Bokkunstverk

Betegnelsen brukes om forskjellige typer kunstnerisk utformede bøker, om bøker som primært er kunstverk, og installasjoner som består av bøker. Bokkunstverk kan f.eks. være bok-objekter (“book objects”) eller bok-skulpturer (“book sculptures”).

Kunstnerisk utformede bøker er kjennetegnet ved “materialbevissthet”. Hver av dem er “en bog, der gør sig umage med at være bog [...] materialitet og taktilitet [...] har kunstner-bogen altid arbejdet multimedialt og på tværs af grænser” (Jeppe L. Wildt i <http://atlasmag.dk/kultur/kunst/en-bog-er-ikke-en-bog-er-ikke-en-bog>; lesedato 07.04. 17).

I bokkunstverk brukes “the physical book as raw material for creative contemplation and cultural commentary. Sensual, rugged, breathtakingly intricate, ranging from “literary jewelry” to paperback chess sets to giant area rugs woven of discarded book spines, these cut and carved tomes remind us that art is not a thing but a way – a way of being in the world that transmutes its dead cells into living materials, its cultural legacy into ever-evolving art forms and creative sensibilities. [...] By altering the book, we can explore the meanings of the material and the idea of the book as a symbol for knowledge. We can explore questions about the history and the future of books and the impact of new technology. We can contemplate and illustrate ideas about literature and information technology. It is not about nostalgia. It is about the richness of its history and the beauty of its form, though more often it goes far beyond this. The infinite ways a book can be explored with our minds and our tools has just begun. We are at an exciting and pivotal moment in the way we record and receive our information. The form of the book, a symbol for ideas, information, and literature, may be the most relevant signifier and richest material we can work with today. We need to take advantage of this moment and respect the history of the book while contemplating its future in the face of shifts to digital technology.” (Maria Popova i <https://www.brainpickings.org/2013/08/20/art-made-from-books/>; lesedato 09.08.17)

“An artist’s book is a medium of artistic expression that uses the form or function of “book” as inspiration. It is the artistic initiative seen in the illustration, choice of materials, creation process, layout and design that makes it an art object. A book that *only* contains text is simply a book; even if authored by an artist, it would be a book that belongs in a book store or the shelves of a library. What truly makes an artist’s book is the artist’s intent, and artists have used the book as inspiration in a

myriad of ways and techniques, from traditional to the experimental. The book could be made through fine press printing or hand-crafted, the pages illustrated with computer-generated images or cheap photocopies; books became sculptures, tiny and gargantuan; books were sliced up and reconfigured, made from all kinds of materials with unconventional objects incorporated, in unique or limited editions, or produced in multiple copies. With all sorts of ideas behind them, artists continue to challenge the idea, content and structure of the traditional book.” (Anne Evenhaugen i <https://blog.library.si.edu/2012/06/what-is-an-artists-book/#.WZKtSFFJZPY>; lesedato 15.08.17)

“Although artists have illustrated the words of others in books since the advent of the printed book itself in the 1400s, the book as art object is a product of the 20th century. In Europe from the 1950s, artists were experimenting with the book format, making books with unique printing and bindings, such as slits or holes cut through the pages and unique shapes for the binding or boxing. [...] artists’ books exist at the intersections of printmaking, photography, poetry, experimental narrative, visual arts, graphic design, and publishing. Artists’ books have made a place for themselves in the collections of museums, libraries and bibliophiles, they have caught the interest of art historians and critics writing about art, and there are numerous studio programs in art schools dedicated to the art of the book, ushering in new generations of artists making books. [...] Books are meant to be touched, and their pages turned, but an art object is usually only experienced under glass in a museum. These are issues that affect the work of artists, practitioners of book arts, curators, museum collections staff, librarians, publishers and others. Yet the problems of the ambivalent nature of the artist’s book is part of what gives it such interesting potential.” (Anne Evenhaugen i <https://blog.library.si.edu/2012/06/what-is-an-artists-book/#.WZKtSFFJZPY>; lesedato 15.08.17)

“The form of art expressed through the medium of the book. The artist’s input extends beyond authorship and illustration, making the physical appearance of the book as object a manifestation of creativity in and of itself. In some artist’s books, the traditional format of the book is not altered (example: an illustrated collection of poems in which the words and images are embossed, rather than printed, on paper). In other works, the artist experiments with format, even to the extent of challenging the concept of reading (example: a book with the leaves made of mirror-foil). Some publishers specialize in this art form (Ron King’s Circle Press). The National Art Library at the Victoria & Albert Museum of decorative and applied arts in London holds an extensive collection of books on the history of this form of artistic experimentation.” (Joan M. Reitz i http://lu.com/odlis/odlis_c.cfm; lesedato 30.08.05)

“Artists’ books are books made or conceived by artists. There are fine artists who make books and book artists who produce work exclusively in that medium, as well as illustrators, typographers, writers, poets, book binders, printers and many others who work collaboratively or alone to produce artists’ books. Many artists’ books

are self-published, or are produced by small presses or by artists' groups or collectives, usually in limited editions. Artists' books that maintain the traditional structure of a book are often known as book art or bookworks, while those that reference the shape of a book are known as book objects. Other types of work produced by artists in book format include concrete poetry, where meaning is derived from the spatial, pictorial and typographic characteristics of the work, as well as from the sense of the words." (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/books-artists/>; lesedato 04.09.17)

"Contemporary artists' books are noteworthy for their many different forms and perhaps because of this they have an equally large number of precursors and influences. Artists have been associated with the written word since illuminated manuscripts were developed in the medieval period. Many have been concerned with books as an artistic enterprise, notably William Blake at the end of the 18th century and William Morris at the Kelmscott Press from the 1890s. Avant-garde artists throughout the 20th century also produced many books as part of their artistic endeavours. It is however the *livre d'artiste*, also known as the *livre de peintre*, that is generally considered to be a key precursor to the contemporary artists' book. Originating in France around the turn of the 20th century, the *livre d'artiste* is a form of illustrated book. They are distinguished by the fact that the pages have been printed directly from a source created by the artist themselves rather than from a source that has been created by a technician from the artist's design. An early exponent of the *livre d'artiste* was the dealer Ambroise Vollard who commissioned Pierre Bonnard to illustrate with lithographs a collection of poems by Paul Verlaine, *Parallèlement*, published in Paris in 1900 [...] In the 1950s and 1960s Swiss-German artist Dieter Roth (1930-98) and American artist Ed Ruscha (1937-) created conceptual works which are considered the foundation of the artists' book genre. [...] Roth's distinctive contribution to the genre was his examination, through his bookworks, of the formal qualities of books themselves. These formal qualities, such as flat pages bound into fixed sequences, were deconstructed and investigated, this investigation becoming the subject matter of the book itself. For example *2 Bilderbücher* (1957) [...] consists of two picture books of geometric shapes with die-cut holes cut into each page to allow glimpses of patterns from the pages beneath. Subsequent works such as *Daily Mirror* (1961) involved the use of found materials manipulated to a particular purpose, a technique that was much used by later book artists." (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/books-artists/>; lesedato 04.09.17)

"Many artists have taken up the challenge to experiment with the content and physical structure of the traditional book form. Bookworks and book objects have continued to step outside conventional boundaries to encompass concepts associated with the fine arts. Works range from the minuscule to the gargantuan. Bookworks are not restricted to the use of paper and ink but can incorporate all kinds of materials and appended objects. While such works are usually unique or

limited editions, some are produced in multiple copies.” (<http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/a/books-artists/>; lesedato 04.09.17)

“As Ulises Carrion eloquently wrote “a book is a sequence of spaces.” In the sixties, small decentralized presses allowed artists to circumvent the traditional publishing system. Artists took on the role as publisher and an influx of artists’ books hit the scene. The portability and accessibility of the medium allowed for an art experience outside of traditional museum and gallery settings. With the rise of the Minimalist and Conceptual movements during the period, artists’ books gradually gained esteem as an artistic medium. Today, artists’ books have taken on many new forms with emerging technologies. The definition of the medium has changed over years and likely will continue to grow in our digitized, internet age.” (<https://www.ringling.org/>; lesedato 24.08.17)

Amerikaneren Alison Knowles lagde bokkunstverket *Big Book* (1967): “The Big Book is an eight foot tall construction by Alison Knowles which has a front cover and several pages, and contains a stove, telephone, chemical toilet, art gallery, electric fan, books and other necessities of life. Alison Knowles has built the Book as a work of art to be lived in, physically and mentally, a place to contemplate useful and changing relationships. [...] I have described the beginning of The Big Book, but I cannot describe the end, because it is a potentially endless structure. When a story keeps possibilities open and relationships changing, there is no conclusion, and the hero who survive such a story must be supple, resourceful and durable. The reader can participate in these qualities by using their massive book of chance, The Big Book by Alison Knowles.” (Knowles 2008)

Tyskeren Anselm Kiefers *Zweistromland* (også kalt *The High Priestess*) (1986-89) er et kunstverk som består av bøker og bokhyller av bly. Hyllene “inneholder mer enn 200 blybøker som hver veier mer enn 300 kg [...] i prinsippet kan en] ta bøkene ut av hyllene og lese dem [...] Bøkene rommer vår forhistorie og kunstverket gir assosiasjoner til antikkens store biblioteker i Alexandria og Babylon.” (*Morgenbladet* 5.–11. oktober 2007 s. 40) Kiefers *The Secret Life of Plants* (2003) inngår i hans prosjekt med å gjøre malerier om til bøker og bøker om til malerier, installasjoner m.m.

“Kunstnerbøker skiller seg fra kunstbøker, og andre bøker, ved at de publiseres med en mer fleksibel og kreativ innfallsvinkel til hva som kan befinne seg mellom to permer. Mediet forutsetter ikke en gang permer, heller ikke distribusjon eller kommersielle forlag [...] Mikkel Wettres nye skulptur “The End of Imagination”, en bokrekke som er hvit ytterst og nærmer seg sort i den andre enden. Et annet fremtredende verk er Elisabeth Mathiesens “Above Words”, en billedbok på video som illustrerer en roman av Simone de Beauvoir.” (*Aftenposten* 27. mars 2006 s. 12)

Dansken Niels Lyngsøs *Morfeus: Digte og poetik* (2004) er en bok som består av løse ark holdt sammen av fem kraftige metallringer, noe som gir den preg av å være en “evighetsbok” uten begynnelse eller slutt. Den er uten sidetall, plassert i en pappboks og innholdet er utformet med svært lekende typografi. Det er skrift i alle retninger, slik at boka ikke har noe éntydig “opp” og “ned”. Det er skrift i sirkler, som trekanter, med tredimensjonal effekt m.m. Innholdet i tekstene er bl.a. filosoferende refleksjoner, dikt (sonetter, konkret poesi m.m.), fragmenter og poetikk-tekster.

“In the basement of the newly renovated Harvard Art Museum, three books fly overhead with slowly waving wings, both rigid and in motion beneath a black rainfall painting across the wall. If you walked by quickly enough, you might not even notice the books slowly flying in place above your head. [...] The piece is entitled “Flying Books Under Black Rain,” [...] and is the work of artist Rebecca Horn [...] To most people, it’s standard to think of a painting as “art” and a book as literature, but by combining the two in a single work, Horn asks us to consider these definitions and how the two relate. [...] The “black rain” in the work is actually black ink, not paint, further blurring the line between literature and art by using a traditional book medium for the creation of a painting. [...] by blurring the lines between standard literature and standard art, artist Rebecca Horn demonstrates their relationship with each other as flexible and relatable “texts.” ”

(<http://dighist.fas.harvard.edu/courses/2016/HUM11c/exhibits/show/open-readings/flyingbooks-artvslit>; lesedato 04.08.17)

Den amerikanske kunstneren Brian Dettmer “bruker skalpell, pinsett og kniv til å beskjære bøker så de skifter form, og i stedet for bøker å lese blir til skulpturer å se på. Eller ta på, kanskje. Han flytter ingenting inni boken, bare kutter og fjerner til vi ser rett inn i bokens sjel. Dette handler om at digital informasjon er formløs, mens analog informasjon også er et fysisk objekt, sier han i sitt manifest. Ved å endre på formen vil han minne om bøkens “rikhet og dybde” i en verden som flommer over av informasjon man ikke kan ta på.” (*Morgenbladet* 15.–21. mars 2013 s. 36)

“Su Blackwell er en britisk kunstner som blant annet har lagd “book-cut sculptures”, det vil si at hun klipper ut papirskulpturer fra bøker. Hun jakter på bøker i brukbutikker, leser historien, og så begynner skapelsesprosessen.” (sitert fra Bok & samfunn og bokhandelkjeden Notabenes gratismagasin *Bokvår*, 2010) På toppen av en åpent bok har hun bl.a. annet lagd en liten by av papir og på en annen bok små trær av papir. Den australske kunstneren Kylie Stillman “har snudd det velkjente spørsmålet “hvor mange trær trengs for å produsere en bok” på hodet gjennom sine bokskulpturer – som gjerne tar form av trær. Og ofte trenger hun ikke mer enn en fire-fem stykker før hun har laget et fint tre av bokstabelen.” (*Morgenbladet* 20.–26. mai 2011 s. 33) “Contemporary artist Guy Laramée has a talent for transforming the pages of thick books into beautiful natural landscapes and historical scenes. He uses clamps to harden the books and wood carving tools –

including sand blaster and tar – to create the 3D sculptures.” (<http://all-that-is-interesting.com/book-sculpture-artists>; lesedato 28.08.17)

Den slovakiske kunstneren Matej Kren lagde i 2010 i et museum i Bologna et tårn som bestod av tusenvis av bøker. Det var mulig å gå inn i tårnet, og speil på innsiden fikk det til å virke enda større enn det var. Tårnet skal ha vært verdens største bokinstallasjon, og ble kalt “Scanner”. “In 1998 he installed a “tower of books” entitled *Idiom* in the entrance hall of the Prague Municipal Library. His rotunda made of books, *Gravity Mixer*, became a key part of the Czech pavilion at EXPO 2000 in Hanover. In 2004 he was chosen to represent Slovak art as part of the travelling exhibition project *The New Ten*, conceived as a symbolic joining with the European Union in the field of contemporary art.” (<http://www.matejkren.cz/en/matej-kren/biography.php>; lesedato 31.08.17)

Utstillingen *Blood on Paper: The Art of the Book* fant sted på The Victoria and Albert Museum i London i 2008. Den presenterte “verk av 38 kunstnere, som på hvert sitt vis har latt seg inspirere av bokens formspråk, ideen om boken som innholdskasse og som videreformidler av visdom, skjønnhet, ondskap eller sjangeroverskridende sakprosa. Dette ser vi gjennom forseggjorte “artists’ books”, små, institusjonskritiske trykksaker og store installasjoner og skulpturer. [...] Anselm Kiefer og hans verk *The Secret Life of Plants*, laget på bestilling fra kuratorene. [...] *The Secret Life of Plants* er en nærmere to meter stor, oppslått bok av bly og papp, stående oppreist på gulvet. Nærmere undersøkelser viser at sidene er gravert med alskens plantenavn, og NASAs nummernavngivning på himmelens stjerner: klodens sammenhenger og kunnskapen om dem. Kiefers eldre bokskulptur *Steigend, steigend sinke nieder* knytter det hele sammen ved utgangen. [...] Damien Hirsts enorme *New Religion* fungerer både som alter, bibel, bibliotek og kiste, og gir en ny inngang til den kristne ikonografien. Denne er sidestilt med Ed Ruschas bok *Stains*, som er dryppet med kunstnerens eget blod, og den igjen peker mot Anish Kapors firedelte verk *Wound*, der et sår eller en flenge er skåret eller brent ut gjennom hundrevis av boksider, med laser. Det mest umiddelbare innslaget i utstillingen står Cai Guo-Qiang for. Hans store *Danger Books* er skrevet/malt med krutt, bokstavelig talt, og utstyrt med en fyrstikkklunte som skal friste leseren. Trekker man i den, eksploderer boken, og ilden brer seg sakte gjennom boksiden og permene. Utgaven av boken *Suicide Fireworks* er representert med prototypen, og en videoinstallasjon av en detonering av den.” (*Morgenbladet* 6.–12. juni 2008 s. 43)

“Kuratorene bak *Blood on paper* er Rowan Watson og Elena Foster. [...] det skal vel vanskelig gjøres å bli mer *high end* enn britiske Anthony Caros bokskulpturer *Open Secret* fra 2004. De er fremstilt i messing, bronse og rustfritt stål, og ser ut som en mellomting mellom en oppslått bok og noe gjenglemt avfall fra en nedlagt fabrikk i Sauda. Skulpturene kan åpnes og lukkes (for dem som eier et eksemplar), og åpenbarer på innsiden et skjult kabinett, der det ligger et par trykk med dikt av

Hans Magnus Enzensberger og et utdrag fra Shakespeares *Kjøpmannen i Venedig*, håndskrevet av Caro selv.” (*Morgenbladet* 6.–12. juni 2008 s. 43)

Den argentinske kunstneren Marta Minujin brukte i 2011 ca. 30.000 bøker til å lage verket “Babels tårn”. Det er et spiralformet tårn lagd av bøker og ble reist på et torg i Buenos Aires. “Called the Tower of Babel, the 82-foot (25-meter) high installation by Argentine artist Marta Minujin is made from 30,000 bricks, donated by readers, libraries and more than 50 embassies. Climbing up its seven floors of metal scaffolding, visitors to the tower hear music composed by Minujin and the voice of the artist repeating the word ‘book’ in scores of languages. On the walls, Japanese children’s books are packed next to adventure tales from Patagonia or a Basque translation of Argentina’s epic cowboy poem Martin Fierro. [...] Minujin, who worked with American artist Andy Warhol, built a full-scale model of the Parthenon in Buenos Aires in 1983 using books banned by the military dictatorship that ended that year. This year’s installation marks Buenos Aires’ naming as the 2011 World Book Capital by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). [...] When the exhibit ends later this month, Minujin said literature lovers will be allowed to come and pick one book each. The rest will be brought down to start a new archive that she has already dubbed The Library of Babel, the name of a story by Argentina’s most famous author, Jorge Luis Borges.” (<http://living.stv.tv/lifestyle/248837-bookish-buenos-aires-gets-own-tower-of-babel/>; lesedato 03.10.11)

“Den spanska konstnären Alicia Martin ger böcker ett nytt liv genom att skapa gigantiska skulpturer utomhus. OpenART samlar nu in sextusen inbundna böcker [...] För tolv år sedan, år 2003, accepterade Alicia Martin en inbjudan att skapa stora bokskulpturer. Sedan dess har hennes skulpturer turnerat världen runt och fascinerat miljoner. [...] - I Mexico, återvände många besökare med böcker. De ville visa sin uppskattning till skapandet på det sättet. I Madrid och på andra platser i Spanien, upprördes istället en del människor över att jag använde böcker som material.” (<http://www.orebroguiden.com/?p=794>; lesedato 21.06.17)

Garrett Stewarts bok *Bookwork: Medium to Object to Concept to Art* (2011) handler om “The anti-book, the book without text, [that] turns itself to dysfunctional book-work sculpture, namely the *bibliobjet*. The *bibliobjet* is a spurious object, deceiving its own medial nature, banished from library shelves, and sheltered in museum galleries, to be seen by the viewer (not by the reader). The exile in materialities, transfiguring the instrumental object into a disused artifact, symptomizes the decay of the book hegemony as quintessential machine of culture in contemporaneity that is marked by the ubiquitous of postmodern digital virtuality. [...] In *Bookwork*, Garrett Stewart renders a comprehensive interdisciplinary approach to the field of Book Studies, and, particularly, to the phenomenon of book-objects. [...] the book as sculpture. Moreover, the book aspires to inaugurate a general theory: the art of demediation. Stewart attempts to preclude, from his analysis, the influence of literary studies, as the author himself

announces in the introduction (entitled “Frontmatters”): “[t]his study thus operates at the collision of two disciplines and the elision of a third. In it, art history impacts book history over the absent [sic] of anything like literary reading” (xviii). Page after page, however, the literary rhetoric is permanently lurking over a deeper and broad theoretical substrate (in the Humanities), which enriches the inquiry. [...] challenges the viewer-as-reader to multiple hermeneutic approaches to rethink the unexpected polysemic *bibliobjets*’ latent meaning. Ultimately, every book is good for reading. But only a few books self-question the nature of book-ness.” (Samuel Teixeira i <http://www.iduc.uc.pt/index.php/matlit/article/>; lesedato 12.05.15)

Alle artiklene og litteraturlista til hele leksikonet er tilgjengelig på <https://www.litteraturogmedieleksikon.no>