

**ARTISTS' WIDE-RANGING APPROACHES TO THE ILLUSTRATED BOOK
EXPLORED IN *BOOK/SHELF***

Book/Shelf

March 26—July 7, 2008

The Paul J. Sachs Prints and Illustrated Books Galleries, second floor

NEW YORK, March 24, 2008—The Museum of Modern Art presents *Book/Shelf*, an exhibition that explores an expanded notion of the illustrated book. The exhibition features approximately 70 works from the Museum's collection that use a variety of techniques—including photography, film, printmaking, installation, drawing, and sound recording—reflecting artists' wide range of approaches to the topic. On view from March 26 through July 7, 2008, the exhibition is organized by Christophe Cherix, Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art.

Book/Shelf begins with Marcel Duchamp's *Unhappy Readymade* (1919), a work created when the artist, while traveling, instructed his sister back home to hang a geometry book on her balcony and to let the wind flip and tear the pages. The artist explained, "The wind had to go through the book, choose its own problems, turn and tear out the pages." The piece—destroyed in the process of its making—was documented in *Box in a Valise*, the artist's famous "portable museum," which is displayed at the entrance of this exhibition.

The first gallery is devoted to works initiated in the 1960s that share Duchamp's irreverent attitude towards the art object. Dieter Roth's *Snow* (1963—69) began as a book project featuring 500 of his drawings, photographs, and collages. When the publication was cancelled, Roth turned his unpublished book into an installation through the addition of a wooden table and chairs. *Book 4* (1962), by Lucas Samaras, is a hardback volume covered with nails from which a knife and a pair of scissors holding a razor blade protrude.

The exhibition continues with works by artists who played a pivotal role in the 1970s and 1980s, such as Richard Artschwager, Allen Ruppersberg, Martin Kippenberger, and Barbara Kruger, and also introduces a younger generation of artists, including Brian Belott, Liam Gillick, and Josh Smith. Several works in which artists appropriate books by others are featured, including an untitled sculpture (1989) by Kippenberger in the form of a bookcase and screen.

Book/Shelf also includes a number of installations created by artists to present books in public contexts. Belott uses a family heirloom table to display children's books found at flea markets and collaged by the artist and his friends (*Books, books, books, books, books, books and books*, 2005—07). Smith—whose untitled screenprint installation from 2007 is on view outside the galleries—compiled his photocopied booklets in handmade wood cases. Gillick created

Underground (Trailer for a Book) (2004), a video in the form of a trailer for a nineteenth-century science-fiction book, viewed on a futuristic Brionvega Cuboglass Television designed in the 1960s. The exhibition also includes works by artists who tackle the idea of books in film (William Wegman), sound works (On Kawara), prints (Edward Ruscha), and drawings (Steve Wolfe).

The exhibition comes full circle with a copy of Duchamp's catalogue raisonné. Rebound in leather, the work was re-titled by David Hammons as *The Holy Bible: New Testament* (2002). The last work in the exhibition is Lawrence Weiner's *A Bookcase for onestar press* (2007), a shelf holding a collection of some 150 artists' books, of which a selection is available for visitors to look through.

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Public Information:

The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, NY 10019

Hours: Wednesday through Monday: 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Friday: 10:30 a.m.-8:00 p.m.
Closed Tuesdays, except December 19, December 26, and January 2.

Museum Admission: \$20 adults; \$16 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D.; \$12 full-time students with current I.D. Free for children 16 and under. Free for members. (Includes admittance to Museum galleries and film programs)
Target Free Friday Nights 4:00-8:00 p.m.

Film Admission: \$10 adults; \$8 seniors, 65 years and over with I.D. \$6 full-time students with current I.D. (For admittance to film programs only)

Subway: E or V train to Fifth Avenue/53rd Street

Bus: On Fifth Avenue, take the M1, M2, M3, M4, or M5 to 53rd Street. On Sixth Avenue, take the M5, M6, or M7 to 53rd Street. Or take the M57 and M50 crosstown buses on 57th and 50th Streets.

The public may call 212/708-9400 for detailed Museum information.
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