Book Artis(t)

Capturing my library, March 18, 2021

Everyone knows one when they see one — but that animals and letters might have something in common is not something you think about all the time. That books are made of pages, paragraphs, sentences, of words and words from letters: and if we go (all the way) back to hieroglyphs, that these letters are often an animal becoming sound, shortened to the first vowel or consonant of its name, like the A is an aleph, an ox's head that the Romans later flipped on its side, and it remains unclear whether the animal hiding under the letter N was once a snake or a fish.

The story of the Penguin logo is another, apparently an idea by Allen Lane of The Bodley Head, based on the example of the first publishing house to produce mass market paperbacks: the Albatross Books company.

Copying the copier, many publishers followed suit, choosing and designing their logos, naming a series after the least bookish species of animals, so every library now hides a menagerie (a zoo, an Artis) of different birds and bees and bears. As they line up side by side and on top of each other, what the spines of books keep telling us is a soft reminder of the pictographic origin and of the rebus principle underlying the written language we use all the time.

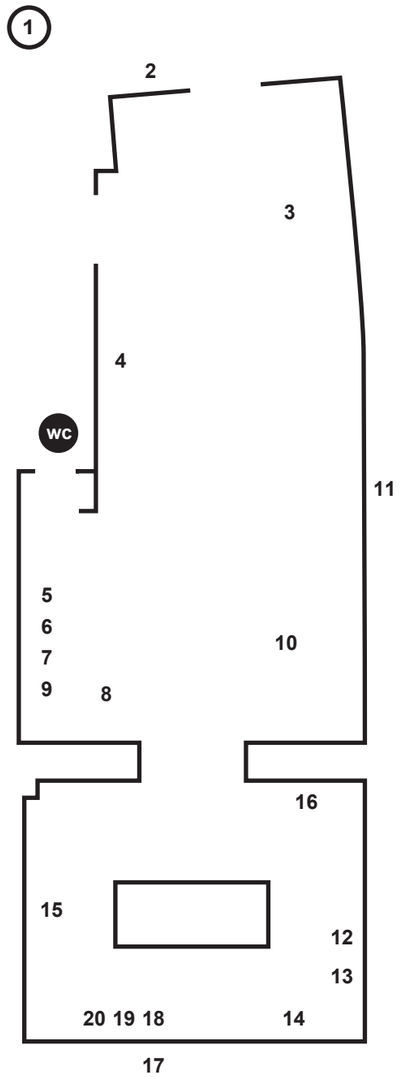
"Every time we issued an expensive publication, I tried to issue an inexpensive publication. And the series which we used as our vehicle was called *The Great Bear* Pamphlets. It was a very hot August day in 1965 when I was trying to dream up the name of this series, and I went to pour myself a cup of water, from the water cooler in my office, and the water cooler was made by the 'Great Bear Company' and it just seemed to me 'Gee, wouldn't it be wonderful' if we could make these pamphlets as refreshing as this water is. So that's how the series got its name." (*Something Else Press and Since: a lecture by Dick Higgins*, January 13, 1981, 00:15:11-00:15:45: https://vimeo.com/139749434).



An animal that speaks
978-90-829362-3-0
Robin Waart

When two things are one, is it a conflict or harmony? How film can be both the material carrier and the result of a recording process. Papers are the surfaces we write, or draw, or print on as well as the documents they lead to. A letter is one part of the alphabet, each with a sound of its own, but also the sum of its parts: open, undisclosed, of intent – a logo that might once have been an animal. So a Penguin is two things, distinguished by a capital p, and there are many robins who share that name. The world is (not) a word that can be read. There are impossible books, with purple possibilities from cover to cover, and there is always an unopened envelope in my Gmail.

The exhibition *An animal that speaks* at ARTisBOOK is Waart's fifth book and continues his contribution to Artispage earlier this year, starting from what it means to take things, objects, ideas seriously literally – as a process, and its outcome: a literary animal, a book that lasts five weeks and has its own isbn.



From the Center to the Right to Left and Front to Back and Back Again

1.
An animal that speaks
ISBN 978-90-829362-3-0
6.11.2021 – 11.12.2021

2.
Vinyl on window
39 x 20.3 cm

3.
Envelope A, 2021
Tufted carpet (the width of Artisbook's door), wool and eucalyptus thread
110 x 269 cm

4.
File, 2021
Wenge skirting board, miniature penguins
Dimensions variable, 442.1 x 8 x 1.8 cm (2 parts)

5.
Evol/Love, 2021
ISBN 978-90-829362-9-2
Book publication, wenge bookshelf
Offset on pink paper
Self-published, edition of 666 copies
19.6 x 19.6 x 2.3, 19.6 x 19.6 x 2.3 cm
200 pages

6.
Dedication(s), 2018
ISBN 978-90-829362-0-9
Book publication, wenge bookshelf
Offset and watermark on paper
Self-published, edition of 800 copies
26 x 20 x 0.7, 26 x 20 x 0.7 cm
60 pages

7.
Part one, 2010/2011
ISBN 978-90-9026176-8 (2011)
Book publication, wenge bookshelf
Self-published, edition of 101 (2010) and 202 (2011) copies
16 x 24 x 2.3 cm, 16 x 24 x 2.3 cm
216 (108) pages

8.
Stool for *Part one*, 2010
Wenge
32 x 24 x 50.3 x 2.3 cm

9.
Thinking in Pictures, 2010
Book publication, wenge bookshelf
Laserprint on paper
Self-published, edition of 20+10 copies
23 x 28.6 x 5 and 23 x 28.6 x 5 cm
Duration 03:42:17 (398 pages)

10.
Email, 2017-2021
36 copies of Isa Belli Barsali's *Europäisches Email* (1980 edition), cardboard box
76 x 56 x 23 cm (open), 39.8 x 30.4 x 15.2 cm (closed)



11.
2004-2015, 2021
(Abstract Bodies – Het stenen bruidsbed)
Book pages, torn front and back endpapers, polyester pocket, 2 parts
25.6 x 19 and 30.5 x 22 cm each
From *Beginnings-Ends*, 2012-

Archive

12.
Huit Livres (Je t'aime) [blanc], 2012
Eight French books replacing eleven books from Artisbook archive
21 x 16.5 cm
From *Love books*, 2005-

13.
Huit Livres (Je t'aime) [noir], 2012
Eight French books replacing five books from Artisbook archive
23 x 16.5 cm
From *Love books*, 2005-

14.
Love, 2012/2016
81 film stills
9'04"

15.
Evol/Love
Testprint
Offset on pink paper
92 x 65 cm

16.
Untitled, 2012
Filmstill, color laser print on black paper, wooden frame
42 x 29.7 and 43 x 31.2
Kaboom, Gregg Araki (US FR 2010), 00:49:51

17.
Artist documentation
Printed ephemera
Dimensions variable

18.
An animal that speaks
Announcement
Offset on envelope
Gmund Wood Savanna Bubinga Solid woodgrain paper
100 gsm
24.1 x 10.6 cm

19.
Embossed bookmark
Gmund Wood Savanna Bubinga Solid woodgrain paper
300 gsm
23.6 x 10.4 cm

20.
** The exhibition (...)*
Vinyl on formica
27.2 x 8.2 cm

Colofon

An animal that speaks
978-90-829362-3-0
Robin Waart

November 6 - December 11, 2021

Robin Waart's work begins with the words of others. He tears out pages, collects subtitles and cuts movies into pieces. He makes books that are also installations and writes about art.

Recent exhibitions: *The Best Dutch Book Designs*, Stedelijk Museum, Amsterdam; *For, to, after and because*, Rongwrong & Rozenstraat, Amsterdam; *A Ladder to a poem*, Kunstverein Kärnten, Klagenfurt; *Artists' Library*: *1989–2021*, Macro Museo, Rome; *Parts*, Pina, Vienna, AT; *Indistinct Chatter*, LAYR, Vienna.

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Organised by Henk Woudsma
And impossible without Anna, Jesse, Rick, Mitch

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Robin Waart - robinwaart.nl

ART BOOK

van Bijleveltstichting

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