

About the Center for Book Arts

The Center for Book Arts promotes active explorations of both contemporary and traditional artistic practices related to the book as an art object. Founded in 1974, it was the first organization of its kind in the nation.

About the Featured Artist Project Series

The Center's Featured Artist Project Series provides a critical forum for artists working primarily in the book arts to showcase a recent or cohesive body of work or create a site-specific installation.

Series Transcriptions from Canonical Male Artists

- *Another Fontana* 2012
- *Matisse's Jazz* 2013
- Ellsworth Kelly's *Line Form and Color* 2013
- *Domenico Gnoli* 2013

Series from and with poetry

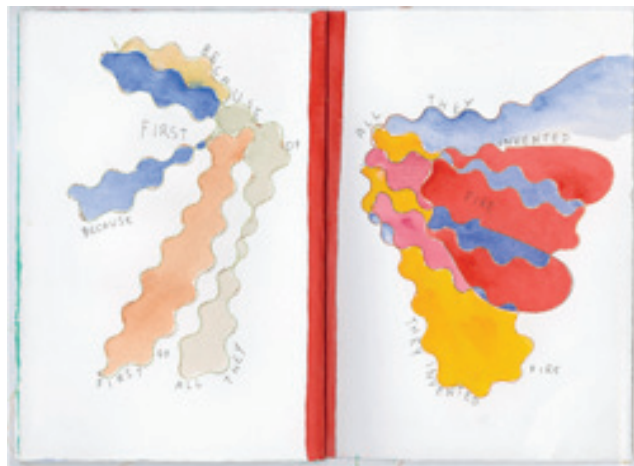
- Apollinaire's *J'Aime L'Art D'Aujourd'hui* 2013
- Emily Dickinson's *But Are Not all Facts Dreams...* 2014
- Catullus's *Cui Dono Lepidum...* 2012

Series Nature

- *Morning I am a Beetle* 2014
- *My Thorny Brush* 2014
- *My Thorny Rose Brush* 2015
- *My Old Brushes* 2015
- *My Grass Brush* 2014
- *My Old Fern Brush* 2015

Unique books; each 16 pages with thread, ink, and watercolor on paper; 8 1/2 x 11 x 1/4 in. closed

Support for the Featured Artist Project Series, a component of the Center for Book Arts' Visual Arts Program, is provided in part by the New York State Council on the Arts, with the support of Andrew Cuomo and the New York State Legislature; and the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs in partnership with the City Council.



A spread from a 16 page unique book *I Love Today's Art...*, made from and with G. Apollinaire's poem 2013

Elena Berriolo:

Why Didn't They?

October 2nd- December 12th, 2015

Feed me the line

A performance with sewing machine and poetry in collaboration with Steve Delachinsky

Friday, December 4th, 6:30 pm

A book as a Bridge

An impromptu performance with sewing machine in the subway.

November to be announced

The Center for Book Arts
28 West 27th Street, 3rd Floor
New York, NY 10001
www.centerforbookarts.org

THE CENTER FOR BOOK ARTS



a page from a 16 page unique book *Matisse's Jazz 2013* series transcriptions from canonical male artists

When I choose to draw, the first instrument coming to my mind is the pencil: the graphite does not penetrate the paper, it sits on its surface and I can erase it whenever I make a mistake. If I want to be a bit bolder, I can attempt to draw with a pen: because my ink is absorbed in the paper, I would have a harder time erasing it because it is a much deeper line than the one made with the pencil, but if I am really brave and believe in the truth of my gesture, then I can go much deeper than that, as deep as to the other side of the surface, using scissors as Matisse did for his cutouts, or using a knife as Lucio Fontana did to split open the canvas;

maybe I could even use a jigsaw to shape the edge of my painting surface as Ellsworth Kelly still now does. But all along the lifetimes of these artists, from well before the twenties to the sixties to our days there has been, I believe, a better instrument easily available to any artist for drawing a line as deep as the support itself without undermining its stability, a line that can grow uninterrupted in space and time: it is the **sewing machine**, able to produce a true three-dimensional line embracing the two sides of the support, splitting it without breaking it, a line that we, every day of our life, move through space along with the seams of our clothes. Why didn't they think of it?



A page from a 16 page unique book *My Thorny Rose Brush* 2015 series *Nature*



why didn't Picasso think of it?

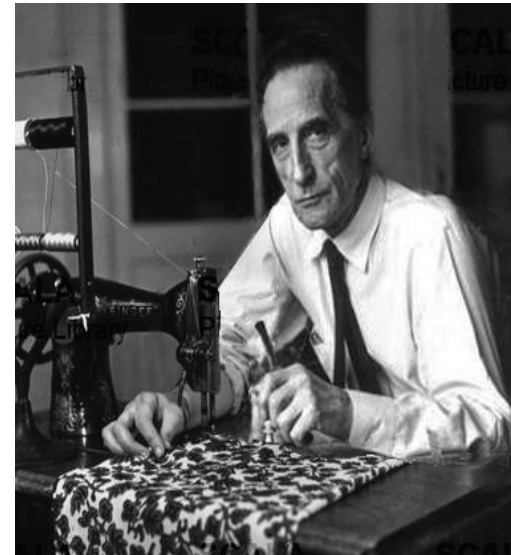
Why didn't Picasso think of it while he was searching for a continuous flow of a line, especially visible from both sides of the glass support in the film *Le Mystère de Picasso*? He traced his line, keeping it uninterrupted as long as he could, limited only by the size of his body. The brush held by his hand could trace a line as long as the length of his arm and the amount of paint held by the brush but the **sewing machine** could have made a line embracing the two sides of a canvas or paper support, a line of much greater length, because it would have been produced by pushing the support under the needle. Why didn't Matisse think of the sewn line even though he was so fascinated by textiles? In his search for a non-virtual line, in making his cutouts, he chose to use scissors on previously colored paper and then glue it on another sheet, but by sewing with

sewing machine he could have split the paper without undermining it with a true three-dimensional line, reaching to the other side of the support. Why didn't the Italian and Russian Futurists, so interested in the machine and its speed, think of including the **sewing machine** in their work? They thought about the car, the bicycle, the plane, but when Boccioni decided to



why didn't Matisse?

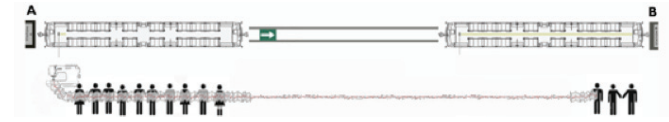
make his mother's portrait, he painted her while sewing by hand... how was it conceivable? How much faster does the machine sew compared to hand-sewing? There may be many answers to this question and the easiest one could be: They were males and they could not think of the **sewing machine** as an art tool. Art, at that time was meant to be made by men and therefore one had to define its masculinity in the art-



why didn't Duchamp?

world. Of course there were also a few women artists, but by defining themselves as such, they often had to accept to present themselves as less feminine than most. The sewing machine was part of the female's domain, hardly usable for male artists of the time. It is a shame that so few women had a chance to become artists but I also believe it was a greater pity for all those guys not to be able to consider the sewn line and its extraordinary conceptual implications. How didn't they realize that the **sewing machine** produces a true three-dimensional line, a line with a top and a bottom that in a book can be moved through space by turning the page? It is a line not resulting from the violent act of cutting but from a peaceful history of linking and repairing.

A Book as a Bridge A Performance in NYC Subway



Traveling from Wall St. Station to 149th St. in the Bronx, a sewing machine is placed at the rear end of the subway train next to an accordion book whose length when unfolded would equal the length of the last train's car. At departure, I will start sewing/tracing the book with an embroidered line and continue producing it while unfolding it up to the arrival. During the journey the passengers will be invited to hold the unfolding book and slowly pass it from hand to hand toward the front of the car. At the time of arrival, the whole line-book will have stretched through the entire length of the last train's car having grown the distance from its back to its front. Most importantly, the line being originated at Wall St. and completed at 149th St. in the Bronx, will have bridged the physical and virtual distance separating the two places now linked by a sewing machine line traced and now kept in a book. The book will be then displayed at Center for Book Arts along with a second book produced by traveling from 149th St to Wall St. It is my intention to start a conversation about finding new ways to mend the distance between the two communities, linking two sites that symbolize two virtual islands in need of a connection.

Elena Berriolo