

UN COUP
A Throw of the Dice

DE DÉS JAMAIS

Artists Inspired by a Visual Text

N'ABOLIRA

LE HASARD



UCI Libraries

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An exhibit in
the UC Irvine Langson Library's
Muriel Ansley Reynolds Exhibit Gallery

November 2003 - April 2004

LE HASARD

Curated by

UCI Professors Emeriti
Renée Riese Hubert and Judd Hubert

Foreword

Welcome to the UC Irvine Libraries' fall 2003 exhibit, *A Throw of the Dice: Artists Inspired By a Visual Text*. I am particularly pleased that we have such an exceptional exhibit as the first to open in the Jack Langson Library, as the former Main Library was rededicated on October 16, 2003.

A Throw of the Dice was curated by Professors Emeriti Renée Riese Hubert and Judd D. Hubert, both of whom joined the faculty of UCI's School of Humanities in 1967. They have actively continued their scholarly endeavors since their official retirement in 1987, and this stunning exhibit is but one example of their recent directions. Their jointly authored book *The Cutting Edge of Reading: Artists' Books* (1999) is but one of many works that have established their renown as authorities on the interplay between literary texts and the work of visual artists.

The Huberts have long shared a particular interest in artists' interpretations of Stéphane Mallarmé's great experimental poem *Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard* (*A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance*), and the recent acquisition by our Department of Special Collections and Archives of an unusual edition of this masterwork inspired them to further explore or revisit other editions as well. In fact, their research for the exhibit led us to acquire yet another dazzling edition that is extraordinary for the beauty of both its visual interpretation and its typography. Thus, their exhibit reveals the synergy we always seek as we build research collections to support and advance the work of UCI's community of scholars in their pursuit of new knowledge.

We were honored to welcome Eric Haskell of Scripps College in Claremont as our opening speaker on November 17, 2003. Professor Haskell studied under the Huberts at UCI, and his doctoral dissertation on illustrations of Oscar Wilde's *Salomé* set the stage for his own distinguished career as an expert in text-image inquiry.

On behalf of both the Partners of the UC Irvine Libraries and the entire library staff, we welcome you to this exhibit and invite you to return to view others in the future.

Gerald J. Munoff
University Librarian

A Throw of the Dice

Artists Inspired by a Visual Text

Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) is considered one of France's greatest writers, and by many sophisticated critics, the poet who comes closest to perfection. His influence on modern poetry is great and pervasive, and his work foreshadowed the typographical experimentation of later poets' work. With publication of the experimental poem *Un Coup de dés* (translated as *A Throw of the Dice*) in 1897, he inaugurated a typography and page design capable of expressing movement in space and time.

Thanks to Mallarmé's modernist technique, the text attracts attention to itself and metamorphoses into a remarkably meaningful visual artifact, one that can be said to have led directly to the development of the 20th-century phenomenon known as the artists' book. Moreover, *Un Coup de dés* influenced the development of poetic genres such as concrete poetry, where textual visibility is the determining factor.

This exhibit explores the visual and textual interpretations of Mallarmé's great poem that have been created from the 1960's to the present. The books are arranged in five sections: limited edition artists' books, early and scholarly editions, parodies, translations, and recent artists' books influenced by *Un Coup de dés*. Taken as a whole, they illustrate the extraordinary life and influence of Mallarmé's poetic and typographic masterpiece.



Artists' Books

Artists' books generally fall into two categories: limited edition *livres de peintres* illustrated by famous artists, and books produced modestly, sometimes in large print runs. The limited editions are expensive and appeal to wealthy collectors, the inexpensive artists' books to sophisticated readers. The inexpensive variety depends on bookwork, including typography, conceived by a single artist. Both types are represented in this exhibit.

Mallarmé played a major part in the creation of both varieties. He collaborated with Edouard Manet in two of the very first *livres de peintres*, a translation of Edgar Allan Poe's poems in 1875 and Mallarmé's own *L'Après-midi d'un faune* in 1876. Previously, Manet had illustrated a poetic text by Charles Cros, the inventor of color photography.

Initially published in 1897 in a widely-circulated intellectual magazine, *Un Coup de dés* inaugurated the economically-produced artists' book. But it took some sixty years for Mallarmé's example to be followed, with the enthusiastic emergence of numerous artists' books in the 1960s. In France, England, Germany, Italy, Mexico, and especially in America, hundreds of artists' books of all descriptions still are being produced and made available to today's general public.

In ordinary illustrated books, the images convey the meaning of text without relating to the typography. Thus, apart from professional typographers, readers will pay little attention to the ways the text is printed. In *livres de peintres*, however, while focusing mainly on the graphics, readers do appreciate the beauty of the printing and the handmade paper. In contemporary artists' books and in some pioneering masterpieces, notably Blaise Cendrars and Sonia Delaunay's *La Prose du Transsibérien et de la petite Jehanne de France* (1913) and Guillaume Apollinaire's *Calligrammes* (1918), the reader no longer can separate the image from the text. In this exhibit, Ruth Laxson's *Wheeling* (item 15) and Albert Ayme's *L'Après midi d'un faune* (item 5) integrate text and graphics beautifully and in different ways. In Laxson's artists' book, typography requires the reader's full attention, such as when it playfully assumes the shape of a vintage car or evokes the aftermath of an accident. In Ayme's *livre de peintre*, the swooping graphics, together with the multicolored overlapping text, convey the dramatic gestures and movements of Mallarmé's libidinous Faun.



The Poet

Mallarmé's mastery of the poetic art led his fellow versifiers to name him "the prince of poets." In long texts such as *L'Après-midi d'un faune* and in his sonnets, he attained heights far beyond the scope of his contemporaries. Before discovering his own style, he imitated Victor Hugo and then Baudelaire. He also wrote prose poems, a genre created by Aloisius Bertrand and perfected by Baudelaire that, together with free verse, put into question the value and indeed the very existence of standard versification. Mallarmé often revised his poems, gradually adding to their beauty and their difficulty.

Married at the age of 21 and soon burdened with a family, Mallarmé taught English in secondary schools, first in the provinces, where he often had to deal with recalcitrant students, and finally in a more auspicious Parisian lycée until his long awaited retirement. He wrote textbooks containing sentences and paragraphs almost as difficult to understand, let alone translate into English, as his poetry. This may account for the lack of receptivity on the part of provincial youth.

Mallarmé was noted for a somewhat self-deprecating sense of humor that occasionally surfaces in his most serious texts. For example, in the opening sentence of his preface to *Un Coup de dés*, he states his wish that his introductory note be read by nobody and, if perused, be immediately forgotten. Nonetheless, the preface clearly expresses his intentions, including the creation of an essentially cerebral musical score based on verbal spacing.

The Poem

Posing as an elderly sea captain, the poet's persona in *Un Coup de dés* evokes a star-encrusted but nonetheless meaningless universe doubling as the watery grave of a doomed humanity whose philosophical questioning will go unanswered. Whatever its many meanings, the poem's effect depends on Mallarmé's skilled page settings and typography. Printed in a variety of fonts, the lettering, together with calculated blank spaces, moves downward like a sinking ship while vainly attempting to remain afloat by crossing over from one page to the next.

The poem's title is intriguing. The word "coup" always evokes a purposeful action, as in "coup de poing" (punch) and "coup d'état" (implying the overthrow of a government). In the extended version of the poem's title, *Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard*, the Arabic word "hasard" means "a throw of the dice." Thus, "A throw of the dice abolishes a throw of the dice."

Praised at first by only a few friends, including the distinguished writers Paul Valéry and André Gide, *Un Coup de dés* has attracted an incredible number of commentaries. Robert Greer Cohn has provided the most searching and detailed critical interpretation in his Mallarmé's *"Un coup de dés": an exegesis* (New York: AMS Press, c1949). Virginia La Charité's *The Dynamics of Space: Mallarmé's "Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard"* (Lexington, Kentucky: French Forum, 1987) is another notable interpretation.

Throughout the exhibit, the same page of the poem's text is shown repeatedly to permit comparison of the differing interpretations applied by artists, printers, and translators.



Publication History

The initial appearance of the poem in May 1897 in the international journal *Cosmopolis* (item 6) failed in several respects, most notably its size, to satisfy Mallarmé's typographic requirements. The posthumous first book edition of the poem published by Gallimard in 1914 (item 7) suffered from the same defect. A perfectly faithful printing of *Un Coup de dés* that was planned by Mallarmé, with illustrations by Odilon Redon, failed to materialize due to the poet's untimely death in 1898. The corrected proofs of this aborted edition did, however, enable Mitsou Ronat to publish a text in conformity with Mallarmé's instructions in 1980 (item 10), nearly eighty years after the poem's initial publication.

Translations

At least eight English renditions of *Un Coup de dés* have been published. While remaining faithful to the original, the work of these thoughtful translators differs considerably, each from the other, no doubt because *Un Coup de dés*, far more suggestive than referential, lends itself to a multiplicity of interpretations. Among the translations, Daisy Aldan's (item 4) is the most flowing and hence the most readable. But we can hardly pay the original the same complement! Weinfield (item 9), who translated all of Mallarmé's poems, sticks closest to the French text. Although Waldie (item 13) takes far more liberties, he never really betrays the original. Crawford's (item 11) is rather heavy and prosaic.

A thorough study of how these translations differ in their interpretations of *Un Coup de dés* would certainly increase our understanding of this hermetic poem.

The Exhibit

A Throw of the Dice was curated by UCI Professors Emeriti Renée Riese Hubert and Judd Hubert, who have published extensively on both artists' books and Mallarmé, including an article titled "Masson and Mallarmé's *Un Coup de dés*: An esthetic comparison" (*Nineteenth-Century French Studies*, vol. 18, no. 3-4 (1990), pp. 508-523). They also co-authored *The cutting edge of reading: artists' books*, published by Granary Books (New York, 1999).

The books exhibited are from the Department of Special Collections and Archives in the UC Irvine Libraries and generous loans from four sources: the Huberts' personal collection, Professor Edward Rex of UC Berkeley, the Department of Special Collections in the UC Davis Library, and the Mandeville Special Collections Library at UC San Diego. We thank them all for their generosity.

A Throw of the Dice



1. Albert Dupont, artist and publisher.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard.

Poème bloc poème. Désir-hasard-dés.

Paris: L'Inéditeur, 1998. 41 copies printed.

Albert Dupont, the innovative successor of Vizat, a famous publisher of limited edition artists' books, faithfully reproduced Mitsou Ronat's edition (item 10) on vinyl sheets as transparent as glass, thus deliberately reducing the text's readability. In a second section consisting of the same number of pages on which he had printed the text, he created a dazzling pop-art visual/verbal accompaniment to, and a postmodern commentary on, Mallarmé's prose poem. The verbal part, no less visual than the imagery, consists of puns initially set in motion by the title: *Désir-hasard-dés*. It seems that desire has much to do with a dangerous throw of the dice.

The vinyl sheets are housed in an impressive wooden box featuring on one side removable plastic dice, cleverly illustrated but of little use in a crap game.

2. André Masson, artist.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard.

Paris: Amateurs du Livre et de l'Estampe Moderne, 1961.

Lithographs by André Masson. 102 copies printed.

For this magnificent edition the noted Surrealist painter André Masson (1896-1987) lithographed in his own hand Mallarmé's printed text. While following the page settings of the 1914 Gallimard edition (item 7), his polychrome printed lettering and cursive writing combine with a compelling continuity of interpretive images. In this colorful rendition of Mallarmé's sacrosanct typographical masterpiece, Masson has paid homage to a poem he had admired since early youth. He has successfully dramatized and intelligently interpreted every overt aspect of the poem. As a *livre*

de peintre, this completely lithographed book stands out as one of Masson's most noteworthy efforts. He had previously composed another entirely lithographed book, *Voyage à Venise*, in which he illustrated his own text.

An early member of the Surrealist group, Masson reacted to André Breton's automatic writing derived from the unconscious by creating automatic or completely spontaneous drawings. Experimental to a fault, Masson introduced the use of sand in painting and invented new techniques in lithography and colored etching. He spent World War II in America, where his Abstract Surrealism played an important part in the rise of Abstract Expressionism as practiced in particular by his friend and follower Arshile Gorky. A careful reader, Masson illustrated many books, usually limited editions. Unlike some other avant-garde artists, he took care of every detail in the production of his graphic accompaniments.

On loan from the collection of Renée Riese Hubert and Judd Hubert.

3. Christiane Vielle, artist.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard.

Paris: Alain Baudry, "Aux Amateurs de livres," 1989.

Aquatints by Christiane Vielle.

93 copies printed.

Publishers of limited edition artists' books traditionally have commissioned famous or promising painters to illustrate their work. More recently, artists, many of them women, have taken charge of the entire operation partly because major producers of artists' books, notably Maeght and Skira, no longer exist. This trend, inaugurated in the sixties by Ania Staritsky, freed artists from all but financial constraints.

Christiane Vielle has "illustrated" Mallarmé's poem with aquatints, a demanding procedure that allowed her to produce dramatic shadings of blacks and grays so

A Throw of the Dice



well suited to the dynamic movement that predominates throughout the poem. A succession of vertical and horizontal thrusts expresses the ship's inexorable descent into the abyss, countered by vain efforts to remain above the surface. Moreover, the images convey the deadly aftermath of the shipwreck.

Mallarmé had written commemorative “Tombeau” poems for Poe and Baudelaire. In his final year, he composed *Un Coup de dés*, a poetic tomb for all humanity and perhaps for the world itself. Vielle has focused on that ultimate catastrophe. Her inventive use of flaps may correspond to the overlap between facing pages of Mallarmé's sentences as well as to his use of spacing. In spite of their enormous size, these powerful aquatints never overwhelm the text. While conveying the violence of the shipwreck, they allow the poem, so beautifully printed by Da Ros, the last of the great French typographers, to remain triumphantly afloat. Not only have Vielle and Da Ros respected Mallarmé's intentions, but by the use of striking black and red lettering they have fulfilled the poet's fondest expectations, perhaps even more so than Ronat's scholarly reconstruction (item 10).

4. Ellsworth Kelly, artist.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

Un Coup de dés.

New York: Limited Editions Club, 1992.

Lithographs by Ellsworth Kelly.

Accompanied by a translation by Daisy Aldan.

300 copies printed.

Although the pages are slightly larger and the letterpress blacker and smaller than in her definitive reconstruction of Mallarmé's intended typographical layout, Mitsou Ronat (item 10) could hardly fault this beautifully printed edition. Even more minimal than Ian Tyson's (item 11), Kelly's visual accompaniment consists in dramatically dividing the folio pages into two sections. Although in no way mimetic, the lithograph exhibited expresses perhaps the descending movement of the text and the doomed ship. By its sustained blackness, the volume as a whole suggests the inevitability of death.

As noted above, Mallarmé composed several texts entitled “Tombeaux” commemorating poets such as Poe and Baudelaire. Ellsworth Kelly may indeed have created a definitive monument for Mallarmé, whose *Un Coup de dés* is considered his final message. In a dazzling suite added to a few copies of the book, Kelly, freed from his commitment to Mallarmé, showed his true colors.

Ellsworth Kelly never had any trouble in producing representational art, as proven by an early self-portrait and his ongoing practice of drawing plants. At the age of twenty-five, he moved to Paris, where he spent the next six years frequenting the studios of artists (notably Jean Arp) and avant-garde writers. During his exile in Paris, he may very well have developed his interest in Mallarmé. Based on contrasting surfaces and colors, his so-called minimalism is simultaneously experimental and intuitive. And it must have required countless hours of practice to attain the perfect balance so frequently achieved in his paintings and graphic works.

On loan from the collection of Edward Rex.

5. Albert Ayme, artist.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

L'Après-midi d'un faune: eglogue.

Paris, 1966. Original watercolors and embossings by Albert Ayme.

66 copies printed.

L'Après-midi d'un faune first appeared in 1876 in a limited edition with etchings by Edouard Manet, who had produced the three earliest *livres de peintres*. This edition produced by Albert Ayme is exhibited because it shows the influence of Mallarmé's innovative typography. It features complex images by Ayme, a sophisticated painter who has written profusely about the use of color in abstract art. A brief story will illustrate Ayme's devotion to the impact of color. The city of Arles commissioned several distinguished artists to exhibit paintings in homage to Van Gogh. By focusing on one of Van Gogh's objects such as a boot or a chair, most results were at best trivial, whereas Ayme's variations on the color yellow struck the perfect note.



Ayme's illustrations differ radically from Manet's earlier faithful rendition of the text. Not only has Ayme captured the movement and spirit of the poem, but the relationship between his imagery and the typography marks a daring departure from all editions of *Un Coup de dés*. Indeed, the many-colored, pochoir-printed text, together with the imagery, join in a sort of dance moving continuously throughout the book. The typographer, Martine Saillard, must have followed the poet's instructions for *Un Coup de dés*, as lines overlap and cross over from one page to the next. The harmony created between a remarkably visual text and abstract illustrations transforms the poem into a musical composition.

An engineer by profession, Albert Ayme was noted for the still lifes he painted in his spare time. At the age of forty, he quit his government job to lead the financially insecure life of an artist. His background in mathematics has had a lasting influence on his paintings and graphics, which are noteworthy for their linear and chromatic precision. And science definitely plays an important part in his writings where, as Josef Albers had done before him, he developed theories about color. The philosopher Jean-François Lyotard, who taught for several years at UC Irvine, devoted a book to Ayme's accomplishments as a painter and as a theoretician. Ayme is closely associated with Martine Saillard, the publisher of Edition Traversière.

Editions

6. Stéphane Mallarmé.

Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard.

Issued in: *Cosmopolis*, no. 17 (May 1897), pages 417-427.

Un Coup de dés first appeared in *Cosmopolis*, a truly international journal published in London from 1896-1898 featuring texts in several languages. The exhibited issue contains creative writing and scholarly essays in English, German, and French without the need of helpful translations. The table of contents is in German. In our age of so-called globalization, would any journal care to follow this example? In addition to *Un Coup de dés*, the issue features writings by a star-studded list of authors, including Kipling, Anatole France, Stuart Mill, Turgenev, and Nietzsche.

Unfortunately, the small octavo pages of *Cosmopolis* could hardly accommodate all of Mallarmé's typographic demands. Nevertheless, its text probably served as a model for the 1914 edition.

On loan from the Department of Special Collections, University of California at Davis.

7. Stéphane Mallarmé.

Un Coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard.

Paris: Gallimard, Éditions de la Nouvelle revue française,
1914 (1952 reprint).

Published 16 years after the poet's death, this is the first book edition of the poem, probably based on the *Cosmopolis* text. It was the best available edition until Ronat's 1980 reconstruction (item 10). André Masson based his calligraphic transcription (item 2) on this edition.



8. Stéphane Mallarmé.

Oeuvres complètes.

Paris: Gallimard, 1945. (Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, no. 65)

Text annotated by Henri Mondor and C. Jean-Aubry.

Although this is the only edition containing all of Mallarmé's published texts together with textual variants, it is by no means a complete publication of Mallarmé's writings, as the poet's voluminous correspondence is not included. In spite of his ponderings on empty pages, however, Mallarmé's output fills twice as many pages as that of Rabelais, who was noted for his exuberance, in the Pléiade edition of his works.

9. Stéphane Mallarmé.

Collected Poems.

Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994.

Translated and with a commentary by Henry Weinfield.

This bilingual edition contains a faithful reprinting, if reduced in size, of *Un Coup de dés*, accompanied by Weinfield's translation and comments. Thanks to his intimate knowledge of all the other poems, his translation compares very favorably with other renditions. His brief comments on various poems are always pertinent and useful to students.

Parodies

10. Mitsou Ronat and Tibor Papp, editors.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard.

Paris: Change errant / d'atelier, 1980.

48 copies printed.

Ronat based her reconstruction of Mallarmé's text on the corrected proofs of the never-published 1898 edition, and she thus justifiably claims that hers is the only edition that in size, typography, and spacing faithfully follows the poet's instructions.

The printing of a twelve-page poem in so large a format must have dissuaded most potential publishers, and it is perhaps for this reason that Ronat added a learned commentary, as well as parodies by several postmodern writers such as Jacques Roubaud. Instead of Gallimard, Mallarmé's official publisher, the obscure avant-garde firm Change errant / d'atelier published this important volume.

Roubaud, a mathematician and perhaps the most famous member of the experimental OULIPO group of writers, contributed one of the parodies despite his admiration for Mallarmé. Such parodies, including Albert Dupont's (item 1), cannot be construed as attacks but rather as ways of relieving the tension arising from Mallarmé's overwhelming accomplishment.

On loan from the collection of Renée Riese Hubert and Judd Hubert.



Translations

11. Ian Tyson, artist. Neil Crawford, translator.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance.

London: Tetrads, 1985. Translation by Neil Crawford.

Aquatints by Ian Tyson.

40 copies printed.

Geometric designs by the British minimalist graphic artist Ian Tyson accompany a translation of Mallarmé's poem. The pagination and typography faithfully follow Ronat's edition (item 10) and thus are faithful to Mallarmé's intentions. The complete separation between text and graphics suggests that instead of attempting an interpretation of the text, Tyson has produced a parallel work of art showing affinities, if not with Mallarmé's practice, at least with his aesthetics.

Unlike the other artists exhibited, Ian Tyson is primarily noted for his bookwork. He is the owner and director of Tetrads Press. Associated at first with Ronald King's famous Circle Press in London, he can be regarded as the dean of British book artists. Indeed, he periodically organizes exhibits and provides detailed catalogues of their work. Tyson and his book artist son Matthew produce their creative works in a village in the south of France.

On loan from the Mandeville Special Collections Library, the University of California at San Diego.

12. Brian Coffey, translator.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

Dice Thrown Never Will Annul Chance, a Poem.

Dublin: Dolmen Press, 1965.

Translation by Brian Coffey.

One of the eight or more English translations of this untranslatable text, Coffey's was done with some help from Robert Greer Cohn, the foremost Mallarmé scholar.

Coffey's translation of the poem's title is interesting in contrast to other translators' versions. "Dice thrown" is in the past, while "will annul" indicates a future. Coffey's irony in no way betrays Mallarmé, but he does underplay the idea of activity. When a translator focuses on one aspect, he or she loses sight of the others. But such subtleties of the translator's art are rarely explained, as a poetic translation with footnotes would be unreadable.

13. Gary Young, artist. D. J. Waldie, translator.

Stéphane Mallarmé.

Poem: A Throw of the Dice Will Never Abolish Chance.

Santa Cruz, Calif.: Greenhouse Review Press, c1990.

Translation by D. J. Waldie. Woodcut illustrations by Gary Young.

60 copies printed.

Gary Young's woodcut designs precede and follow the poem, evoking a page in a book while suggesting the descent expressed in Mallarmé's poem. Like Ronat's reconstruction (item 10), this American translation is printed in accordance with the proofs of the aborted 1898 edition. Waldie has added to his thoughtful translation a searching commentary on this hermetic text, together with his ideas on language and translation. Both Young and Waldie are graduates of UCI.

Influences

14. Henri Chopin.

Luce Lune.

Paris: Editions Traversière, 2001.

161 copies printed.

Henri Chopin broke away from traditional practices as a poet, musician, and visual artist. His long poem on the phases of the moon displays on every page visual inventiveness in typography. Some of the alphabetical imagery is produced by means of a calibrated typewriter that radically reduces the spacing between letters and enables the poet/artist to create compact designs consisting of an unrecognizable alphabet. Thanks to Martine Saillard, who designed and printed this artists' book, the text itself becomes, even more obviously than in *Un Coup de dés* because of the use of color, a visual work in its own right that meaningfully enhances Chopin's hermetic poetry.

On loan from the collection of Renée Riese Hubert and Judd Hubert.

15. Ruth Laxson.

Wheeling.

Atlanta: Press 53 Plus, 1992.

200 copies printed.

Laxson's description of her book suggests affinities with, and differences from, *Un Coup de dés*. The dice are replaced by cars—vintage Fords, of course. And instead of a shipwrecked sea captain, humanity consists of accident-prone drivers and their driven victims. Laxson's use of present participles creates an air of continuity amid disruptions. On the selected page, the wheel provides the only blank space among garbled letters tightly packed within a frame. The letter W is awarded the starring role.

Laxson has produced a number of artists' books. She produces her work almost entirely by herself, planning the text, the typography, the illustrations, the bookwork, and even the binding of all her creations. And in artists' books, bookwork is all important.

On loan from the collection of Renée Riese Hubert and Judd Hubert.

The primary objective of the UC Irvine Libraries Exhibits Program is to support the research and instructional missions of UCI by interpreting and publicizing the richness, diversity, and unique strengths of the resources of the UC Irvine Libraries.

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