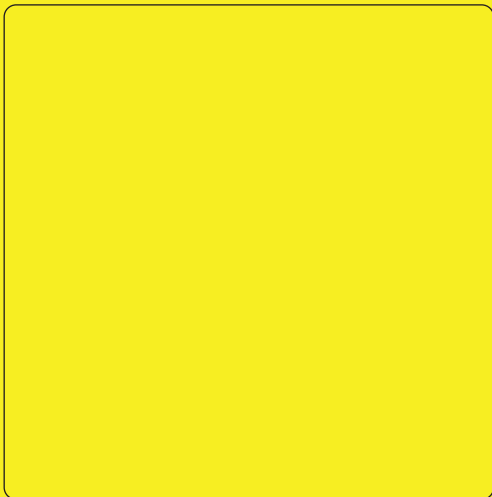


A New Manifesto for Book Art Criticism

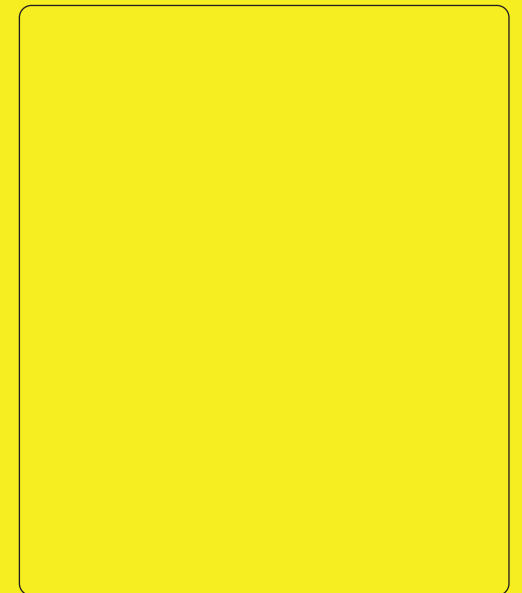
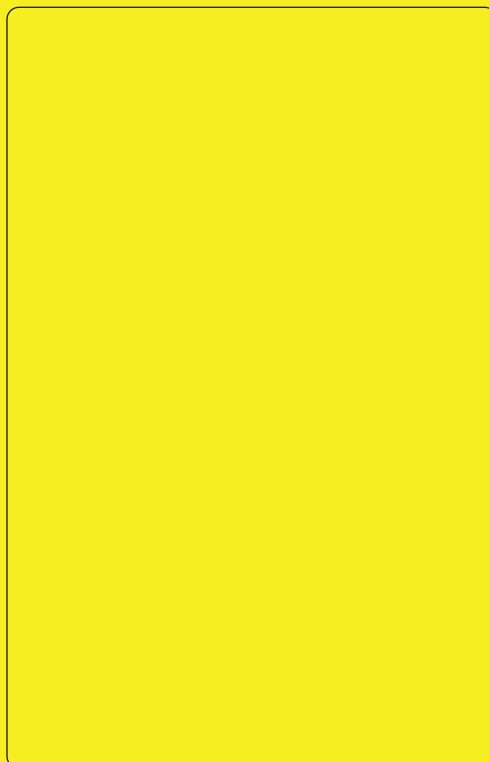
Books have long been recognized as a key medium for artists. Mallarme wrote in 1895 that, “Everything in the world exists to end up in a book.” That is ever more true in today’s climate as the book form is leveraged to share ideas, perspectives, outrage, protest, humor, and beauty.

Book art production is more prolific now than ever before, yet critical writing about book art and specifically about artist books lags far behind critical writing about other media. Few publications devote space to writing about book arts. Reviews of artist books often consist mostly of descriptions of the book rather than a structured analysis.



We want to raise the bar! The Book Art Review is our plan to make book art criticism more visible and more valuable, and to engage with a diverse group of writers and readers. Our main principles are:

- Defining book art and artist books as broadly as possible, including digital and other novel and experimental forms.
- Acknowledging that the way we tell the history of book art needs to be expanded, revised, and annotated because of our culture’s changing perspective.
- Acknowledging that there is no single model for proper criticism, but that critical writing should generally entail thinking about subject; maker; image; text; typography & design; binding structure; printing method; other physical attributes; time and place of origin; and quantity produced.
- Demystifying artist books and making them more accessible to a wider audience.
- Encouraging dialogue about book art in as many forms and forums as possible.



Beginning in fall 2020, we will launch the Book Art Review project with a range of activities including:

- Open public discussion about what artist book criticism should look like and what the field currently lacks.
- Producing educational resources and classes for prospective writers.
- A physical and online journal.
- A prize for book art criticism.
- Public outreach and education programs.

If you are a writer with an interest in writing about the book as an art form, we would like to hear from you. Email us at bar@centerforbookarts.org. And find more details at www.centerforbookarts.org/bar

*Megan N. Liberty
David Solo
Corina Reynolds*