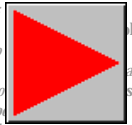


The Book of the Future

Thoughts and images on the form of the book of the future
presented in a series of "work in progress" exhibitions and
publications until the year 2000.



Gail Rubini & Conrad Gleber

Project support and organization

The Florida State University Museum of Fine Arts takes great pride in acknowledging the support of the State of Florida, Division of Cultural Affairs, and the Florida Arts Council. All sponsored programs prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, handicap or age in accordance with federal law.

The exhibition **The Future of the Book of The Future**, March 5 – April 10, 1994, has been organized by the Florida State University Museum Fine Arts. Gail Rubini was the Guest Curator; Allys Palladino-Craig, grantwriter.

Gail Rubini, an Associate Professor of Art and the Chair of the Department of Art, is an artist who works in photography, artist's books and multiple publications. Involved with artists' books and publications for twenty years, she was one of the founding directors of Chicago Books, an experimental printing and publishing organization producing multiple originals with offset printing. Professor Rubini has received both state and NEA grants for her publications and continues to publish prints and photographic works. She has been researching this project for several years.

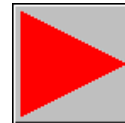


Florida Department of State
Jim Smith, Secretary of State
Florida Arts Council, Division of Cultural Affairs

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Acknowledgements

There was really nothing about **THE FUTURE OF THE BOOK OF THE FUTURE** exhibition that was standard operating procedure: this is, no doubt, the *modus operandi* of Gail Rubini and Conrad Gleber. When a week after the exhibition opened, we found ourselves installing yet another artwork, it gave new meaning to the subtitle "works in progress." This project is intended to set precedents and make history—several times over. It is as reflective as its many individual creators and as exciting as the cast of thousands drawn together by the curators hoped it would be. The Museum celebrates their achievement in this catalogue, and thanks all the artists, writers, and computer-*literati* who came together over this intriguing question.

—Allys Palladino-Craig, Director

Florida State University
Museum of Fine Arts Exhibition
March 5 - April 10, 1994

Curators

Gail Rubini • Conrad Gleber

Inspiration

F. de la Fuente • Robert Fichter • Tom McEvelly
Jerome Stern • Martha Wilson

Exhibitors

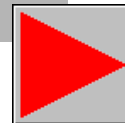
Dennis Ashbaugh • Thomas Barrow
Kevin Begos • Steve Bradley • François Bucher
Andrea Callard • James Cogswell • Peggy Diggs
Matthew Geller • William Gibson • Ilona Granet
Betty Leimer • Scott McCarney • Robert Peters
Ed Ruscha • Paul Rutkovsky • SCRI
Jerome Stern • Paul C. Windsor
Artists' Books: John Baldessari • Miles DeCoster
Johanna Drucker • Brad Freeman • F. DeChamps
& J. Mohrs • Masaki Fujihata • Pattie Belle
Hastings • Syl Labrot • Gary Martin
Claire Moore • NEXUS Press • Kevin Osborn
Genevieve Petermann • Dieter Rot
Todd Walker • Seth Weinhardt

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Poindexter • Richard Schoenberg • Van
Stonecypher • Michael Viggiano • Tim Harley
Vicki Harris
Lee de la Fuente (for the shirt off her back)

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Paramount Interactive • Sanctuary Woods
Multimedia Corp. • Software Toolworks • Sony
Interactive • Time Inc. • Voyager



How will the future book continue to manifest creativity and disseminate knowledge?

The book as interface, the changing interface of collected thought... what is the future of the book? In the '90s, either directly or indirectly, computers and electronic resources have given us unprecedented access to information. In the surge of electronic information systems will printed books still be a part of future history or will their future interdependence with the culture begin to curve away like some discreet particle? In modern history the printed book has acted as a catalyst to propel significant cultural change. Martin Luther considered printing "God's highest and extremest act of grace." Considering his Reformation was a revolution through print, it's easy to see how he could feel that printing was divine intervention not human invention. The American colonies, later the United States, maintained one of the most literate populations in the world. The contribution of printed material to the American Revolution led the United States to

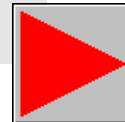
lead the world in making public education mandatory. Today, we are descended from a grand history of publishing when the printed word had a virtual monopoly on the maintenance of our culture.

The printed book no longer has a monopoly on the culture. For most of this past century print has shared the road with licensed broadcast media. More restrictive and less interactive than print, television and radio compete with print to give us a picture of who we are and what's going on in our world. We are in the middle of an emerging information source—the personal computer—and it may integrate the best characteristics of all three. How? We'll see—but it does seem that our eyes and ears will be working harder than ever and knowing how to type (and speed read) will help us to cope.

Early in March, we posted the question above to all kinds of groups who use the Internet. Opinions, questions, stories and all sorts of musings came into our reach—in the exhibition they made a compelling wall of texts. In the pages that follow some of them are reproduced along with writings by our contributors.

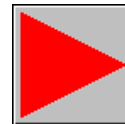
INTERNET LIST OF AUTHORS

From: Pat McMurray pat@cooky.demon.co.uk>
From: Steve.Armstrong@SEN.CA.GOV
From: walter@netcom.com (Walter Alter)
From: clarkd@poco.eng.sun.com (Clark Dong)
From: nielsen@bellcore.com (Jakob Nielsen)
From: vogelke@c-171gp.wpafb.af.mil (Contr Karl Vogel)
From: sfisher@megatest.com (Scott Fisher)
From: gold@sri.com (technical boy)
From: Francisco de la Fuente <fuente@husc.harvard.edu>
From: masaki@sfc.keio.ac.jp
From: jon.lanestedt@ilf.uio.no
From: melynda@titipu.resun.com (Melynda Reid)
From: Amy Critchett <amy@wired.com>
From: Hageloh@applelink.apple.com (Michael Hageloh)
From: Joseph Matheny <mediak@well.sf.ca.us>
From: Balms@ctrvax.Vanderbilt.Edu
From: CountMind0 <mgardbe@andy.bgsu.edu>
From: jon@perth.dialix.oz.au (Jonathan Kitchen)
From: far@medinah.atc.ucarb.com (Forrest Richey)
From: Bob Wyman <bobwyman@hebron.connected.com>
From: Don Webb <0004200716@mcimail.com>
From: Mark Poirier <poirier@fox.nstn.ns.ca> (902)-424-7922
From: Johanna Ruth Drucker <jrd3@columbia.edu>
From: Susan Schweitzer <pamplona@umich.edu>
From: brace@netcom.com (Brad Brace)
From: Mark Amerika <amerikam@boulder.lib.co.us>
From: Dr. Philip G. Stokes <100021.2555@CompuServe.COM>
From: davis@MIT.EDU
From: Don Hosek <DHOSEK@PITZER.EDU>
From: Paul Rutkovsky <prutkov@mailier.fsu.edu>
From: Robert Fichter <rficht@mailier.fsu.edu>
From: mech@eff.org (Stanton McCandlish)
From: jberman@eff.org (Executive Director of EFF)



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CONRAD GLEBER

e future, My discussion about the future of books begins with photography because books

—James Gleick

making of

Imagine the current collective surprise to learn that we are in the beginning of another quantum

We are going forward—backwards.



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7

-Walter Ong

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Received: from cooky.demon.co.uk by
post.demon.co.uk id ab23924;
From: Pat McMurray
<pat@cooky.demon.co.uk>
Subject: future of the book

I think people will always publish books as books, the physical objects. I think this will be true even when an electronic device exists with ALL the capabilities of a book. People still practice calligraphy, even in the age of the PC. In the future most information will be transmitted as electronic data and read out on screens which may be very different from today's computers and televisions. However there will still be works that are so personal that they're printed, for example poetry. There will also be works considered so important that the effort of committing them to print will still be made, for example genealogy. And, of course there will still be books published as souvenirs and for collectors. The latest Stephen King will always be available in hardback for collectors even in a century's time.

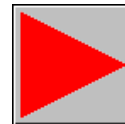
THINK OF IT AS EVOLUTION IN INTER-SECTION

Pat McMurray

From Technophilia's crenelated ramparts the prevailing response is this: these three questions reflect a common garden-variety parochialism, and further, the *authentic* issues at stake are simply hamstrung by such feeble, sanctimonious, and ultimately irrelevant quibbling. The bona fide core of the matter to the Technophile may be summarized as: high industrial, or late industrial, or—paraphrasing Daniel Bell—post-industrial civilization is for better or worse, synonymous with a robust, tumbling on-rush of ever advanced, more efficiently improved, more functionally stable, increasingly miniaturized, progressively protean ways and means of identifying, organizing, processing and stimulating information that is both analogous to and homologous with the actual nature of reality. How can the plastic arts—its practitioners and its critical agencies—ignore or refute the curt implications of these smirking facts? By what justification, by what blind cipher's tactics, can the Arts disengage from their existential responsibility to take on, deflect, and otherwise corral these high technologies into aesthetic embodiments? When reflecting upon the unprecedented complexity, magnitude, and rapidity as well as frequency of change which characterizes the dynamo systematically procreating these technologies, it becomes inexplicable that artists should, or possibly could, ignore their presence and impact—while smugly churning out images and objects cut from the same old cloth. Moreover, continuing to eschew any interest whatever in engaging high-tech media within the aesthetic domain is equal to a culpable negligence, because the Technophobic attitude of mind eviscerates art of any moral breadth, while playing directly into the grip of end-game nihilists and their reactionary ilk.




Swinging back from high-tech's ramparts into the trenches and dank bunkers of our Technophobes, the counter-exchange turns a low-tech screw another notch with this choice volley: from its stealthy origins in interactive video installations of the late '60s, through the introduction of electronic real-time analog enhancement, to pixilation and variations on the computer as an image-making and plotting device, to the computer as a governing element in video installations as well as the initial modem-linked networks of the late '70s and up to the full-flowering emergence in Virtual Reality systems—even through all of these developments, nevertheless, in gazing back




From:Armstrong@SEN.CA.GOV
Subject: Future of Books
To: future-of-the-
book@mailers.fsu.edu
Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN;
CHARSET=US-ASCII
Importance: normal
Priority: normal

Steve...

That much said, there nonetheless exists an unbroken line of argument focusing on dialectical relationships between objective and subjective status, or explicit and implicit components, or art and scientific truths. Beginning in the fifteenth century with Brunelleschi's "science" of perspective and van Eyk's invention of an oil based medium, up through the nineteenth century with Talbot and the invention of photography and Ruskin's theories of industrial influence on the arts, proceeding as far as the precincts of early modernism with its concern for synchronicity, non-Euclidean geometry and machine imagery, there has been a continuous and passionate interest on the part of artists to incorporate ideas and appropriate materials which inform or enhance their intuitive way of working.



Matthew Geller



3500

na of a preemptory usurpation, reducing all in its wake to folklore and superstition. Metaphysics, especially, was reduced to the status of a fool's hegemony. Art, at worst, was reduced to the status of super-

From: davis@MIT.EDU
To: Gail Rubini
(grubini@mailier.fsu.edu)
Re: FOB Project

Being stuck on a mock bulletin board isn't exactly my idea of high profile or a big reward for thinking. (but I am sort of a crank)

Not until the word book is an acronym for something will you know you are in the future... or maybe it becomes a verb... we already book to get out of someplace fast... like I'm booking now...

B.

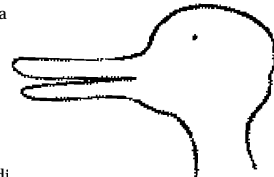
domain of unquantifiable or intangible qualities of any stripe has ever since been assigned a distant secondary role concerning affairs of the Mind. Scientific method and technology were thereby sanctified with the air of inevitability. However, in the words of MIT's professor of computer sciences, Joseph Weizenbaum, "Technological inevitability can be seen to be a mere element of a much larger syndrome. Science promised man power. But, as so often happens when people are seduced by power, the price exacted in advance and all along the path, and the price actually paid, is servitude and impotence."

"Exactitude is not truth" wrote Henri Matisse in his *Notes of a Painter*. And this is, at its core, the key to this conflict—*truth*. What rings true, from the perspective of the artist, does not necessarily emerge from a calculation of facts, or a precise application of statistical probabilities, or an inevitable engagement with the most recent and sophisticated instrumentation available—it emerges as well, and even more urgently, from hunches, from leaps of faith, from a sudden epiphany, from wishful thinking, and from a panoply of intuitive judgments.

Thus, it may very well be that an essential function of the artist in the present epoch is to provide the culture with a foil, with a counterpoint to reigning scientific dominance—whether the artist utilized high technology or eschewed its use as irrelevant. If we revivify the arch idea that art is a necessary and distinctive way of knowing the world—a way of knowing which celebrates the world's mystery as opposed to expunging it, and a way of knowing which is the signature of consciousness itself—then the task of art becomes tantamount to making a difference that makes the difference that makes the difference in the accelerating order of things.

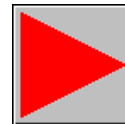
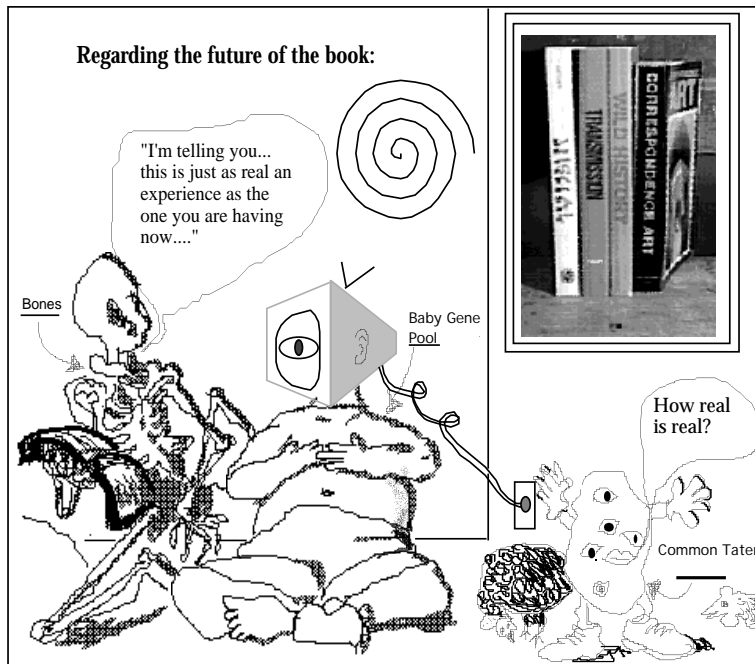
Finally, a caveat from Heraclitus:

"Nothing that is great enters into the life of mortals without a curse."



Bones to Baby Gene Pool:

ROBERT W. FICHTER

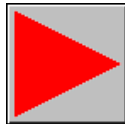


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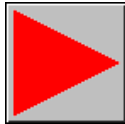
I have yet to make a phenon
between these marks and the
of my hand. My mind is c
body is not. It is as if
pick and find no pin
to search for the pin.

The quick brown fox jumps
lazy brown dog. The quick
jumped over the lazy brown
quick brown fox jumps
lazy dog.

I feel physically and ment
fortell. I am uncertain
of being if these marks



My body resists abandoning the
 sensuous pleasures of reading and
 writing. It needs intimate bound-
 aries that order thoughts by phys-
 ical location, weight, scale, sound,
 smell and history. It seeks
 corporeal fields created by page,
 book, manuscript, card catalogue,
 library. It wants paper that cuts
 fingers, pages to make notes on,
 turn, shuffle or crumple. It wants
 to connect these corporeal fields
 to the acts of reading, editing,
 thumbing through the card cat-
 alogue, drifting through library
 stacks. It seeks the phys-
 ical presence of others in mar-
 ginal notes, highlighted passages,
 inscriptions, dog-eared pages, stains,
 smells and other markers which
 intimately link it to other readers.
 My body's interaction with these
 containers catalyzes my imagina-
 tion to play, reorder and find
 unexpected linkages. What role



When Will the Keyboard Become Extinct?

STEVEN BOBKER

The Newton, the EO, and the 9600 series Sharp Wizards are ushering in a new method of data entry: writing, or if you're snotty, pen entry. For centuries handwriting was the only way to permanently record data. Then the printing press changed our whole concept of permanent data. However, until a keyboard-based type creation scheme was invented, printing was a slow and specialized task. Keyboards rapidly took over all large data entry devices. Good keyboarders could (and still can) enter data at several times the speed of the best writers and more accurately.

Keyboards have also exacted a price. As they have become ubiquitous, so have the repetitive stress-type injuries they can cause. They are overwhelming our bodies, literally.

Keyboards demand a substantial amount of real estate. They are what determines the size of tiny computers these days: not screens, not chips, but the need for an acceptable keyboard.

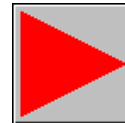
Apple and others have been promoting pen entry as a substitute for many items now keyboarded. They claim it is more natural. That's not true.

Handwriting is as much an acquired skill as is keyboarding. We tend to learn it earlier in life and more of us master handwriting, but it's still a learned ability. Since handwriting is slower and the motions more varied it is easier on the body. But more natural (and hence better because "natural" is good)? *Not.*

Pen entry has a place in computing: on-the-go applications and places where a keyboard would take up too much space. Still, its market is a niche market and will remain a niche market. If you have lots of data, pen entry is inferior to a traditional keyboard.

There are at least three alternatives to pen entry and traditional keyboarding. One is here now, one will be here in the next few years (I think) and one is pretty much sci-fi today.

Here today is chord keyboarding. Chord keyboarding is very much like what court reporters do. There are five buttons, one for each finger of one hand. They are generally arranged in the natural layout



bob wyman

-Neil Postman



21

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J E R O M E S T E R N

Until a couple of weeks ago I didn't even know this mind-tingling activity existed. Gail Rubini and


Books are physical objects, objects that embody for us a most

And so, in tribute, I thought I would bring a book tonight, a book that stood for the world of books, that stood for the world of stories of ourselves and the world. It was a book to hold

Should I bring *Two Years Before the Mast* or *Robinson Crusoe*, *A Tale of Two Cities* or *The Three Musketeers*, *Alcott's Wives and Daughters*, *The Wives of Woodbury*, *Wuthering Heights*, *Les Femmes de*

The Heart of Darkness or The Way of All Flesh, The Critique of Pure Reason or The Interpretation of

Silas Marner or *Sister Carrie*, *Great Expectations* or *Gulliver's Travels*, the poems of Emily Dickinson, the stories of Edgar Allan Poe, William Faulkner, Mark Twain, Solzhenitsyn, and



CONFIG-SYS

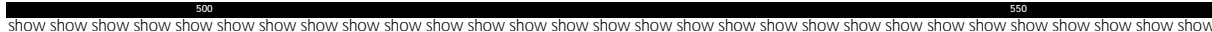
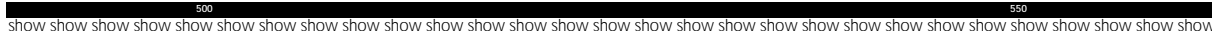
I said to her come closer and whispered press Alt-L. She dabbed at the tiny keys with the tender tips of her pink fingers. The screen glowed. "How do I love thee? let me count the ways." Turquoise wave forms luminesced behind Elizabeth Bar rett Browning speaking for me. "I love thee to depth and breadth and height my soul can reach." Behind the melodious synthesized voice, Ravel's Bolero rose and fell from the computer's tiny speakers. I slid my hand to her bird-song collarbone. Ctrl-G I murmured. "The still unquiet bride of quietness" sang from the computer. I slid my hand under her angora sweater and touched sweet, smooth flesh. We moved until our cheeks touched and together we read the pearly screen. "Gather ye rosebuds while ye may." I put out my arm, but she stopped me with her gentle hand. Let me do that she said. I leaned back and she tapped until she came to "My true love hath my heart and I have his." We turned together, our lips, our bodies. Our fingers danced on the keyboard, hers searching data bases at the edge of time. I touched Alt-S, she touched Ctrl-X "O mistress mine, where are you roaming? O stay and hear! Your true love's coming." And the computer made sweet moan.

25

–Jerome Stern

Jerome Stern is a Professor of English at Florida State University, director of the Creative Writing Program, and author of *Making Shapely Fiction*. *Florida Dreams*, his meditation on Florida tourist attractions, co-created with photographer Gary Monroe and underwritten by the Florida Humanities Council and the Florida Arts Council, tours museum venues in the state until 1996. He also is a commentator for Florida Public Radio and National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." His works have appeared in a number of magazines including *Harper's* and *Playboy*. He writes frequently on popular culture, edited *Studies in Popular Culture* for six years and is current president of the Popular Culture Association of the South. He has been a speaker for the Florida Humanities Council and does a monthly book column for the *Tallahassee Democrat*.



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G I O V A N N I Z O C C H E

History tells us that many new medium goes through a period in which forms of the previously prevailing media are heavily imitated. The first printed books were mere imitations of handwritten manuscripts, and the first movies were simply filmed stage plays. Similarly, most of today's multimedia titles mimic established, primarily books. We are still waiting for the D.W. Griffith of the multimedia world who will move the camera off the stage and see the world anew. And when we do, we shall also see multimedia publishers who will break through the business models of print publishing and the movie business and come up with a new model for new media.

publishers negotiate with authors and photographers to obtain electronic and display rights as if they were preparing a book for print, and Hollywood is to license distribution of movies on CD-ROM the same way video is handled. These old habits need to be molded to a new model that will revolve around entities known as multimedia publishers.

People are talking about the "killer application" that is going to drive consumers into more aggressive multimedia buying, not recognizing that this will soon become a "title" business and that tools are not the key. There may or may not be a single "killer title" that awakens the consumer beast, but titles will drive the industry.



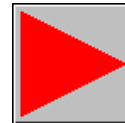
Agrippa by William Gibson

When the technologists find a standard that satisfies the largest possible market, their importance will be considerably reduced. At that point, another group—the one controlling the content—will take charge. These publishers, broadcasters, movie studios and collectors are sitting on a pile of high-value property.

While existing content will always play an important role, its importance will soon begin to diminish. When we realize that there is more to multimedia than digitizing linear media, economics will shift in favor of the multimedia producers. They will use some of the old content, but will also produce something new. As a consequence content will lessen.

quence, the economic value of the old content will lessen.

At the same time, distributors will play a smaller role as high-bandwidth networks facilitate a



The Future of the Book
of the Future=====



The self-reading book will transmit its contents instantaneously into the human brain, so that nobody actually has to read it. On that glorious day, all peoples of all nations will come to understand how little different they are, and nobody will ever have to actually read a book again. Then, publishers will develop the book that writes itself. With that development, publishers will rule the world.

The publisher will also have to coordinate deal-making and negotiations with artists, content owners and other players. The most common model for this new publishing is that of joint ownership, where parties retain a percentage of the sales of the product and retain partial ownership. In some cases, the publisher may own the product outright, especially if it is still at the conceptual stage and the publisher sets up a work-for-hire agreement with the producer.

To ensure its success, of course, the product must be engaging. Publishers must have a good understanding of the necessary creative techniques and should team up with producers and help them match their ideas with an interface and an audience. Product innovation depends primarily upon the genius of the creator, but innovation in design, deal-making, marketing and packaging can also contribute to the success of a title. If there will be such a thing as a "killer title," not only will there need to be a D. W. Griffith in the director's seat but a savvy publisher who understands just how radically the rules are changing.

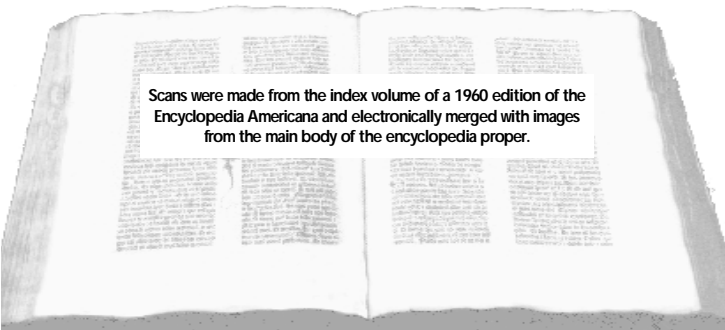


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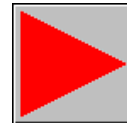
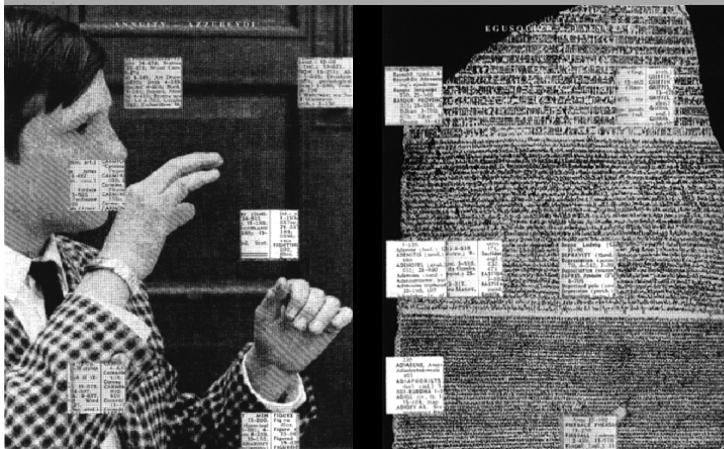


INDEX to the Encyclopedia McCarney: the Portland Project

SCOTT MCCARNEY



Scans were made from the index volume of a 1960 edition of the Encyclopedia Americana and electronically merged with images from the main body of the encyclopedia proper.

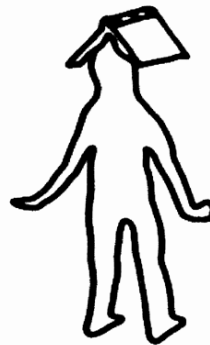


We Have Seen the Future and It Is Digital

CLIVE PHILLPOT

The book is an old technology. The form of the codex goes back over 2000 years. It is an efficient technology that has permeated every aspect of society, and every corner of the world, especially if we understand 'book' to include magazine, pamphlet, manual, etc. There are rumors, however, that the book is approaching obsolescence. While such rumors may be alarmist, in that the book will surely not disappear overnight, we should take note of the contestant that threatens to knock the book off its perch. What is the nature of the book's adversary?

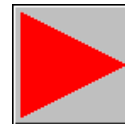
The writer and 'authority on artificial intelligence,' Raymond Kurzweil, sketches a compelling model of the life cycle of a technology. He identifies seven phases in this cycle: cursors, invention, development, maturity, false pretenders, obsolescence, and anti-cursors. He suggests that the book is presently in the fifth phase, in which its dominance is threatened by false pretenders. To illustrate the concept of 'false pretenders' he charts the evolution of the phonograph record, suggesting that the long-playing record (LP)—was the mature phase, and that the LP was first challenged by the cassette tape. He sees the cassette tape as the false pretender, because this new technology could not do everything the LP could—and more. The LP was, in fact, made obsolete by another new technology: the compact disc.



Masaki Fujihata

Kurzweil goes on to describe the evolution of book production, from vellum page inscribed and bound by hand, through the introduction of printing, then movable type, now computer typesetting. He suggests that the printed book is not yet obsolete, but threatened by false pretenders. He also makes us aware that although the challenges are flawed, their appearance is a sure sign of approaching obsolescence. The prominent threat is from 'electronic books.' These are false pretenders because they cannot yet do everything a book can do—and more. The technology that will make the book obsolescent must match 'the essential qualities of paper and ink,' when that moment arrives we will witness the ascendancy of the virtual book.

A description of this still-theoretical virtual book is in order. Kurzweil suggests that it will be a combination of telephone, camera, television, computer and, of course, book. It will enter text from voice; translate pen marks into letters, symbols, and instructions; translate from one language to another in real time; include sound and moving pictures; send and receive mail; navigate databases and networks; access vast quantities of material to seek knowledge; in short, it will be a personal research assistant. It



To: future-of-the-
book@mailer.fsu.edu
From: jon.lanestedt@ilf.uio.no
Subject: What is going on?

What is going on at this address
I am interested in electronic publishing, hypermedia and dynamic documents and would like to know...
—jon

Jon Lanestedt
Department of Linguistics
University of Oslo Voice: +47 22
85 48 99
P.O.Box 1102 Blindern Fax: +47
22 85 69 19
N-0317 Oslo, Norway Email:
jon.lanestedt@ifl.uio.no

... books as such—that is, bound and printed documents—are not an interesting category. In modern industrial societies, the vast majority of books bear no cultural burden at all; they are parts catalogs, census reports... tide tables, tax codes, repair manuals, telephone directories, airline schedules—documents whose appearance as books rather than in some other form has mostly to do with the practical requirements of display and diffusion and the limits of available technologies... The printed documentation that accompanies the delivery of a single Boeing 747 weighs about 350 tons, only slightly less than the airplane itself. Who would have any reservations about putting texts like these into electronic form, if it will make the world a roomier and greener place?

Having disposed of publications that continue to exist only because alternatives are not fully viable, Numberg goes on to his main concern, the future of "works of literature, belles lettres, scholarship, and criticism, as well as ... journalism ..." etc. He makes many interesting observations. For example, in the context of literature: "It is very unlikely that the computer will replace the book as a reading tool in a way that it has replaced the typewriter as a writing tool." A useful distinction.

Knowledge, not capital, is the new basis of wealth.

–Peter Drucker

At the end of his essay Nunberg states that:

Conventional print-and-distribute publication may be required to establish the public presence of a text, but [not] ... to sustain it. Texts will have primary, secondary, and tertiary lives, moving back and forth over scanners and printers... In some cases, print publication may become largely ceremonial, analogous to the common ... practice of first releasing a book in hardcover to establish its claim to serious critical attention....

Even now, television and radio are probably the principal means by which people in industrial societies obtain knowledge. If, as seems likely, the virtual book draws heavily on sound and image for communication, then linear reading may decline. Linear hearing may be the preferred form of reading. Another factor that might help to knock out linear reading may be the current incessant need to scroll texts in a computer environment—along with the difficulty of estab-



A more positive outcome of reliance on sound and image is that illiteracy might be diminished, since our arcane and harmful system of spelling English can be dispensed with, and speech can be converted instantly into soundtext. If text is more likely to be sound than image, reading may well have more to do with visual literacy, with the deciphering of alphanumeric characters and images—combined as gestalt figures.

-Plato

Because of these concerns, the actual costs of digitized publications and original electronic works to the individual may well be cumulatively prohibitive. An individual may be required to pay a kind of license fee—in theory at least—in order to access a copyright publication into their virtual book and electronic memory; the virtual book may therefore also become prohibitive. Consequently libraries should not be seen as accessible repositories for packaged 'signs and symbols,' especially when the works are digital, since it is almost certain that individuals will not be permitted to realize the full potential of their astonishing virtual books.



jon kitchen jon@DIALix.oz.au

A row of ten vending machines on a metal stand. Each machine has a different design and label. From left to right, the labels are: "CC", "CC", "CC", "WASH IN 12", "WASH IN 12", "WASH IN 12", "WASH IN 12", "WASH IN 12", "WASH IN 12", and "WASH IN 12". The machines are arranged in a row on a metal stand.



Listening to John Crowe Ransom Read His Poetry

DAVID KIRBY

I am waiting for my wife to get dressed so we can drive over to campus for the regular Tuesday poetry reading, when you consider that it takes place, say, forty times a year, means that, combined with the readings sponsored by other groups, there are maybe sixty poetry readings annually of all kinds—benefits, slam poetry contests, even anti-poetry readings—in our little town of less than a hundred thousand people.

So while everyone decries the dwindling audience for poetry, I don't see it: when I was in college, we never had readings, so I really didn't go to any until I was a senior and John Crowe Ransom came to the LSU campus to read his poetry.

Ransom was pretty much it as far as Southern poetry went—at worst, he was tied with Robert Penn Warren—what with him being an Agrarian poet and then a member of the Fugitive group and, later, founder of *The Kenyon Review* as well as author of *Chills and Fever*, *Two Gentlemen in Bonds*, *The World's Body*, and all these other great collections. So everybody was pretty excited about his coming, with the exception of my then-girlfriend, who was majoring in something called Clothing and Textiles and whom I was dating because I thought it would be refreshing to go out with somebody who had ideas and interests different from mine—big mistake—and who was

now beginning to pull away from me

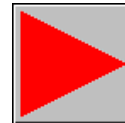
and all the “impractical” things I adored.

She said no, she didn't see what the big deal was, but yeah, sure, she would go along to see the famous poet since it meant so much to me. So I put on my best clothes and she puts on hers and off we go to the auditorium,

where everyone is waiting, all dressed up as though they are going to the prom. In those days, men still wore coats and ties and women wore dresses to football games, so you can imagine how gussied up they are for a poetry reading. We find good seats in the middle, and everybody else files in

pretty quickly, until there are maybe seven hundred fifty or eight hundred people there. And then Ransom comes out, dapper little white-haired guy close to eighty years old and starts reading these terrific poems: "Blue Girls," "Piazza Piece," "Captain Carpenter," and, to be sure, "Bells for John Whiteside's Daughter." In his semi-ironic, semi-whimsical way, Ransom is just knocking everybody out, even though he seems to weary as the evening goes on and spends more and more time shuffling his pages between poems. My girlfriend and I are sitting behind one of my teachers, Dr. Fabian Gudas, who is quite bald and has a big, sweet, goofy grin, and his wife, whose name is Almena Meeks.

And behind us is this big moron
who is in a couple of classes of mine

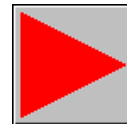


Issues of Intercession

J I M C O G S W E L L

A book is a handy device visually, portable, directly interactive with human gesture, almost like an added appendage. Its solid geometry makes it a useful tool for building space perspectively, yet the pages of the open book also have a fluidity and adaptability to other forms, like cloth over the skin. An open or closed book carries anthropomorphic connotations referring both to the physical manner and the inner attitude of a figure.

As an object of the gaze, the book has become an image both of absorption and absence, mirroring perhaps our own relationship to the painting we are viewing. I was fascinated to read earlier this year a reference by Margaret Miles, in her book *Carnal Knowing*, to the shock which St. Augustine's silent readings provoked among his contemporaries.



At First Glance

PAUL RUTKOVSKY

From: CountMind0
<mgardbe@andy.bgsu.edu>
Subject: books
Mime-Version: 1.0
Content-Type: TEXT/PLAIN;
charset=US-ASCII

McLuhan said it best:

"books are nice, so are horses"

—mindy g.

At first glance my multi-media installations are more like a focus of Hollywood/Madison Avenue confusion—sounds of radio and television commercials coming from dozens of mini-speakers, hamburgers and buns, plastic figures of World Wrestling stars, Ninja Turtles surrounded by thousands of dead branches, and Toxic Crusaders rotating on small motors as stage lights illuminate the event from below. The sound, light, and bombastic imagery don't seem to suggest a starting point, or an end, or even a resting point. After a short period of time the sound takes on a monotonous, white noise, background effect. The images, sound and light begin to merge like a tapestry and seem to elicit the numbing and pleasurable experience of a warm bath.

Since we live in a material, bottom line, capitalist culture it seems to me to be very important for all of us to keep a sane and knowledgeable perspective in this consumer oriented world. Understanding this simple relationship is an important step in connecting my work to a playful critique of our world. Technology can be mysterious and remote, especially when seen as high tech images that simulate reality. The simulation takes on a life of its own and becomes more convincing than the "objective real" world. It's a very seductive notion to be lost in a virtual reality of perfection. Humor and satiric investigation of the fabricated world can, it is hoped, draw us closer to the living, breathing world that is our humanity—and reconnect us to a more vibrant primitive existence.

The primary focus for me is to connect the technology to our lives, to eliminate the barriers between flesh and silicon.

–Paul Rutkovsky & Doo Daa Floridada



Near at Hand Super Information Highway

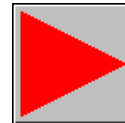


[illegible]

1975

"One-of-a-kind one thousand of a kind. Precious. And not so. A visual pun. An unending mental challenge. The artist's book—the visual book—is an unexpected art"

-Amy Jinkner-Lloyd



Robert Peters

I'm not depressed, nor should you be. Visit Japan and take in a department store in Tokyo called *The Wave*. Each floor offers different technology—records, audio tapes, video tapes, CDs, books. The only thing that is sure to be lacking is the time in which to consume our options.

During the '80s, the gains for women and minorities imagined in the '60s, achieved in part in the '70s, were eroded by the fashionability of racism, sexism and money as the measures of value. While "information" was transformed into sound bytes, ironically, for artists, the simplicity that was possible to project in the '60s and '70s disappeared in the '80s in favor of complexity—perhaps in reaction to artificially simple analysis of the world as a place in which to make a profit, where a 19th-century supply-and-demand morality applied.

Barbara Kruger worked as a graphic artist for Condé Nast for many years before becoming internationally known for her unmistakable graphic style, which makes liberal use of advertising tech-

From: vogelke@c-
171gp.wpa.fb.af.mil (Contr Karl
Vogel)
To: future-of-the-
book@mailier.fsu.edu
Subject: Re: Opinions wanted: The
Future of the Book??
Organization: Control Data
Systems Inc.
How will the future book manifest
the continued creation and
dissemination of knowledge and
creativity?

Project Gutenberg is in the process of putting quite a few texts in electronic form, and the Interpedia Project is working on the creation of an Internet Encyclopedia.

When I look at what's been done
and what's being planned for
these

"One
 element
 we found
 placed
 inside
 people's
 heads as
 if it had
 been
 there all
 along.
 The night
 was
 the night
 was
 the
 moment
 at."

43

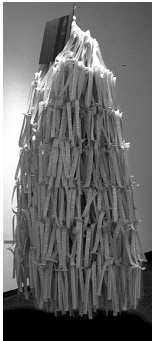


The '70s began, at least as far as the art world is concerned, with the "Information" show at the Museum of Modern Art in 1970. The "dematerialization of the art object," to use Lucy Lippard's

phrase describing the trend which replaced painting and sculpture with documentation of actions and ideas through photography, videotape, audiotape, performance and books, was in full swing. The artists who pioneered Conceptual art in the '60s and '70s paved the way for women and third world artists to mount their attack on the European American axis. Additionally, the '70s saw institutions (such as Franklin Furnace) spring up to deal with the new nature of art world commodity, and (like the Women's Building in Los Angeles) the urgent parallel issue of lack of visibility and representation for women and minorities.

The 1960s

Let me use as a starting point Claes Oldenburg's *Ray Gun Poems*, produced in 1960 on a stencil machine owned by Judson Memorial Church, the one-hundred-year-old institution on Washington Square Park in New York City. This supremely ephemeral art object embodies the hopes and dreams of the '60s, and is one of the only remaining products of a collective of artists, dancers, writers, musicians, filmmakers—all of whom were intent upon tearing down these distinctions among media, and between the art world and the “real” one outside on the street. The Reverend Howard Moody cut a clearing for such restless talents as Claes Oldenburg, Red Grooms, Jim Dine, Yvonne Rainer, Simone Forti, Allan Kaprow, Tom Wesselmann, Al Hansen, Robert Rauschenberg, Dick Tyler, Dick Higgins, George Brecht, and many other artists whose work both despised and hoped to transform the status quo. Oldenburg was living in an apartment on the lower East Side that was so small, writing was the only aesthetic pursuit that would fit. Consequently, the street became his studio, its prostitutes, drunks, artists, landlords, policemen, pigeons and dogs his models. The *Ray Gun Poems* are graffiti and overheard snippets of conversation, “zapped” with the ray of annihilation illumination, when pimps and governors, artists and the rich would find their swords had become ploughshares. How was this miracle going to come to pass? It would be the artists and seers, pumping pamphlets out of their basements and giving them away on street corners, who would implement



Scott McCarney


social and spiritual change.

Now, for a further digression on offset lithography—the technology that produced multiple copies of artwork. During the Second World War, a new problem confronted the military for the first time: how would it be possible to distribute orders for a war being fought all over Europe and the Pacific basin? The answer was to mount printing presses directly on aircraft carriers and to perfect offset lithography, which transferred ink from a metal plate to a rubber blanket and onto paper at a



projects, I wonder if I'm going to continue thinking of a book as something solid that has to be held up. For that matter, a "book" in the future may not even exist in one defined place on a network; it may just be a set of links to different sources of information around the world.

But back to the '60s. Surely this time, social change would work. While the Constructivist artists in Russia had used available technology to produce their works in multiple, that technology was limited: stone lithography, rotogravure, letterpress, silkscreen painting—the desire to litter the landscape with visual literature was genuine, but these methods of reproduction were slow, and materials also at a premium. Oldenburg had a stencil machine at his disposal, the limited resources of a church stationery closet, and his own energy. When I asked him how many copies were in the edition of the *Ray Gun Poems*, he didn't exactly answer, but replied, "Fatigue was a factor."



Subject: FOB submission

When I was a young lad, my grandmother used to Email me her reminiscences on publishing 'round the turn of the century. Since this historical matter is of interest to you young folk, I'll pass along a few of her remarks — of course this is dimmed and confused by the dint of years, and although nothing written after 1998 was ever lost, I am too weary to try to search the data galaxy for it. Hope you-all find this interesting.

1. The Right to be Written League, a branch of what was then called the Fundamentalist Right, came into being in 2005. These folks argued that texts had a right to life that was often overlooked by their authors. They feared for the loss to humanity of the aborted novels, abandoned articles, and slain short stories that authors dispersed to data heaven. In many countries they created adoption data banks to which authors could send their unfinished work, where it would be finished by a League volunteer. Many pranksters took horrible advantage of this situation sending only a single let-

ter. The League, with its motto of "Let not a letter be wasted!" lived on until 2011, when the case of Henderson vs. The League was tried. The first case of electronic custody, Henderson claimed that his unfinished novel Bellow the Rain Queen, had been so mercilessly edited by the League volunteer, that it would have been a far, far better thing for it to have been aborted. The court agreed that the League had essentially changed the nature of the founding work and was thus guilty of the very crime it sought to abolish. Damages in the amount of ten thousand virtual dollars (about \$0.25) were awarded and the League disbanded, although some of its members are rumored to be part of the Library of Babel Cult.

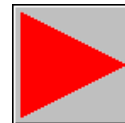
2. The Vandy Anthologies. With the advent of huge data files of every magazine story ever published, a new species of vanity press appeared. They would put together a book of detective fiction, half of which would be unanthologized works by recognized masters in the field (needless to say whose copyright had expired) and half "new talent." The "new talent" would be required to guarantee the sale of a certain number of copies. The same half book could be sold over and over again. Most notorious was Gruenstad's *The Complete Thriller* which was sold 54 times (once

in every state) each with half the writers being first timers who lost about a thousand real dollars each. When this scandal hit the major EnewsWerks, a group of the writers banded together and killed Gruenstadt, and then novelized their crime as the The Vanity Murder.. This self published volume sold well and spawned a score of copycat killings/ books.

3. The Cancer Novels. The metamorphic novel, introduced by Michael Joyce, became a fairly popular genre by 2001. Almost everyone had read a novel that changed each time it was read, and indeed most High Schools students had gang written one as part of their electronic English classes. A Mr. Pel Terry came up with the idea of introducing viruses into the novels. His early novel, *...Fully One Quarter...* had special unseen features that would read files on the owner's computer, and introduce material from those files into the story. Pel Terry defended the idea as being non-motivational of the act of reading, since "We always take our own ideas into the texts we read anyway." This also stopped piracy of the novel, because no one wanted to give a friend a copy of a novel that had their deep personal secrets in it. Unfortunately Terry's computer skills were lacking and the viruses tended to leave traces of the

novel behind. After a few hours of running the book, the entire system was made into the novel, and if the system had automated Email powers, the novel would spread through the system. Carefully made viruses to kill the meganovel were introduced by the Internet Arts Council in 2003. A few other cancer novels were produced as acts of artistic terrorism, but virus detection rendered the medium obsolete by 2005.

4. The Chain Novel. The chain novel enjoyed a brief vogue in 1996. The idea, based on the chain letter, was that one would write a chapter of a novel, send it along to ten friends, each of them would write a second chapter and so forth. By the end of the process there would be in theory thousands of different versions. There had been chain novels ever since the creation of the net, but in 1995, the completed version of *'Naked Came the Programmer'* became a bestselling paperback. Thousands of novelists and would-be novelists began their own projects within months. The sheer interconnectedness of net culture killed the project. Some individuals would receive as many as 25 versions of an ongoing book on the same day. The suicide of Dermal Phillips in 1996 ended a great deal of net alut. Phillips



had tried to answer all of his Email, and as he became further and further behind became more despairing. The day before his leap from the Golden Gate Bridge, he had received 205 copies of the novel in progress, *_To Err is Human_*. His epitaph, "He died for the Net" is a poignant reminder of the dangers of Email today.

5. The Snake Hunt Novels. Snake hunt novels combined the thrill of amateur detection with the thrill of reading. Indeed following the so called 'Runic School' of criticism which holds that reading is an act of revealing the Hidden, these novels may be viewed as the most normative of any creation of Net culture. The term Snake comes from the cypherpunk wars of '94-'96. According to a manifesto of the time, "A TENTACLE is an Email address used by a real person for the purpose of concealing their identity from others. A SNAKE is a TENTACLE that is particularly wicked and evil and will lie and trick others into believing the TENTACLE is real. In other words, the more consequential and malicious a TENTACLE, the more it is a SNAKE." The traditional self identification with evil practiced by many writers, Baudelaire, Ewers, Webb, etc. led to the adoption of the term Snake for themselves. The Snake would put out the first chapter

of his or her novel and then leave clues as to who wrote it. If the reader tracked the clues down to the correct address, the next chapter would be released. Sometime the trackers went in the wrong direction, and other artistes created SPOOF-Snake novels claiming that they had written the first chapter and giving the mistaken tracker a chapter of their own manufacture. Advances in tracking technology eliminated the Snake novel.

6. The Do It While You Sleep Novel. This particular service originated among the user groups as a final way to stop people seeking direct Internet access. The consumer would buy a program that would read several dozen of the consumer's files. It would do textual analysis of them, number of word pairs, preferred tenses, POV, etc. When the analysis was completed, the program would "Translate" a classic novel into the consumer's voice. These were euphemistically called "Collaborations." Dickens and Conan Doyle were the favorite targets for such collaborative work. These games are still played, but by no means enjoy the vogue they had in 2008-2012.

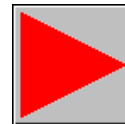
7. The Surprise Novel. These were a further modification of the process above. Instead of translating a classic

text into the narrative voice of the consumer, these would write a novel that the consumer had outlined in a voice they had previously analyzed. The consumer would choose from a fairly simple plot element menu, customize it with locale, character names, etc. and then choose a voice. Since these programs had a fairly long run time, the term "Surprise Novel" was used to describe them. After selecting the elements the user often had to wait a month or more until his or her system announced that the consumer had "written" the novel. These had roughly the same period of popularity as their counterparts above.

8. The Re-Creation Novel. All the novels produced by this technique are eminently forgettable, but the method is amusing. Advances in VR allowed persons to re-create the exact circumstances of their favorite novel. A person could write on Poe's writing desk, with Poe's quill (from a raven naturally), and scribble away. Then they could advance the program to a point where they watched their work come out, and be criticized by simulations of the critics of the day. Of course these simulated critics were generally programmed to be much more receptive to "genius" than their actual counterparts had been. Similar programs exist-

ed for painting, sculpture, musical composition, etc. The problems with addiction and personality breakdown have greatly limited the use of these games.

9. The Novel of Rebirth. Reincarnation was only discovered as a scientific fact in 2055, and the process by which a person may tap into the accumulated wisdom of his or her past lives is still largely unknown. A very popular idea has been the creation of some artistic object to cause the psyche to remember its past. Accordingly sophisticated programs which will look for the characteristics of the deceased among Net users have been developed. When the program suspects that the new user may indeed be an old user reborn, it Emails the new user the text of the novel, the music, the poetry, or a VR of the art the old user had made. If this does not produce the memory experience sought for, the program waits and continues its search down the avenues of time. Thus the Net which began as just the wall of the Cave is now the guide to Truth, Beauty, and the realm of the Forms.



FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY

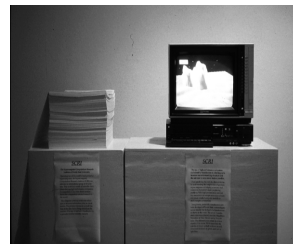
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Barbara Buford, *Permanent Collection*
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Numbers Into Pictures, SCRI