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SEVEN WONDERS an exhibition by students of the American Studies Museum Exhibitions class

Trinity College

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In Memoriam
Ann Fitzgerald
1944 – 2011
Introduction

In the wake of the tragic loss of Ann Fitzgerald this fall, I was humbled and honored to be asked to teach her Museum Studies course on exhibitions. After our first session, I simply felt fortunate to be able to work with such dedicated and intellectually committed students. My goal was to give them a practical lesson in producing an exhibition, from concept to installation, including the planning and funding of an opening event and the production of a catalog (which you hold in your hands). I could not be happier with the result, both for the course and for the Watkinson. Enjoy their discoveries!

Richard J. Ring
Head Curator & Librarian
The Free Masons, a so-called secret society, have been the source of popular culture for centuries. More recently, Dan Brown’s novel, *The Da Vinci Code*, theorized the connection between the Free Masons and the creation of our nation. While Masonic symbols are present throughout our everyday life, the public knows little about the internal operations of the ancient society. It is clear to both historians and political scientists that the Free Masons contributed to the political climate during America’s Second Political System (1828-1854).

The Second Party System consisted of political candidates from second-generation Americans. It was the first time since the creation of the nation that America had multiple political parties, of which the Anti-Masonic party was one.

This party emerged because citizens of the United States felt that the Masonic Order was trying to rule the nation. Members of the Anti-Masonic Party believed that being a Free Mason was an unwritten requirement of obtaining presidency. The Anti-Masons recognized that every president to sit in office had some affiliation with Free Masons, and therefore saw a connection to the monarchy of Great Britain. Individuals involved with the Free Masons were thought to have greater political recognition, while those who were not involved with the group would flounder under the suppression of the Masonic order. Many believed that this was the case with William Morgan, a Free Mason from Batavia, New York, who John Quincy Adams described as a family man and a diligent supporter of his family.

Morgan was essentially average, but distinguished himself when he became disillusioned with his fellow Free Masons. He parted from the lodge and dedicated his efforts to creating a book that revealed the secret symbols and rituals of the order. Shortly after Morgan signed his publishing contract, he mysteriously disappeared. Rumors emerged that Morgan fled from Batavia to avoid the doldrums of his daily life. However, a greater number of people believed that the Free Masons had abducted him and through him into Niagara Falls, in an effort to halt the production of his book. The Anti-Masons were convinced that William Morgan lost his life at the hands of the Free Masons and pointed out that after Morgan’s abduction the publishing company suffered a fire destroyed Morgan’s monograph.
Lewis Carroll’s 1865 novel, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, and its 1871 sequel, *Through the Looking Glass*, have fascinated generations of readers since their publication. Generally, when modern cultural consumers think of Alice, we picture a little blonde girl with a blue dress and a white apron. Where does this image come from? Carroll’s inspiration for the character of Alice was the young Alice Liddell (Fig. A). She is nothing like the Alice that comes to mind today, partly because Carroll sent original Alice illustrator John Tenniel a photograph of another girl, Mary Hilton Badcock, as a model for Alice (Fig. B). Alice changes based upon the illustrator, and her portrayal often relies upon the time period. The following images from books in the Watkinson collection were chosen to illustrate this phenomenon.
1. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland
   London: Macmillan and Co., 1886
   This is an illustration by Tenniel from a presentation edition of Alice.
   Tenniel’s illustrations are the most widely used and well-known. Tenniel’s Alice is an innocent, determined little girl.

2. Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There
   London: Macmillan and Co., 1872
   This is a pencil sketch done by Tenniel himself, found on the title page of a first edition. The delicate pencil lines show the care Tenniel put into his portrayal of Alice.

3. Alice’s Adventures Underground
   London: Macmillan and Co., 1886
   After the popularity of Alice, Carroll’s publisher put out a facsimile edition of the original manuscript with illustrations by Carroll. Some say his illustrations capture Alice’s soul in a way Tenniel’s do not.

4. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking Glass
   New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1919
   This edition uses photographs from the 1915 silent film, Alice in Wonderland, as illustrations. This is the first example in this exhibit where Alice has her iconic blonde hair and blue dress. The shots with real actors make Alice’s world surreal and dream-like.

5. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland
   New York: E.P. Dutton and Company, 1929
   With illustrations by American artist Willy Pogany, this Alice looks like a flapper. The illustrations have a decidedly Art Deco style and capture a vivacious Alice for a new era.

6. Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland
   Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982
   Some challenge typical Alice portrayals. Artist Barry Moser claims other illustrators intrude “on the privacy of Alice’s adventure, standing apart and observing her,” but in his edition, “images of Alice’s dream are seen from Alice’s point of view for, after all, the dream is Alice’s dream.”
A Pirate’s Life For Me: The Romanticized Life of Buccaneers

The Disney Blockbuster film saga, Pirates of the Caribbean, is based on the park attraction. During the 1960s, head Imagineer Marc Davis realized real pirates were not glamorous enough for the ride and opted for a more populist image. Consequently, Disney perpetuated the tradition of romanticizing pirates.

Books from the 1800s and onward evoke romantic images about the lives of the most notorious pirates through colorful narrative. The target audience is those who love adventure and danger, but wish to enjoy it at a safe distance.
Our perception of pirates is imbued with romance and cinematic glamour, but what do we know of the “real” pirates? Four volumes (written in French) compiled by Alexandre-Olivier Oexmelin in 1775 are supposedly true stories of encounters with pirates in the West Indies.

*Pirates of the New England Coast* (1630-1730) and *Deep Water Days* concentrate on pirate society, government, and economy. *Weapons of the Buccaneers and Pirates* challenges the stereotypical image through a comparison of illustrations of infamous pirates.
For centuries, society has turned to etiquette guides to answers questions ranging from fork selection to behavior at sporting events and proper correspondence.

From the 1840’s to the turn of the century, there was a preponderance of guidebooks published for both proper society and for those lacking in good breeding. This dynamic period was witness to vast and rapid change, including large-scale immigration, the Civil War, women’s suffrage, abolition, industrialization, and rapid urbanization. Questions arose. What was the proper etiquette for the street? How should a man treat a “liberated” woman? What could be expected if a game of bridge became hostile? What was expected of a bachelor? All sorts of social situations called for instructions on correct behavior. After 1910, this demand decreased until its modern resurrection under etiquette gurus such as Emily Post and Miss Manners.

Historically, the rules of etiquette were used by high society as a means to widen the gap between the classes. However a number of authors wanted to use etiquette as a tool for social reform. A way of cultivating mainstream interest in the subject was to evoke the experiences of common heroes. Annie White employed this strategy with her statement: “The great Lincoln often said that the lack of early culture and the disadvantage of never having associated in his younger days with well-bred people was a source of real mortification to him when his advanced position threw him into the society of distinguished cultivated men and accomplished graceful women.”

“When ladies are introduced to one another, they should remain rigid and calm and evince no interest in the proceeding. Their necks should be stiff and their heads thrown back like cobras about to strike.”

~Francis Croninshield

“Manners for the Metropolis”
While many facets of etiquette are still relevant, there are a great many that have become archaic and are no longer observed.

One commonly found section in etiquette guides was devoted to the language of flowers, which was of interest to both sexes. While this art originated in ancient times, its popularity heightened during pre-revolutionary France and in the Victorian era. Florigraphy, which was a method of arrangement, was used to silently convey thoughts. Naturally this coded language found popularity amongst lovers. The practice of sending bouquets called tussie-mussies, which included a small note explaining the meaning of each blossom, is one that continues to this day.

Proper etiquette guidelines for mourning the loss of a loved one is a practice that has all but disappeared since its height in the Victorian era. To avoid being socially chastised, every household member, including servants had to observe strict rules. Two years was considered the suitable observance for a woman who lost her husband. During the first year of mourning she may only be allowed to wear black, and a single piece of jewelry, perhaps an article made from the hair of the deceased. The rules softened a bit in the second year.

On all the questions that one can dream up, there is advice to be had, and a surplus of authorities on the subject. Many etiquette guides are a reflection of the time period in which they were written and their advice has become obsolete. Yet others words continue to resonate. One particular guide, *Manners for the Metropolis* leaves us with some classic words of wisdom that will never go out of fashion: “Always be half an hour late for everything. Nothing is so tedious as waiting.”

“The women of our day grow old in their youth. They often have all the marks of fifty years of age at twenty-five, decayed teeth, sallow skins, sunken cheeks, wrinkled faces, nervous debility and a whole crowd of female ailments. Our grandmothers at sixty years were stouter and more capable of endurance than our young women at twenty-five. Why is it so? Simply because our girls and their mothers have neglected to cultivate their physical powers. They have been shut up in tight rooms, bound up in bandages, fed on sweetmeats and spices, doctored with poisons, dressed in whalebones and death-cords, petted like house-plants and steeped in tea and coffee, till they are nothing but bundles of shattered nerves and diseased muscles. There may be exceptions but this is the general rule. Our men and women are all too weak and sickly.”

Quotes:
The Watson Library has a small collection of fashion plates from the nineteenth century, including more than 300 plates from magazines published in France, England, and the United States between the 1810s and the 1880s. The collection also has a number of catalogs and magazines from the late nineteenth century into the 1930s, including publications of Harper's Bazaar and Vogue. In this exhibition we see fashion and style evolve, as well as its display in advertising over a century.

I have before me a series of fashion plates...which have a double-natured charm, one both artistic and historical. They are often very beautiful and drawn with wit; but what to me is ever hit or important, and what I am happy to find in all of them, is the moral and aesthetic feeling of their time.

-Baudelaire

The fashion plate in the 19th century became a form of popular imagery, utilized to promote and sell the current fashions of the period. The standard procedure of the magazines that incorporated fashion plates was to include in each issue at least one full-page print in color, showing two or more fully outfitted women grouped together in a conventional indoor or outdoor setting. The figures would be presented in such a fashion as to show as much of the garment as possible, accentuating the amazing detail created by the illustrator.

Top Left: Le Bon Ton, 1863. Illustrated by Louis Berlier & Heloise Leloir

Above: Le Follet Courrier des Salons, Sept. 1834.

Bottom Left: Le Bon Ton, 1878. Illustrated by Jules David.
The fashion plate started to change in the early twentieth century, where Art Deco fashion plates were all the rage. These plates put an emphasis on the dominant lines and color of the garment, producing clean, striking fashion plates.

The 20th century brought a new era of consumerism, fueled by the rapid change of cycles in fashion along with mass production and mass marketing. The most significant change in fashion came in the post-World War I years, where women were requesting clothing that was comfortable, durable, and functional for their newly independent and active lifestyles. The new boyish silhouette (no waistline, shorter hem) became the mode. Combined with bobbed hair, skintoned hosiery, and a liberal amount of makeup, the popular, youthful looking “flapper” style became prominent in fashion pages. The geometric shapes and purity of line of this Art Deco movement embodied the Machine Age. As we can see in these images, it hit Paris in the 1910s and 1920s (above) but did not become popular in America until the 1930s (right).
A Princess With A Past:

Cinderella Before Disney

Left:
Cover of *La Cenerentola; o sia La Bonta in Trionfi* (Cinderella; or The Triumph of Goodness): A melo-dramatic opera in two acts.
By Gioacchino Rossini. 1852.

Right:
*George Cruikshank’s Fairy Library*
Edited and Illustrated by George Cruikshank
Circa 1853 – 1864

Below Left: Cover of *Cinderella at School*  
By Woolson Morse, 1881

Below Right: Cover of *Cinderella*  
Performed at Mechanic’s Hall, 1895
Above Left:  *Cinderella: A Fairy Story*. Retold by Mary Windsor and Illustrated by Juanita Bennett, 1935.

By Marianne Moore and Illustrated by Eugene Karlin, 1963.

Left:  
Walt Disney’s  
*Cinderella*  
1974

All night the Prince danced only with Cinderella.  
They danced around the floor as if in a dream.  
Everyone said:  
“How lovely she is! Who can she be?”
Suggested Reading displays eight contemporary artist’s books that re-examine the book form and the relationship between book, text, and reader. The artist’s books included in this exhibition encompass many areas of the field of production – the visual poem [figs.1 & 2]; the hand-made bookwork [fig.4]; the inexpensively produced pamphlet; the text-sculpture [fig. 5]; and the conceptual book-object [fig. 3]. As is typical of the form, the artist’s books presented here overlap one another categorically. For instance, *Between Page and Screen* [fig. 1] is not only a “visual poem” but is also a “hand-made bookwork” and a “text sculpture.”

Diane Perry Vanderlip first coined the term “Artists Books” in 1973, when she curated an exhibition of the same name at the Moore College of Art in Philadelphia. *Artists Books* set out to display “many types of books made by artists from 1960 to the present [1973].” Since then, the definition of the term(s) “artist’s books,” “artists’ books,” and/or “artists books,” within the critical literature on the subject has ranged widely. These disparate definitions are reflected even in each writer’s placement of the apostrophe. The leading scholars and historians of the field have not yet, and most likely will not, come to a consensus on such a definition. The difficulties in characterizing the properties that define artist’s books arise from the astounding breadth and variance in the field of production.
As critic Nancy Tousely argues, “there are as many definitions of an artist’s book as there are innovative extensions of its flexible form.” It is “this Mercurial condition” that most effectively “defines the nature of the artist’s book.”

A working definition of the term artist’s book is, however, useful when viewing an exhibition in which artist’s books are the subjects. Stephen Bury provides the most utilitarian, if un-nuanced, definition of the artist’s book.

“Artists’ books are books or book-like objects over which an artist has had a high degree of control; where the book is intended as a work of art in itself. They are not books or reproductions of an artist’s work, about an artist, or with just a text and illustrations by an artist.”

The unifying thread in all of the artist’s books presented in Suggested Reading is self-reflexivity. Although the formal manifestations of these books vary tremendously, the artist/author’s re-examination of the codex (book) form in each book serves to challenge traditional notions of the book and of reading. Each of these books provides an alternative appraisal of the essential qualities of a book and its text. They suggest to the reader new ways to read and engage with the printed word.

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3 ibid.
Seven Wonders

Emily Bloom
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