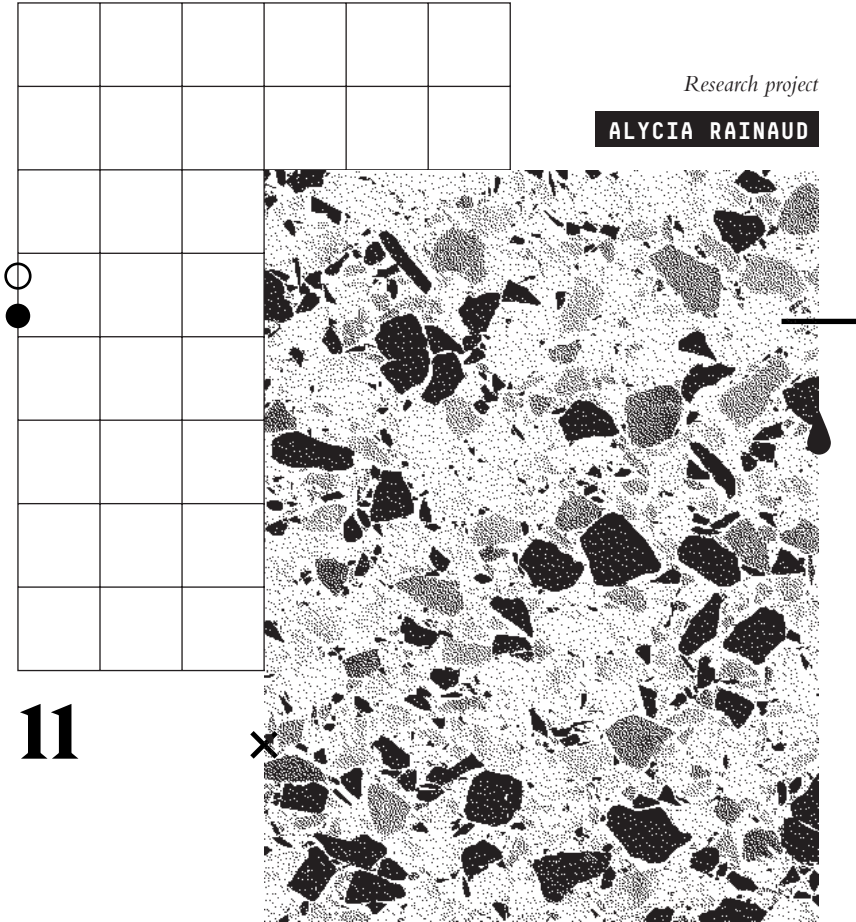


What book are you reading?

Book design — from book content to book shape



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Master degree in Graphic Design, 2018
Denis Diderot High School, Marseille

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Abstract

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WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

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Abstract

Seven years ago, I passed my A-levels in graphic design and I became particularly interested in print media. It also allowed me to study the book as an object and to learn how to shape this object.

Seven years ago, after a fourteen-year long psychoanalysis, I discovered a new alternative to therapeutic methods. I met Marjolaine Krochmalniky, a young jungian¹ therapist. She used to design objects such as figurines so that her patients could express themselves more easily. They used those figurines to materialize disorder and psychic multiplicity.

Almost seven years later, I felt like connecting both parts of myself through an audacious bet : writing a dissertation trying to link books and psyche. I tried to find a common characteristic to these two entities, i.e. order and disorder. Then came the questioning regarding both books and the human psyche. I tried to analyze how the shaping of books could be an “in-between” order and disorder.

Abstract

¹ Analytical psychology, also called Jungian psychology, is a school of psychotherapy which originated in the ideas of Carl Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist. It emphasizes the importance of the individual psyche and the personal quest for wholeness. Jungian psychology is also based on creativity.

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Research project

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RESEARCH PROJECT

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A codex, also better known as « a book », is a symbolic, ordinal and open form. In fact, it is defined as the earliest form of books, replacing scrolls (also called volumen¹), and wax tablets² of earlier times. The codex is both a simple and complex object which evolved through time. The rise of the Christian Religion legitimized its first shape. Some transformations then occurred to take into account its numerous functions.

Shaping a book means adapting and limiting the content to a specific space that can evolve into a hybrid form. Nowadays, the digital revolution also modifies codices towards an augmented shape.

In this dissertation, I intended to link the book to the world it refers to, the reader, and the book designer.

In other words, how can shaping books be linked to order and disorder? Is there a relationship between books and our psyche? What are the problems encountered when shaping books?

Research project

¹ Volumen is a latin word that refers to wrapped papyrus sheets. The scrolls composed with these sheets were created and used by Egyptians in 3000 B.C.

² A wax tablet is a tablet made of wood and covered with a layer of wax. It was used as a reusable and portable writing surface in Antiquity and throughout the Middle Ages. Writing on the wax surface was performed with a pointed instrument, a stylus.

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In order to answer these questions, I studied how the codex appeared and became the « promotional object » of the Christian religion.

The codex first appeared with the birth of Christ. It first took the shape of a wooden tablet called Caudex by the Romans —literally wood block in Latin. Its form changed in the 6th century, to replace the Torah volumen in order to link the Old and the New Testaments into a single book, the Bible. The book became a symbolic object.

The relationship between the orderly codex form with a table of content, index and chapters, and the orderly structure of the world, made the book a « transcendental object » as Emmanuel Kant called it. According to Kant, « transcendental means all kinds of knowledge that does not relate to objects but to our way of knowing them, as far as it is possible in an a priori way »¹. This idea is supported by Michel Melot in his essay entitled « Book », in which he explains how the book became a transcendental object and how it created new transcendental categories². In fact, books condition the way we apprehend the world in categories, thus modify our way of perceiving order and meaning. We can say that the book shaped the world's order, notably due to its binding, instead of rolling, which allows the dialectic of form and content and the interpretation of the text.

Research project

¹ Emmanuel Kant, *Critique of pure reason*, Introduction, §VII, III, 43

² Michel Melot, "Book", Chapter 1, page 23, L'oeil Neuf Editions

³ The printing press was invented in 1450 by Johannes Gutenberg. It is machine, as a cylinder press or rotary press, that allows serial printing on paper.

⁴ From French OULIPO, acronym from the initial letters of *Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle*, lit. "workshop of potential literature". It is the name of a group of writers and mathematicians formed in 1960 by François Le Lionnais and Raymond Queneau.

I then studied how people seized the codex shape from the Renaissance to the democratization of books with Gutenberg's press³.

Indeed, as an open and long lasting object, the book transcends both time and the evolution of the world. It reflects the crisis between internality and externality. I studied, how, in a more secular context, the book was modified, and how some literary and artistic movements tried to appropriate the book in refusing the normative excess imposed by its initial shape.

In fact, from the 6th to the 20th century, movements such as Oulipo⁴, artist's books⁵, cut-ups⁶, tried to deconstruct the book's standards and played with its shape. Last but not least, in the 21st century, the digital revolution led to the dematerialization or hyper-materialization of books. However, the future of books doesn't seem to be at stake, and it is now time for designers to try and make the digital and the tangible coexist in proposing other ways of reading books with sometimes hybrid forms.

These hybrid forms allowed me to analyze how books can shape the individual, the reader's ability to internalize an image of oneself through order and disorder while reading and handling a book. In fact, I tried to imagine how today's designers can reach another way of reading and shaping books. Something not merely functional, with text and image, designers should take into account the extreme symbolic and complex power of the object. I tried to figure out how book designers could move away from functional design to a design closer to psychology, inspired by the book and the concept of Jehanne Dautrey and Emmanuel Quinz called

³ Artists' books are works of art that uses the form of the book. They are often published in small editions, though they are sometimes produced as one-of-a-kind objects.

⁶ The cut-up technique is an aleatory literary technique in which a written text is cut up and rearranged to create a new text.

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Strange Design¹. In fact, graphic designers who agree to shift away from the initial function of books can re-shape the codex in new hybrid forms. Moreover, Strange Design can be considered as a “counter-design”, more concerned with creating flaws than modeling practices. Finally, I considered the book as a physical and psychological device. In order to make this happen, designers sometimes have to develop unexpected collaborations such as working with psychologists, just as I did with Marie-Rose Krochmalniky, a psychoanalyst. The book is the individual’s mirror and shaping the book is about accepting to merge a necessary order and disorder.

¹ Jeanne Dautrey and Emanuele Quinz, *Strange Design, from the design of objects to the design of behaviors*, 2014

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Research project

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The volumen or scroll



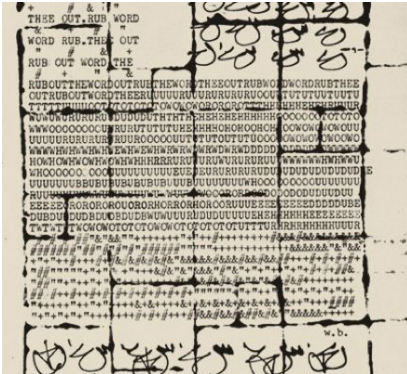
The codex

Research project



Gutenberg's press

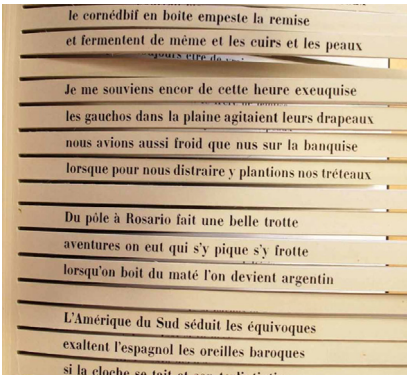
Engraving by Giovanni Stradano, 1570



The Cut-up

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William S.
Burroughs, *Rub out
the word*, 1989



Oulipo

Raymond Queneau,
Hundred billions poems,
Gallimard, 1961

Research project



Artist's book

Christian Boltanski,
Livres, 1944

PROFESSIONAL PROJECT

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My work about the relationship between books, order and disorder, led my professional project. During the past two years I wondered how I could shape a book in the context of the digital era and how I could link books to psyche. I started to work on the relationship between tangible and digital media. Nowadays thanks to technological advances, books are meant to be augmented. In reaction to interactive books and digital books, I wanted to learn how to deal with augmented reality. This technology led my professional project move from traditional books to hybrid books.

Then I wanted to try to discover what could link books and psyche. Thanks to my research project, I found it interesting to analyze how books could be the mirror of the individual. In fact, books and editorial objects can be the witness of emotions, feelings and thoughts.

Just as complex as we are, books have an internality and an externality. The outside of the book is as important as the inside. During my internships at the FabLab of St-Exupéry High School and at FRAC PACA, I worked on an aesthetic and handy tool kit for artist's books.

Professional project

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Nevertheless, I wanted to focus more on the link between books and psyche. The question I had in mind was how can books relate a psychological state? I analyzed how some psychological troubles can affect the shape of a book while collaborating with a jungian therapist named Marie Rose Krochmalniky.

At the end of my research I brought together all the prototypes I had made and created my own publishing house called Mauvais Pli. Through this project, I wanted to offer a contemporary vision of books by publishing traditional books and hybrid books to try to link books to our psyche. The Mauvais Pli project already includes several books and objects created during the past three years that show the evolution of my research.

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Professional project

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1. Tracks Papier, a hybrid and augmented magazine

Tracks Papier is a project inspired by the TV Program Tracks, broadcast on Arte channel. It is a quarterly that deals with counter-culture and emerging arts. The magazine was inspired by the 9 sections of the TV program, each represented in a different augmented booklet. Tracks Papier is a hybrid paper version of the program composed of an archival storage box, with different print media of all types and sizes. The magazine contains an envelop, two flyers, a leaflet, five booklets, a lenticular card and a mini UV lamp. Tracks Papier is a print memory of the TV program and an alternative editing object. It is intended to be unconventional due to its form and content. Moreover, one of the goals of this project is to try to link digital and tangible contents by moving away from the codex conventions.



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Professional project

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2. Plus Egal un, a card game

This project is a graphic memory of the experience called 9645 magazines, 53 students, 1 artist.

In 2017, 53 design students worked with the artist Francesc Ruiz on his Kiosks of Toulon an exhibition at Fotokino Gallery in Marseille. It is a project that questions the documentation of Contemporary Art. Plus Egal Un is a card game that deals with my thoughts and feelings as I participated in the project.

Professional project



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3. *Neurosis In Love, Leporello*¹ made of photographs and posters

A photographic project to show how people can be affected and overwhelmed by love and secret feelings in a neurotic way. This series features ten A3 size black and white photographs that illustrate the inner struggles of private scenes. Each photograph has a drawing layer on top to emphasize the effect of disorder.

Professional project



¹ A Leporello is a book that is folded into a concertina shape.

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4. Malavida, an augmented artist's book

Malavida, is a project to try to embrace feelings, failures and complexity through abstract art. Abstract art is art that does not attempt to represent an accurate depiction of a visual reality but instead use shapes, colours, forms and gestural marks to achieve its effect. This book is an augmented artist's book showcasing more than 100 original digital artworks.

Professional project





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Professional project

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5. L.E.M On Tour, a device for artist's books

A project by PACA Contemporary Art fund. L.E.M On Tour is a mediation and a kit tool for artists' books. I created this object in collaboration with the FRAC's documentation and lending departments. L.E.M On Tour allows to carry and preserve artist's books. It is also a modular object that allows different displays of the books. The main goals of this object is close to the FRAC's one that is to make people sensitive to Contemporary Art.

Professional project





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Professional project

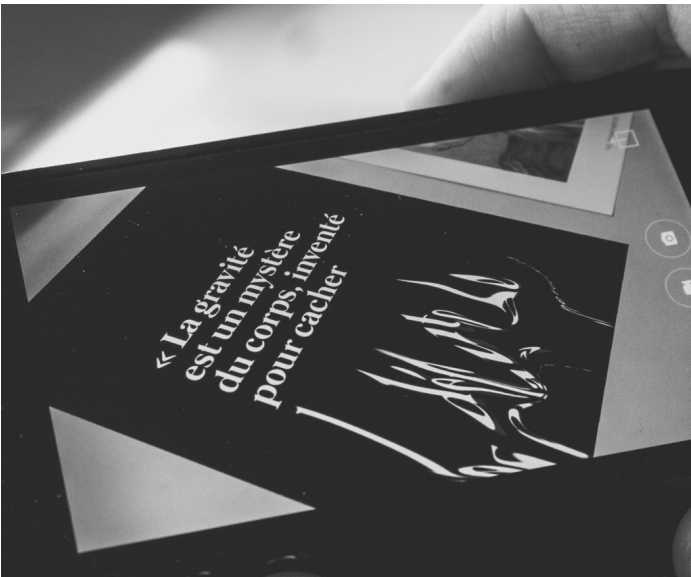
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6. Duality, augmented posters

A project with augmented reality posters to experiment the idea of gravity between mind and body. The project contains five posters whose titles refer to a fictional story - The wise man; The misanthropist; The one- eyed girl; The mold and Fatal error. Each poster has a missing piece that is completed by an augmented reality process.

Professional project





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Professional project

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7. En découdre avec le livre, a hybrid book

A research project about books, order and disorder. My research project is also a part of Mauvais Pli. Its hybrid and alternative shaping highlight the content of this research.

Professional project





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Professional project

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8. Noir 365, an anxiety diary

This project is an interactive diary whose aim is to make readers sensitive to mental disorders. This project is inspired by diaries and mood tracking applications in a more artistic way. This diary is also a way to link books to psyche, while inspired by jungian psychoanalysis therapeutic methods. Related to these methods, Noir 365 uses creativity and interactions to help people to step back from bad feelings such as anxiety and the hardships of life. This project has been created in collaboration with Marie Rose Krochmalniky, a jungian therapist.

Professional project





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Professional project

ORIGIN OF ANXIETY

Did your caregivers encourage you to be things even if it made you nervous?
If so, how did they encourage you?

What did you learn from your caregivers about how to handle new social situations?

If you heavily concerned about other people's perceptions? For example, if you do _____ what will _____ think?

FEAR & AVOIDANCE

In the chart below, rate your anxiety for each situation on a scale of 1-10. Then rate the strategy which you typically avoid the situation - 1 being your most used (if being always used)

Situational situations	Anxiety	Avoidance
Attending meetings		
Attending business events		
Going to a party		
Spending time alone with a friend		
Going on a date		
Going to the grocery store		
Hiding eye contact		
Getting a speech / speaking in public		
Talking on the phone		
Dealing with authority figures		
Being in a crowded room		
Being the center of attention		
Being asked questions		
Talking to or meeting or discussing		
Job interview		
Meeting your partners		
Making small talk		
Professing opinions, views, etc.		
Meeting clients		
Going to home of others		
Using public services		
Being involved with group meetings		
Being asked for comments		
Feeling you're invisible		
Qualifying when someone is looking at you		
Phrasing a point with friends		
Being on an airplane		
Public transportation		
Attending events		
Gift giving		
Being away from home		
Dealing with stress		
Thinking		
Remembering to have		

TO CONCLUDE

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My research project has been really important to me. As a book designer, I wanted to learn more about this object that is part of our lives. I learned a lot about the history of books and their shapes, their evolution and current influence. Working on this subject was a hard task as the relation between books and psyche has not much been dealt with. It pushed me out of my comfort zone and made me a researcher for two years. In the end, this experience confirmed the way I imagined my future professional vocation as an alternative book designer.

Thanks :

Mrs Christine Orsola for her help, kindness and investment.

My teachers for their advices through the past two years.

My classmates for their friendship and support.

My family and caregivers for their unconditional faith.

Professional project

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