



**DATE: June 19, 2018
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**GETTY RESEARCH INSTITUTE PRESENTS
ARTISTS AND THEIR BOOKS / BOOKS AND THEIR ARTISTS**

The exhibition draws on the Getty Research Institute's extensive collection of artists' books and features work by more than 40 contemporary artists

LOS ANGELES, CA – For most of us, books are a central part of daily life, but for artists they are also an essential medium for contemporary art – both as a tradition to be challenged and a form for experimentation—as much as sculpture, painting, and other classic forms of artmaking. On view at the Getty Research Institute from June 26 through October 28, 2018, *Artists and Their Books / Books and Their Artists* presents more than 40 of the liveliest and most unexpected examples of artists' books from the GRI's Special Collections.

"Books are at the heart of the Getty Research Institute's collections, from fifteenth and sixteenth-century illustrated editions to the avant-garde experiments of the early 20th century to our large and varied collection of more than 6,000 books made by artists from the 1950s to today," said Andrew Perchuk, acting director of the Getty Research Institute. "These striking works often make their way into the GRI's collections through our relationships with contemporary artists or they come as part of artists' archives, which we collect in depth. Artists' books resonate with the GRI's



Barbara Fahrner (German, b. 1940) and Daniel E. Kelm (American, b. 1951). *The Philosopher's Stone*, 1992. Museum board, paper, stainless steel wires, tubing, colored ink, pencil, watercolor. Unique. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 94-B18918. © Barbara Fahrner and Daniel E. Kelm

interest in exploring creative processes and are a fundamental and often understudied element of art history. I am certain our visitors will find these extraordinary examples evocative and compelling."

Artists' books occupy a creative space between traditional books and contemporary works of art, often questioning what a book can be. This highly visual and experiential exhibition focuses on artists' books that can be unpacked, unfolded, or read in alternative ways. Some are made to be shown on the wall or displayed as sculptures or installations. The exhibition highlights the myriad incarnations and innovative roles for books in contemporary culture.

"When artists make or design books, they delve into the possibilities of this distinctive cultural object in ways that expand our notions of what a book can be," said Marcia Reed, chief curator of the Getty Research Institute and one of the curators of the exhibition. "The book holds a special status in contemporary art practice, and we look forward to sharing examples from this critical collecting area of the GRI with wider audiences. Because the GRI's collections of artists' books are not well known, for several years we have been working on a publication that shares selected works from postwar and contemporary collection of artists' books. This exhibition and the related catalogue is born of that research. Together this stunningly designed volume and the exhibition of selected artists' books—slightly different from the book—show the breadth of our collection of artists' books as well as illustrating how books designed and made by artists extend the boundaries of the GRI's rare book collections."

Some of the artists in the exhibition, such as Tauba Auerbach and Dieter Roth specialize in making art in the form of books, or have established small presses, like Sam Francis' Lapis Press in Santa Monica and Venice and Felicia Rice's Moving Parts Press in Santa Cruz. Many others who are primarily known as sculptors, painters, or performance artists have also experimented in artists' books, including Ellsworth Kelly, Anselm Kiefer, Barbara T. Smith and Wei Tan.

"Many of the works in this exhibition might not look like a book at all, but they all play with the idea of what a book is and how to engage with it," said Glenn Phillips, exhibition co-curator and head of modern and contemporary art collections the GRI. "It is interesting to note that while many artists have devoted their practices to making books, there are so many more artists working in other media who have made books at some point in their careers. Although they may be challenging to display and even collect, books seem to have the same

appeal to artists as they do to other readers – the objects themselves can be just as compelling as the content within.”

The books, multiples, and unique objects included in the exhibition take different shapes, some made with surprising materials, while being made to be looked at or interacted with in different ways. For example, *The Philosopher's Stone*, 1992, a unique book-object by Barbara Fahrner and Daniel E. Kelm, is a geometric paper egg that holds nuggets of wisdom to be revealed as corners are turned down and intricately drawn panels filled with handwritten



Guillermo Gómez-Peña (Mexican, b. 1955) and Felicia Rice (American, b. 1954). *DOC/UNDOC: Documentado/ Undocumented: Ars Shamánica Performática*. Santa Cruz, CA: Moving Parts Press, 2014. Video by Gustavo Vazquez (Mexican, b. 1954), text by Jennifer A. González (American, b. 1965), and sound by Zachary James Watkins (American, b. 1980). Relief print, letterpress, DVD, compact disc, clamshell box, aluminum case, mirror, electric lights, wrestling mask, headphones, various objects. Edition of 15. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 2015-B6. © 2018 by Felicia Rice and Moving Parts Press

text are unfurled. Once fully taken apart, it is no easy feat to put the angular 'pages' of this book-inspired paper sculpture back together.

One of the more recent works in the exhibition is *DOC/UNDOC* (2017) by Felicia Rice and Guillermo Gómez-Peña. Riffing on earlier boxes assembled by Marcel Duchamp, this is a high-tech aluminum case that holds an altar, a cabinet of curiosities, and a Mexican wrestling mask. Opening the case triggers lights and music, the sound art created for the piece by Zachary Watkins. Installation of this work will include a multimedia component giving visitors the opportunity to experience these interactive elements.

One of the earliest pieces in the exhibition stands out for its confrontational style – and smell. Dieter Roth's work *Poetrie*, 1967, is a

book made of 21 clear vinyl envelopes for pages, on which the texts of poems are printed. The envelopes contain urine, now desiccated and yellow green, retaining its distinctive odor,

which may be getting stronger over time. The artist produced this book in an edition of 30; fifty years after their publication the see-through pages have wrinkled and changed color but still make a strong impression.

This summer sees the release of the Getty publication *Artists and Their Books / Books and Their Artists*, which inspired the exhibition. Edited by Marcia Reed and Glenn Phillips, this volume includes over one hundred important examples selected from the Getty Research Institute's Special Collections.

The publication also presents precursors to the artist's book, such as Joris Hoefnagel's sixteenth-century calligraphy masterpiece; early illustrated scientific works; and avant-garde publications. Mid twentieth-century works in the publication reveal the impact of Pop Art, Fluxus, Conceptualism, feminist art, and postmodernism on artists' books. The selection of books by an international range of artists who have chosen to work with texts and images on paper provokes new inquiry into the long-term fertile relationship of art and books in contemporary culture.

A full list of artists included in the exhibition *Artists and Their Books / Books and Their Artists* is attached. The public can find more information about the exhibition, including a schedule of tours and public programs at

www.getty.edu/research/exhibitions_events/exhibitions/artists_books/index.html.



Dieter Roth (Swiss, 1930–1998). *Poetrie*. Stuttgart: Edition Hansjörg Mayer, 1967. Clear plastic, Plexiglas, metal screws, substance (possibly cheese). Edition of 7. Los Angeles, Getty Research Institute, 94-B19053. © Dieter Roth Estate. Courtesy Hauser & Wirth

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the largest art and architecture libraries in the world. The general library collections (secondary sources) include almost 900,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and auction catalogues encompassing the history of Western art and related fields in the humanities. The Research Library's special collections include rare books, artists' journals, sketchbooks, architectural drawings and models, photographs, and archival materials.

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