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From George Walker, *Book of Hours*.

Walker's contemporary work—at least in the Porcupine's Quill edition—is hardly as collectible, but the two original, hand-printed editions of just 10 copies are. Those copies sold for \$1,000 apiece, well above the price of the trade paperback reviewed here. This fact bears witness to the ongoing work of engravers to open new vistas to us and shape our perceptions of events. The parables of the sower and the prodigal son may have sunk deeper into the popular imagination through the work of Victorian engravers, but the vignettes Walker's work captures resonate with equal strength because we are familiar both with their mundane quality and the extraordinary backdrop that overturned their settledness.

As David Beronă writes in his introduction, “By focussing on the people prior to the attacks and representing a commonality of routines and actions, Walker's book binds us together as a community, a nation and a world.” This is not unlike the common culture the images of English periodicals inculcated through their own representations of the world. Without these points of reference, and the arts to remind us of them, our common experience is diminished.

~ REVIEWED BY PETER MITHAM

Beyond Words: A Meditation on Books and Art

CARNEGIE GALLERY, DUNDAS, ONTARIO,
OCTOBER 1 TO NOVEMBER 14, 2010

BEYOND WORDS was created to celebrate 30 years of the Carnegie Gallery. This exhibition had really three aspects—modern private press books and broadsides, some 19th-century books, some works of art incorporating parts of books—but lacked the focus that a curator with a clear vision could bring. The items in the show were determined by the individual artists.

The exhibition included three books and three broadsides from Will Rueter's Aliquando Press (including *Majesty, Order and Beauty*, the hundredth book of the press); plus items from Alan Stein's Church Street Press (*Golden Lilies* plus a broadside); two books by George Walker (including *Book of Hours*, plus an artist's book); three books by Gerry Brender à Brandis; and two works by Margaret Lock. All of these are fine works by mature book artists and represent their most recent work.

Generally, each book was placed on a plinth. White gloves invited visitors to page through the book. This is something rarely allowed in an exhibition and a move that I applaud. Significant exceptions were the presentation of books by Gerry Brender à Brandis, which were displayed under clear plastic shells.

The most interesting work of Gerry's that was exhibited was *A Pebble's Journey*. I know this to be a work on the Grand River that Gerry has been working on for some time, but I had never seen it before. It was displayed standing up with the pages splayed. By crouching down, I could look into the spaces between several pages of the book, but this gave a distorted view of the contents. I assume the organizers chose this method because the plinth was too small to display the book open resting on its covers. The other plinth held two books—a copy of *Heritage in Stone*, a 1989 work of Gerry's shown completely open at the title page, and also *A Sylph's Progress*, a work not known to me and displayed closed.

Before seeing this exhibition, I assumed that Margaret Lock had given up book work

in favour of pastel drawings, and I was pleasantly surprised to see her two works. *Blow, Blow thou Winter Winde* is classic Margaret Lock, with the text of this song from *As You Like It* accompanied by a large woodcut, both on one side of a single folded sheet.

The other work was *The Dialogue between Ulisses and the Syren*. This piece consists of 10 panels in an accordion fold. The illustrations are engraved and later hand coloured, and Margaret's calligraphy presents the text. The paper is Sanders 90 Waterford mould-made. I saw this work on a handmade paper by Wendy Cain three days later in The Nature of Words exhibition. The visual differences between the two papers were too subtle for me. Margaret told me that she had tested Wendy's paper and that it was fine for her calligraphy but after she printed the engravings and tried writing, she faced problems with the ink bleeding and so switched papers.

Wesley Bates gave us *Calypso Narrative Wall Book*. This is an ancient Greek story that Bates has illustrated in chalk and acrylic wash on eight panels connected accordion-style and intended to be hung on a wall. There is no text. Bates's robust figure drawing on each of the panels conveys well the story.

Joe Borges is a person whose work I had not encountered before. He had a single piece in the show, entitled *Type Faces*. He used type to create the faces of Henry Miller, Aldous Huxley and George Orwell and placed beside each portrait the title *Tropic of Capricorn*, *Brave New World* and *1984*. The six pieces were three-dimensional images with the necessary glasses hanging beside the work.

I had encountered Maureen Steurat as a collaborator of Will Rueter in two books from the Aliquando Press. She contributed three pieces to this exhibition. All involved images on paper folded accordion-style. *The Bayeux Tapestry* is a summary of the images from the famous tapestry done in ink and occasionally coloured with thread. *Tuscany Star Piece* is a construction involving layers of paper painted and cut out to reveal a number of landscape views.

The Last Saved Books shows the whimsical and serious sides of George Walker. The work is a wooden book-shaped box with wires, and

a screen that will display images. The box is plugged into a power source. On the wall beside it is a sheet with the installation instructions, setting out among other things how to plug it in and turn it on to see the images on the screen. On the inside front cover of the "book" is George's commentary about the survival of the traditional book. It ends with this sobering note: "What would happen to our recorded history if all our most critical thoughts were stored only as digital media? How much would be accessible or exist 200 years from now?"

Included in this exhibition were several cases with 19th-century books found in the Dundas area and contributed by the Dundas Museum and Archives. Interesting as these books were, I was at a loss to see how these particular contributions related to the exhibition as a whole.

The Dundas Library had run into difficulty for safety reasons because of the storage of library discards intended for its annual book sale. Before pulping them, the library offered the discards to artists to use in their contribution to this exhibition. These were put to various uses, the most stunning being *Poetree*, by Donna Ibing. This featured a large woodcut of a tree (about six feet tall) placed against a background of pages removed from a book of poetry.

Lacking access to a catalogue or a commentary, I could not see the link between the modern private press books, the 19th-century books and these other works

The Carnegie Gallery is an artist-run gallery that over the years has provided a home for book arts exhibitions. While the individual items in the exhibition were interesting and many were outstanding, I felt the lack of a strong curatorial vision. Nevertheless, the gallery deserves congratulations for its 30 years of operation and the support of all those interested in the book arts.

~ REVIEWED BY CHESTER GRYSKI