

THE LIBRARY PROJECT

Temporary Services

In March of 2001, Temporary Services launched The Library Project. One hundred new books and artists' projects were surreptitiously added to the Harold Washington Library Center, the main branch of the Chicago Public Library. The library was not told about this donation.

Every title was checked against the library's catalog to verify that it was not already owned by the library. Several books that are already in the collection were added in creatively altered new versions. The project infiltrated every publicly accessible section of the library.

Creating new arrangements of materials not normally possible in common library practice was one component of this project. Another major goal was to bring obscure, subversive, self-published, hand-made, or limited edition works by underexposed artists to a wider audience.

We held a three-day preview at our office space in downtown Chicago before placing the books into the library. It was a send-off, complete with posters from the American Library Association extolling the virtues of reading, bright lighting, and all of the books available for our visitors to view.



The Harold Washington Library Center,

Each book was stamped and processed in the way that the Chicago Public Library would upon receiving a book that they were adding to their collection. Softcover books were laminated for protection and due date card holders were glued into the inside covers. Call numbers were invented so that the books could be shelved in carefully chosen sections based on their content or the desires of the authors. Many of the books were added to sections that they may not have

been cataloged in if the library had handled it. For example, *Sexy Politzei*, a collection of perverse and aggressive drawings of cops by Bruno Richard, may have been archived into the artists' books collection in the library, which would mean that it would not be on the open shelves for patrons to discover. Instead, one would have to ask the reference librarian in the art section to retrieve it. We placed Richard's book in the criminal justice section, alongside books on police brutality and test preparation guides for taking the police officers exam.

Many of the books stayed in the library for years after their initial placement. A few were successfully checked into the library – a patron would take them from the shelf and attempt to check them out, and the library staff would assume that they were somehow missing from their computer database and simply put them in to speed up the process.

In 2004, while consulting librarian Margarete Gross for unrelated research, a member of Temporary Services learned that she had been put in charge of handling books from The Library Project as they were discovered by other staffers. Gross had about twenty of the books stored in boxes under her desk. Gross was considering making a public display of the found books but ultimately decided that in light of recent Anthrax attacks at the main Chicago Post Office, it would be best not to create an exhibit about hiding things in the library. Nonetheless, she made it clear that the library planned to keep the books. Shortly after this meeting, Margarete Gross retired from her position and left the Harold Washington Library.

In the fall of 2006, Temporary Services inquired about the books again and found that other staffers were also aware of the project. We made an appointment to bring a group of students to the library to see the books as part of a workshop we were teaching. Not sure how the library would react, we were amazed to find a large display of the "caught" books set out for us in the art reference area. The librarians were helpful and excited about the project, and wanted help in "finding" more of the books that might be on the shelves. We presented librarian Angela Holtzman with a copy of the booklet from the project and agreed to help her identify the books they had discovered – many of which were unsigned by the artists.

As of the spring of 2007, all of the Library Project books that were found and brought to the Visual and Performing Arts section of the library are officially cataloged under "Temporary Services: The Library Project". Any patron can now see these books at the Arts section reference desk on the 8th floor. Other books from The Library Project remain on the shelves, still undiscovered by staff.



Students perusing books that were discovered by library staff and moved to reference.

Artists and Participants Included in The Library Project

An "Uncontrollable"

Janell Baxter

E.C. Brown

The Center for New
Community

Brooke Chaffee

Raimond Chaves

Salem Collo-Julin

Jim Duignan

Paul Druecke

Hans-Peter Feldmann

Flotsam

Fordham Urban Law
Journal

Emily Forman

Paul Gebbia

Helidon Gjergji

Kenneth Goldsmith

Kenneth Hirsch

Steven Hudosh

Douglas Huebler

James Hugunin

Rob Kelly & Zena

Sakowski

Nance Klehm

Kathleen Kranack

Stephan Laphisophon

Aemin Annie Lee

Cindy Loehr

Josh MacPhee

Ryan McGinness

Rebecca Moran & Rosie

Sanders

Simon Morris & Helen

Sacoor

Leah Oates

OK & OR

Stephanie Ognar

Trevor Paglen

Laurie Palmer

Robert Peters

Michael Piazza

Andrea Pinal

Jennifer Ramsey

Karen Reimer

REPOhistory

Bruno Richard

Chris Ritter

Jorge Rivera

Van Harrison

Chemi Rosado Seijo

David Shrigley

The Somnambulist

Dana Sperry

Deborah Stratman

Ervin Stuntz

Jocelyn Superstar

2001

Royal Torres

Samuel Torres

Pedro Velez

Oli Watt

Tara Zanzig

Pam Zimmerman

Selected Quotes Included in the Booklet From The Library Project

"1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views contributing to their creation."

- The American Library Association, from The Library Bill of Rights

"Over its lifetime, the book has the capacity to insinuate itself into unforeseen locales"

- Brad Freeman, Artist

"...I became a young novelist and wrote a book about the Jonestown, Pennsylvania, flood in 1830 - something where Clara Barton threw her weight around. The book was three-hundred-twenty-one pages long and I had set for myself the deadline of my eleventh birthday. I'd heard the girl who wrote *Black Beauty* was eleven so I wanted to be the youngest novelist in the world.

Since I didn't have any idea of how to get it published, I typed it all up, stapled it together, cut up some beer-case cardboard, and covered it with white butcher paper and Saran Wrap. I painted a relevant picture for the cover and smuggled it into the library and put it on the shelves in the correct alphabetical order. I never saw that book again."

- Cookie Mueller, from "My Bio: Notes on an American Childhood"

"The failure of the democratic multiple is not a failure of production, but of reception - another of the many moments in which the efforts of alternative discourse have been eclipsed by the economically advantaged mainstream. Artists' books have failed to find a place as a democratic art form, at least up until now. But in the future [...]?"

- Johanna Drucker, artist and author of the book *The Century of Artists' Books*. Quote is from the essay "The Myth of the Artist's Book as a Democratic Multiple", *Art Papers*, November/December 1997, Vol. 21 Issue 6.



We had a project launch at Temporary Services' Chicago office space before adding the books to the Harold Washington Library's collection.

Selected Books From The Library Project



White Lane Eh by Zena Sakowski & Rob Kelly. Two examples from a set of three handmade books that opened up to become a coat, a pair of pants, and a balaklava hood.

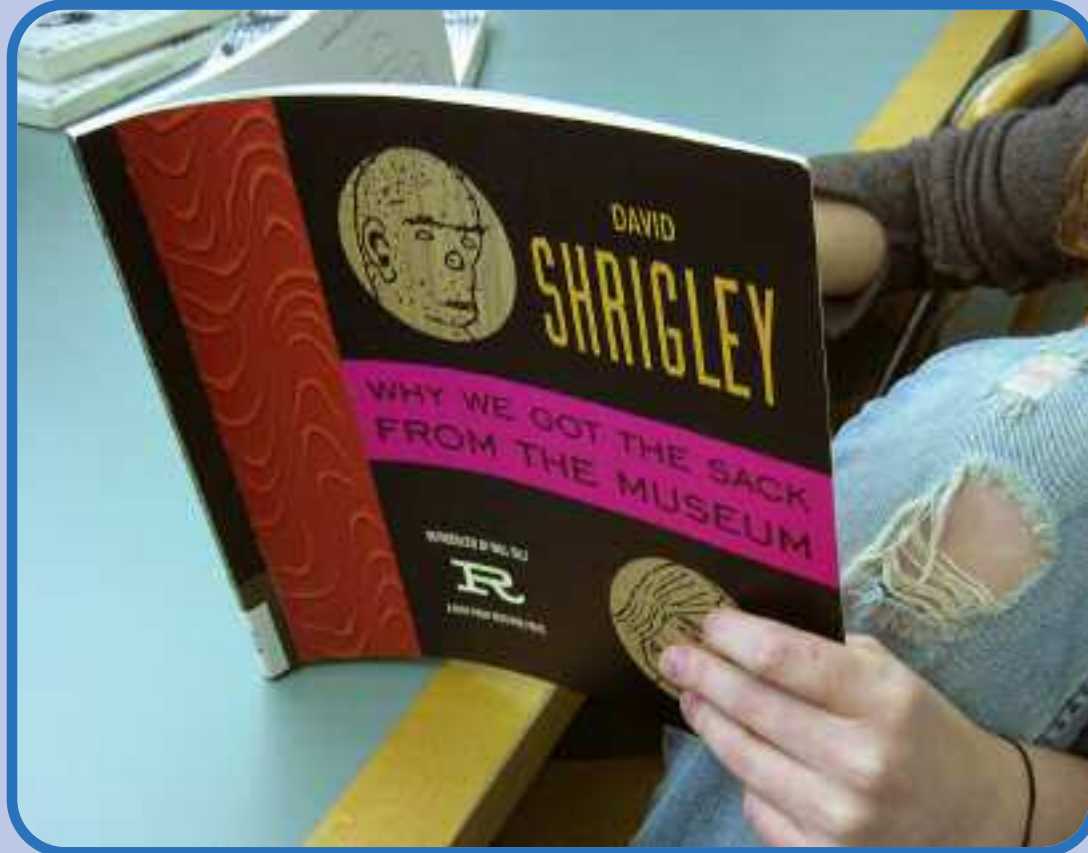
Seed Ledger by Nance Klehm. A collection of free seed packets and informational sheets for weeds common to Chicago.



Los ladrones de dinamita by Raimond Chaves. A book of modified police composites of three young boys who stole explosives.

Sexy Politzei by Bruno Richard. A book of violently redrawn photos of police officers. Richard's book was shelved alongside books on police brutality and police training manuals.

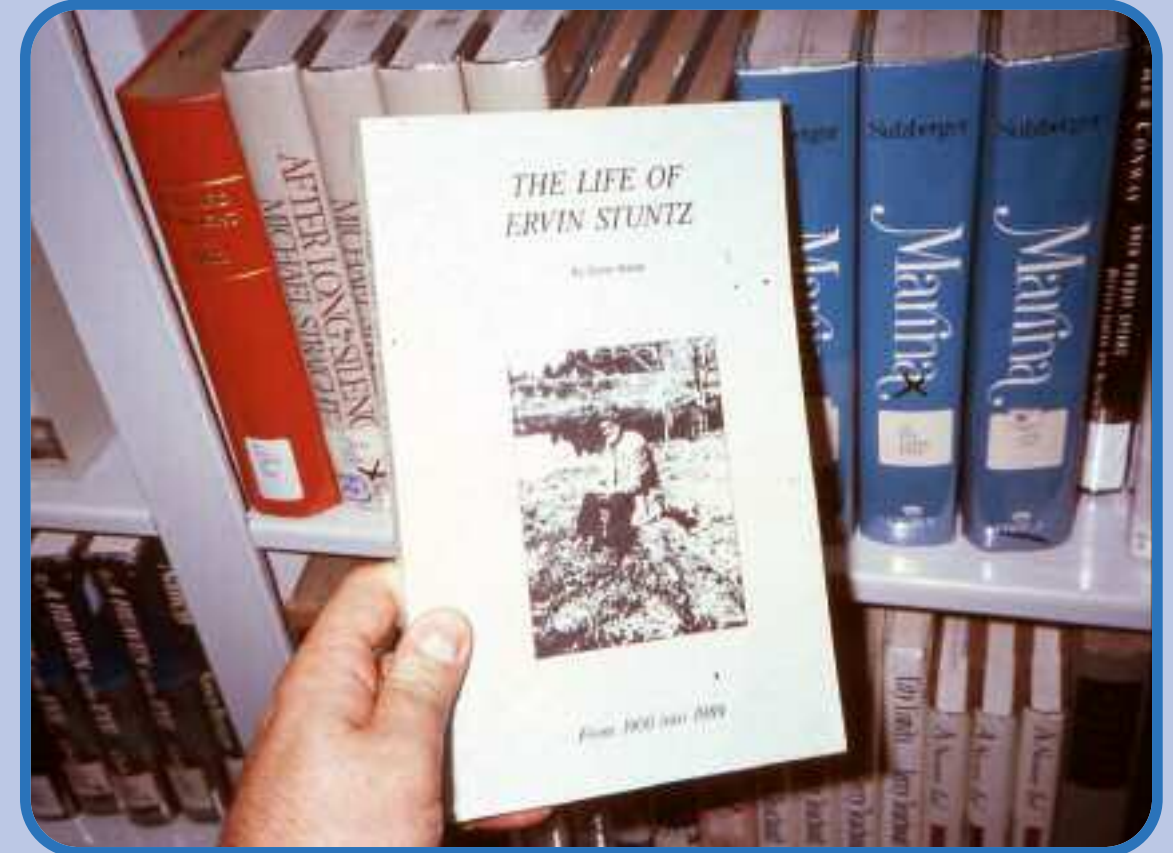
Selected Books From The Library Project



Why We Got The Sack From The Museum by David Shrigley. At the time of the project, the library only owned two books by contemporary Scottish artists.



Observed Reading on the Armitage Bus 8:15 a.m. 2/15/01 by Michael Piazza.



The Life of Ervin Stuntz by Ervin Stuntz. We found this self-published autobiography in the library's discarded books store and decided to include it in the project.



Books on a table in Temporary Services' former office, just three blocks north of the Harold Washington Library Center.



Synchronic Bibliomania: Uncommon Books Sharing A Common Thread by Paul Gebbia. Paul purchased used copies of books already in the library's collection and switched their covers to create mis-matched contents. Right: Paul's copy of *His Way* houses a book on Nostradamus.



Project Notes: Creating Call Numbers and Deciding Book Locations - Two Details

next to "The Spanish Civil War" by Antony Beevor

Anonymous "Uncontrollable" A Day Mournful And Overcast everybody is born one publishing 1999 [4 copies] Autonomous Zone 1573 N. Milwaukee Ave., #420, Chicago, IL 60622 "Written by an 'Uncontrollable' member of the Iron Column during the Spanish Civil War"

DP 269 .A29 1999

HX 925 .A57 1999

REF HX 925 .A57 1999

HV 9743 .U76 1999

6th Fl Prisoners' writings - next to Franco Spanish prison

green tape

next to "A Theological Anthropology" by Hans Urs von Balthasar

Put under Chi Pub Lib Ref stream inside

6th Fl stamp. soc. Sci. History Division

Next to "The Spanish Anarchists: The Heroic Years 1888-1936" by Murray Bookchin

next to "How to Read a Film" by James Monaco

8th Floor Film

PN 1994 M392 2006

EC Brown Untitled Unique artist book 2000

Devin Burghart (Editor) Soundtracks to the White Revolution: White Supremacist Assaults on Youth Music Subcultures The Center for New Community in cooperation with The Northwest Coalition for Human Dignity 1999 [4 copies] The Center for New Community, P.O. Box 346066, Chicago, IL 60634 www.newcomm.org

Music Fz. B

ML 3534 .C91 1999

REF DS 145 .S63 1999

Anti-semitism

E 184 .A1 R493 1999

Anti-Semitism

DS 145 .C43 1999

6th Fl next to "The Satanizing of the Jews: origins + development of mystical anti-semitism by Joel Carmichael"

6th Floor make a white reference sticker + stamp Social Sciences + History + Chicago Public Library

4th Fl Ref

Brooke Chaffee Untitled Unique artist book 2001

REF QH 96 .C51 2001

Raimond Chaves

Stephen Laphisophon Hotel Terminus WhiteWalls 2000 Whitwalls Inc. P.O. Box 8204 Chicago, IL 60680

DP 526 .L16 2000

Travel Portugal - Floor 6

Josh MacPhee Architecture/Work Unique artist book 2001

NA 737 .M281 .A4 2001

architecture - next to a book on Rodolfo Machado & Jorge Silveti 8th Fl.

Ryan McGinness flatnessisgod RSUB 1999 ISBN 1-887128-34-4 www.RSUB.com

REF Z 244.3 .M29 999 PRO

printing ref. - next to "preparing Art For Print" Books on Books

Simon Morris & Helen Sacco bibliomania Self-published 1998/1999 [2 copies] www.bibliomania.org.uk

4th Fl. Lit. Books on books. Next to "The Book on The Bookshelf" by Henry Petroski

Z 685 .M58 1999

Concept art

Leah Oates Unknown Geometry Bee & Rhino Press 2000 "A collection of digital prints documenting DNA, the body and nature."

4th Fl. ref. Behav. Medical Genetics by Nora Fraser and "The Family Genetic Sourcebook" by Pierce Bus/SciTech Division

REF RB 155 .O11 2000

letter "O"

Stephanie Ognar Flip Book Kiss Self-published 1997 "A FlipBook™ movie by Stephanie Ognar"

HQ 801 .O29 1997

letter "O"

How to be better lover even 6th Fl next to "Love is a Verb" by O'Hanlon + Hudson

SOCIAL SCIENCES DIVISION