

Addendum

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There is most likely no art object with as many different and diffuse definitions as the artist's book. General art enthusiasts are scarcely aware of the notoriously opaque artist's book / *livre d'artiste* / *libro d'artista* / *Künstlerbuch*, but it has become something of an icon and cult object in the history of art and library science. In and of itself, the book is one of the most functional, liberal, and inexpensive means of transmitting information in the history of our culture. But what role do artists' books play in this?

The one hundred and twelve interviews on artists' books gathered here – about the Swiss within an international context – contain about four hundred and fifty questions, but far more than four hundred and fifty answers, because the questions sparked over six hundred and fifty annotations, associations, and anecdotes. This complex of questions and answers – resulting from exceptional and intimate conversations with renowned international specialists and select makers of artists' books – covers about one thousand five hundred titles. It's a big number, but small compared to the one hundred and fifty thousand plus artists' books held as part of the Swiss National Library's collection, comprising three and a half million books and periodicals in all. It was therefore only possible to touch upon a fraction of everything there is to be said about types, categories, genres, contents, terms, and events having to do with artists' books, about concepts, dimensions, and facets in different areas, about formats and materials. Although this publication takes in the whole panoply of artists' books from the earliest illuminated codices – or cave paintings dating back to over thirty thousand years – to ephemera and the most current fanzines, and has even addressed ideal and “real” market and collector value, as well as the varied life of artists' publications in general, the result is akin to the experience of interviewing Andy Warhol: “It seemed that the more pointed [Benjamin] Buchloh's questions became, the more elusive Andy's answers were.... In the end, I realized that by saying so little, Warhol was inverting the traditional form of the interview; I ended up knowing much more about Buchloh than I did Warhol.”¹

High Times: Do you read a lot?

Warhol: Not too much. I mostly look at the pictures.²

¹ Kenneth Goldsmith (ed.), *I'll Be Your Mirror: The Selected Andy Warhol Interviews, 1962–1987* (New York: Carroll & Graf, 2004), xxxii.

² Glenn O'Brien, *High Times Greats: Interview with Andy Warhol* (from the August 1977 issue of *High Times*), *High Times* (online), 6 August 2020, <https://hightimes.com/culture/high-times-greats-interview-with-andy-warhol/>.