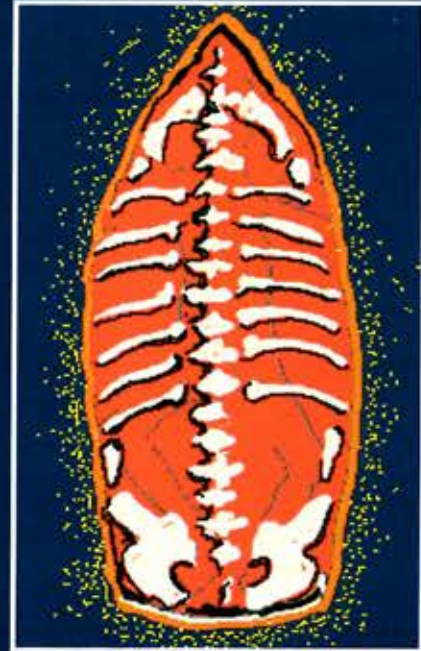


THE RIVER STYX  
(sticks)



THE RIVER STYX  
(sticks)

*An Australia-New Zealand Artist's Book Project*

Raft Press Incorporated

1994

*This project is assisted by the A.C.T. Government through its Cultural Council*

## PRELUDE TO A JOURNEY

*Director's report*

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The artists on the River Styx (sticks ) project were asked to work to a theme; to create a book using one of the possible interpretations of "The River Styx (sticks)", and to consider the use of modern equipment and materials to produce the work. The brief was simple: the theme allowed for a wide range of artistic flavour and emotional response; the materials and equipment were available and easily used, and most of the artists had dealt with the idea of the

Artist's Book before. The Books created by them for this project should be experienced by what one knows and also by what one suspects.

We are all familiar with what a book is; the basic structure changes little from book to book and each is easily recognised. A book has pages and a cover. Usually you start at the front and read to the back. It may contain a story with accompanying pictures, or a presentation of facts. Often the cover will indicate pictorially what the contents will divulge. If we are in doubt about books there are

lexical clues, such as: 'a set of written, printed, or blank pages bound together in a volume' (which I found in the Penguin Reference Dictionary). The dictionary also presents a list of other possible interpretations which assists in defining what a book is.

Remember that the book has evolved over centuries to its present form and this form is designed to protect, advertise, and bind the information together, without intruding on the reader's awareness.

But, above all, remember the

book is a physical object. It is a source of information, not the information itself.

In 1917, Victor Shklovsky wrote:

*Habitualization devours works, clothes, furniture, one's wife, and the fear of war . . . And art exists that one may recover the sensation of life; it exists to make one feel things, to make the stony stony. The purpose of art is to impart the sensation of things as they are perceived and not as they are known.*

I am not arguing whether his purpose for art is preferable, however much it might entertain, but consider how this proposed purpose affects Artist's books. A question arises: 'What is the sensation of a book?' By that I mean: what is the 'feel' or 'perception' of a book, the taste and after-taste that tells us we have experienced a book? Or, more obscurely: 'What is the "book-ness" of a book?' For the artists on the project this was an unasked question that lay at the foundation of their work: What is 'book-ness'? How is it achieved?

We have to be suspicious. We have to suspect them of having sensations or forms beyond our Knowledge. Preconceptions limit their reality. If elements of a book remain invisible to our senses we

have a right to seek them out, to find them and bring them to the fore. They will assist us in the defamiliarization of the object and develop an intimacy with the book not previously perceived.

If you wish to be suspicious you have to doubt. Consider that books come in more than just the paper-back or hard-back form. There are also audio books, braille books, books that exist only on the electronic networks, finely crafted books, limited editions, personal diaries, scrap books, bank books, and many more. They differ from other objects that have 'read-ness' such as scrolls and maps because books have sequences rather than singular frameworks. Is this the only reason? And how do film and video fit into the picture? Do they have 'book-ness'? We seek, and in the search we experience doubts. We are suspicious.

But books definitely have 'book-ness', and 'book-ness' is what we are seeking. There are no ready formulae for the search for 'book-ness', just as there are no ready formulae for finding of the Meaning of Life. With the combination of search for 'book-ness' and the theme of the River Styx we can play with the combination of Myth and Reality: the passage from

one state to another. With the bracketed echo of 'sticks' we can play with the floating remnants in our streams of consciousness. In combination with the river sticking we can look into history, into memory, in our search.

We may have found some of the elements of the book with this project, but what other facets are there that we have yet to find.

The BOOK is an emblem of Communication. From Communication comes Change. With Change there is Doubt. In Doubt there is Suspicion. Through Suspicion comes Survival. With Survival there is Experience.

Les Petersen  
Director

## The Merchant's Passage

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The wounded hills bled the river across parched earth; but the water passed no lips, no shrub sucked at its moisture. The brackish water swirled through course and rapid, leeching the soil as it moved. Our rest was disturbed by the hollow sound of the world around us and we chose not to stay, but moved out from the grey mountains and filed along the path etched into the land. A towel we had dipped in the mordant river fell apart and rotted as we watched, and our glassware broke. We fell from our conversation and a poisonous lethargy assailed us all. Uncertain aches clouded my temples, and Olympians came down for oath-making, and the mules trudged on in a sagacious convoy. Our unquenched flesh withered from the condensed sun as we moved through uncertain time, inconsolable space.

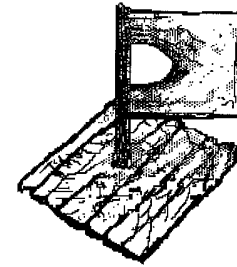
It seemed we had journeyed for ever. The nude landscape wove its shadows around us was like a seductive old crone, stripped of cosmetics and pride. We felt exposed on the flanks of the valley, as we wandered through hushed crevices and polluted folds. Those before us had cleared the valley of trees; had brought in chain-saws, and put the work teams out day and night. They had left nothing. They floated the timber down the river to

the mill in great rafts, and then conceded the area to the weather, taking their noise and bustle with them, packing their billies of tea and sticks of damper, quietly counting their hard-won pay, bleaching the guilty colour from the land.

We ceased to look. One step followed the next. The leather creaked and the tack swayed, our clothes chafed and the grass crackled. The stubbled valley passed carelessly beneath each footfall. A spiteful magpie warbled in some hidden pore; a soliloquy unsung before.

Following the endless river we passed down through the ruined valley, worked around the prow of one gaunt hill and floundered onto a bank beside a great ocean. The last of the abhorrent wash from the Styx chuckled beside me, then joined the darker water. My companions wept, and the mules sawed at the netherworld.

We waited for the ferry and smelt the smoke from campfires further up the shore.



The River Styx (sticks)

In 1992 Raft Press Inc. initiated an Artist's Book project. This publication co-incides with the exhibition of the works made during this project. At the time of printing the project has not rached its conclusion, and because of the dynamics of the working processes of the artists, insufficient information is available to present complete information on the works. It has been decided, therefore to indicate only the author/artists of the work. A complete list of titles and information will be added after all the works have been received. This publication is a summary and explanation of the project. It is also a voice to celebrate our achievement.

## THE ARTISTS

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Daniella **Aleh** (NZ)  
Sandra **Appleby** (AUS)  
John **Barnett/Lesley Kaiser** (NZ)  
Gemma **Black** (AUS)  
Heather Jean **Bryham** (NZ)  
Penny **Carey-Wells** (AUS)  
William **Cumming** (NZ)  
Sebastian **Di Mauro** (AUS)  
Stephen **Duke** (AUS)  
Brian **Gregory** (NZ)  
Judith **Haswell** (NZ)  
Martin **Hodge** (AUS)

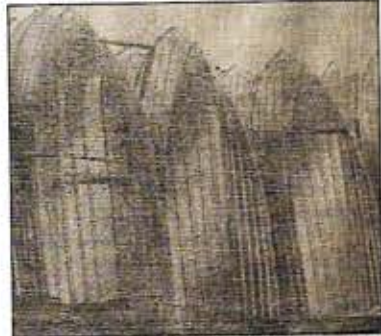
Timothy **Hurd/Sydney J. Shep** (NZ)  
Giovanna **Ianniello** (AUS)  
Sue **Jowsey** (NZ)  
Claine **Keily** (AUS)  
Virginia **King** (NZ)  
Dianne **Longley** (AUS)  
Tara **McLeod** (NZ)  
John **Mitchell** (NZ)  
Jonathan **Nix/Les Petersen** (AUS)  
Neville John **O'Neill** (AUS)  
Claudia **Pond Eyley** (NZ)  
Adrienne **Rewi** (NZ)

Tim **Rowston** (AUS)  
Olga **Sankey** (AUS)  
Helen **Schamroth** (NZ)  
Elizabeth **Serjeant** (NZ)  
Elizabeth **Steiner** (NZ)  
Catrina **Vignando** (AUS)  
Margaret **West** (AUS)  
Dennis **Wild** (AUS)  
Joanne **Wild** (AUS)  
Patricia **Wilson** (AUS)





Heather Jean Bryham



Sebastian Di Mauro



Gemma Black



No images available:  
William Cumming,  
Penny Care-Wells,  
Claudia Pond Eyley,  
Adrienne Rewi.

Daniella AjeH



Sandra Appleby



Stephen Duke



**Penny Carey-Wells**

Paper Centre — University of Tasmania

**William Cumming**

Born Hokitika, Westland, New Zealand.

Studied Ilam School of Fine Art.

Registered Engineering Associate.

1984> Tutor, Christchurch Polytechnic.

1993 First Bookworks Symposium NZ, Auckland.

Designer of numerous private gardens and house interiors.

"A total of two and a half years living in England and visiting European Countries providing the opportunity to visit many important galleries and collections. Spent a year living in Canada. Visited India, Nepal, Australia and the U.S.A. Spent an interesting surrealist day with Salvador Dali at his home in Cardaques in Spain."

**Sebastian Di Mauro**

Born 1955 Innisfail, Qld, Australia.

1993> MA Visual Arts, Monash University.

1990-91 Grad. Dip. Visual Arts, Monash University.

1987 BA Visual Arts, Queensland College of Arts.

1986> Creative Director, Liveworm Studio.

**EXHIBITIONS**

>1990 Extensive exhibition experience.

1990 *being-BECOMING*, Roz MacAllan Gallery, Brisbane.

*Death/Life Passage Series*, Avago Art Window, Toowoomba.

1991 *Transference*, Above the Apothecary.

1992 *IMbalance*, Ipswich City Council Regional Art Gallery, Ipswich.

1993 *Praeparatio Physica*, Omniscient Gallery.  
*Recurrence*, Magazine Space, Brisbane.  
*evanescence*, Space Plentitude, Brisbane

**GROUP EXHIBITIONS**

1990 *New Directions*, Childers Regional Gallery.

*Melbourne Contemporary Art Fair*,

1991 *Artist's Books*, Graham Gallery, Brisbane.

*New Directions 11*, Childers Regional Gallery.

1992 *Sculpture in Wood*, MOCA, Brisbane.

*Artright for Tibet*, MOCA, Brisbane.

*New Art Six*, MOCA, Brisbane.

1993 *Environment - Inner and Outer*, Queensland Arts Council Gallery, Brisbane.

*Artright in the Public Eye*, Artright, Brisbane.

*Crossings*, BEMAC, Metro Arts Gallery 2.

**OTHER**

1989 Artist of the Year, Queensland Symphony Orchestra.

**Stephen Duke**

Born 1968.

1991 BA Visual Arts, C.I.T.A, Canberra, ACT.

1991 Awarded the CRES Environment Award.

Currently studying MA in Electronic Art, ACAT.

**Brian Gregory**

Born 1947 Wellington, New Zealand.

Poetry published in *Landfall*, *Pacific Moana*

*Quarterly*, and *Plainwraps*. Guest Poetry reader at

Gluepot (Ponsonby), Albion and Masonic (Devonport) Hotels, Auckland.

**PUBLICATIONS SINCE 1977**

*In Extremis*, *For the Company*, *Cicada Moon*, *Inside the Circle: short stories*, *The Last Romantics*, *Of Pagans and Pilgrims*, *Passion Tide*, *A Poem for Van Gogh*, *Reflections for Simone Weil*, *The Sad Man Poems*, *To Be a Hobo In Wellington*, *To the Drummer*.

**EXHIBITIONS**

1990 *Images of Katherine Mansfield*, Turnbull House Gallery, Wellington.

1991 *Images of Maungawhau*, Oedipus Rex Gallery.

**Judith Haswell**

"Born 1946, Wellington, New Zealand. Lives in Auckland; work part-time as a librarian; write poetry and have produced two books, each in a limited edition of 100: the first was letterpress with Ron Holloway of the Griffin Press; the second was with rubber stamps under my own imprint, Donek Press."

**Martin Hodge**

Born 1959 New Plymouth, New Zealand.

Bachelor of Arts, University of Western Australia.

Graduate Diploma of Art, University of Newcastle.

**EXHIBITIONS**

1988 Lewers Gallery, Penrith.

1990 ArtSpace, Sydney.

Wandering Artists, Newcastle.

1993 Watt Space, Newcastle.

**SOLO EXHIBITION**

1993 Watt Space, Newcastle.

**Timothy Hurd / Sydney Shep**

"Sydney Shep and Timothy Hurd are co-founders of SILENT ISLE PRESS, a private letterpress printing and fine binding venture focussing primarily on publication of contemporary New Zealand and Scottish poetry and prose. Since establishing the press in 1993, they have produced several collaborative works for exhibition and sale, including *Terra Nova Incognita*, and *What We Knew About the War*. Ms Shep and Mr Hurd serve on the Board of Directors of the Book Arts Society of New Zealand and have been