

<http://movingthoughttampa.blogspot.com/>

Forward Projections

"Moving Thought" May Be Like This

We are on the road. But why? How did this crazy idea get going? Recently, as the logistical challenges of this project mounted, I've not even been able to remember... But it was Irineo Cabrerros, the School of Art and Art History's Shop Supervisor, who first fed my arriviste whim to live in a trailer—he spotted a 40-foot doublewide on a huge asphalt pad for me. I didn't rent that rock concert venue, but the germ of this scheme was hatched: a nomadized venue for USF's artists to get out into the face of Tampa Bay's diverse peoples. By cosmic coincidence, a major RV dealer, Frank Bates, had discovered his inner artist and launched a project called the "Airstream Ranch." (You can look it up.) My belief that the artist and entrepreneur are closest kin was confirmed when Frank bit on the scheme, and agreed to lend us his vintage 1974 Bates RV salesman Mike Brucker, who truly loves this school, moved the project along. When he drove our chariot of dreams into the USF studio yard, we were all but jumping up and down.

The "Moving Thought" Airstream carries artists' books—a specialized kind of art product most people don't know exists. But artists' relation to books is very deep—before Gutenberg, of course they made every one. In the days of the Bolshevik revolution, propaganda trains crisscrossed the country bringing word of the new society to the Russian people and evangelizing literacy. (See sidebar.) Now, we invoke the spirit of these humanist and modernist initiatives as we foray forth. To bring a "bookmobile" by contemporary artists to the streets today is to raise the possibility of every variation that those artists' presence and the scandalous reproductions of artistic practice may allow. Where the art action is happening in April in Tampa Bay, the "Moving Thought" vehicle is likely to be popping up. An anarchists' convention, two film festivals, a "sound art" show and a library festival are currently on the venue list. Since this catalogue goes to press before our adventure has properly begun, we really have no idea what is going to happen, who we'll meet, what we'll make. (See the "Moving Thought Tampa" blog (<http://movingthoughttampa.blogspot.com/>) for the blow-by-blow account.) But because Tampa is a real "crazy" place, in the sweet sense that old beatniks used the word, we will discover more than even now we can imagine. — Alan W. Moore

Moving Thought



Moving Thought at Special Collections Fourth Floor, USF Tampa Library April 25 – May 24, 2008

The Special Collections of the USF Libraries collect, preserve, and provide access to special collections of history, literature, the arts, and sciences for students, staff, faculty, scholarly researchers and the general public. Special Collections is a natural partner for the Moving Thought project. A small display complements the theme by exploring diverse relationships between artists' books and politics and culture in society. Thanks to Dr. Mark Greenberg, Director, and Tomaro Taylor, Assistant University Librarian, for their assistance in this exhibition.

Artist Books from Cuba's Ediciones Vigía From the USF Special Collections

The flame burning brightly in the Ediciones Vigía logo represents both the location of the press and its mission in keeping alive book arts during a difficult time in Cuba's history. The press is named after the old watchtower (*vigía*) in Matanzas, a city to the east of Havana famed for its culture. Ediciones Vigía was founded there in 1985 by a group of writers and artists using nothing more than a borrowed typewriter and an old mimeograph machine. Their contemporary handmade books are inventively crafted from scrap paper and "arte povera" materials and reflect the hard economic realities of Cuba in which the press was born. Writers and artists collaborate to link together literature and visual arts in labor-intensive, highly innovative ways to produce editions of 200 or less.

Artist Books of the Russian Revolution

On loan from the Wolfsonian Museum, Florida International University, Miami

The subject of the artist's book will be revisited this fall in an exhibition of Russian avant-garde artists' books, pamphlets, placards, and journals. Stimulated by the Moving Thought project and more recent artistic interventions, this complementary exhibit showcases the medium of bookmaking and the artist's book as a historical practice of social and political intervention. The works were all produced between the formative years after the Bolshevik revolution (October 1917) and the repressive decades of Stalinism (c.1927–1930), at a time when the historical avant-garde courted a broad public audience. As such, they reveal the radical, utopian political motivations and efforts of the avant-garde, exemplified in works such as Tatlin's Monument to the Third International (1919), which is the subject of one pamphlet, and the children's book written and illustrated by El Lissitzky, *About 2 Squares* (1922). While all of these works highlight the adamant hostility toward the bourgeoisie, Western decadence, and the greed of capitalism characteristic of Leninist Russia, the books' construction also attests to the avant-garde's concurrent experimentation with the formal elements of bookmaking and typography.

Only since the end of the Cold War have we been able to gain a more nuanced perspective of the extraordinary artistic debates and developments that defined the creation of these works. This exhibition is a welcome opportunity to re-examine the Soviet avant-garde's unique commitment to both radical politics and modern formalist techniques of bookmaking—a distinctive combination of politics and modern art that decidedly distanced these artists from the advent of Soviet Realism and Stalinism, both of which were to define the Soviet era.

Curated by Professor Heather Vinson and the students in her Art and the Russian Revolution class at the School of Art and Art History, USF; Melissa Diaz, Sabrina Hughes, Monica McGuire, Ryan Morgan, and Teresa Whitney. The books are generously loaned from the Wolfsonian Museum, Florida International University, Miami.

Contemporary Art Museum Institute for Research in Art

Margaret Miller, Director
Alexa Favata, Associate Director
Randall West, Business Coordinator
Tony Palms, Exhibitions Designer
Denton Crawford, Preparator
Vincent Kral, Preparator
Don Fuller, New Media Curator
David Waterman, Chief of Security

School of Art and Art History

Wallace Wilson, Director
Irineo Cabrerros, Vocational Training Supervisor
Charles McGee, Senior Vocational Technician

A project by students of the Critical Writing Class, School of Art and Art History

Kimberly Adams, April Childers,
Rebecca Flanders, Chad Harmon,
Shane Hoffman, Lauren Howard,
Daniel Moore, James Reiman,
Ivan Reyes-Garcia & Marta Slaughter

Dr. Alan Moore, Visiting Assistant Professor

Project organized by Noel Smith,
Curator of Education, IRA

Jean Carey, Intern, Class Project Coordinator
Leslie Patarroyo, Intern

Catalogue designed by James Reiman & Daniel Moore.

Sponsors:

Bates RV:
Frank Bates and Mike Brucker

Printed Matter, Inc.:
AA Bronson and Max Schumann
Barnes & Noble: Grace McQueen

Gordon Ricketts

USF Special Collections:
Dr. Mark Greenberg and Tomaro Taylor

Mobilivve Collective: Courtney Dailey

Ybor Festival of the Moving Image:
David Audet

Safety Harbor Public Library: Robin Leigh

The Special Collections has been acquiring Ediciones Vigía books for some years; especially attractive in themselves, they build upon USF's extensive collection dedicated to Cuba and the long history between the island and Tampa.

The ten books selected represent a range of authors—among them José Martí, Federico García Lorca, Nancy Morejón, and Ranier Maria Rilke—significant in Cuba's long love affair with literature. In their various forms—accordion folded, bannered, adorned with elements of Cuba's natural environment, sprinkled with cut-outs—they showcase the delightful invention and whimsy displayed by chief designer Rolando Estevez and his crew.

Curated by Noel Smith, Curator of Education/Latin American Art at the USF Institute for Research and Art, and Leslie Patarroyo, art history student and member of the USF Honors College.

Venues

Friday, March 28, 2008
ARThouse, USF College of Visual and Performing Arts

Friday, April 4, 2008
"All Power to the Imagination" conference, New College, Sarasota,
Bookmaking Workshop: 100 Books for 100 People 4–6pm

Saturday, April 5, 2008
Flight 19 Artists' Space, Tampa: "Loud Art" Exhibition
Bookmaking Workshop: "100 Books for 100 People," 7–10pm

When the Moving Thought project was first introduced to our Critical Writing class, we thought of possible events that could relate to the project and possibly sway our thinking about what the artist's book is really about. I immediately thought of a bookmaking workshop where we would show others the process of binding and creating a book that has endless possibilities from the cover to the content. I contacted Gordon Ricketts, who has been doing such workshops for almost 10 years. He was excited, and agreed to help us. Gordon needed to know how many books we were planning on making to order materials. The figure of one hundred books came to mind, and "100 Books for 100 People" became our goal for the venues where bookmaking would take place. As the first dates draw near, we are preparing to introduce the workshop at New College in Sarasota, and at Flight 19, a non-profit gallery located in the train station in Tampa. My hope is that people not only walk away knowing how to make a book, but realizing that this is only part of what the artist's book is about. The other part is expression. — Kimberly Adams

Sunday, April 6, 2008
Safety Harbor Public Library

Saturday, April 12, 2008
"Neighborhood Watch" screening series, Seminole Heights

Friday, April 18, Saturday, April 19 and Sunday, April 20, 2008
Hillsborough Community College, Ybor Festival of the Moving Image
Cyanotype workshop with James Reiman

Cyanotype is a 19th century printing process that creates blue tinted images. Anna Atkins used this process in the mid 1800s to create some of the first photographically printed books. Participants attending the workshop will be encouraged to create their photographs using this process. Special thanks to Lou Marcus, Brad Shanks and all of the USF photography students that made this event possible. — James Reiman

Guest Speaker - Courtney Dailey

The Mobilivve-Bookmobile project is an annual touring exhibition of artist books, zines, and independent publications. Collective members traveled in a vintage Airstream, with an interior designed by Freecell, to a variety of venues in Canada and the U.S. They visited community centers, schools, libraries, festivals, prisons, and artist-run centers—many in remote regions—between 2001 and 2006. Coordinators traveling with the exhibition facilitated workshops, artist talks, and educational forums. The project exposed thousands to a unique collection of independently produced book works. Collective member Courtney Dailey comes from Philadelphia to talk to us about the project.

Friday, April 25, 2008
"Laminate Your Scrapbook!" — "Mobile Thought" trailer installed
at CAM opening reception, 7–9pm

From Revolution to Recreation: Not Only Printed Matter



The books made by Russian artists and the ways in which they were distributed are crucial exemplars for art bookwork in our times. Russian artists of the revolutionary era continued the radical experimentalism of the futurist artists who worked up "zines" around Kruchenykh's zaum poetry—an invented language with unspecific meaning. With the revolution, artists switched their message from cryptic to explicit, as if their abstractions had only been lying in wait for their content. The Soviets used every means of communication they could to propagandize their revolution to the people of a largely illiterate land. To put that across, artists engineered important innovations in billboards, parade floats, kiosks, trains, newspapers and cinema.

An entirely abstract 1923 book collaboration by the poet Maykovsky and the artist El Lissitzky was among the first editions that the artists' bookstore Printed Matter produced when they opened in New York in the late 1970s. Printed Matter was one of a number of artists' bookstores worldwide, and a sister venture to the nearby Franklin Furnace. Both of these venues came into being under the impact of conceptual and performance art—the idea that an exhibition could take place entirely within a book, or that a book might become the jumping off point for direct communication between artist and audience lay behind their entrepreneurial practice. Franklin Furnace now is entirely virtual, working with artists online. Printed Matter is a curious mutable warehouse of artists' multiples of every conceivable type—the book is only one (albeit predominant) of many forms.

It is this extreme elasticity of the idea of a "book" when it is taken up by artists that charges "Moving Thought" with its sense of possibility. We include handmade books—one-of-a-kinds—whereas Printed Matter does not. We include as well "crossover" books courtesy of the national chain Barnes & Noble, and artists' zines. Zines are a subcultural form which has evolved and grown with increasingly accessible photocopying technology, and it is closely tied to comics and fanzines. We might also gesture towards video DVDs, artists' CDs, and downloadable PDF files of artists' books on the internet. But we are certainly making books and their raw materials through on-site bookbinding and photography workshops.

Yet the most significant aspect of the "Moving Thought" project—and the part of it that connects most directly to the Russian revolutionary precedent—is that we are moving out of the box of the white cube gallery, out of our cultural confinement. "Moving Thought" is a moving gallery, seducing people to move into our sphere of creative products through the mouth of leisure. We look like just a passle of tin can tourists, sitting in our torpedo....

Curated by Dr. Alan Moore, Visiting Assistant Professor, School of Art and Art History, USF

In the picture, it's summer 1939, in Ragan Park. People of all ages are gathered around a big black car. Ladies in pretty dresses are distributing books. The Tampa Public Library Free Reading vehicle, courtesy of the federal WPA, is bringing literature to the citizens.

Now 69 years later, graduate studio art students of the USF School of Art and Art History Critical Writing class are hitting the roads of Tampa Bay in another bookmobile project called Moving Thought.

I remembered the nostalgic Burgert Brothers photograph from my own graduate work years ago. Much more, I vividly recall the fun, terror and sheer hard work of being a graduate student, and I am amazed at what the students have been able to accomplish in four short months to put together this big, complicated project.

The idea was simple and clean: to find a vehicle, fill it with artist books, and drive it around the area. This doesn't even begin to describe the many challenges—temporal, conceptual, practical, financial, logistical, bureaucratic, and ad infinitum—presented by the project. Despite it all, the class has come through, big time, with a sexy, shiny Airstream trailer, packed with provocative artist books. The merry band of artists and their fearless leader, Dr. Alan Moore, are piloting the land yacht from Safety Harbor to Ybor City to Sarasota, conducting book workshops and selling books to the citizens.

Numerous people from the university and community have helped to make Moving Thought possible, and they are all listed above. We thank them for their generous assistance and confidence in the project. In particular we are indebted to Frank Bates of Bates RV, who made the beautiful Airstream available to USF.

The USF School of Art and Art History provided seed funds and the means to tow the Airstream, and the Contemporary Art Museum has organized the project, providing guidance, logistical and financial assistance, and a home base. The students have transformed the Museum Store into a book storeroom with the help of museum preparators. After its travels, the Airstream will perch on the lawn outside the USF Contemporary Art Museum for six weeks, as a relic of the Moving Thought adventures and the belief in the power of artist books that inspired them.

Noel Smith
Curator of Education / IRA

Burgert Brothers Image "Courtesy of the Tampa-Hillsborough County Public Library System"

