

Artist's Book Yearbook
2008-2009

Artist's Book Yearbook 2008-2009
Published by Impact Press at
The Centre for Fine Print Research
University of the West of England
Bristol, September 2007

(ISBN 10) 0 9547025 6 5
(ISBN 13) 978 0 9547025 6 4

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Yearbook 2008-2009* are not necessarily those
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CODEX Book Fair. Photo: Susan Filter



CODEX Book Fair. Photo: Susan Filter



Bartkowiak's Best: Book Art from the Hamburg Archives
The San Francisco Center for the Book. Photo: Sarah Bodman

The first CODEX Biennial Symposium and Book Fair, The Fate of the Art: The Hand Printed Book in the 21st Century

13th - 15th February 2007

University of California, Berkeley
and UC Berkeley Art Museum, California, USA

We (Sarah Bodman and Tom Sowden) attended the CODEX fair and Symposium as speaker and exhibitors, and had a great time meeting other artists, librarians, dealers and lecturers. We asked other attendees to share their views on this event for the *Artist's Book Yearbook*, to spread the word about the CODEX Foundation and their work to promote the arts of the book.

The first word goes to the chief organiser who worked so hard to make this inspired event happen:

Peter Koch Codex Foundation

The first biennial CODEX International Book Fair, a benefit in support of the CODEX Foundation, showcased contemporary artists' books, fine press and fine art editions produced by presses, book artists, and artisans. The book fair gathered together book artists, presses, printers, publishers, bookbinders, papermakers, book arts organisations and libraries from around the world in the gracious and light filled Pauley Ballroom overlooking Sproul Plaza on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley. The weather was brilliant sun and flowers were blooming, over 700 visitors came to the fair. The book fair was open to the public: Wednesday, February 14 and Thursday, February 15, 2007.

Word on the floor of the fair was that we had produced a huge success... the thanks were unanimous and loud and the cry for another event was heard throughout. The directors of the Fair and Symposium aggressively advertised the events to the bibliophile community on an international scale and the result was that collectors came from afar to attend and to buy books! The book fair raised over twenty-three thousand dollars for the Codex Foundation primarily due to the tremendous amount of organising for the Fair by board members Peter and Susan and numerous volunteers.

The non-profit Codex Foundation was established in 2005 by Berkeley-based artist/printer/publisher Peter Rutledge Koch and other fine book printers, curators, and aficionados, with the express purpose to promote knowledge and appreciation of the book arts, and to organise a biennial international book fair and symposium in the San Francisco Bay Area.

The Codex Foundation's educational commitment recognises that: "The Art and Craft of the book depend upon the knowledge of traditional forms,

design, and hand-manufacture; as well as familiarity with and a commitment to understanding the latest printing technologies, imaging sciences, contemporary arts, and design." Indeed, the first CODEX International Book Fair provided an opportunity to meet and learn about some of the world's finest private presses, book artists and artisans.

Concurrent with the Book fair, curators, scholars, book artists, and collectors participated in the CODEX Symposium, *The Fate of the Art: The Hand Printed Book in the 21st Century*, with sessions held February 13-15 in the auditorium of the UC Berkeley Art Museum.

Symposium speakers: Sarah Bodman from the Centre for Fine Print Research at the University of West England brought news from the UK; Dr. Stefan Soltek Director of the Klingspor Museum in Offenbach informed us of the work of a select group of book artists in Germany. Philippe Ehrenberg was charming and full of life bringing his own brand of fluxus and post-fluxus interventions from Brazil and Mexico, Robert Bringhurst, the Canadian thinker/poet/typographer and intellectual content provocateur delivered a thoughtful and indeed beautiful presentation on the book, nature, and sacred geometry.

Book Arts programmes in American colleges and universities were represented by librarians Ruth Rogers, Madelyn Garrett and Suzy Taraba from, respectively, Wellesley, University of Utah and Wesleyan. The theme was strategies to introduce and strengthen book arts studies in the academy. Publishers Peter Koch and Carolee Campbell, and Duke Collier, collector, each gave their perspective on the "Fate of the Art" moderated by George Fletcher from the New York Public Library and Roberto Trujillo from Stanford University Library.

The Board of Directors has agreed to the second Biennial Bookfair and Symposium in Berkeley in February 2009. The Theme for the Symposium will be: *PAINTERS, POETS and PRINTERS ... when the rubber hits the road, collaboration and the artist's book.*

The table fee (with one symposium seat) will be 700 USD and the symposium will be 200 USD.

In the interim the CODEX Foundation will publish *BOOK / ART / OBJECT* a comprehensive record of the CODEX 2007 events, in early 2008. The volume will include an introduction by the editor, David Jury, a foreword by Peter Koch, the Symposium proceedings, selected reports from around the world on the "State of the Art," and a lengthy section of illustrated books by the Codex book fair participants (www.codexfoundation.org).

Thoughts About CODEX

Charles Hobson

Imagine thousands of intimate works of art, many filled with arresting images and narratives - others testing visual limits of design and conceptual content. Imagine also talking easily with the artists and makers of the work.



Codex International Book Fair, February 14th - 15th, 2007
UC Berkeley Campus, ASUC Pauley Ballroom

This was the scene recently at the Codex International Book Fair and Symposium held on the campus of the University of California, Berkeley, in February. Here were more than a hundred artists and makers from around the world whose work showed the book as a medium of creative expression like a painting or sculpture. The book in an artist's hands can capture ideas of sequence and flow, it can embody sculptural forms, and it can expressively join words and image - all providing an artistic experience as strong as any sculpture or painting.

Sequence and flow are components that an artist works with to give narrative power to his or her work. *Sequence* helps create a story and *flow* gives the book a quality like a musical score, having each page be part of a melody.



Language of Her Body Robin Price, 2003
Photographs and sumi-e ink on Tosa Hango paper
Edition of 60

Of course, words and image are frequent bedfellows in the book form and when used creatively can create tension and insight with their interplay.



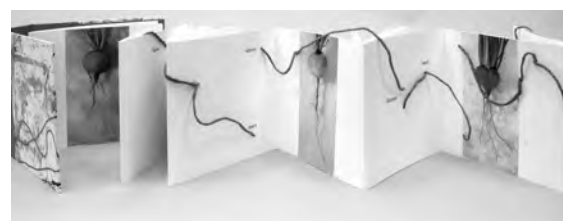
Pablo Neruda The Sea of Isla Negra, 2006, original drawings by Manual Neri and calligraphy by Thomas Ingmire, unique book

The various structures that can be used offer an artist the opportunity to create a form which re-enforces the theme or subject of the book.



Neo Emblemata Nove Daniel Kelm, 2005
Offset and hand painting, mobius strip structure, edition of 21
www.garageannexschool.com

And in terms of viewing the book I invite you to consider the variety of structures of books (such as accordions and fold outs) that allow a range of presentations.



red thread, two women Charles Hobson, 2006
Pastel over digital prints, thread, accordion and sewn signatures
Edition of 38 www.charleshobson.com

The variety and intriguing nature of the artists' books at the Codex Book Fair is a testament to the phenomenon that in a digital age, the book form is emerging as an compelling means of expression in an artist's hand.

Charles Hobson is an artist who has worked with the book as an expressive medium for more than twenty years. He is a faculty member at the San Francisco Art Institute where he teaches about artists' books. His work is in the collections of the Whitney Museum, the Library of Congress, the Museum of Modern Art, University of California, Berkeley, the British Library and the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Stanford University has acquired the archive of his design work, which will be exhibited there in the Spring of 2008. www.charleshobson.com

Emily Artinian

www.emilyartinian.com

I thought the whole thing really raised the standard for book fairs in general:

1. The scheduling of lectures so that vendors could attend enriched the whole experience for everyone - speakers included probably, as this gives them a full audience.
2. The corresponding publication *BOOK/ART/OBJECT*, provides a good platform for documenting and showcasing the event, and makes the table fee very justifiable, from a vendor's point of view.
3. Quite simply, I sold more here than at any other fair previously. There seems to be a mature collecting audience for artists' books attending: maybe this true of the US generally: as I haven't gone to any other US fairs, I wouldn't be able to say if it was specific to Codex within the US.

I do think CODEX had an overall emphasis on fine press work: in comparison the UK fairs seem to be a broader church, incorporating more of the ethos of both underground publishing (what I like to think of as Western samizdat) and also contemporary fine art practice. It would be nice to see Codex expanding out further into these territories, because I think it's greatly needed on the US scene. Codex, with it's project of interrogating 'the state of the art' seems an excellent place to do this.

Impressions of The Codex Symposium, Berkeley, California and the Works on Paper Fair at The Royal Academy

Frances McDowall

The Old Stile Press, UK

This is a modification of the journal for February on our website (www.oldstilepress.com). The two shows that I went to during that month provided an interesting comparison between exhibiting



Photo: Kitty Maryatt

among significant art galleries and at an academic gathering of people delivering papers about aspects of books and institutional collecting.

February was hectic and full of contrasts for me. First, the Works on Paper Fair at the Royal Academy where we met an amazing number of people, most of whom were unfamiliar with the book as art, or even a repository for art. For a long time we have endeavoured to find opportunities for our books to be seen together with works of art not just among books and this proved to be all that we had hoped. Many of the visitors to the fair were hugely excited by the books they encountered (not just ours) and bought enthusiastically. We had been asked at very short notice and the logistics of getting ourselves and books to central London and then staying for five days took some considerable effort followed by a speedy return home to spend a day wrapping and despatching a large number of parcels before setting off to California for Codex Symposium. So I set off on a high, though already exhausted.

I should have known - but it was nevertheless unexpected - I left Britain in snow and arrived in California in rain. When it rains there, it really rains although it had waited for two dry months to tip it all down on my head! My destination was Berkeley (the University Campus was alive with anti-war protests, drumming and singing in the main plaza) where printers, book makers, librarians, collectors were coming together for a symposium and book fair for four days prior to the world famous San Francisco Antiquarian Book Fair. The contrast was great and discussions changed gear because all these folk were deep into books, their history, the way they are produced, presses and the intricacies of their productions. The way they all looked at books was so different from the buzz generated at the Academy. That is not to say there was no buzz here too but of a very different nature. Many of the books produced by Californian artists explore structures and are many layered in terms of imagery and printing method - often startling and eye-catching and make our books seem very cool

and spacious. At first I thought this was going to mean that no-one would choose to buy from us - however, on the third day that changed and we sold to some very enthusiastic people. During the course of the event, however, I had the pleasure of meeting librarians and collectors who had previously only been august names.

There were six other British presses who made it over to California. In all, there were about a hundred presses showing their books, with a sprinkling of papermakers and leather suppliers for bookbinding. It was a remarkable gathering and evidence of a healthy interest in the creation of books - but one of the questions posed was whether an art is dead if it is only appreciated and bought by its creators. The works shown would certainly demonstrate vitality in the huge variety of approach to the creation of books. Coincidentally, the vitality is best demonstrated by the much greater interest shown in books at the Royal Academy show where the buyers were certainly not makers. They did, indeed, find it of added interest to meet the makers rather than the more accustomed (in that context) gallery owners.

Ido Agassi

Even Hoshen, Israel
www.hoshen.com

The Codex Foundation symposium was a very exiting and special event for me; I was impressed with the outcome and I am already waiting anxiously for the next one. This event was definitely worth the long journey to California for me.

In 1994 when my father and I opened our private press, we decided to call it Even Hoshen - Books for Bibliophiles, I still remember the long hours I stood in my booth watching people passing by, looking at the sign above my head, and mumbling with their lips 'Books for bbibliogrhaaffhiles', slowly moving their eyes down towards me looking at me like I am a mad man, the brave ones asked what does it mean, most of them kept on going, but there are some who stayed and looked. Needless to say, I was the only exhibitor with books in limited editions at those places.

So I came up with a sticker, "I am a Bibliophile, and I even know what it means" this phrase, this sticker became very useful, as I display it on my table at book fairs, and then I know, I can recognise those who "speak" my language.

Some times I have the feeling I am alone in the world, it is usually when I do something that takes a very long time - you know those little things that take you forever - and you say to your self, what am



Photo: Tom Sowden

I doing? Will someone even notice? There are a few people in the world that could understand and appreciate what I just did.

At CODEX, I met those people; interesting, friendly, open, from all over the world, coming to see and to be seen, eager to help, sharing information, meeting one another, new and old acquaintances. I think that this point reflects just how important and how helpful it was for me to come to this event. To see I am not alone; there are people out there like me, doing more or less the same thing, facing the same problems.

From an outsiders view, I didn't see any competition between the exhibitors, on the contrary, I saw people introducing one another forwarding knowledge, contacts names, taking catalogues for people of interest, and what I think helped for that matter is the concept-unlike most of the book fairs I attend - the open space, no walls, no borders; full transparency both in the view and the sharing of knowledge. Not so comfortable for the displaying of books, but very important for the atmosphere of those who are handling them.

The Codex International Book Fair

Jane Kennelly

We filled in the green slip with integrity. Customs was scary: a heavily uniformed man under a red light.

'You got anything to sell? You got books? What kinda books?'

'Hand-made books.'

'Whadya mean hand-made books?'

'Well, I get the paper printed in Paris - then I put images on in my studio - then it gets bound into a book.'

'You guys can go!'

So we did - to the Best Western University Inn in West Berkeley, to the welcoming reception at the Faculty Club and to set up our table in the Pauley Ballroom.

It was a great experience. I loved the positive energy of the events - the lectures, seminars, visits to the San Francisco Center for the Book and Peter Koch's studio, and back to the Faculty Club for the final Gala Dinner.

The organisation ran on oiled wheels. Tables were ready when we arrived at the Pauley Ballroom. It was light and airy. Private collectors, university librarians and others, passionate about bookmaking and printing had been invited and were there.

For me, it was a huge professional experience. It seemed to me that bookmaking in the US, unlike the UK, is not deeply divided into 'fine' and 'artists' books, with less of the 'poncy, foo-foo'. The exhibitors had a sensitivity to concept and careful production - there was a great variety of materials and craftsmanship on display and new techniques and methods to appreciate.

Then there was Berkeley itself, with its particular charm of faded hippiedom, eucalyptus-clad campus and every kind of Asian restaurant in the grid of streets to the south. And, of course, there was San Francisco and its rattling cable cars only a BART journey away.



Photo: Kitty Maryatt

Sue Huggins Leopard

Leopard Studio Editions, Rochester, NY, USA

When I heard that the Book Fair in Berkeley was planned I was very excited to be a part of it. It seemed evident that there would be a group of diverse artists coming from different places both literally and figuratively which to my mind promised to be an adventure and provide an interesting mix of what's going on at the moment. I really wanted to go to Berkeley with its rich

heritage of poetry, printing, bookarts and dissent of various kinds. I wasn't disappointed.

I enjoyed waking up in the morning, walking across the street to the museum from the hotel where I stayed to listen to the lectures. First thing in the morning was a good start to the day. Finding a seat wasn't that easy if you didn't arrive on the dot. A lot of eagerness in the air. No one seemed to want to miss what Sarah and Phillippe and Robert Bringhurst and Duke (among others) had to say. I wish I could start every day with one inspiring person (well, what are books for?). You all were, informative, fun, poetic, wacky and generous and I really appreciated each speaker so much. I did miss not having more TIME on the last day for the audience to interact with the panel. It would have been enriching to hear more from the assembled artists whose combined knowledge and experience was about to be witnessed at the Book Fair. TIME rules!

A little TIME between lectures and bookfair to walk through the campus and witness a protest against the War, hear a few old hippies preaching to the choir, and soak up some California sun. Being from Rochester, NY, One of the snow capitals of the Great Lakes, I was in heaven...

On to the Book Fair... Great Venue.... Such a rich gathering of talent. Everyone I spoke to was amazed to see so much in one room at one TIME! Big Energy. People seemed to have travelled from allover as if they were dying to see artists' books and indeed they are which is a great thing. There were outstanding books on display. So many books, so little TIME. The diversity and high quality of the works is what stays with me. There are so many artists doing their own thing which is what it's all about that it seemed like seeing a history of what's going on at the moment. I think that the scales tipped in the direction of fine press books but there were a lot of cutting edge things as well. I happened to be next to the artists from Germany who seemed to be getting lots of attention and across from Booklyn whose stuff is always really interesting.

It was a joy to be there and meet so many wonderful people. The organisers did an outstanding job and Peter Koch deserves kudos for his vision and obvious ability to make things happen. My only real regret is that I didn't have more TIME to get around and look at every book there but I had a lot of activity with my work and hey, I can't complain. I certainly hope they do it again in '09. I'll be there! Maybe they could programme in an extra day so we could spend more TIME just looking!



Peter Koch and Graham Moss at Peter Koch Printers, studio visit for CODEX, Berkeley. Photo: Martyn Ould

Linda K. Smith Board Member, San Francisco Center for the Book, and Information and Instructional Services Librarian, Menlo College

The CODEX symposium and book fair were beyond compare with any similar events I've previously attended. My interest in attending CODEX was two-fold - my love of all things related to artists' books in my role as a board member of the San Francisco Center for the Book; and my interest in the use of artists' books in promoting information literacy in my professional capacity as an academic librarian.

I loved hearing from Sarah Bodman on the wonderful state of artists' books in the U.K. and from the highly entertaining Felipe Ehrenberg. He spoke on things such as a book that was printed, bound, and distributed on a London to Edinburgh train, as well as discussing his view that etching, tattoos, and photocopying are all really the same thing. His notion of the ephemerality of some books that are not meant to be kept, but rather to be remembered or told, was provocative. I was also taken with Stefan Soltek's idea that the heart is itself a double page.

As an academic librarian, I very much loved the talks by Ruth Rogers, Suzy Taraba, and Madelyn Garrett. It was both inspiring and energising to hear how they have incorporated the use of artists' books and fine press editions into the curriculum. It was heartening to hear about their successes and programme growth and to learn that students from Rogers' programme have gone on to earn their MLS degrees in rare books and conservation, touching to the librarian in me. All have been opportunistic in the slow, steady progress they have made in promoting artists' books across the curriculum.

Ehrenberg opened his talk with a Schopenhauer quote that ended with "books are humanity in print." The CODEX symposium was filled with books, humanity, and much promise and excitement for the fate of the hand-printed book. I can hardly wait for the second CODEX to occur.

Robbin Ami Silverberg

For three days I got away from the 'making' in my hermetic world of Dobbin Books and had the opportunity to mingle with colleagues and friends. CODEX was a delightful time for me: I love the Bay area and many people there tug my heart strings. But because of my commitments in Central Europe, I usually go East instead of West. It was a lovely opportunity to turn about, to see what is brewing in the book world of Northern California.

For two very long afternoons at the CODEX Book Fair, I was swamped with intensive presentation, marketing, and sales of my artist books. And, it was a success. At the same time, I was a good deal frustrated that I saw ever so little of the other vendors' books. This was only due to the fact that I came alone to CODEX, and there was a surprisingly endless stream of inquisitive visitors to my table. But what I did see, from a few forays away, delighted me: selections from Quercus Press, CTL Press, Indulgence Press, Ketelhodt + Malutzki, Turkey Press, ... I wanted more looking / reading time!!

For three mornings I swam through the CODEX Symposium talks - a motley crew of presentations: too many lists of books / of book people 'out there', and minimal discourse as to the state of our art or calls for syncretic direction. Insufficient dialogue and far too few questions. Regardless, I was thankful to be there...

For three days in February I was fully enmeshed and immersed - in the 'peripatetic world' we call book arts. Happily so.



Bartkowiak's Best: Book Art from the Hamburg Archives, at The San Francisco Center for the Book, Jan 26-Apr 27, 2007

Bartkowiak's Best: Book Art from the Hamburg Archives, was one the related events organised for CODEX (www.sfc.org/hamburg). Curator Stefan Bartkowiak founded *Forum Book Art* in Hamburg, one of the most active organisations in Europe promoting fine book art. Bartkowiak has recently launched *b-art1*, an international online database of contemporary book art (www.forumbookart.com).



Stefan Bartkowiak speaking at the special event on 14th February for *Bartkowiak's Best: Book Art from the Hamburg Archives*, at The San Francisco Center for the Book.
Photo: Susan Skarsgaard

Tana Kellner

Women's Studio Workshop

I think the conference was very well organised, especially for a first effort. I thought that the fair was too big and arranged in such a way that most buyers did not have the time and/or stamina to visit all the vendors. The most interesting aspect of the conference was a last minute unofficial gathering of educators who teach book arts at a university settings and/or arts centers, where we discussed the value of teaching book arts and our approaches to educating the next generation, something which is crucial if the field is going to prosper.

Susan Viguers

Director, MFA Book Arts/Printmaking Program
The University of the Arts, Philadelphia, USA

The speeches in the symposium part of the Codex event were varied. Sarah Bodman presented an overview of the activity of book artists in UK, supported by a written factual synopsis of the material; the intent seemed not so much that of presenting an argument or slant, but generously disseminating information, educating people, creating a sense of potential interconnections and future possibilities. Quite different was Robert Bringhurst's lyrical visual/verbal performance - which has stayed with me, not only the elegance of his essay, but also his examination of the idea that imperfection is an essential element in the organic, in living art. I also appreciated the new world that was opened about German book artists in Stefan Soltek's provocative talk, a lecture that contrasted significantly with Felipe Ehrenberg's colorful descriptive excerpts from his career as an artist.

The two panels discussed, although of course did not resolve, frequently voiced issues relating to book arts in the academic curriculum and to the status/future of the field.

One thing I applauded about the event was that the speakers and the book fair were not concurrent. The fair had over a hundred tables from all over the world. I spent hours and hours, but even so missed much. It was a luxury for me because I did not have a table and, thus, had the freedom of time and freedom from worrying about sales. I'm sure it was a very different experience for those who had tables.



Second Encyclopaedia of Tlön, by Peter Malutzki and Ines von Kettelhodt. Photo: Susan Viguers

Every opportunity to see fine press books, livres d'artistes, or artists' books brings up the question of how to facilitate experiencing them. Displaying in cases is of such limited value, and digital images of each spread, films of pages being turned are inevitably diluted (or at least changed) visual experiences and exclude the physical, tactile experience that is (usually) such an important component (conceptually, as well as sensually) of the book. Book fairs aren't ideal: too many people crowding around a table, being watched (by someone invested in your response, although this has the advantage of someone to answer questions and give context), needing to stand (my back bothered me), and simply the overstimulation of more books to experience than you can absorb. But, still, book fairs offer an extraordinary opportunity.



Anjelique and the Pearl Necklace Donald Glaister.
Photo: Susan Viguers

Many United States artists whom I admire were represented - Charles Alexander, Inge Bruggeman, Carolee Campbell, Julie Chen, Leonard Seastone, Barabara Tetenbaum, artists published by the Women's Studio Workshop, among others, many of whom had pieces I hadn't seen. Donald Glaister's new book, *Angelique and the Pearl Necklace*, is pure poetry-a fusion of the physical, visual, and verbal.

Among those stand-out experience of works by artists and presses new to me were: the lively work of the Righton Press Group; the inexhaustibly provocative, Borgesian, ambitious *Second Encyclopaedia of Tlön* by Peter Malutzki and Ines von Ketelhodt; the stunning 19th and early 20th century pattern books of woodblock prints used by the kimono industry (Mitsui Fine Arts Inc.); and the conceptually and visually elegant work by Paul Heimbach (Galerie Druck & Buch).

I am intrigued by reinterpretations/reincarnations of great literary works and I was fascinated, in different ways, by Caroline Saltzwedel's *Ulysses in Hamburg* (Hirundo Press), Sandow Birk's *Divine Comedy*, set in present-day Los Angeles (Trillium Press), and Pedro Villalba Ospina's *Hundred Years of Solitude* (Taller Bosque Primario).



Photo: Susan Skarsgaard

Karen Bleitz ARC editions

Arc adventure to the wild west...

"There's no better way to peddle your wares than a road trip..." as Ronald King would say. So, with that in mind, with Google Earth at our fingertips, and with brave hearts (and limited funds), we set about planning for a great book adventure that we hoped would bring us fame, fortune, and a new all-American book posse to swing with in the wilds of California.

That was the plan, anyway... and I could fill many pages telling you all about it... but the question at

hand is, "What did you make of Codex?" So, I'll cut to the chase and tell you this...

Yes, it was an adventure. And yes, it certainly was a new frontier to be explored. Combining the event with a road trip to visit libraries, galleries, and museums makes the airfare worth your while and allows you to not stand around looking lost and friendless at the many social satellite events that were all bundled into the Codex package.



Photo: Sam Winston

The objectives of the Codex Foundation were quite clearly laid out by Peter Koch as he introduced the first speakers at the symposium. The goal was to "create a market place" for books, ideas, and knowledge (this includes making, promotion and marketing skills, etc.). "And were they met?" you ask. Well, yes.

The idea that this gathering, drinking and dining (see L. symposium ~ "drinking party," from Gk. symposium "convivial gathering of the educated") should cause people, ideas and energies to meet and ferment was one wholeheartedly embraced by the crowd. Fuelled by canapés and wine treats, artists shared ideas, booksellers sold, librarians exchanged hot tips, and collectors could feast their eyes on a smorgasbord of old and new delights.



Stefan Bartkowiak and Steve Woodall at the San Francisco Center for the Book. Photo: Dmitry Sayenko

Luckily for us, this proved to be the ideal atmosphere in which to launch the foundling Arc Editions. As far as profile raising events go - Codex proved its potential for allowing work to be seen



Photo: Karen Bleitz

and critiqued by people who are often difficult to get an appointment with. I will never again underestimate the power of BVM (boozy-viral-marketing) as the most effective tool for generating so much interest and awareness in such a short time.

Holding down the fort at the book fair was exciting and intense (our voices being the first victims of the battle). Sadly, I didn't get to look at more than a few of the other tables. Even with 3 of us, there was never a moment to get away and explore.

But, rumour has it that there was lots of praise for the assemblage by all. (On the more gossipy side... I heard a few people say that there was a bit of a 'fine press' bias and that there could have been more young fresh faces about... so I guess that's a message to all ye youth out there...)

The symposium (in many ways, the heart of the Codex) - had some very interesting and inspiring talks - and the selection of speakers showed that a considerable effort was made to try and raise awareness of issues that were important for academics, artists and collectors alike. And now that our eyeballs are all seeing more clearly, if not just yet eye-to-eye on everything, I would hope that the focus of the talks could move closer to the books themselves.

Seeing more examples of what's happening in the international scene (for example, the talks by Sarah Bodman & Stefan Soltek) would be good. More talks about inspiration and philosophy



Bartkowiak's Best: Book Art from the Hamburg Archives at The San Francisco Center for the Book.

Photo: Caroline Salzwedel

(Felipe Ehrenberg & Robert Bringhurst) would be good. And finally, I think academic talks (that I hope would explore, with fresh eyes and minds, the directions that contemporary artists are taking and how the language of the artist is being explored through the medium of the book, etc.), would be a much welcomed addition to the symposia of the future.

So, to summarise... I had a brilliant time and look forward to an even better, bigger Codex in 2009.

Be there or be square, as they say!