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ART REVIEW
Artworks With Pages to Be Turned and Savored



COMPELLING "Book of Warnings" by Daniela Deeg.
By BENJAMIN GENOCCHIO
Published: March 12, 2009

Artists have been active in printing and book production in Europe since the Middle Ages, but it was not until the 20th century that the artist's book — a work of art in book form — came into its own. It happened first in France and Germany with the modern avant-garde and then later in Russia and Italy, where Futurist artists devoted themselves to making experimental books that exploded the assumptions of standard book production.

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Artists' books are usually published in small editions, given the enormous labor involved, and come in a great variety of shapes and forms, as the [Islip Art Museum's](#) new, delightful exhibition "Out of the Incubator" reveals. If you love book art, you shouldn't miss this show.

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Tatana Kellner's "Fifty Years of Silence."

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Maureen Cummins's "Business Is Suffering."

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"What's Happening With Momma?" by Glanissa Slight.

(2004), a lovely miniature book in the shape of a clock that was in her grandmother's home, which opens up to reveal silkscreen pictures on bits of balsa wood strung together.

A book in the form of postcards by Jahjehan Bath Ives tells a sad story about a brother who died of pneumonia. The postcards are assembled in a box and meant to be read in any order, so that the reader slowly builds awareness of what is going on. It takes a while to get used to the format, but the result is intensely affecting.

Playful and humorous books are in abundance. They range from Miriam Schenitzer's "How to Talk About Art," an interactive, pop-up book poking fun at opaque art-speak, to Janis Krasnow's timely "How to Get a Job" (1988), in which she pairs personality types with careers. According to the book, if you are alert, for instance, you would make a good receptionist, while pedantic people should be accountants.

There is also some nutty stuff, like Heidi Neilson's "Atlas of Punctuation" (2004), for which the artist made letterpress prints of the last punctuation marks of every sentence found in famous books. There is H. G. Wells's "Time Machine" and Jules Verne's "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea," but also punctuation marks from books by Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein and many others. This is probably the strangest book I have ever seen, though the prints are beautiful.

Of course there is a cookbook, "Good Eats" (2005) by Carissa Carman, with recipes contributed by members of the Women's Studio Workshop along with little illustrations for each of the dishes. It is cute and fun and probably one of the few books here you could use. Among my favorite-sounding recipes is the Vietnamese-inspired "Magic Rainbow Rolls With Legendary Peanut Sauce."

Like all the publications here, "Good Eats" was published in a very small edition — 80 copies — and sells for considerably more than an ordinary book (\$250). That is because these are artworks first and books second, made to be carefully savored and collected in a deliberate reaction to mass-produced editions. In a digital world, they make a compelling case for print.

"Out of the Incubator, Collaborations From Women's Studio Workshop," Islip Art Museum, 50 Irish Lane, East Islip, through April 19. Information: (631) 224-5402 or [islipartmuseum.org](#).

A version of this article appeared in print on March 15, 2009, on page L18 of the New York edition. [More Articles in New York Region ►](#)

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