

UTOPIA/DYSTOPIA

Karen Kunc

Avoca, NE



“A structure is made vulnerable by the hype and chatter of rumor and insistentcies, as subtle visual cues seep and inundate behind, and within, the edifice.”

Incessant White Noise

Accordion book created with woodcut and letterpress on Japanese Nishinouchi paper, digital print on Asuka paper, with etching and mixed media decorative papers. 11” h x 5” w (closed), 11” h x 35” w (open)

LandEscape

Accordion book created with woodcut and letterpress printing on handmade watermarked paper of cotton/abaca, housed in a small covered box with watermarked paper. 6” h x 5” w (closed), 6” h x 36” w (open)

Endless Eternal Elusive

Sewn binding, with center spread accordion fold, covered boards with silk bookcloth spine, woodcut printed endsheets on Nishinouchi, letterpress on handmade paper of cotton/abaca, and Cave Paper cover with letterpress title. Poem by Grace Bauer. 11” h x 3” w (closed), 11” h x 15” w (open)

Statement

I am an artist who has found books to be a “fertile format.” I have used many book-making methods over the years in my own bookworks, some learned at workshops, other methods developed on my own or adapted. I often follow principles that recognize possibilities for display of the work, self-publication abilities, plus knowledge of book terminology, and print technology problems. I am an advocate for the “experiential nature” of artist’s books - that one experiences the work on many sensual and spatial levels.

Among the many reasons I make books is the recognition of the tactile qualities of work made for the hand, the control of pacing and the “reading/viewing” as an experience, an interest in story-telling, and strong, important historical and cultural associations.

For me, there is a love of materials as I make my book objects - an awareness of paper, ink, proportion, color, relationships, finish, detail, all parts to the whole, with evidence of craftsmanship. I am making an aesthetic object, even a beautiful one, as a carrier of important ideas.

My prints and books often deal with my own “print” issues - reading and perception questions - how one is aware of subtle printed elements, how one reads on multiple dimensional printed levels, how the eye moves through the works into my designed entrances and

exits, where one gets entwined and held, and where a simple ending forms. My visual sense has always been about how I transform my world, what I see, study and the ways I interpret my simple surroundings - from instinct, to forms, to concept, to abiding life issues. The experience of making and thinking is what influences my visual instinct and interconnections, which results in the works themselves.

Biography

Karen Kunc explores inventive color abstractions of the natural and human-fashioned world in her prints and artist books, creating ideas of 'strange beauty'. Kunc is a Cather Professor of Art at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Awards include Fulbright Scholar Awards to Finland and Bangladesh, two NEA/MAAA awards, the 2007 SGCI Printmaker Emeritus Award.

Her works have been shown in exhibitions nationally and internationally and are held in numerous collections: MOMA; Library of Congress; Milwaukee Art Museum; Haas Arts Library Yale University; Jyväskylä Art Museum, Finland. She has taught workshops around the world, in Egypt, Italy, Finland, Bangladesh, Poland, Japan, France, Mexico, Iceland; and she has lectured as a visiting artist to over 200 institutions. Kunc has recently launched Constellation Studios in Lincoln, Nebraska, as a creative destination for artist residencies, collaborations and workshops in print, paper, book.

www.karen-kunc.com