

1-1-2011

Visual Studies Workshop Press : a website description of process-based and experimental books

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VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP PRESS: A WEBSITE DESCRIPTION OF PROCESS-BASED AND
EXPERIMENTAL BOOKS

by

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A thesis project
Presented to Ryerson University
and George Eastman House International Museum of Photography and Film

in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts
in the program of
Photographic Preservation and Collections Management

Rochester, NY, USA and
Toronto, ON, Canada, 2011
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Abstract

This applied thesis project deals with a selection of fifty books published by the Visual Studies Workshop (VSW) Press in the 1970s and 1980s. The selection of books can be found in the Independent Press Archive that is currently held in the Research Center at the Visual Studies Workshop (VSW) in Rochester N.Y. The objective for this applied project is to facilitate access and describe the selection of books through the construction of a website.

The thesis is divided into two parts, a website description of the books and an analytical paper. The website will allow for visual access to some important experiments with the book format, analog experiments that were revolutionary in their time. The analytical paper includes a discussion of the decisions made while selecting and digitizing the books for the website. This thesis project will add to the current knowledge about VSW Press by providing a snapshot view of how the book format was utilized by artists and students working at VSW at a particular moment in history, a historical period in which photography media and publication were undergoing a time of remarkable growth.

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In 1969, photographer, writer, curator, and educator Nathan Lyons founded the Visual Studies Workshop (VSW) as an artist-run, educational and support center for photography and other media arts.¹ VSW Press, a program of VSW, has been producing artists' books and titles in the visual arts since 1972. Jessica S. McDonald, then the Curator of Collections at VSW, and Tate Shaw, Director of VSW, introduced me to the Independent Press Archive held in the Research Center at the Visual Studies Workshop. The Independent Press Archive contains over 5,000 artists' books.² This applied project grew out of my desire to create a website exhibition that would make accessible and visible some of the books that I was encountering in the archive, specifically books that were published by VSW.

This project was undertaken due to a fascination with the current happenings in the fields of independent publishing, artists' books, photo books, and book arts. Digital technologies effect a significant influence in the area of book publishing and distributing artwork. The current landscape of print on demand technologies seen in commercial websites such as Blurb³ and Lulu⁴ are allowing artists, writers and photographers to publish books with ease. Organizations such as Coach House Books⁵, Booklyn Artists

¹ About the Visual Studies Workshop, accessed May 23, 2011, http://www.vsw.org/about/about_vsw.php

² Research center at the Visual Studies Workshop, accessed May 23, 2011, http://www.vsw.org/research_center/research_center.php

³ Blurb Books, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.blurb.com/>

⁴ Lulu - Self Publishing and Book Printing Solutions, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.lulu.com/>

⁵ Coach House Books, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.chbooks.com/>

Alliance⁶, The Center for Book Arts⁷, Printed Matter⁸, Publication Studio⁹, Rollo Press¹⁰, and Self Publish Be Happy¹¹ are some current examples of organizations and websites whose missions are rooted in promoting and producing printed visual books. Each new media is grounded in the past but looks to the future, to new possibilities, and new means of production and distribution. This project presents forty-six books published by VSW Press in the 1970s and 1980s as important precursors to what is happening in the field today.

The books included in the website were all printed at VSW Press through the coordination of artist Joan Lyons. Lyons notes that during this time period there was an explosion of interest in new media and technology as artists sought alternative exhibition and distribution systems for artwork that was becoming more process-oriented.¹² “In the early 1970s, the term “artist’s book” was not in use, but we understood that print and books were essential extensions of photography and therefore visual books had to be a part of VSW’s programs.”¹³

VSW began in 1969, and during the time period of 1970 to 1977 the press utilized a number of tools: an old letterpress and an offset duplicator, a process camera,

⁶ Brooklyn Artists Alliance, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.brooklyn.org/>

⁷ The Center for Book Arts, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.centerforbookarts.org/>

⁸ Printed Matter, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://printedmatter.org/>

⁹ Publication Studio, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.publicationstudio.biz/>

¹⁰ Rollo Press, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.rollo-press.com/>

¹¹ Self Publish Be Happy, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://selfpublishbehappy.com/>

¹² Joan Lyons, Conversation at Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY, January 31, 2011.

¹³ Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists’ Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009) 12.

an AB Dick 360 duplicator, a Haloid Xerox machine, a 3M Color-in-Color machine, and, in 1977, a 25 inch Heidelberg offset press was acquired.¹⁴ It was in 1973 that VSW began functioning not only as a student facility but also as an artists' press. VSW created a space for artists to have direct access to the means of production, and created opportunities for experimentation and innovation in the field.

Experimenters with the book format such as Keith Smith and Sonia Sheridan created books with VSW Press. Sheridan's artwork stands as an important example of the intersection between new technology and art; she worked as artist-in-residence at 3M's Color Research and Central Research Labs. Keith Smith comments about VSW:

"VSW was a great place in the 1970s, because Nathan and Joan were both into the book format. Nathan concentrated on the orchestration of how to move from page to page. So few book artists really understand structure. He is a gold mine. I did not learn concepts from him, but from making my own artists' books and trying to resolve each new book in a different manner of how to get the viewer from one page to the next, and more importantly, how to relate pages, and specific areas of a page to an area in a page which is not adjacent. When Nathan brought me to VSW to teach in 1970, I was only then introduced to what he taught. He was never my teacher, but our shared students would give me an idea of his concepts."¹⁵

¹⁴ Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009) 131-135.

¹⁵ Keith Smith, e-mail message to author, February 9, 2011.

In a discussion with Joan Lyons about the digital tools that are available for publishing today she commented: “I find it curious that a result of the digital revolution has been an increased interest in digital methods of printing. We thought everything was going to be created to go online, into the ‘ether’. But books stick around, and go out into the world.”¹⁶ Despite the changing landscape of technology, the book continues to play a vital role. Joanna Drucker, in her introduction to *Artists’ Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*, suggests that the opportunities represented by new technologies present new challenges but the core issue remains the same:

“The replacement of offset equipment and darkrooms with digital pre-press, scanners, and other tools has extended the media of print into the meta-media of information technology. The ability to produce and reproduce visual images and type with a freedom of expression and fluidity that was unthinkable thirty years ago poses as many challenges as opportunities. The core issue - how to think of a book as a primary work, one whose features are engaged in the artistic project from conception to execution - remains crucial to the practice.”¹⁷

The analog book experiments produced by VSW Press were revolutionary in their time. The books illustrate a grappling with technologies and new media in order to transmit visual ideas. These thoughtful experiments in the analog area should be considered for the example they provide as current digital technologies impact the way

¹⁶ Joan Lyons, Conversation at Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY, January 31, 2011.

¹⁷ Joanna Drucker, “VSW Press: Making Books Then, There, and After” in *Artists’ Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. ed. Joan Lyons (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009) 9-10.

that visual books are published and built today. This website exhibition endeavors to present process-based and experimental books as a means of informing and thinking about the current possibilities of the medium. While the diversity of tools and resources has expanded greatly, with many tools accessible through the Internet, there remains the need to experiment and innovate with the medium. The books seen within this website reflect a particular creative atmosphere and culture cultivated by the VSW Press. The grappling with technologies evidenced in the books, along with the creative culture of VSW Press, should stand as helpful examples to artists confronting the challenges of working with the book format currently.

Introductory Note:

The literature consulted has been divided into six categories including: publications and writing about VSW Press, the photographic book, artists' books, independent publishing, printing and technologies, and technical resources for the creation of a website.

The core of this project centers on an examination of books produced by Visual Studies Workshop (VSW) Press; thus it is important to consider any publications or writing that related to the press and the work produced there. Although VSW Press stands as an example of an influential press that has sustained a long and varied run of producing books, the amount of writing that relates specifically to the press remains small. In the early 1970s the Visual Studies Workshop Press was a venue through which artists learned the conceptual and technical disciplines for producing a book and were encouraged to think critically about the process of bookmaking. This critical and experimental atmosphere is evidenced in the critical discussions published in: *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology & Sourcebook*¹⁸, produced by Joan Lyons in 1985. This book is a compilation of writings about bookworks in the 1960s. Recently published by VSW Press, *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*¹⁹, is a bibliographic listing of works printed by VSW Press and offers primary documents in the form of

¹⁸ Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology & Sourcebook*. (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press & Peregrine Smith Books, 1985)

¹⁹ Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009)

artists' annotations, an introduction by Joan Lyons, an essay by Johanna Drucker, and an afterword by current VSW Director, Tate Shaw. Drucker, in her essay about VSW Press, suggests that there is much to be learned from interacting with the books created by the VSW Press.

Resources listed in the other sections of the bibliography, that do not reference VSW directly, provide a historical and contemporary context and grounding for the topic at hand. By examining books such as Thomas Dugan's *Photography Between Covers*, Bill Owens *Publish Your Photo Book: A Guide to Self Publishing*, Stefan Klima's *Artists Books: A Critical Survey of the Literature*, or Johanna Drucker's *The Century of Artists' Books*, one can begin to understand the creative atmosphere and cultural moment during which the VSW Press was created.

Books such as Richard Benson's *The Printed Picture*, and Kyle Schlesinger's essay *The Letterpress in the Mimeo Revolution*, are important for their discussions of the changing technology of making and distributing pictures and text throughout time. Martin Parr's *The Photobook: A History, Volume I and Volume II*, Andrew Roth's *The Open Book: A History of the Photographic Book from 1878 to the Present*, and *The Book of 101 Books: Seminal Photographic Books of the Twentieth Century* offer varied ways to examine and present the history of the photographic book. The Visual Studies Workshop was founded as a support center for new media and photography and the organization promoted the book format as essential to the practice of photography. VSW Press books appear to be separate from the subject matter included in these

photographic book texts; however, these 'histories' are important to examine in the context of this research for the historical context they provide.

Websites for organizations such as Coach House Books, Brooklyn Artists Alliance, The Center for Book Arts, Printed Matter, Publication Studio, Rollo Press, and Self Publish Be Happy are all relevant to examine alongside the organizational structure of VSW Press. Some of these organizations had their beginnings in the same era as VSW Press, while others are examples of the current proliferation of organizations devoted to the medium of artists' books, book arts, photo books and independent publishing.

The final section of the bibliography includes technical resources that were referenced during the construction of the website. *Indexhibit* is a web application that was used to build and maintain the website format. The online exhibit *Movement* was created by a group of students at VSW, and it is helpful to be examined as an example of VSW's current online exhibitions and resources. *Museums in a Digital Age*, edited by Ross Parry, is a text that compiles the work of some fifty authors. This text considers how digital media influences the cultural heritage sector, and was a valuable resource while completing the project.

Books from the Independent Press Archive were chosen for inclusion in the website based on four essential criteria as follows:

- Published by VSW Press
- Published within a certain time period (In the 1970s and 1980s, focusing on a time period when VSW Press was in its beginnings)
- Eclectic (looking for a clear sense of artistic experimentation with the book format)
- Examples of both resolved books and less resolved projects

The selection of books brings together a range of material that reflects an in-process method of working with the book form. Included are experiments made by groups of students working together, as well as books made by artists such as Keith Smith, Sonia Sheridan, and Joan Lyons. For a complete listing of artists and the titles included in the website, see appendix #1. In the early 1970s the Visual Studies Workshop Press was a venue through which artists learned the conceptual and technical disciplines for producing a book and were encouraged to think critically about the process of bookmaking. An exhibition checklist for an exhibit of VSW Press books that took place at the Franklin Furnace in New York City in 1978 was consulted. This list was helpful as a basis for narrowing the focus of the selection to a certain time period. The books have been selected for the way that they represent inquiries into the book format, and for their experimental spirit. Included are books that are more fully resolved alongside books that are not.

Keith Smith's book: *Structure of the Visual Book* elaborates on the potentials of the book format. Published in 1984, this book discusses the format of books as physical objects, and how structure and composition relate to the experience of interacting with a book. This interaction, and considerations of the transition between pages and images, is what many of the books that are included in the website experiment with. The website presents digitally these three dimensional book objects that were built for interaction and handling. Direct interaction with the object cannot be replaced; the book format presents a private experience in which the viewer cradles the object and turns the pages according to his or her own choices. The direct experience of viewing and handling the books is lost in the digitization process.

What can be conveyed in the format of a website is an exhibit that creates a context-specific interpretation of the selection of books. The meanings of the books are not fixed and ever evolving, and are part of a specific time period and cycle of knowledge making. The website allows information about the book materials to be viewed in many circumstances, on any number of computer screens. The viewer does not have the opportunity for direct interaction with the objects; however, the digital copies allow visual interaction with information that otherwise would be visible only to visitors of the VSW research center. The website is not tactile and material but interpretive and accessible. This exhibition format seeks not to replace the act of interacting with the book format, but to create new links and a space for considering these books as a group.

Considering the state of our current technological world, and the trends towards digitization in institutions and museums²⁰, issues regarding original and copy should not be taken lightly. This debate is as old as the first photographic reproductions of paintings and artwork, however, and I would suggest that this issue should not be the central debate when considering digitization projects. A careful consideration of the cycle of knowledge making that is created through different interpretations and presentations of museum objects should be the focus. In a discussion about photographic materiality, researcher Joanna Sassoon notes: “The process of digitizing involves a more complex cultural process of translation – or a change between forms of representation.”²¹ The future (and current reality) contains digitization for museums, libraries and archives. The challenge will be to construct and implement digital models of interpretation that communicate thoughtfully with an audience that is comfortable in the digital world.

In her article titled “Museum Collections, Documentation and Shifting Knowledge Paradigms”, Fiona Cameron suggests we should be mindful of the how, who, and why in the interpretation of an object. Cameron posits that in order to promote multiple meanings of the objects included in museum collections, polysemic models of interpretation must be created.²² Cameron goes on to suggest that not only should past

²⁰ Ross Parry, ed., *Museums in a Digital Age*, (London; New York: Routledge, 2010)

²¹ Joanna Sassoon, “Photographic Materiality in the Age of Digital Reproduction” in *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images*, ed. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart (London; New York: Routledge, 2004), 188.

²² Fiona Cameron, “Museum Collections, Documentation and Shifting Knowledge Paradigms” in *Museums in a Digital Age*, ed. Ross Parry (London; New York: Routledge, 2010), 87-89.

modes of object interpretation and object documentation be exposed for their specific biases, but that we look on any interpretation as a construct of a given author, theory, and time.

Summary of Work

The books chosen for inclusion in the website have been scanned using an Epson scanner, or photographed using a copy stand and a Nikon D80 digital camera. These tools were available to me in the research center at VSW. Decisions regarding which tool was utilized for documentation were dependent upon the format of the book, and the specific limitations created by each object. In all cases, front and back covers, title page, and representative spreads have been digitized. Each book has been treated in a case-specific way; therefore the number of pages represented from each book varies. The books are each displayed with a catalogue record. Included in each listing are measurements, page counts, type of binding, and type of printing process.

At the outset of the project, I discussed options for creating access to the books with VSW's director, Tate Shaw. An interactive CD-Rom format that could be distributed was considered; however, a website format was preferable. The website format allowed the exhibit to be connected to VSW's website under the online exhibitions link. The website was initially hosted on my own server while being constructed, and was transferred to VSW's server once complete.

The web application Indexhibit was used to build and maintain the website. Indexhibit was created by artists and designers Daniel Eatock and Jeffery Vaska, it is: "A web application used to build and maintain an archetypal, invisible website format that combines text, image, movie and sound."²³ The benefit of installing this web application is that it allowed me to concentrate on the content and interpretation of the books,

²³ Indexhibit, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.indexhibit.org/>

rather than programming in HTML. Once installed, Indexhibit creates a portal into which the user logs in and then can easily upload and edit content. I found this simple format intuitive; the scrolling list on the left frame allows viewers to click and display information in the right frame. Another factor that was important in this choice of format was the ability to scroll continuously to the right in the right frame. This allows for a flow of images, one next to the other, of the book pages. For visual examples of the format of the website, see Appendix #3, Illustrations.

Each artist that is included in the website was contacted in order to approve the use of their work in the exhibition. A letter delineating the project, along with a request for permission was mailed to each of the 42 artists involved. VSW's Assistant Director and MFA Coordinator, Kristen Merola, assisted me in locating contact information for some of the artists in VSW's alumni and artist database. However, in some cases contact information was out of date or unavailable and required Internet searches and email correspondence in order to obtain current address information. This updated contact information was in turn added to VSW's database. See appendix #2 for an example of the letter and permission form that was utilized in this correspondence.

Concluding Remarks

The selection of books in the exhibit is from a specific period of time, a time of interest in new technology and new systems of distribution related to artwork. Joan Lyons recognized that “As soon as there were venues for showing book works, such as Franklin Furnace in New York, that many artists started making books.”²⁴ This period of cultural activity exhibits a tremendous spirit of innovation, and this spirit can be seen in the books published by VSW Press. The books that were made were products of the specific parameters created by the tools available at VSW. The experimental fluidity seen in the works is a product of the direct access to the tools. The books present photographs, drawings and text that are produced with such tools as letterpress, offset, Haloid Xerox, and 3M Color-in-Color intermediaries. The works move smoothly between drawing and photography, halftone and continuous tone, and are products of an atmosphere of experimentation.

This atmosphere of experimentation is being reflected and re-kindled in the digital age. Today, VSW Press continues experimenting and thinking critically about the book format along with many other organizations, such as JAB (The Journal of Artists’ Books)²⁵, J&L Books²⁶, NSEW Press²⁷, and Booklyn Artists Alliance²⁸. Artists working with

²⁴ Joan Lyons, Conversation at Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY, January 31, 2011.

²⁵ JAB The Journal of Artists’ Books, accessed August 4, 2011, <http://www.journalofartistsbooks.org/>

²⁶ J & L Books, accessed August 4, 2011, <http://www.jandlbooks.org/>

²⁷ NSEW Press, accessed August 4, 2011, <http://www.nsewpress.com/>

²⁸ Booklyn Artists Alliance, accessed May 23, 2011, <http://www.booklyn.org/>

the book medium today can access current technologies and support through the Internet where there are a proliferation of websites and organizations devoted to the medium. The work being created in the era of Photoshop and information technology picks up on the themes and strategies exhibited in the books produced by VSW Press in the 1970s and 1980s. The spirit of innovation seen in the selection of VSW Press books is being echoed in work produced today, and is driven by the same forces of innovation; albeit by differing technologies, resources, and venues.

The curatorial, technical, and institutional influence of VSW Press has produced books that should be examined as important precursors. Prior to the completion of this project, books published by VSW Press were accessible through the research center at VSW, or through the bibliographic listing produced by Joan Lyons in 2009.²⁹ Digitizing and producing this website has provided visitors to VSW's website a chance to interact with and access visually some selected examples of VSW Press's publishing endeavors in the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, this website description asks viewers to consider the books as a group, as examples of the book format that are relevant to examine in the current landscape of publishing.

²⁹ Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009)

The direct link to the exhibit is: <http://www.griffin.vsw.org/>

The exhibit can alternatively be found as a link on the Visual Studies Workshop website under the online exhibitions tab at: <http://www.vsw.org/exhibitions/online.php>

- See Appendix 3, Illustrations, for visual examples of the structure of the website.

Two sections of text have been included in the website: “About This Site” and “Introductory Text”. While the texts include similar information to what has been written in the analytical paper, the different viewing format and circumstances of the website called for edited versions of the information. The link “About This Site” provides a basic explanatory note about the project. Although the structure of the website is intuitive, this explanation also contains some brief information on navigation. Found below are the edited versions of the texts as they appear on the website.

About this site:

Visual Studies Workshop Press: A Website Description of Process-Based and Experimental Books is a Ryerson University / George Eastman House Photographic Preservation and Collections Management MA Thesis in the form of a website.

This applied thesis project deals with a selection of 50 books published by the Visual Studies Workshop (VSW) Press in the 1970s and 1980s. The selection of books can be found in the Independent Press Archive held in the research center at the **Visual Studies Workshop (VSW)** in Rochester N.Y.

This research and website description allows visual access to some important analog experiments with the book format that were revolutionary in their time. In the current landscape of independent publishing, book arts, and "artists' books", these early VSW Press publications should be examined as important precursors. This project exists as a snapshot view into how the book format was utilized by artists and students working at VSW at a particular moment in history.

To navigate the website: click on a book title from the alphabetical listing on the left panel. Information and images of the book will be displayed in the left panel, to view all images related to each book, scroll to the right. For further information about the project, please read the introductory text.

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- Published within a certain time period (In the 1970s and 1980s, focusing on a time period when VSW Press was in its beginnings)
- Inclusion of both resolved books and examples of less resolved projects
- Eclectic (looking for a clear sense of artistic experimentation with the book format)

The selection of books brings together a range of material that reflects an in-process method of working with the book form. Included are experiments made by groups of students working together, as well as books made by artists such as Keith Smith, Sonia Sheridan, and Joan Lyons.

The books included in the website were all printed at VSW Press through the coordination of artist Joan Lyons. Lyons notes that during this time period there was an explosion of interest in new media and technology as artists sought alternative exhibition and distribution systems for artwork that was becoming more process oriented.³¹ "In the early 1970s, the term "artists' book" was not in use, but

³⁰ Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009)

³¹ Joan Lyons, Conversation at Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY, January 31, 2011.

we understood that print and books were essential extensions of photography and therefore visual books had to be a part of VSW's programs."³²

The press utilized a number of tools to produce books in the beginning: the organization started with an old letterpress and an offset duplicator, then added a process camera and an AB Dick 360 duplicator, and finally, in 1977, a 25 inch Heidelberg offset press was acquired.³³ VSW created a space for artists to have direct access to the means of production, and created opportunities for experimentation and innovation in the field.

Experimenters with the book format such as Keith Smith and Sonia Sheridan created books with VSW Press. Sheridan's artwork stands as an important example of the intersection between new technology and art; she worked as artist-in-residence at 3M's Color Research and Central Research Labs. Keith Smith comments about VSW:

"VSW was a great place in the 1970s, because Nathan and Joan were both into the book format. Nathan concentrated on the orchestration of how to move from page to page. So few book artists really understand structure. He is a gold mine. I did not learn concepts from him, but from making my own artists' books and trying to resolve each new book in a different manner of how to get the viewer from one page to the next, and more importantly, how to relate pages, and specific areas of a page to an area in a page which is not adjacent. When Nathan brought me to VSW to teach in 1970, I was only then introduced to what he taught. He was never my teacher, but our shared students would give me an idea of his concepts."³⁴

In a discussion with Joan Lyons about the digital tools that are available for publishing today she commented: "I find it curious that a result of the digital revolution has been an increased interest in digital methods of printing. We thought everything was going to be created to go online, into the 'ether'. But books stick around, and go out into the world."³⁵ Despite the changing landscape of technology, the book continues to play a vital role. Joanna Drucker, in her introduction to *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*, suggests that the opportunities represented by new technologies present new challenges but the core issue remains the same:

"The replacement of offset equipment and darkrooms with digital pre-press, scanners, and other tools has extended the media of print into the meta-media of information technology. The ability to produce and reproduce visual images and type with a freedom of expression and fluidity that was unthinkable thirty years ago poses as many challenges as opportunities. The core issue- how to think of a book as a primary work, one whose features are engaged in the artistic project from conception to execution- remains crucial to the practice."³⁶

The analog book experiments produced by VSW Press were revolutionary in their time. The books illustrate a grappling with technologies and new media in order to transmit visual ideas. These thoughtful experiments in the analog area should be considered for the example they provide as current digital technologies impact the way that visual books are published and built today. This website exhibition endeavors to present process-based and experimental books as a means of informing and thinking about the current possibilities of the medium.

³² Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009) 12.

³³ Joan Lyons, ed., *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009) 133-135.

³⁴ Keith Smith, e-mail message to author, February 9, 2011.

³⁵ Joan Lyons, Conversation at Visual Studies Workshop, Rochester, NY, January 31, 2011.

³⁶ Joanna Drucker, "VSW Press: Making Books Then, There, and After" in *Artists' Books: Visual Studies Workshop Press 1971-2008*. ed. Joan Lyons (Rochester, NY: Visual Studies Workshop Press, 2009) 9-10.

Introductory Note:

The literature consulted has been divided into six categories including: publications and writing about VSW Press, the photographic book, artists' books, independent publishing, printing and technologies, and technical / theoretical resources for the creation of a website.

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Appendix #1: Listing of Books

	Artist Name	Book Title	Year	# of Pages	Size	Printing & Binding Information
1	Bacher, Fred	Tension	1977	48	11.75 x 9 in	Offset, adhesive bound
2	Chiasson, Hermenegilde	Rochester's Love Book or Book of Ashes	1979	36	10.5 x 11 in	Photocopier, mixed media collage, wire bound
3	Childs, Bruce	Two Places	1980	24	5.5 x 8.5 in	Photo/electro-graphic lithographs, offset color, saddle stitched
4	Collaboration (VSW Students)	Dreaming	1975	42	8 x 8 in	Offset, adhesive bound
5	Collaboration (VSW Students)	Read, Rest	c. 1974	76	7.5 x 7.5 in	Offset, adhesive bound
6	Collaboration (VSW Students) Michael Bishop, Laura Blacklow, John Kennard, Joan Lyons, Cathy Von Weller	We Graduated From HS in _____ This is our Autobiography	c. 1975	76	7.75 x 5 in	Offset, adhesive bound
7	Collaboration (VSW Students) Chuck Anderson, Marion Faller, Robert Stevens, David Trend, Ray Van Dusen	5 x 5	1977	46	6 x 6 in	Haloid Xerox, offset, spiral bound

	Artist Name	Book Title	Year	# of Pages	Size	Printing & Binding Information
8	Collaboration (VSW Students) Helen Brunner, Frank Dufy, John Helmore, Chuck Kelly, Steve Moore, Brian Smith, Erik Sundance	Fifty Fifty Copies Fifty Copies Copies	1973	78	8 x 10.5 in	Offset from Xerox paper plates, adhesive bound
9	Connor, Doug	Guide to Collision Services in Rochester	1975	32	5 x 7 in	Offset, adhesive bound
10	Coutellier, Francis	Report Rapport	1976	32	8 x 13.5 in	Offset
11	Coutellier, Francis	Not at all Polaroid	1975	32	7 x 5 in	Offset, saddle stitched
12	Faller, Marion	A Resurrection of the Exquisite Corpse	1978	30	4.5 x 10.5 in	Offset, spiral bound
13	Flynn, Deborah	Imaging with Light Sensitive Materials	1976	24	7.25 x 10 in	Offset, saddle stitched
14	Godden, Christine	This Rose Book	1977	28	8.25 x 8 in	Offset color, saddle stitched
15	Gordon, Bonnie	The Anatomy of the Image Maps	1982	48	8 x 10 in	Stretched halftone photographs, offset, Smythe sewn
16	Gordon, Bonnie	The Anatomy of Proteus	1982	24	8 x 10 in	Stretched halftone photographs, offset, saddle stitched
17	Gordon, Bonnie	The Four Temperaments	1974	320	5.5 x 4.75 in	Offset, adhesive bound, flip book

	Artist Name	Book Title	Year	# of Pages	Size	Printing & Binding Information
18	Hartshorn, Martin and Patty Martin	Famous Men	1977	48	5 x 5 in	Offset, adhesive bound
19	Hydler, Glenda	The Human Dilemma, Part I	1978	42	8 x 10 in	Offset, saddle stitched
20	Kennard, John	Untitled	1974	32	8 x 9 in	Offset, adhesive bound
21	Lyons, Joan	Abby Rogers to her Grand-Daughter	1976	32	7.5 x 10 in	Color offset, saddle stitched
22	Lyons, Joan	Bride Book Red to Green	1975	42	7.75 x 9 in	Offset, Japanese stab binding
23	Lyons, Joan	Busform Shadows	1973	22	8 x 5 in	Silkscreen, letterpress, saddle stitched
24	Lyons, Joan	In Hand	1973	64	8 x 10 in	Offset from paper plates, adhesive bound
25	Lyons, Joan	Perspectives I	1976	70	5 x 6.75 in	Offset, post binding
26	Lyons, Joan	Perspectives IV	1976	56	8 x 6.5 in	Offset, post binding
27	Lyons, Joan	Self Impressions	1972	52	8.5 x 11 in	Offset from 3M color-in-color intermediaries, adhesive bound
28	McClaren, Robbie	Unidentified Non-Flying Objects	1977	28	5.5 x 3.5 in	Offset, saddle stitched
29	North, Kenda	Fanny	1975	38	8 x 8.5 in	Offset, saddle stitched
30	Parker, Bart	A Close Brush With Reality	1981	64	8 x 10 in	Color offset, Smythe sewn binding
31	Parry, Linda	Linda's Book: A Tighter Version of Corrective Shoes	c. 1973	16	7 x 7 in	Offset, saddle stitched
32	Renner, Eric	The Horsefetter	1976	24	5 x 7 in	Offset, saddle stitched

	Artist Name	Book Title	Year	# of Pages	Size	Printing & Binding Information
33	Saxe, John G	The Flying Dutchman (Reprint Series)	1975	34	7.5 x 5.5 in	Offset, Smythe sewn
34	Seidman, Spencer	Footnote	1978	32	8 x 4 in	Letterpress, saddle stitched
35	Sheridan, Sonia	The Inner Landscape and the Machine	1974	20	8 x 10 in	Offset from color separations made on the 3M color-in-color machine and b&w from 3M VRC remote copier transmissions, saddle stitched
36	Sheridan, Sonia and Keith Smith	Unfolding Volume 2	1973	32	6 x 6 in	Offset from paper plates, adhesive bound
37	Siskind, Aaron and John Logan	Aaron Siskind: Photographs; John Logan: Poems	1976	72	7.5 x 10 in	Offset, saddle stitched
38	Smith, Keith	A Bee Sees (Book 71)	1976	36	8.5 x 11 in	Silkscreen, saddle stitched
39	Smith, Keith	Masturbation Meditation (Book 65)	1976	12	8.5 x 11.25 in	Offset, nuts and bolts binding
40	Smith, Keith	When I Was Two (Book 68)	1977	50	8 x 12.5 in	Offset, saddle stitched, hard bound
41	Swartz, Joel	Something Different To Do	1977	28	7.5 x 8.5 in	Mechanical color offset, Haloid Xerox paper plates, adhesive bound
42	Swartz, Joel	Untitled (Labor-Saving Devices)	1974	20	7.5 x 10.5 in	Haloid Xerox images, offset from 3M direct image paper plates, adhesive bound
43	Swartz, Joel	Words and Pictures	1975	42	11 x 8.5 in	Offset from Haloid Xerox paper plates, adhesive bound

	Artist Name	Book Title	Year	# of Pages	Size	Printing & Binding Information
44	Swartz, Joel	Your Book	1973	68	7.5 x 10.5 in	Haloid Xerox images, 3-color separations offset from 3M direct image paper plates, adhesive bound
45	Sylvia, James	A 20th Century American Tragedy	1975	16	5.25 x 5.25 in	Offset, saddle stitched
46	Zimmerman, Phillip	Exerpts from Alphaville	1977	12	8 x 5.5 in	Offset lithography, saddle stitched
47	Zimmerman, Phillip	The Cure	1977	12	10 x 9 in	Offset lithography, Japanese stab binding

VISUAL STUDIES
WORKSHOP



VISUAL STUDIES WORKSHOP, INC. 31 Prince Street, Rochester, NY 14607 PH (585) 442-8676 FAX (585) 442-1992

May 11, 2011

Glenda F. Hydler

Dear Glenda,

In August 2011, the Visual Studies Workshop will present **Visual Studies Workshop Press: Process-Based and Experimental Books**, an online exhibition of books published by VSW Press in the 1970s and early 1980s. In collaboration with the Visual Studies Workshop, this work has been undertaken in partial fulfillment of an MA Thesis (Ryerson University / George Eastman House). The exhibition will be launched from the VSW website and will allow for visual access to important experiments with the book format that were revolutionary in their time. In the current landscape of independent publishing, book arts, and "artists' books," these early VSW Press publications will be presented as important precursors. This exhibition will add to the current knowledge about VSW Press by existing as a snapshot view into how the book format was utilized by artists and students working at VSW at a particular moment in history. The online exhibition will include fifty individual book works.

We are requesting your permission to include one (or more) of your books (details attached), selected from the Independent Press Archive at VSW, in this online exhibition.

Please indicate your agreement by signing and returning the attached statement of permission. In signing, you warrant that you are the sole owner of the rights granted and that your material does not infringe anyone else's copyright. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

With best wishes,

Erin Griffin

MA Candidate Ryerson University / George Eastman House

To: Erin Griffin
C/O Research Center
Visual Studies Workshop
31 Prince Street
Rochester, New York 14607

STATEMENT OF PERMISSION

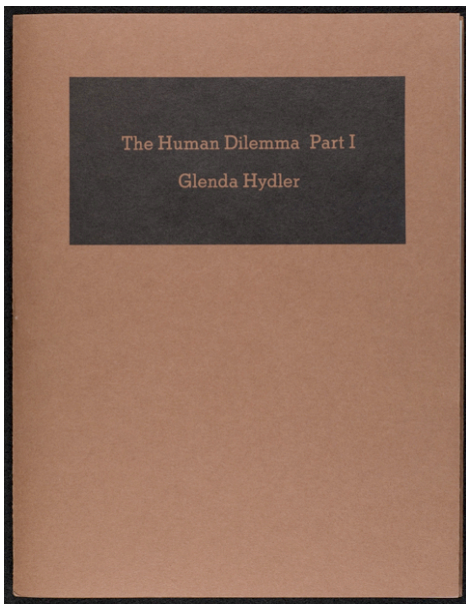
I am granting permission for reproduction of the following work(s):

(Each book will be digitized with front and back covers, title page, and representative spreads. The exhibit will note measurements and page counts for each object.)

Artist: Glenda F. Hydler

Title: The Human Dilemma, Part I

Date: 1978



SIGN HERE:

Signature: _____

Name: Glenda F. Hydler

Date: _____

Appendix #3: Illustrations of Website

Fig. 1
Main page of website.

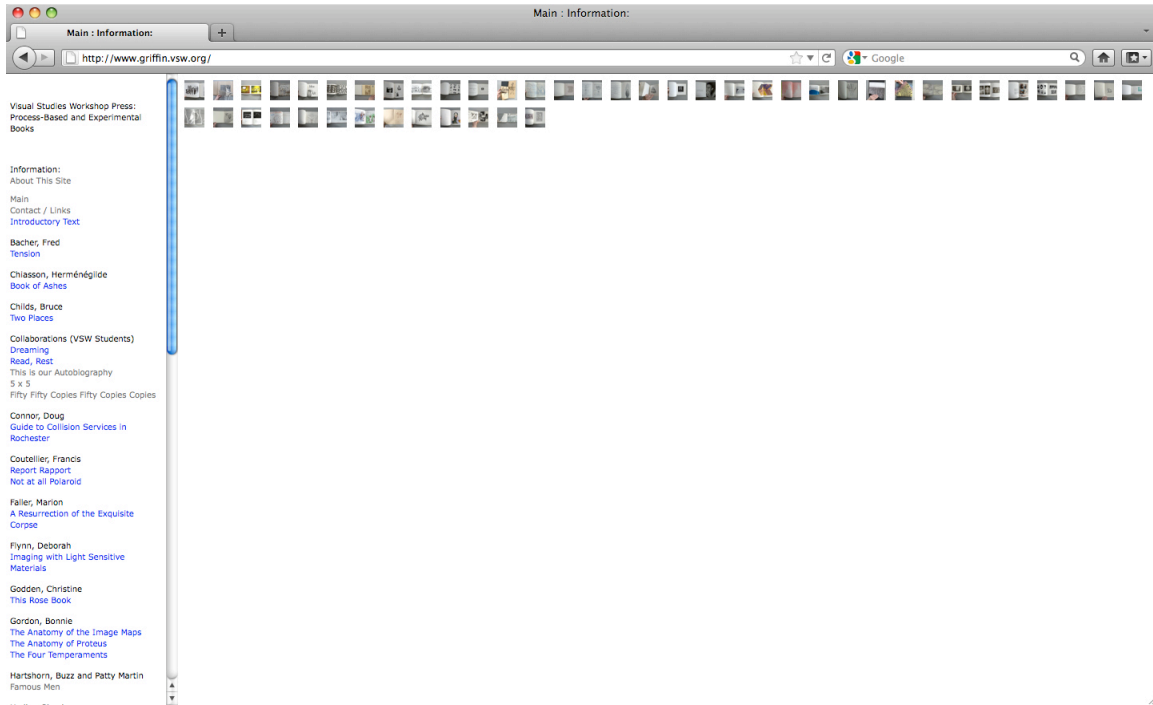


Fig. 2
Main page of website displaying image from *A Close Brush With Reality* by Bart Parker

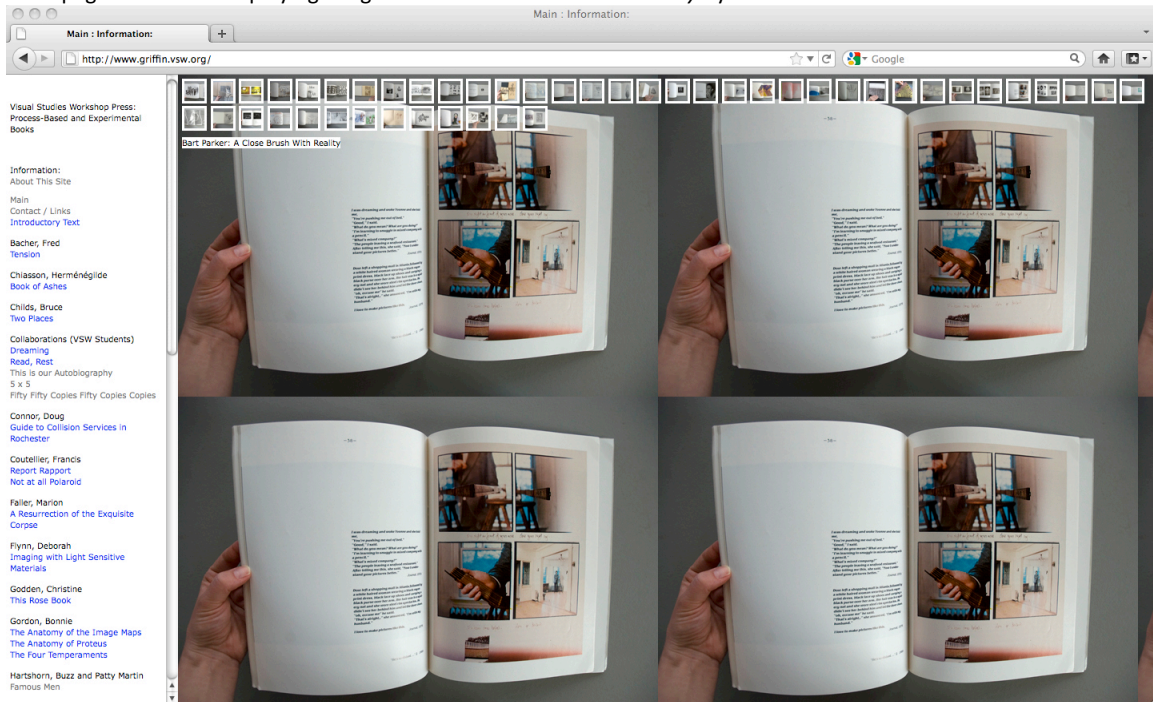


Fig. 3

Main page of website displaying image from *The Inner Landscape and the Machine* by Sonia Sheridan.

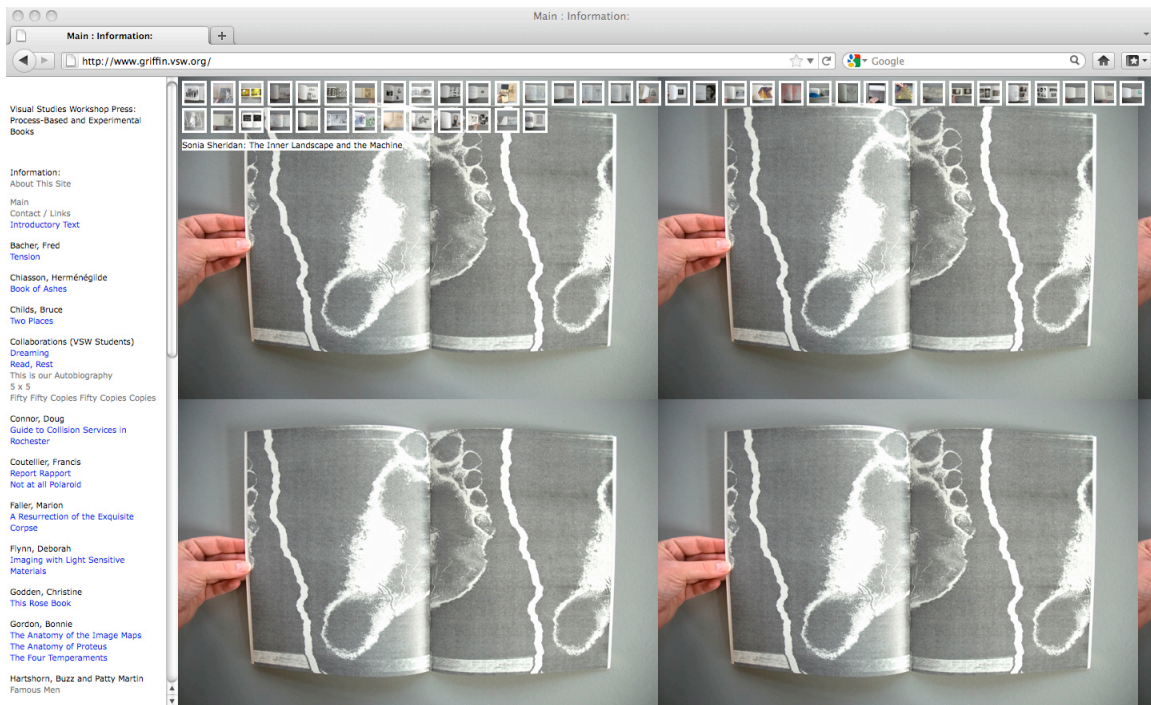


Fig. 4

"About This Site" page.

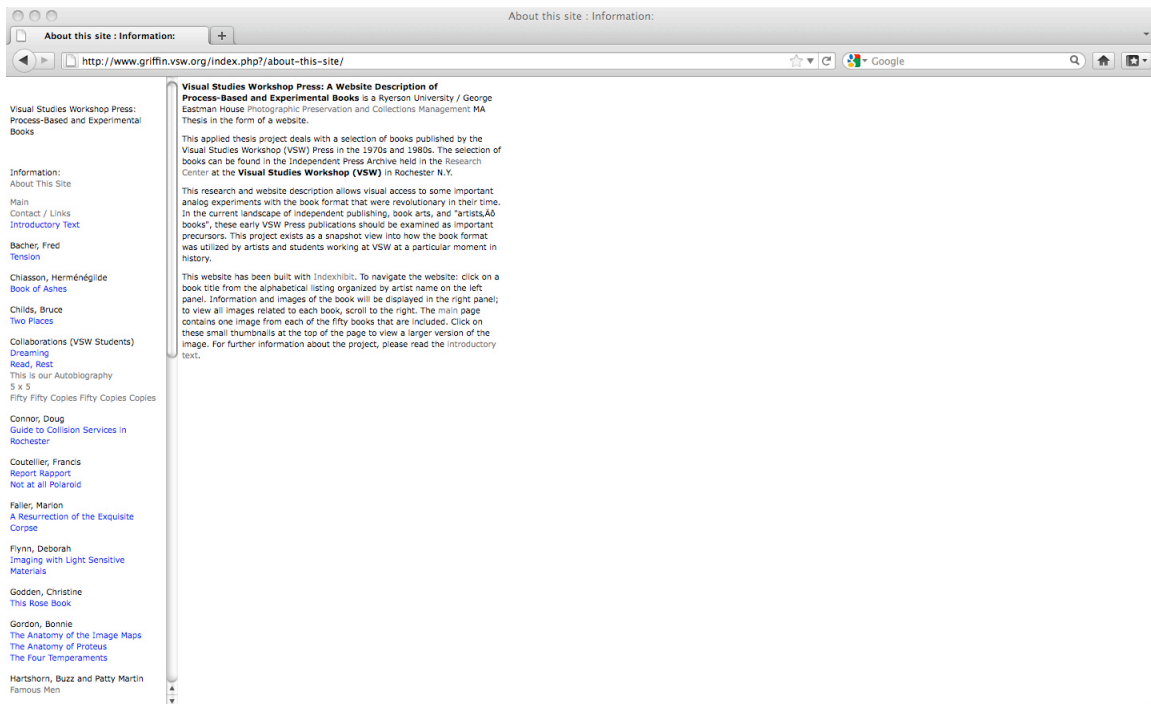


Fig. 5

“Contacts/Links” page.

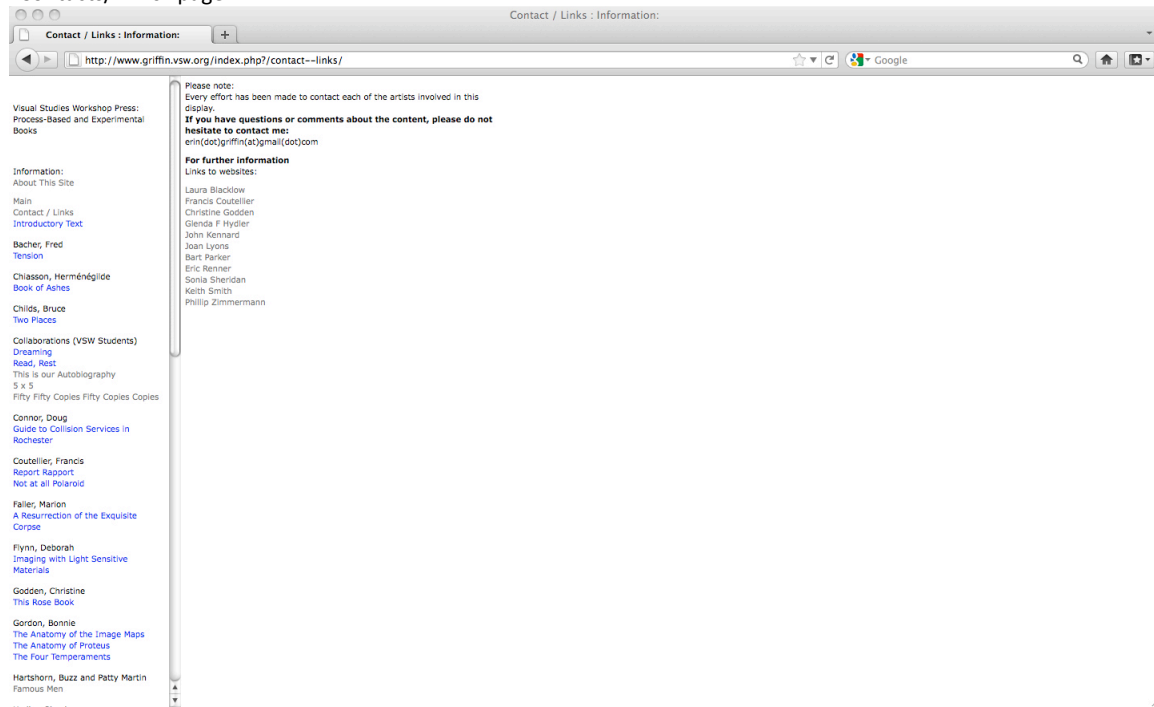


Fig. 6

“Introductory Text” page.

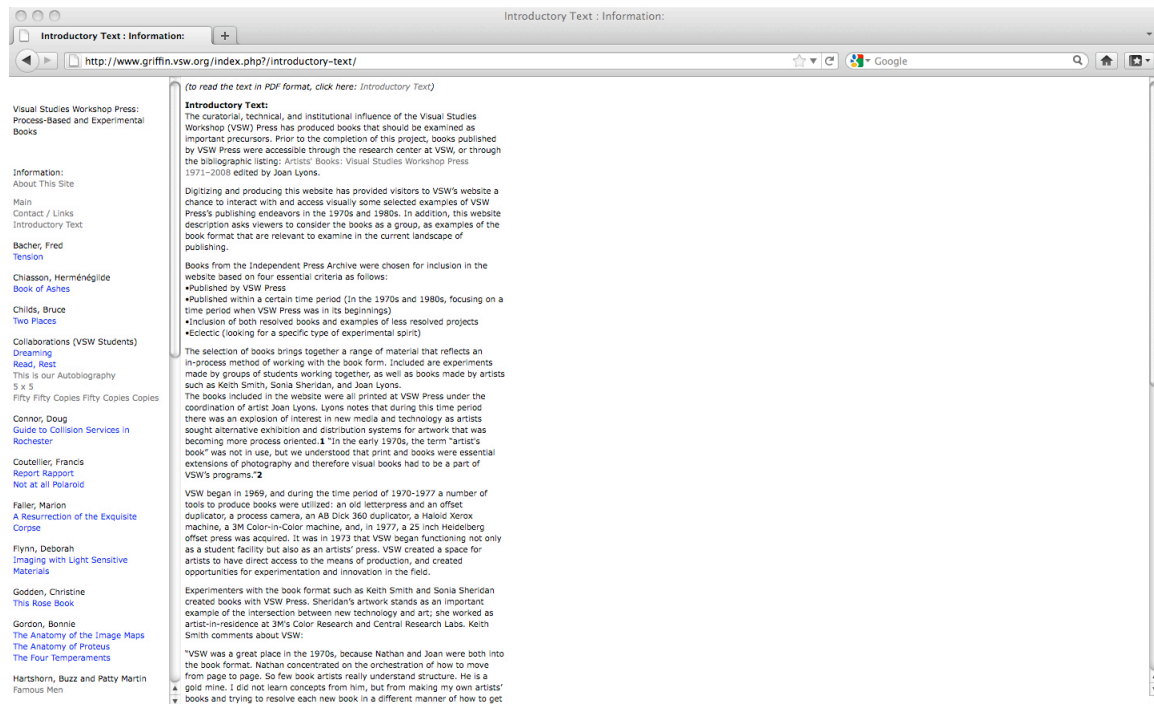


Fig. 7

Example of book page: *Rochester's Love Book or Book of Ashes* by Herménégilde Chiasson. View #1.

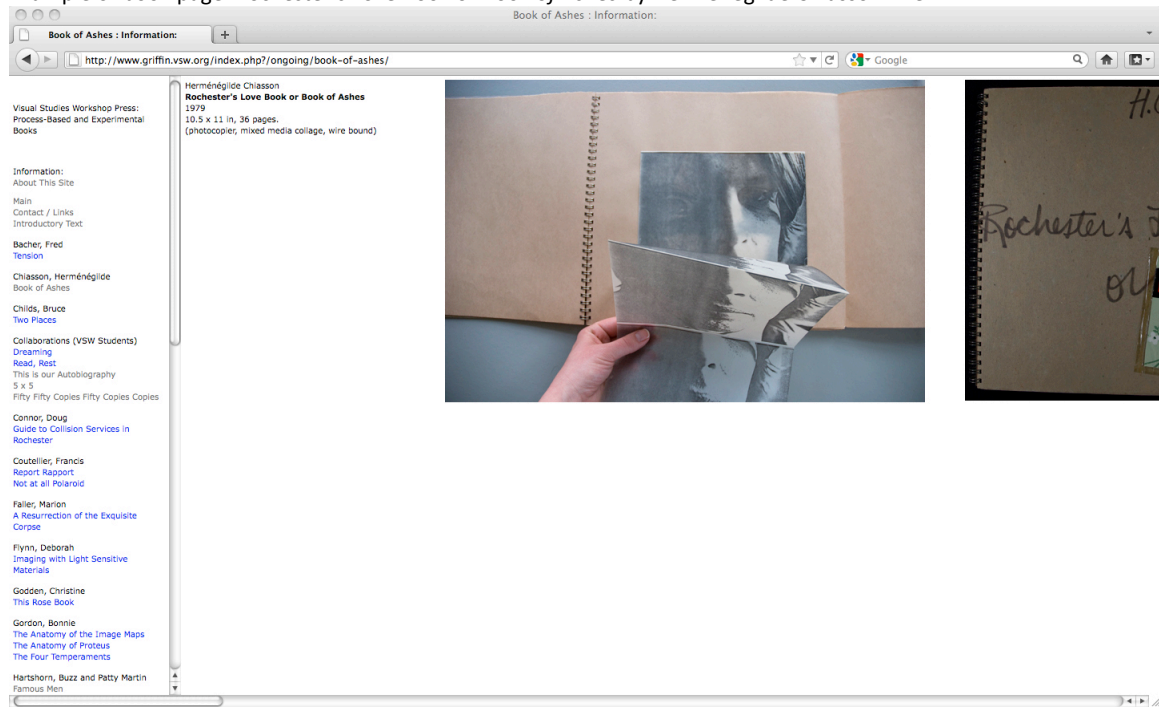


Fig. 8

Example of book page: *Rochester's Love Book or Book of Ashes* by Herménégilde Chiasson. View #2.

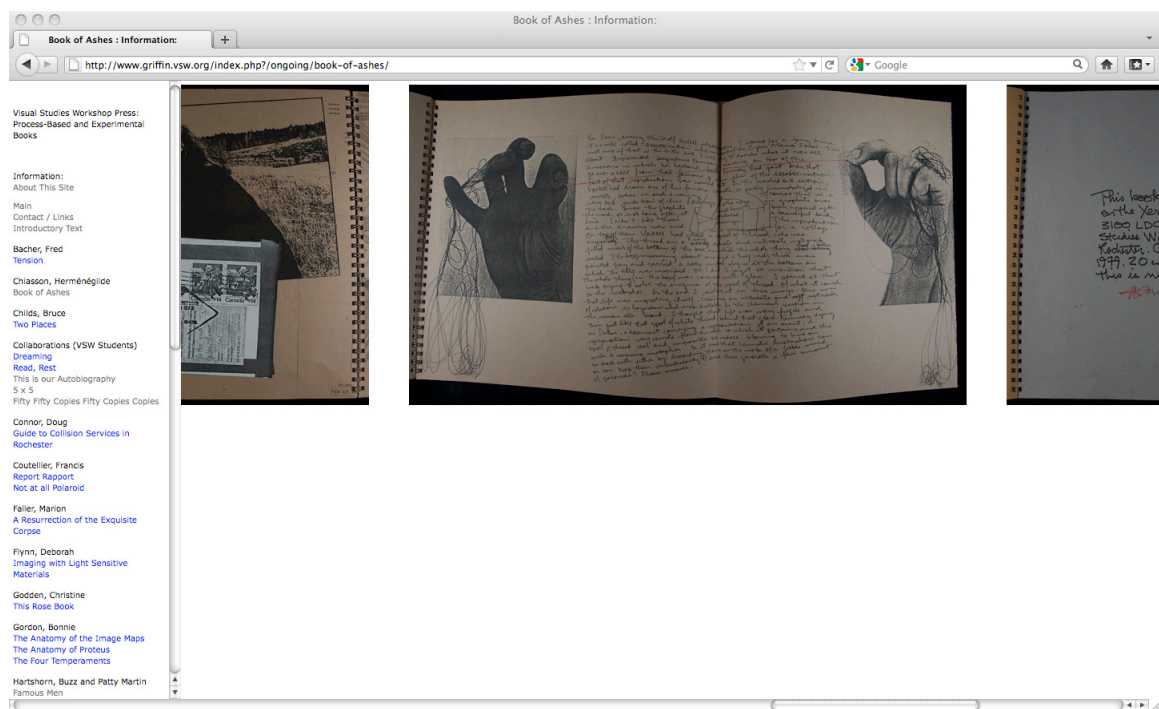


Fig. 9

Example of book page: *A Resurrection of the Exquisite Corpse* by Marion Faller. View #1.

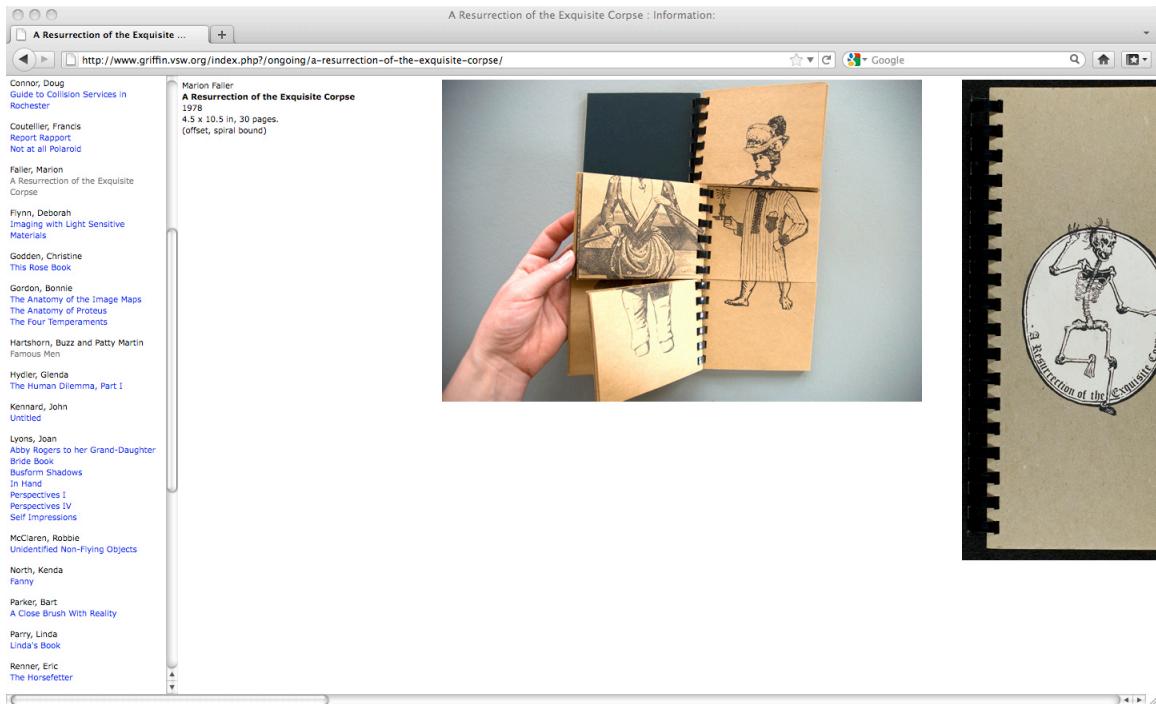


Fig. 10

Example of book page: *A Resurrection of the Exquisite Corpse* by Marion Faller. View #2.

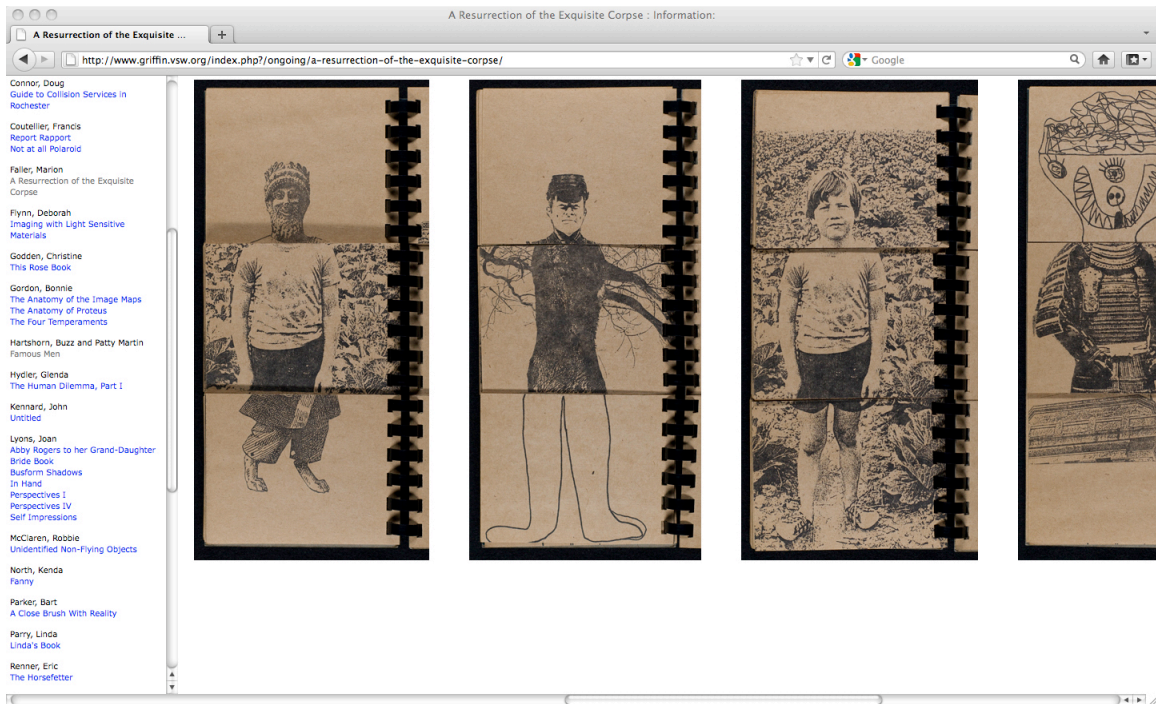


Fig. 11

Example of book page: *Imaging with Light Sensitive Materials* by Deborah Flynn. View #1.

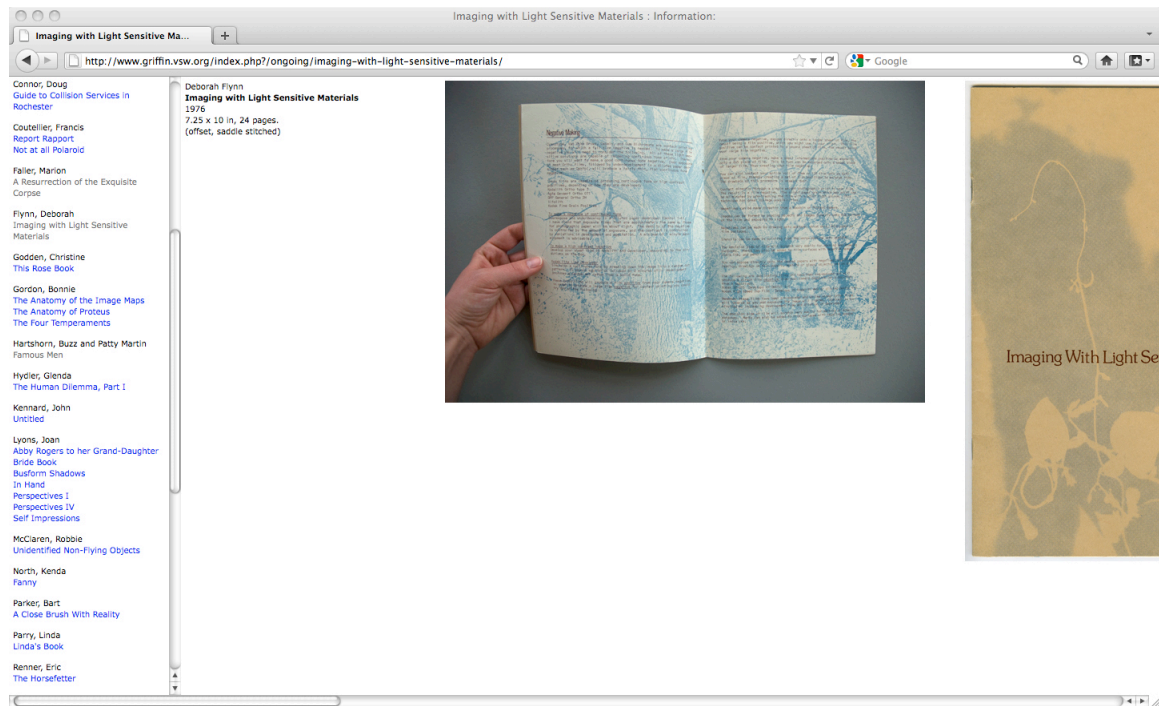


Fig. 12

Example of book page: *Imaging with Light Sensitive Materials* by Deborah Flynn. View #2.

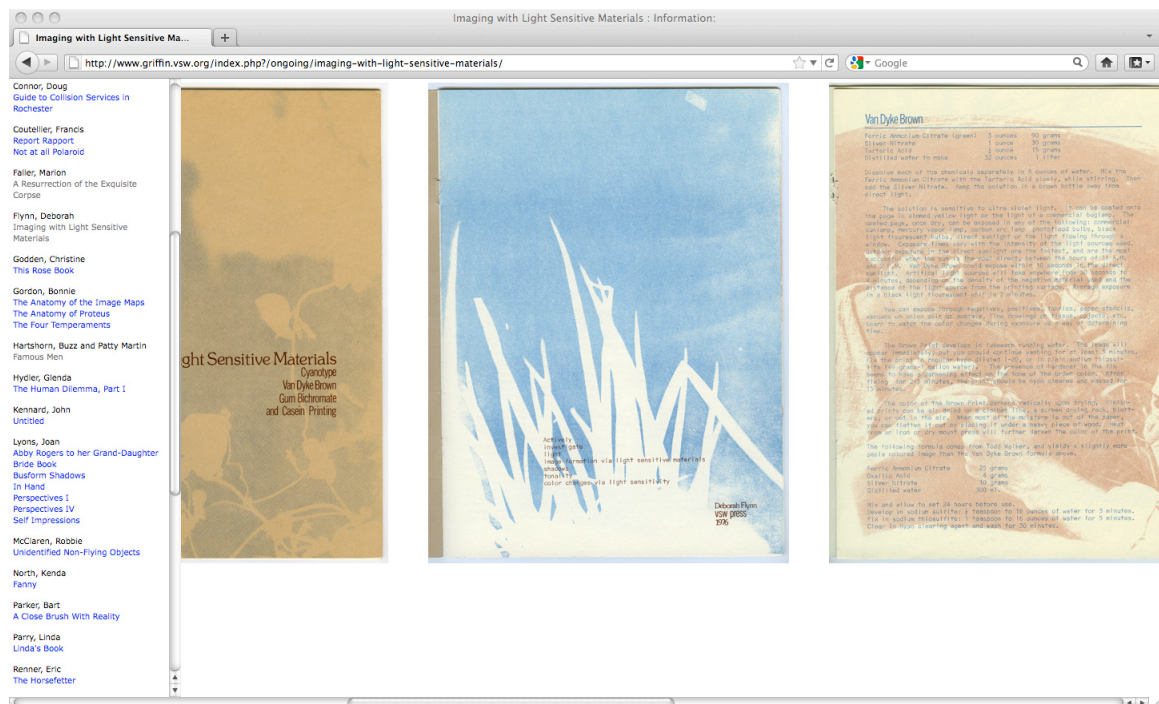


Fig. 13
Example of book page: *Self Impressions* by Joan Lyons. View #1.

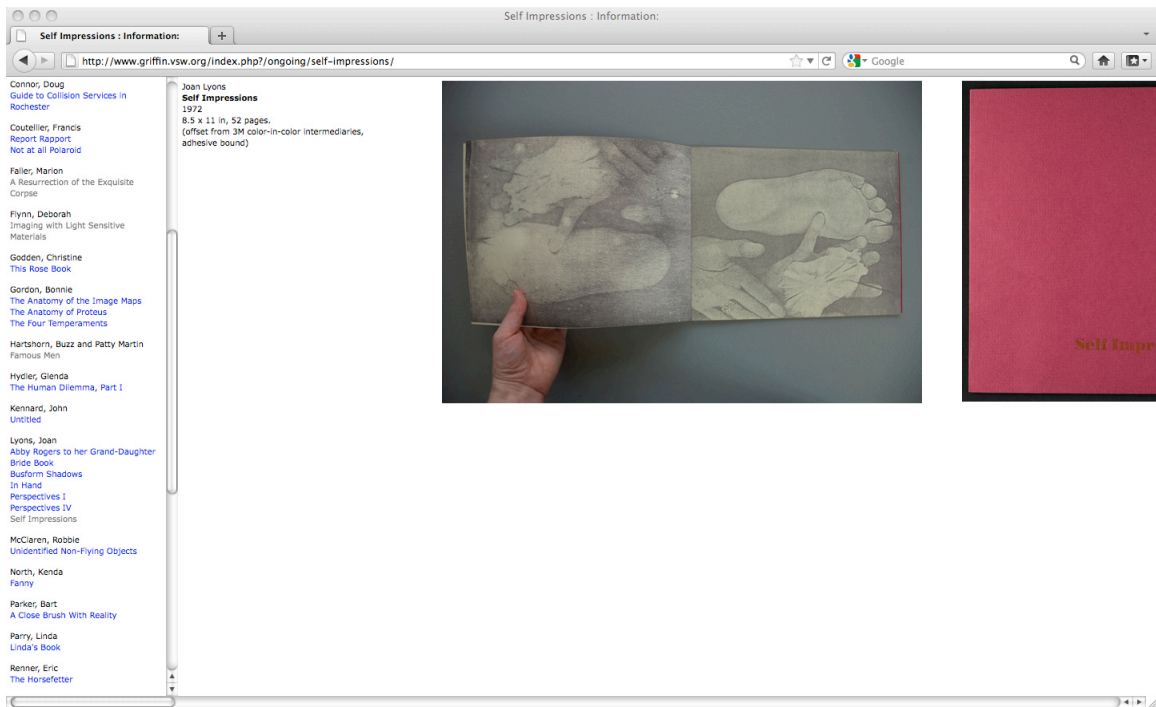


Fig. 14
Example of book page: *Self Impressions* by Joan Lyons. View #2.

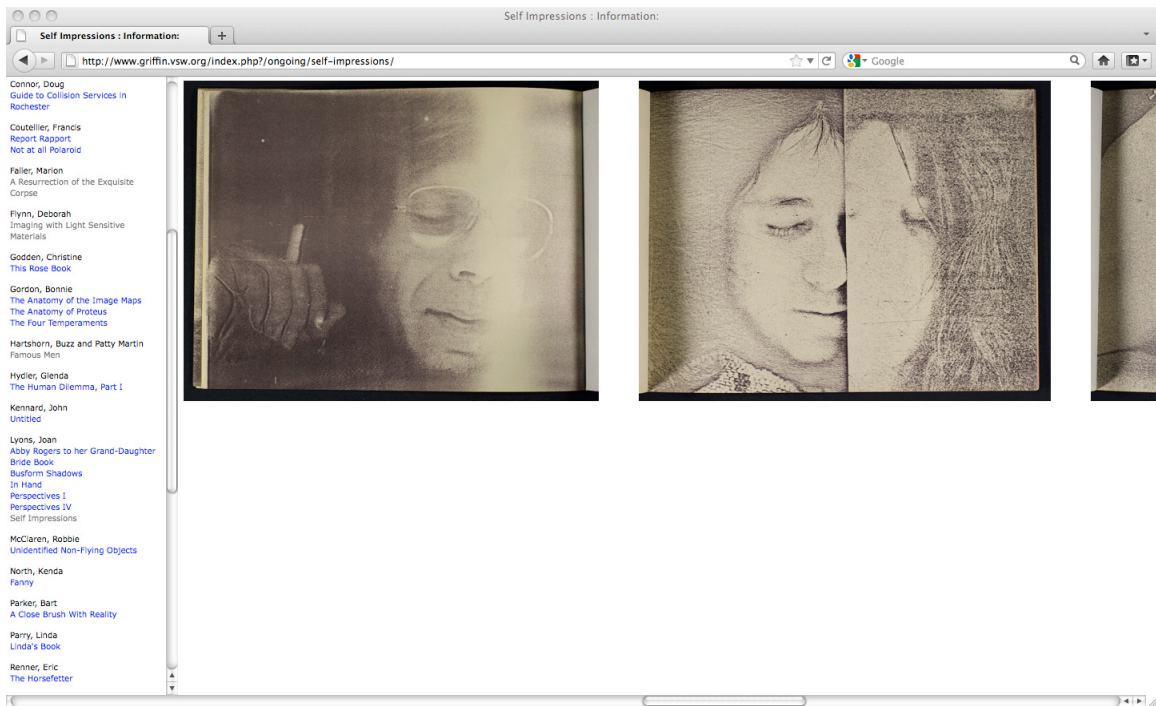


Fig. 15
Example of book page: *Your Book* by Joel Swartz. View #1.

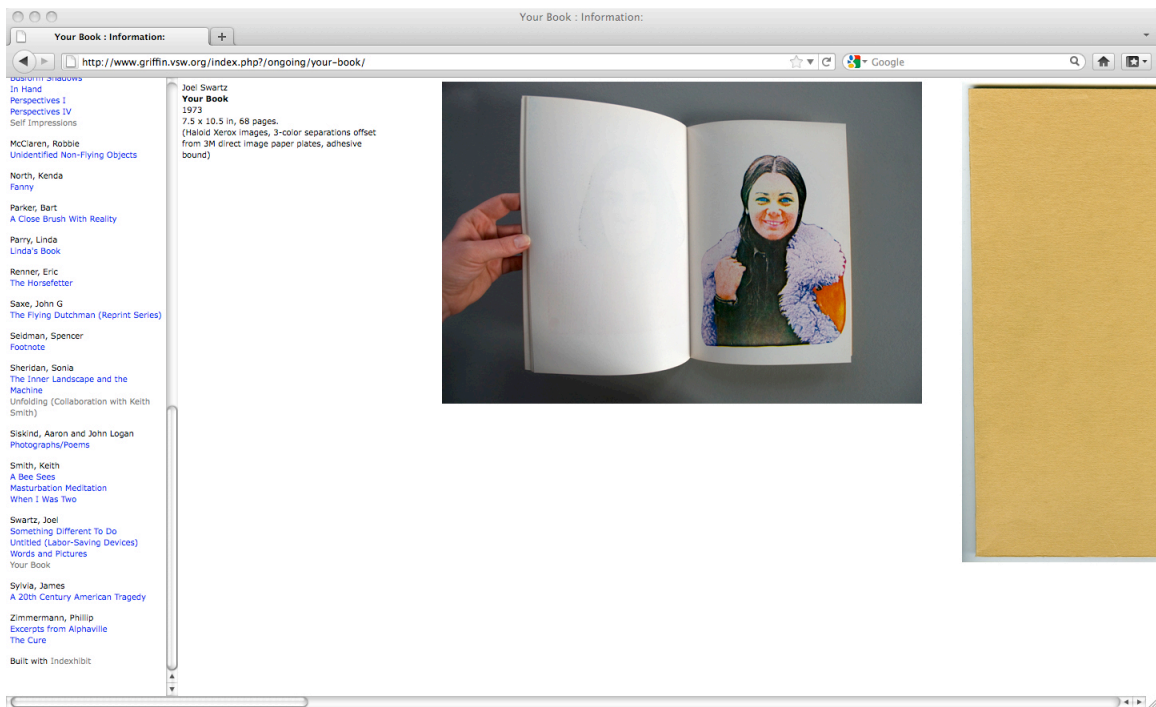


Fig. 16
Example of book page: *Your Book* by Joel Swartz. View #2.

