

PUBLICATION STUDIO

THE SPRING LINE

Welcome to the Publication Studio newsletter, another glimpse into the workings of the self proclaimed “maker and destroyer of books.” We make books with authors and writers we admire by any means possible, often destroying preconceived notions of what a book can be.

There were no weekends for Publication Studio this spring. On April 28, Patricia No, Matthew Stadler, and David Knowles from the Portland Publication Studio flew out to New York City for the unveiling of our Spring Line of books. In a glamorous and boozy book event in the East Village, our artists and authors promenaded down a runway, toting their Publication Studio Jank Editions like the high fashion accessories they are. Among those Janks were Christine Hou’s debut book of poems, *Accumulations*, and artist Matt Keegan’s experiment in archiving, *History of New York*.

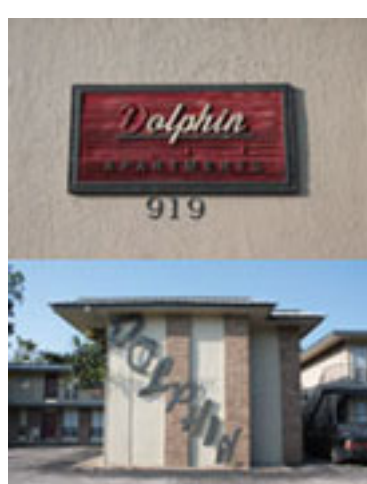
In May the Portland Studio saw two book releases by local artists. First came Elizabeth Jaeger’s launch of *How Other People See Me*, a collection of photographs that Jaeger describes as “a self portrait through the collected gazes of people I have photographed.” The event was friend filled, low key, and chatty. The night ended with an epic Mexican-food snack attack.

The following weekend, artist and notoriously excellent party dj, Shawn Creeden, released his book, *This is the Same Hillside*, with a rowdy night of reading and rock and roll. Creeden gave a hallucinogenic recitation from his book culminating in a convincing impression of fellow Publication Studio author, Israel Lund, repeating his own name ad infinitum. Things took a chaotic turn when David Knowles unmasked his German side with an epileptic music performance. David reported being understandably sore the next day after crawling under cars parked in front of the Studio. The night ended with a stripped down and energetic performance by artist Aidan Koch’s new band, The Bubs. All present were convinced that The Bubs will be opening for Katy Perry or Thurston Moore on a world tour in no time.

In contrast to Shawn Creeden’s launch, Justin Bland’s event for his newest curation-as-publication, *Signs and Symbols*, was austere and music free. Inspired by the Nabokov short story of the same name, *Signs and Symbols* features work of Taiwanese photographer Chuen-Huei Yang. Yang’s photos, which all originated from her Flickr account, demonstrate how unassuming objects bring on “referential mania” in even the most literal minds. Despite the many cases of Ninkasi beer – all consumed – there were no free-associative meltdowns from Bland or the attendees. ♦

A CONVERSATION WITH KEITH WILSON

San Francisco- and Austin-based filmmaker Keith Wilson’s *Hyde Park Apartments* documents the rich fabric of fonts and designs found on signs of apartment buildings in Austin’s historic Hyde Park neighborhood. Each open page “juxtaposes the buildings’ fanciful names with their quotidian appearance.”



Publication Studio – I’m curious about your selection of the Hyde Park neighborhood for the subject matter of your book. What is it about these apartments and their signs that captured your interest? Are the names and typography at all specific to Austin, this neighborhood?

Keith Wilson – I went to graduate school in Austin for an MFA in film production and lived for a time in the Hyde Park neighborhood. It took me several months living in the neighborhood before I noticed what Berndt and Hilla Becher might describe as a typology: a high percentage of the apartment structures, built mostly in the 60s, 70s, and 80s, were named, and those names were advertised on their facades. Most people, myself included, drove, walked, biked, texted or iPhoned by them without noticing. I’m from the suburbs of Atlanta and grew up in subdivisions called Dogwood Plantation and Misty Valley Estates so I’m attuned to the nomenclature developers and landowners use to evoke the ideal, the pastoral, and the historically important. I guess people don’t want to just live in an apartment, but in a villa. They don’t want a parking lot but an arbor. They don’t just want to pay rent, but aspire to a lifestyle. I’m fascinated by the degree to which these naming display efforts are successful (or not!). In some cases the name, the font, the façade, and the architecture coalesce into a “living experience”: The Jacksonian, The Monticello. In others nothing works: Bent Tree, The Del Prado.

Are there any photographers or photography books that influenced the project? Ed Ruscha’s work is what first came to my mind.

Exactamente! Ed Ruscha’s photography books were a huge influence. His flat-footed, unsentimental and serial approach to documenting his immediate Los Angeles environment just sings to me. It’s like music to my eyes, my brain, and my suburban upbringing. This body of work is by no means high on the originality scale. In the *Artforum* article about the photo show I had recently the reviewer, Katie Anania, said I was in dialogue with Ed Ruscha and that the work was “sincere despite having art historical freight.” I like to think Hyde Park Apartments is a continuation of a conversation that Ruscha started in Los Angeles that I’ve

now brought to Austin – a much less, until recently, mythologized location than Southern California. Next week I’m printing a book that is also “in dialogue” with Ed Ruscha and his great 1967 accordion-fold book called *All the Buildings on the Sunset Strip*. Mine is also an accordion-fold book and is called *All the Buildings on Burnet Road*, a much less mythologized stretch of the American urban road).

I’m also very influenced by many of the New Topographics photographers (such as Lewis Baltz, Joe Deal, Henry Wessel Jr. and the Bechers) and their anthropological vs. critical approach to documenting the American built environment. For me, Austin, Texas, is suburban, which I find both attractive and repulsive. I’ve found that the best way to convey this orientation is by presenting work that is straightforward, banal and, to some, boring. In my photo and film work I try to encourage people to pay attention to what is around them: to how the world was, is, and will be constructed.

Was the final format of the book – the sign mirrored by a more panoramic shot of the building – already in your mind while you were taking the photographs?

I was pretty confident early on that the diptych format was right for the project. Something is lost when there is one without the other. Extracting the names (on the left side) from their context (on the right side) points to the disconnect between what is advertised and what actually exists. The divided page in between each pair helps emphasize the disconnect as well. Although, I like to think that the two come together again when the book is closed. Whether it’s a kiss or a collision depends on the particular diptych and/or the viewer. ♦

AUTHOR TOURS : GERMANY & NAFTA

In early June, Vancouver writer Aaron Peck joined artists Adam Harrison and Dominic Osterried in Germany to tour four cities with a festive, multi-media event, presenting their deluxe edition of their Publication Studio book, *Letters to the Pacific*. The Germans loved the charming Canadian, the book, and the presentation. The touring PS crew loved the sausage-heavy German cuisine. The limited edition (50 copies) includes original work by artists Christopher Williams and Johannes Bendzulla. Photos from their trip and the events are up on the Publication Studio tumblr at publicationstudio.tumblr.com.

Starting on June 21, Publication Studio co-founder and author, Matthew Stadler, toured 12 cities in the NAFTA Free Trade Zone in support of his new novel, *Chloe Jarren’s La Cucaracha*. As Matthew ate his way across America, the six Publication Studio imprints provided special launch editions of *Chloe Jarren’s La Cucaracha*, prepared expressly for the fancy dinner events. A more traditional paperback, also made one-at-a-time on the Espresso Book Machine (EBM), was made by Third Place Press to be sold at mainstream bookstores across the country.

The tour included a 5-day residency at the Henry Gallery in Seattle. Patricia, Matthew, and David hauled all the book-making machines from Portland to operate a pop-up storefront where they carried out our daily production in the gallery’s lobby space. From the temporary studio, Patricia made Seattle-based artist Debra Baxter’s new book of images and poetry, *Wanting is Easier Than Having*. The book collects images of Baxter’s crystal sculptures along with her writing and functions as a catalog for her summer long exhibition at Seattle’s Platform Gallery. The pop-up PS also produced two books with the Henry Gallery: Lucy Pullen’s *Marks and Angles* and Matthew Offenbacher’s catalog for *The Gift Shop*.

During the NAFTA Tour Matthew wrote profusely on his tour blog, naftabooktour.tumblr.com, chronicling in text and pictures the hectic experience of an author working to converse with his readers between mouthfuls of suckling pig and sips of tequila. ♦

NEW MEMBERS OF THE PS FAMILY

At the beginning of June we said goodbye to our amazing intern, Antonia Pinter, but thankfully only for the summer. Antonia is currently in San Francisco, interning at the prestigious Crown Point Press. In her place we gained new book-making talent, willing to work for lunch twice-a-week. Megan Stockton, a student at Reed College, has joined the team and is already proficient at making perfect-bound books and smart-aleck retorts. PNCA student Alex Dolan also joined the book assembly line whenever the books in the Publication Studio library don’t distract him. Besides book making, Megan is helping organize the next edition of Publication Studio’s literary magazine, *Weekday*. Alex is helping upgrade the online store with his photography and hand-modeling skills. ♦

SUMMER WORK AND PLAY

This summer, Publication Studio will be lounging on the beach of one of Portland’s many swimming holes on the weekends when not engaged in the grueling yet rewarding work of book making. Keep an eye on our events page and online store for the many new books set for publication this summer, including new titles by Tara Jane O’Neil, Gretchen Bennet, Tom Greenwood, and Sam Lohmann. ♦

“Maker and Destroyer of Books”

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