

The Field of Distribution

INTERVIEW Victoria Browne speaks to Nancy Campbell about **KALEID editions**, an initiative that represents books by Europe-based artists at art book fairs and through advocacy with museum special collections

NC What was the genesis of KALEID editions?

VB KALEID editions began in 2009 as a curated project space with a rolling programme of exhibitions, book launches and drop-in workshops in Shoreditch, London. Artists were invited to exhibit and make a book as an extension of an interdisciplinary practice. This led to an exhibition of artists' books at the Saison Poetry Library and a studio base at The Art Academy in London Bridge. The background to this was my experience working with Kilometer Zero, a politically engaged group of artists and writers in Marseille during my studies. After returning to London, I wanted to reach out beyond a local network and continue developing connections with artists across Europe.

NC How do you see the role of KALEID editions today?

VB The Digital Revolution is impacting on medium- and material-based art in a multitude of ways. The cost and scale of industrial printing has been reduced, making high-quality commercial printing accessible to the individual; the reaction against screen-based technology continues to drive DIY makers and the legacy of British Arts & Crafts and the German Bauhaus continues to influence artists' studio-based activities. Dissemination via social media and online platforms enables a peer-led movement, the curator's influence has a greater reach than the critic's review and artists are now accustomed to self-exhibiting their works through multiple channels: galleries, fairs, popups, open studios, websites, social media, etc. But technology has not yet replaced time to consider art, time to meet, time to make. KALEID editions curates by filtering, selecting and representing the best artists' books, and then distributing them.

NC KALEID editions exhibits at artists' book fairs, but that's not the only way the works are distributed. You also do an annual US tour...

VB The US tour is a great way to introduce a stable of artists to established collections of artists' books who have previously relied on a US-based network and may be less informed of emerging artists in Europe. Each institution I visit has different criteria for acquiring, often developed over years of consideration in relation to the history of the museum, the specialist subjects at the University or the current school of thought within contemporary art.

NC How does this fit in with your own practice as a printmaker?

VB I run KALEID editions as an extension of my studio practice, one informs the other and I am always learning about new collections to visit both for acquisitions and for personal research. Being responsible for other artists' work can be a heavy undertaking, but it is challenging and fulfilling to have influence in the development of collections for future public and academic access. How else can an artist counter the wall-to-wall media consumption that influences our global collective conscious? Street graffiti, for example, has traditionally been the anarchic approach to infiltrate the definition of public art; but the ability to infiltrate national archives with original values and ideas that may be overlooked or misinterpreted by mass media channels, contributes material evidence to history that cannot be whitewashed over. I believe the activity of lugging a suitcase of books across the highways of the US has an equally subversive impact



on a nation's cultural identity as an artist's response to current socio-political issues. Seth Price's essay *Dispersion* is often quoted as foreseeing the explosion in artists' self-publishing with an opening quote by Marcel Broodthaers: 'The definition of artistic activity occurs, first of all, in the field of distribution'.

NC You are Associate Professor of Printmaking and Drawing at Kunsthøgskolen i Oslo (KHiO). How does your research at KHiO support KALEID editions?

VB KHiO is unique in Europe with its Department of Art & Craft (in addition to Design, Academia, Theatre) focusing on medium- and material-based art. There is an emphasis on the Everyday and the legacy of Europe's Bauhaus and Arts & Crafts movements. I am part of a team of tutors and technicians delivering specialist printmaking expertise and world-class facilities to BA and MA students. (For example, last September the Department facilitated 'Printmaking in the Expanded Field', a week of lectures delivered by 18 international speakers which can be viewed online.) KHiO is supporting the move of KALEID editions from London to Oslo. This year's seminar is funded by the national research board and enables three artists to present their publishing practice to the students and staff at KHiO, to be broadcast online to a global audience. KHiO's library is an ideal space to curate art pieces that demand consideration, to be handled in an environment for the public to access and to acquire artists' books for their own collection.

NC What can we expect from the KALEID 2016 showcase?

VB We had a record number of over 250 submissions, from which we select no more than 40 to represent a broad approach to the form of the book. We're delighted to work with such a fantastic group of artists across Europe. I don't always know who those artists are but I know I'm going to be investing a lot of time learning about their practice over the coming year.

KALEID 2016 Oslo is Bjarne Bare, Guy Bigland, Jessie Brennan, Alex Bühler, Sigrid Calon, Daniele Catalli, Ben Cave, Amanda Couch, Jane Grisewood, Marcelle Hanselaar, Sam Hodge, Elisabeth Ida, Marie Jacotey, Jos Jansen, Toby Leigh, Sophie Loss, Sara-Lena Maierhofer, Imi Maufe, Patrizia Meinert, Edward Newton, Paul Paper, Louis Porter, Peter Rapp, paula roush, Hillie de Rooij, Alessandro Rizzi, Randi Strand, Christian Tunge, Benedikt Terwiel, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Imrich Veber and Honza Zamojski.

For more information see www.kaleideditions.com

Image

Artists' books on display at KALEID 2014 London. Photography ©Victoria Browne