

INTRODUCTION //

TO BE SEEN, HEARD, READ: ARTISTIC PUBLISHING AS CRITICAL ART PRACTICE

In art history as well as in the broader art world, artistic publications have long been regarded merely as marginal phenomena in the work of many artists.¹⁾ This issue of *FKW* focuses on those published, often small-format and reproducible art forms such as books, magazines, posters, Mail Art, and multiples. From various research perspectives, it particularly highlights the critical potential of artistic publishing practices as alternative forms of art production and distribution. The collected texts are revised and expanded contributions to the international conference that took place at the Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst in Bremen on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Research Association Artists' Publications in June 2024.²⁾

RESEARCH ASSOCIATION ARTISTS' PUBLICATIONS — The Research Association was initiated in 1999 as an interdisciplinary network that has since then been dedicated to the study of artworks appearing in a published or reproduced form. Its members come from a range of disciplinary, professional, and practice-based backgrounds, including literary studies, art and cultural history, the visual arts, archiving and collecting, as well as curatorial practice. The research cooperation is institutionally supported and financially sponsored by the Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst, the University of the Arts Bremen, the University of Bremen, and the Research Centre for East European Studies attached to it.

— From the onset, the Research Association has been closely connected, both in content-related and conceptual terms, to the previously founded Centre for Artists' Publications at the Neues Museum Weserburg (today's Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst) and its holdings. The cornerstone of this collection was the acquisition of the Archive for Small Press & Communication (ASPC) of the Belgian collector and exhibition-maker Guy Schraenen. As a guest curator, Schraenen had already been presenting his large collection of artists' books at the Weserburg for several years as a "museum within a museum" (Thurmann-Jajes 2011: 17), before the collection was transferred to the holdings of the institution in 1999 and established as a separate department, the Study Centre for Artists' Publications.³⁾ Today, the institution, which was renamed to Centre for Artists' Publications, houses more than 300,000 published works

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More than twenty years ago, the art historian and critic Abigail Solomon-Godeau observed that the "artists' book is an integrally marginal form. Few critics write about them, even fewer specialize in them, and they are rarely the subject of museum exhibitions" (Solomon-Godeau 2004: 184). Over a decade later, in 2015, the literary scholar Annette Gilbert, for example, identified a proliferation of such artistic forms of publishing and sought "to push publishing into the center of aesthetic and academic discourses" (Gilbert 2016: 7). Yet even today, a discrepancy remains between the enthusiasm for publishing practices within the art field (and increasingly within exhibition contexts) and the comparatively limited scholarly engagement with them.

2)
Artists' Publications – A Critical Approach to Historical and Contemporary Formats of Artistic Publishing, June 28–29, 2024: Centre for Artists' Publications at the Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst, Bremen. A project by the Research Association Artists' Publications and the Centre for Artists' Publications at the Weserburg Museum für moderne Kunst in Bremen in cooperation with the IKFK. Institute for Art History – Film Studies – Art Education and the Mariann Steegmann Institut. Kunst & Gender at the University of Bremen.

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During this time, more than 30 exhibitions and a catalogue series with 25 editions were developed and supervised by Schraenen and his assistant curator Bettina Brach. The acquisition and conception of the study center took place in close cooperation between the Weserburg and the University of Bremen, namely by Anne Thurmann-Jajes, reviewing the museum's collection at the time, and Sigrid Schade, Professor for Art History and Aesthetic Theory at the University of Bremen between 1994 and 2005. The founding of the Research Association Artists' Publications also mainly owed to their commitment.

of art by more than 27,000 artists from around the world—ranging from stamps, to books, films, videos, and records, all the way to multimedia editions. With its more than 100 archive and collection holdings, it thus ranks internationally as one of the most significant archives for artists' publications. The second starting point of the activities of the Research Association was the archive of the Research Centre for East European Studies, which since 1982 has placed its collection focus on documents, objects, and images from the informal cultures of Eastern Europe, which were often self-published (samizdat) to avoid censorship.⁴⁾

— Based on these two holdings, while also drawing on other archives and collections, the Research Association seeks to advance and disseminate foundational research on artists' publications and their cultural, historical, and media-related contexts. Over the past 25 years, an international network of researchers has thus emerged, leading to cooperative research projects, public lectures and talks, university seminars, workshops, and symposiums, as well as exhibitions (conceived together with students) and publications. Particularly significant is the series for artists' publications, featuring not only anthologies on artistic publishing but also dissertations, thereby supporting emerging scholars.

CONFERENCE / PROCEEDINGS — The original idea for the anniversary conference of the Research Association, the contributions of which are brought together here, was to build on the network's previous activities and to gain insights into current research on artistic publishing. The call also specifically addressed early-career researchers and was deliberately kept open; proposals dealing with the critical potential of artists' publications were particularly encouraged, since this potential constitutes a central dimension of artistic publishing, manifesting itself not only in content but also in media-specific and formal strategies. The strikingly strong focus of the submissions on women artists engaged in artistic publishing pointed both to a research gap and to a shared interest among the contributors. We took this impulse into account when selecting the conference papers, and it also informed our collaboration with the Mariann-Steegmann Institut Kunst & Gender, ultimately resulting in this issue of *FKW*.

— The authors' research interest coincides with the current heightened attention given to female artists in the exhibition context, mainly historical positions, which is also evident in the field of artists' publications.⁵⁾ Their publishing-based work is increasingly being presented in large-scale institutional shows as well, like the

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For more information on the origin and the current holdings of the Centre for Artists' Publications and the Research Centre for East European Studies, see: <https://weserburg.de/zentrum-fuer-kuenstlerpublikationen/>, <https://www.forschungsstelle.uni-bremen.de/> (accessed May 20, 2026).

5)

See, for example, *Off-Register: Publishing Experiments by Women Artists in Latin America, 1960–1990* at the New York Center of Book Arts in 2023, curated and edited by Mela Dávila Freire, as well as the exhibition *Mirtha Dermisache: To Be Read*, curated by Regine Ehleiter in 2024 in the spaces of A–Z in Berlin, whose title inspired us to the title of this issue of *FKW*.

retrospectives of Yoko Ono at the Kunstsammlung Nordrhein-Westfalen (2024/25) and of Lygia Clark at the Nationalgalerie in Berlin (2025), or the presentation of Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt's work at the *documenta* 14 (2017). In this way, these forms gain (renewed) visibility as independent artistic formats, potentially enabling further critical and discursive engagement.

— On the one hand, the curatorial fascination with works by women artists should be viewed positively, particularly in light of the current conservative backlash and associated political attacks on gender studies at universities.⁶⁾ On the other hand, this increased engagement also gives cause for skepticism: Does the attention given to a select few female positions translate into broader representation in exhibitions and collections, or into an improvement of their economic situation in general? Does it indicate a transformation of the patriarchal power structures within the art world, or merely a form of market-driven exploitation? Moreover, the frequently invoked gendered trope of the “rediscovery” of forgotten women artists obscures the fact that their absence from art historiography was the result of deliberate exclusion; it also negates the previous achievements of feminist scholarship on these artists and their work (Nugent 2023). Against this backdrop, the demands as they have been expressed since the 1970s by art historians such as Linda Nochlin (1971), Griselda Pollock and Roszika Parker (1981), as well as Nanette Solomon (1991) are still highly relevant today: Instead of simply adding to the existing canon and engaging in a mainly biographical manner with women artists, thereby marking them as exceptions and perpetuating their status as such within art history, what is needed is a structural, intersectional analysis of the institutional and social mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, particularly through a critical examination of the discipline itself.⁷⁾

— Taking this as a point of departure, we basically understand the interest of the participating authors as a valuable expansion of research on artistic publishing. This issue seeks to bring their perspectives and the forms of publication they have unearthed and examined into dialogue with the debates in gender studies, for which *FKW* serves as a central platform. The contributions' common ground, however, does not lie solely in the artists' (perceived) gender. Rather, it is the practices and strategies of producing and disseminating artists' publications—and their inherent critical potential—that closely align with *FKW*'s power-critical perspective on visual culture and its institutional frameworks.

6)

The chairwoman of the German right-wing AfD, Alice Weidel, for instance, declared at the party convention on January 18, 2025, that they would shut down all gender studies institutes if the AfD were to form the government. <https://www.fg-gender.de/angriffen-auf-die-freiheit-von-forschung-und-lehre-entschlossen-entgegenzutreten/> (accessed June 11, 2026).

But also outside the AfD, an increase in anti-feminist attacks on the field of gender studies can be observed since the turn of the millennium. See: Hark and Villa (2025), Einwächter (2022), and Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (2025).

7)

For discussions in the German-speaking context—Germany, Austria, and Switzerland—see Zimmermann (2018). Following the 3rd Conference of Women Art Historians (Kunsthistorikerinnentagung) held in Vienna in 1986, the journal *FKW* (then titled *Frauen Kunst Wissenschaft*) was established as an independent forum for scholarly exchange which documents the subsequent development of debates surrounding gender-specific issues. See also Sigrid Schade's contribution in this issue, published on the occasion of the death of Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat.

ARTISTIC PUBLISHING AND ITS INHERENT CRITICAL POTENTIAL

Since the 1950s, artists' publications have been produced foremost as aesthetic forms of expression and as materializations of a conception of art that has become increasingly widespread, particularly in response to technological innovations and moments of social, cultural, and political transformation.⁸⁾ This development was significantly driven by a younger generation of artists who were interested less in traditional art forms than in ideas and processes as well as in breaking open rigid genre boundaries and hierarchies in the art world. For them, concepts and actions took precedence over style and the *one* unique object as an object of art and consumption. Dichotomies such as high and low art or art and life were called into question and dissolved: many artists increasingly reflected on and integrated pop-cultural products and aesthetics alongside everyday actions and objects into their works. They shifted the traditional understanding of authorship—tied to a singular creative genius—to the assumption that art production and reception should be conceived above all as relational, process-oriented, and collective, and as substantially determined by the participation of the audience.

Concrete and Visual Poetry, Pop Art, Happenings and Action Art, Fluxus, Conceptual Art, Performance, Land Art, and Minimalism formed the historical and ideologically heterogeneous background against which artists increasingly turned to new media and experimental forms and formats of publishing. The greater accessibility of communication technologies and systems since the mid-20th century functioned as a catalyst for the mass-media dissemination of artistic and activist content (Frohne 2013: 38–43). The unprecedented possibilities of recording and reproducing opened up unimagined potentials for the expansion and spreading of art and/as information, contributing to new forms of audience participation and activation.⁹⁾

As the heyday of artistic publishing, the 1960s and 1970s were shaped by the idea of artistic freedom and autonomy to circumvent aesthetic norms and institutional restrictions of an increasingly commercialized art world (Moeglin-Delcroix 2016): During this time, artists' publications were produced worldwide, including books, magazine contributions, periodicals, and Mail Art formats such as postcards, as well as mobile exhibition formats that blurred the boundaries between exhibition and publication: editions in boxes, exhibition catalogues in the form of index cards or bulletins.¹⁰⁾ They were predominantly produced in large editions, which were usually neither numbered nor signed; low-cost production by means of DIY methods and inexpensive, partially also found mate-

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In 1977, the artist Howardena Pindell, for example, published a comprehensive overview of artists' periodicals that had appeared in North America and Europe until then. It also included precursors since the year 1900 (Pindell 1977). For a general overview on artists' publications, see also: Drucker 2004, Schade and Thurmann-Jajes 2009, Moeglin-Delcroix 2011, Clive Phillpot 2013.

9)

The *Instruction Pieces* by Yoko Ono—which can be categorized between poem and score—can be regarded as a prime example of this. They are artistic instructions on viewing the world and becoming active in it, published as a collection for the first time in *Grapefruit* in 1964.

10)

In New York in 1970, Marian Goodman and her publishing house Multiples, Inc. issued a collaborative artists' edition in the form of a box, which simultaneously functioned as a mobile group exhibition: in a relatively large edition of officially 1,200 copies, *Artists & Photographs* brings together 19 artistic positions from Pop, Conceptual, Land, and Minimal Art from Western Europe and the United States. In 1973, Lucy Lippard published her now long iconic "cross reference book" *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972*, in which numerous publishing formats in art at the time are listed and commented on.

rials (texts, photos, newspapers etc.), and affordable, anti-commercial distribution were at the core. Such artworks based on different dimensions of ephemerality challenged the market's notion of value and exclusivity.¹¹⁾

— Alongside these emerging artistic practices and forms in artistic publishing, new spaces for presentation and distribution emerged, often run by artists and supported by like-minded critics, art historians, and independent curators. At a distance from established museums and commercial galleries, the publications were presented and distributed in small, self-organized art bookstores, galleries, project and publishers' spaces. Their circulation was based on local, national, and transnational networks connecting these newly formed infrastructures.¹²⁾ As a mobile form of art, artists' publications themselves functioned as alternatives to the privileged exhibition space, enabling more direct and contingent forms of contacts as well as a more intimate and activating relationship between object and audience. In the form of magazines, they additionally offered space for documenting and reviewing the artists' ideas and practices, beyond the dominant leading media such as *Artforum*.¹³⁾ However, periodicals were not only viewed as a site for documentation or exhibition, but as the event itself (Pindell 1980: 282).¹⁴⁾

— Establishing independent infrastructures served the artists not only as a means of distinction, but also as a structural necessity, as the established art-world institutions remained oriented toward classical modernism and provided only limited support and visibility for artists' publications (Thurmann-Jajes 2004: 62). Yet there were exceptions already early on: individual exhibitions and the founding of the first archives and special collections, which integrated these new art forms into their holdings or used them as a starting point for new collection focuses.¹⁵⁾

— Notably, it was especially women who turned to artistic publishing in order to circumvent the structural marginalization with which they, as artists, art historians, or curators, were otherwise confronted within the field: for example, the future renowned gallerist Marian Goodman co-founded the publishing house Multiples, Inc., with a few colleagues in New York in the mid-1960s after realizing that, at the time, she would not be able to secure a curatorial position in a museum because of her gender. (Glenn 1998: 45). Lucy Lippard, one of the few (freelance) curators and critics to have consistently reviewed and presented artists' books by women, also emphasized that feminist artists in particular used the books as "vehicles of propaganda" to spread their political message (Lippard 1977: 77). And decades later, Abigail Solomon-Godeau postulated

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In contrast, there were also so-called book art works, as well as unique artist's books or book objects produced in small editions, which were often more expensive to produce and handmade.

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At the end of the 1960s, George Wittenborn's bookstore in New York was the place to go for European art literature and artists' publications. Walther König, who had worked with Wittenborn, played a decisive role in Cologne and beyond where he founded his own bookstore in 1969 and started disseminating international artists' publications in Europe; from 1976 onwards, with the founding of the non-commercial organization Printed Matter, there was then a central location for the presentation and exchange of artistic print formats in New York. Even before that, women active in the art world—such as Rosa Esman with Tanglewood Press, Marian Goodman and her colleagues at Multiples Inc., and Toiny Castelli, who ran Castelli Graphics—had been key promoters of these new, reproducible art forms (Barutzki 2025: pp. 73–111, in particular pp. 91–92). The establishment, expansion, and reorganization of infrastructures (archives, libraries, collections) as well as an institutional localization associated with this can be exemplarily observed at the following places and institutions: Something Else Press, as early as 1964 in NY/Chelsea; Archive for Small Press and Publication, Antwerp, 1974; Artpool, Budapest, 1979; Bookie Wookie, Amsterdam, 1986.

13)

With regard to their appearance, some artists' magazines imitated the glossy look of *Artforum* and others or pursued more unconventional forms and a DIY aesthetic. For more information on the format of artists' magazines, see Allen 2011.

14)

In the case of unfolding posters, Leporello fold-outs, or paper objects that can be assembled, the work is only fully realized when the recipients unfold, open, or build them.

that in her opinion particularly feminists and other politically motivated persons have dealt with the possibilities of artistic publishing in the most creative ways. “The book,” Solomon-Godeau goes on to cite the art critic Kate Linker “has provided space for women and special interest; for ‘marginal’ art with little financial value, and for artists geographically removed from regional commercial centers” (Solomon-Godeau 2004: 185). Therefore, artists’ publications were not always, but quite frequently, spaces for otherwise marginalized content and political protest, in which critique of the media and critique of society often intersected. They were used to address both the causes they advocated as well as the respective communities, to facilitate communication within them, or to constitute them in the first place. With regard to samizdat publications from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc or those produced within the context of state dictatorships in Latin America at the time, the distinction between “making public” and “making a public” gained special relevance (Gilbert 2016: 25–27, Thurmann-Jajes 2004: 75–76).¹⁶⁾

— Today, publishing is an integral component of artistic practice, as well as of collecting and exhibition-making.¹⁷⁾ The often critical, nonconformist impetus of the 1960s and 1970s has increasingly been absorbed by market logics and capitalist structures. Yet, even in its early days, a discrepancy can be observed between the utopian aspiration to provide an alternative to the art world and its actual conditions. As Gilbert has argued, the binary opposition underlying this assumption is itself questionable (Gilbert 2016: 16). Moreover, those supposedly alternative spaces were often only perceived within the artists’ own circles (Thurmann-Jajes 2004: 72 and 77/78). Even at the time, contemporaries themselves already questioned the political effectiveness of artistic publishing as a means of addressing broader and more diverse audiences. This is reflected in Lippard’s somewhat cautious characterization of such works as “potentially ‘democratic’” (Lippard 1985: 50).

— However, published artistic formats retain their capacity to continually reinvent themselves across decades (Solomon-Godeau 2004: 184). Following the rise of desktop publishing in the 1980s, artists soon began expanding their practice to the internet in the 1990s. Today, platforms such as Instagram and artist websites also function as spaces for the presentation and circulation of artistic work. At the same time, a post-digital trend toward self-publishing can be observed, foregrounding artisanal production processes and the specific material qualities of printed matter. Despite these diverse developments, amid multiple and overlapping crises, artist

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Early exhibitions in North America and Europe in the 1960s and 1970s were *Working Drawings and Other Visible Things on Paper Not Necessarily Meant to Be Viewed as Art* by Mel Bochner in 1966; “publications as exhibitions,” exhibition projects by Seth Siegelaub and Lucy Lippard with artistic forms of publishing like the *Xerox Book* by Siegelaub and the *Numbers Shows* by Lippard; *Information* at the MoMA in New York in 1970 as early example of an artists’ catalogue as an exhibition catalogue; as well as exhibition and catalogue *When Attitudes become Form* by Harald Szeemann at the Kunsthalle Bern in 1969. In the 1970s, institutions such as MoMA in New York began adding artists’ publications to their collections, and starting in the 1990s, this area of the collection was expanded significantly. See also footnote 12.

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On samizdat publications, see for example Hänsen (2015).

17)

Books, zines, digital publications, and especially independent fairs (since 2009: Miss Read Berlin; since 2006: New York Art Book Fair; since 2013: LA Art Book Fair; since 2010: Offprint Paris; since 2015: London; since 2012: I Never Read, Basel).

and educator Paul Soulellis, in his essay “Urgent Publishing After the Artist’s Book,” argues that the value of publishing still lies in its capacity “to circulate stories and information in public space,” which he describes as one of the “superpowers of the underserved,” enabling individual empowerment and the formation of global coalitions (Soulellis 2021: 34).

— To sum it up, the inherent critical potential of artistic publishing—particularly since the 1960s—lies not only in the content of the works themselves, but even more so in the alternative forms, infrastructures, and modes of circulation through which they are produced and disseminated. This potential manifests itself in the choice of publication format, aesthetic concept, materiality, as well as in the collaborative structures of production and distribution that are used. By operating relatively independently of established institutional frameworks, artists’ publications have enabled the development of artistic formats that challenge conventional genre boundaries, thus making their ideas publicly accessible in a particular, often mobile form.

ON THE CONTRIBUTIONS — The authors of this issue research, teach, mediate, and curate art and artists’ publications. Drawing on questions of material aesthetics, production, and reception, they examine institutional frameworks of artistic production and reflect on the hegemonic power structures and mechanisms of exclusion within the worlds of exhibiting, publishing, and producing, as well as on existing classifications and canonizations of art. The focus is placed on artistic practices and strategies that subvert established paths of creating, circulating, and presenting art by developing alternative modes, formats, and networks. The contributions engage with material that is often difficult to access, sometimes only to be found in private archives or estates, and that has not yet been systematically examined. The essays combine different approaches: while some articles are more analytical and discourse-oriented, others are more descriptive, reconstructive, and contextualizing.

— The artists’ publications discussed here were produced between the 1960s and 1980s within various political and cultural contexts across Europe and the Americas. Despite these often very different circumstances, significant parallels can be identified in both the artistic approaches and forms of publishing. From the many possible condensations, we propose three thematic focal points that bring the contributions into dialogue with one another and may serve as starting points for further research: (1) Working Through International Networks, (2) Artistic Infrastructures in and

out of Eastern Europe, and (3) Materializing Thought, Language, and Absence.

WORKING THROUGH INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS — The three contributions brought together in this section examine different publishing formats that highlight the crucial role of transnational personal and professional networks in their production. The focus is particularly on the close exchange among creatives such as artists, curators, and publishers. In doing so, the essays illuminate both the collaborative dimension of producing the works and the conceptual interrelations between individual artistic positions, while also reflecting on the conditions that shaped these processes.

— The essay **Corresponding Propositions: Lygia Clark and David Medalla** by Anne-Grit Becker examines a dialogue between the two artists that developed in the mid-1960s across continents: Clark in Brazil and the Philippine artist Medalla in London. Brought into contact via the Signals gallery in London and the eponymous news bulletin—Clark as a contributor, Medalla as the magazine's editor—they became catalysts for each other's creative work. Becker traces the parallels between their approaches to language and form, as well as their active engagement of the audience or readership. It is precisely through the medium of the magazine that they established a direct relationship between the artwork and its viewers, in which individual participation becomes the actual form of artistic expression and, in turn, redefines conventional notions of authorship.

— Marie van Bömmel's case study **Posing as a Catalogue, Acting Like an Artists' Book: *Künstlerinnen international* 1877–1977** reflects on the possibilities and limitations of the catalogue format on the basis of a complex, multi-voiced publication project that accompanied the eponymous exhibition in Berlin in 1977. The author examines the economic and institutional framework conditions, as well as the individual resources and collective working methods of the persons involved, and performs a close reading of selected catalogue contributions. In doing so, she shows how *Künstlerinnen international*, as a feminist network, undermined patriarchal models of artistic practice, curatorial authority, and art-historical canon formation. Instead, it revealed the structural obstacles faced by women artists and developed new forms of self-representation.

— In her essay **Shared Utopias. Tomasz Schulz's COOP-Books (1979–1988) in the Context of Mail Art**, Marie Egger explores a publication medium that emerged from the artist's

personal network. Unlike the magazine and catalogue discussed above, these are collectively produced, unique books. Egger provides the first art-historical analysis of the COOP-Books by the Polish Mail Art artist Tomasz Schulz. Based on detailed readings of selected pages, she demonstrates how the book embodies typical strategies of the international Mail Art network of the time and how the contributors used it to exchange artistic ideas, political views, and insights into their personal lives. Through its collective, collage-like mode of production, the book becomes a mobile site for negotiating the private and/as the political, as well as the attendant web of social relationships.

ARTISTIC INFRASTRUCTURES IN AND OUT OF EASTERN EUROPE — The next two contributions trace the infrastructures in and out of Eastern Europe that were used and specifically established by artists in the context of the Cold War. They analyze alternative spaces and channels for producing and distributing artists' publications, as well as the reception of these artistic print media at the time.

— Corinna Kühn's essay **Mail Art Activities as Artistic Tactics: Ewa Partum's and Ruth Wolf-Rehfeldt's Infrastructures Within the Mail Art Network** examines how women artists were active in the male-dominated Mail Art network in the GDR and Poland in the 1970s. Discussing Partum's traveling Galeria Adres, Wolf-Rehfeldt's typewriter graphics, and the correspondence practices of both artists, the article sheds light on how they appropriated the existing postal infrastructures as well as private and public spaces as exhibition and communication spaces. Their activities circumvented institutional and geopolitical limitations and facilitated transnational artistic exchange behind and across the Iron Curtain. The author argues that the artists' participatory and mobile practices challenged gendered role expectations and opened up new forms of agency, particularly for women artists with caregiving responsibilities.

— Sandra Križić Roban's contribution **Double, Invisible, Handmade, Experimental: Books and Magazines as Works of Conceptual Artists from the Former Yugoslavia** provides insights into the art practice of publishing that emerged in former Yugoslavia between the late 1960s and the early 1980s as a form of artistic exchange and counter-positions to canonized conceptions of art. The often collaboratively created publications, such as magazines and books, were produced in limited editions or as unique copies, originally intended for a close circle of friends and colleagues, where they circulated as mobile sites of exhibition and discourse.

Roban focuses on their material fragility, conceptual design, and institutional distance, highlighting the use of found, inexpensive materials, the reduction of language, and non-commercial distribution. On this basis, she turns to economic and ecological questions that also reflect on the current context of reception.

MATERIALIZING THOUGHT, LANGUAGE, AND ABSENCE — The last three contributions address the necessity of publishing as an act of self-expression and self-positioning in the world of art, publishing, and exhibiting, particularly where conventional forms of publication are expanded in aesthetic and conceptual terms. What is thought and said, but also what is unspoken, the unrealized, the not directly comprehensible, and the blank page become the themes and motifs in the artistic positions under discussion.

— Mela Dávila Freire's essay **"Thinking Is a Revolutionary Act": Artist's Publications by Marie Orensanz** examines the publication activities of the Argentine artist, who, alongside her sculptural and painterly work in the 1970s and 1980s, also produced yet largely unknown publications. Under Argentina's military dictatorship of the 1960s and 1970s, there was a strong need amongst artists to reflect on the restricted communication systems and institutional conditions. Consequently, Orensanz' publications, which ranged from manifestos to posters and brochures to books, and were issued both in editions and as unique copies, also drew on this context. They thus presented artistic publishing as a necessary means of articulating and visualizing ideas in a society in which artistic freedom could only be expressed in ways conforming to the regime.

— Regine Ehleiter's essay **Materializing Absence, Absent Materials: Mirtha Dermisache, Roland Barthes, and the Politics of Publishing** shifts the focus from the artist's much-discussed concept of asemic writing to her dealing with both the limited material and infrastructural resources, alongside the publishing industry's mechanisms of exclusion. By making recourse to unpublished archival material, including the artist's correspondence with the French philosopher and literary critic Roland Barthes, the article reconstructs their plans for a joint but ultimately never realized publication, and thus reveals the mutual expectations invested in this project as well as the structural barriers within the publishing field. The analysis further reflects on Dermisache's engagement with the sociopolitical repression of Argentina's military dictatorship at the time: between artistic ambitions and the practical constraints of disseminating her work.

— Francesca Valentini's article **Materiality and Sonority in the Work of Giulia Niccolai and Patrizia Vicinelli** explores the interplay between materiality and sonority in the neo-avant-garde work of the two Italian artists. Her discussion of Niccolai's plaquettes *Humpty Dumpty* and *Poema & Oggetto*, as well as of Vicinelli's performances and video works in the exhibition *Materializzazione del Linguaggio* at the Venice Biennale 1978 demonstrates how both artists focused on the phonetic and performative dimensions of concrete and visual poetry in their art practice. The author argues that, through the merging of visual form, objects, and sound, the selected works challenged conventional literary and curatorial hierarchies and highlighted the essential role of voice, gesture, and auditory experience in the reception of poetic material.

LOOKING FORWARD — While the contributions assembled in this volume expand current scholarship on artistic publishing as a critical art practice, they also reveal productive blind spots that point towards future research. The focus remains largely on artists' books and magazines, while more ephemeral, audio-visual, performative, collective, and otherwise unconventional forms of artists' publishing receive comparatively little scholarly attention. Such imbalances reflect hierarchies operating within artistic publishing itself, where certain formats have proven more readily collectable, preservable, and canonizable than others, shaping both archival holdings and art historical research.

— Future research would also benefit from embedding artistic publishing more consistently within intersectional frameworks. If publishing is understood, following Paul Soulellis, as one of the "principal tools of hegemonic power and colonisation," (2021: 34) its infrastructures must equally be examined as sites where exclusion and resistance are negotiated. Rather than treating gender, race, class, sexuality, or geopolitical location as supplementary perspectives, these categories should be understood as constitutive of artistic publishing's histories, networks, and material conditions. This also entails asking which communities, practices, and materials have remained outside the established art historical canon, and how artists themselves engage with coloniality, ecological and economical entanglements, and material politics through publishing.

— The critical potential of artistic publishing lies precisely in its mobility, adaptability, and resistance to stable categorization. Its fragmentary and ephemeral forms, unpretentious or even irreverent treatment of materials and conventions, and capacity to generate alternative infrastructures offer productive points of dialogue

with queer-feminist theories of aesthetics, temporality, relationality, and spatial practice. More broadly, research should explore forms of identity, desire, intimacy, and kinship beyond binary and heteronormative conceptions emerging—both literally and figuratively—between the pages of artists' publications and across the networks through which they circulate and have circulated.

— At the same time, these perspectives require reflection on our own situatedness. The contextual framework developed in this introduction reflects the editors' expertise foregrounding primarily North American and European developments. While these contexts remain central to the present discussion, they also point to the need for further decentralizing Euro-American perspectives and expanding the geographical and epistemological scope of artistic publishing research.

— The accompanying contributions engage with many of these questions, although not necessarily within the realm of artistic publishing. Doris Weinberger's edition of a bracelet reappropriates the rosary as a feminist object of solidarity, pointing to questions of colonial violence, gendered beauty politics, and resource extraction through the use of human hair. Clewe and Parker revisit the Kathy Acker Reading Room at Cologne University through the lens of queer bibliography, reflecting on the productive tensions between institutional archives and transgressive literary practice. Leonie Schuster's review on the publication *Turning the Mirror* (2025) foregrounds feminist and post-/decolonial approaches to the art histories of Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula, while Sigrid Schade's reflection on the passing of Daniela Hammer-Tugendhat underscores the importance of intellectual infrastructures, feminist networks, and the continuing urgency of making oneself seen, heard, and read.

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// FKW is supported by the Mariann Steegmann Institute and Cultural Critique / Cultural Analysis in the Arts ZHdK

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