THE IMMERSIVE MOVABLE OBJECT:
CONTEMPORARY POP-UP BOOKS

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Exhibition and Catalogue
by
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INTRODUCTION

The movable pop-up book is a magic trick made from paper. The joy of a pop-up book is that it defies the readers' preconceptions and certainties. Our preconception of paper is that it is flat, weak, and easily damaged. Books or codices are flat rectangles that open to flat paper pages that should be carefully handled. To access the content of the book, the pieces of paper must be lifted and turned to reveal new pages and content. Handled carelessly, the pages can be torn, crumpled, buckled by liquids, or stained by dust or dirt. The contents of the pages are also flat. The text and the images remain static on the page, and are expected to remain so.

A closed flat rectangular movable book looks like a conventional book. But to lift the cover and to have the contents literally spring upwards towards the reader as a three-dimensional structure is surprising, amazing, and delightful. That these structures can twirl, move, and reposition themselves, and sometimes make sounds, never seems to fail to delight the reader, even with repeated readings. They continue to be almost miraculous, even to readers who are fully aware of what will happen each time the book is opened.

Most of the works in this exhibition have no static pages. Letters and words move, and illustrations rise. Some even transform from one three-dimensional object to another three-dimensional object within the same spread. The reader is invited, on almost every page, to physically interact with the content, to create their own experiences and, often, create their own narratives. Added to the experience is the sensation that the movable book is even more fragile, and more likely to be damaged as it is interacted with. The reader feels that the book should be handled with great care. Counter to this expectation, many movable books live undamaged, with all the spreads still working even after many years of use due to clever design and paper engineering.

BRIEF HISTORY

Movable elements within a book have a long history. The earliest work in this exhibition dates to 1567, and it features a volvelle. A volvelle is a set of wheels attached to each other through a central pin. Each wheel can be spun by the reader on its own to new settings in relation to the other wheels. In the examples in this exhibition, the volvelles are used as calculators: to calculate time settings for use in navigation, global positions when travelling, and astrological predictions. By the 1700s, flaps, which are similar to tabs, were added to books for children. A flap or lift-up is a piece of paper that is tipped or glued with a fold on one edge to an underlying page obscuring the image or text below it. It is up the reader to lift the flap to find the hidden information.

CASE 1: INTRODUCTION TO MOVABLE BOOKS

[1] Claude Dariott. *Dariotus Redivivus: Or a Briefe Introduction Conducing to the Judgement of the Stars*. London: Printed for Andrew Keme, 1653.

Dariott was a French astrologer living in the sixteenth century. This work is an instruction book for the aspiring astrologer. The multi-layered volvelle, one of several in the work, acts as a pocket calculator for a practitioner calculating their client's horoscope.

[2] Robert Dodsley. *On Biblical Subjects: Poems, Histories, Meditations, Prayers*. England, early 18th century.

Little is known about Dodsley, who wrote *On Biblical Subjects* in and around 1700. He was reputedly a schoolmaster at the Free School in Mansfield, Nottinghamshire. The manuscript, inspired by medieval devotional manuscripts, is a collection of biblical stories, poems, and meditations. It is written in brown ink with watercolour illustrations. Throughout the work, the author uses illustrated flaps to further develop narrative elements within the biblical stories. The reader is invited into the narration as they lift the flaps to reveal new developments in the story.

[3] David A. Carter and James Diaz. *The Elements of Pop-Up: A Pop-Up Book for Aspiring Paper Engineers*. New York: Little Simon, 1999.

Carter and Diaz, both paper engineers for Intervisual, created the ultimate 'how-to' book on designing and creating pop-ups. Still in print well after its original 1999 publication, the work remains unique in its approach. It begins with a short history of movable books and a glossary of terms relating to the manufacture and elements of movable paper structures. Whereas most of the works on the subject use printed illustrations with samples that the reader can photocopy and construct, Carter and Diaz provide the actual examples that can be activated, along with explanations on why the structure works. Each construction is illustrated with a movable paper model, along with the technical terms related to the model, the specifications, and the mathematics critical for success. The samples also include instructions for the creation of noise makers, optical illusions, the use of wheels, and the various ways that pull tabs can be designed to create special effects. Each illustration has a textual explanation combined with a flap that opens to show the actual object or the behind-the-scenes construction. Almost every pop-up element that appears in this exhibition is illustrated in the work.

[6] Vojtěch Kubašta. *Hänsel und Gretl*. Prague: Artia, 1959.

While pop-up books were published in the early twentieth century, the format languished until the 1950s when Kubašta, a Czechoslovakian architect, civil engineer, artist, and paper engineer, created for the Prague-based publisher Artia a number of pop-up children's books. Artia trained the staff to assemble the books and distributed them worldwide in seventeen languages, including English. The books were a success, and soon publishers from other countries started to commission works and explore creating and publishing their own pop-ups. For the most part, Kubašta created very simple works with stage-like pull down pop-ups, along with some reader-activated elements. In *Hänsel und Gretl*, pull-down pages create the stage for the action in the story, while pull tabs within the pages reveal the witch, make the father's arm chop down a wooden branch, and allow the reader to help Hansel and Gretel push the witch into the furnace.

CASE 4: ARTIST BOOKS

Limited edition artist books have pushed the definition of what constitutes a book, often by subverting the traditional structure. Broadly, the artists in the exhibition define a book as a structure that has a cover which opens to reveal content. The entire book may be a single pop-up structure to be seen in its entirety. These works include accordion books and tunnel books. This case also contains a series of one-spread pamphlets, and a book within a box which contains other structures. The content may or may not have narration or text. The works are meant to challenge conventions. Abstract movable sculptures may pop-up. Some have linking narrations, others deliberately do not.

[18] David A. Carter. *One Red Dot*. London: Tate Publishing, 2008.

A meditation on the potential of kinetic paper sculpture art through paper engineering, *One Red Dot* is the first of the series by Carter of colour-themed works that explore the use of paper and the book structure to create pieces of non-representative abstract art. The very minimal text was written after the individual spreads were created. The sole narration merely urges the reader to find the red dot in each piece. Other than this directive, there is no further narrative. It was awarded the Meggendorfer Prize for Paper Engineering in 2006.

[19] Maryline Poole Adams. *The Two Brothers: A Peep-Show*. Berkeley, CA: Poole Press, 1994.

Illustrated and printed letterpress by Adams, the format of *The Two Brothers* is a tunnel book which uses the accordion-folded sides to create a stage-like space within the resulting tunnel. The small book invites the reader into a three-dimensional snapshot of the events in Lewis Carroll's poetic parody. The complete poem is included in a booklet on the verso page. Sixty-five copies were produced, of which this is copy five.

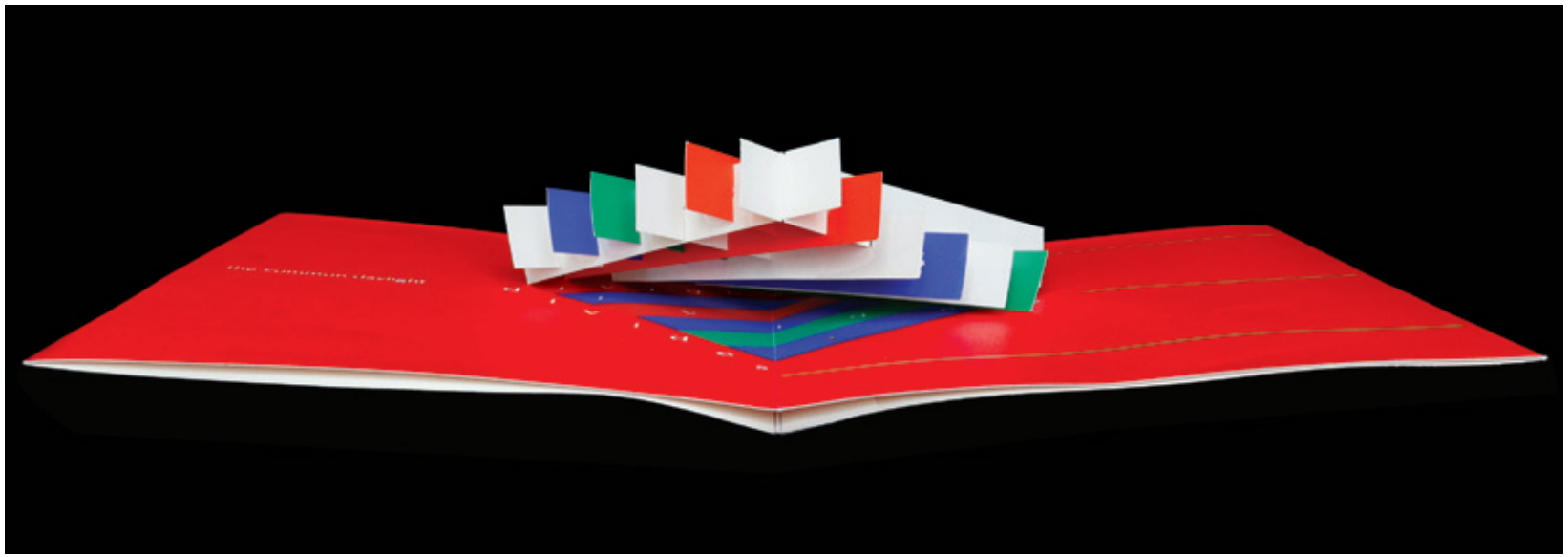
[20] Paul Johnson. *The Tree House of Time*. Cheadle Holme, England: The Book Art Project, 2005.

Hand constructed and illustrated by book artist Paul Johnson, the treehouse is built from interlocking paper pieces that rise into a complex structure when the one-spread book is opened. The text is inscribed on the tree. This is a redesigned second edition; the first edition was issued in 2004. It was laser printed on ninety-pound paper, was hand assembled, and features hand colouring by the author. Johnson is a Meggendorfer Prize winner in 2021 for the artist book *The Lemon Tree*.

[21] Ron King. *Bluebeard's Castle*. Guildford, England: Circle Press Publications, 1972.

This version of *Bluebeard's Castle* is inspired by Béla Bartók's opera. The recently married wife of an ominous nobleman discovers that she is the latest addition to a long line of previously deceased wives. The work follows Bluebeard and his new wife through the halls of his castle as they open each of the seven doors. The often-ambiguous text and images echo the voices of Bluebeard's previous wives coming from the rooms. The paper sculptures are individually abstract, each connected to the other through the overarching narrative.

Additional credits: Pop-up designs conceived and produced by King; verses written by Roy Fisher; printing by Tony Tombs under the direction of the artist; cutting, typesetting, and construction have been carried out at Circle Press; design for the bound versions worked out in consultation with Roy Salter of Bath Academy of Art.



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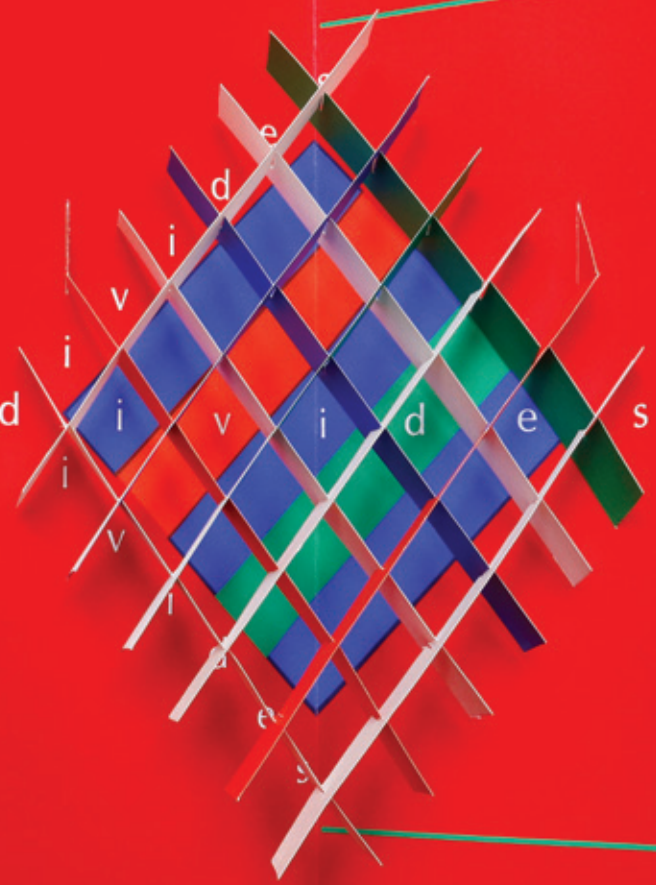


[23] Barbara Hodgson and Claudia Cohen.
Folding Paper. **Vancouver: HM Editions, 2017.**

This work is a celebration of paper and the many ways that it can be pushed, pulled, cut, and reformed from a flat structure into endless new possibilities of form, surface, and uses. Designed by Hodgson, who also folded the specimens from a variety of different papers, this is not a work about pop-ups, but a demonstration of pop-up's roots. A brief introduction to folding techniques and design is followed by chapters on the applications and further iterations of folded paper. There are folded samples of each of the two-dimensional structures. The entire work is encased in a custom-made box, which also holds three-dimensional structures. David Clifford at Black Stone Press in Vancouver printed the text, and Cohen bound each copy in her Seattle studio. The Fisher's copy is number nineteen of thirty numbered copies.

CASE 5: THE FOUNDING OF THE UNIVERSE TO LIFE ON EARTH

The books in this case look at the world that humans inhabit, its evolution, and other inhabitants.

[24] Shawn Sheehy. *Welcome to the Neighborwood*. Somerville, MA: Candlewick Press, 2015.

An elegant three-dimensional work on the homes built by various animals including birds, snails, insects, mammals, and fish. The text is spare and direct, and the use of handmade paper collages gives the work the look of a one-of-a-kind artist book. The pop-up paper sculptures are in themselves complete as paper engineer Sheehy does not use pull tabs or flaps to add to the narrative. This book, printed in Thailand, was awarded the Meggendorfer Prize for Paper Engineering in 2016.

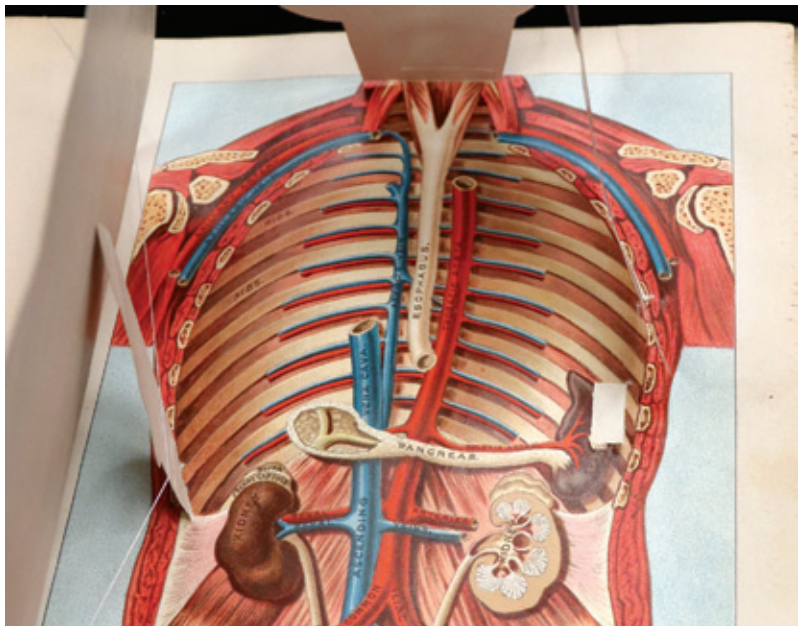

A honeybee's size varies depending on her job, but on average she's about the size of a raisin.
Honeybee
Home Sweet Home
Honeybee builds her hive with beeswax. She makes the wax inside her body but must chew it and soften it before she can begin building. Her hive is built of layers called combs. A comb is made of hundreds of six-sided rooms called cells. Each cell holds pollen, honey, or an egg.
Honeybee makes honey from nectar. Her neighbor has an appetite for nectar too. . . .

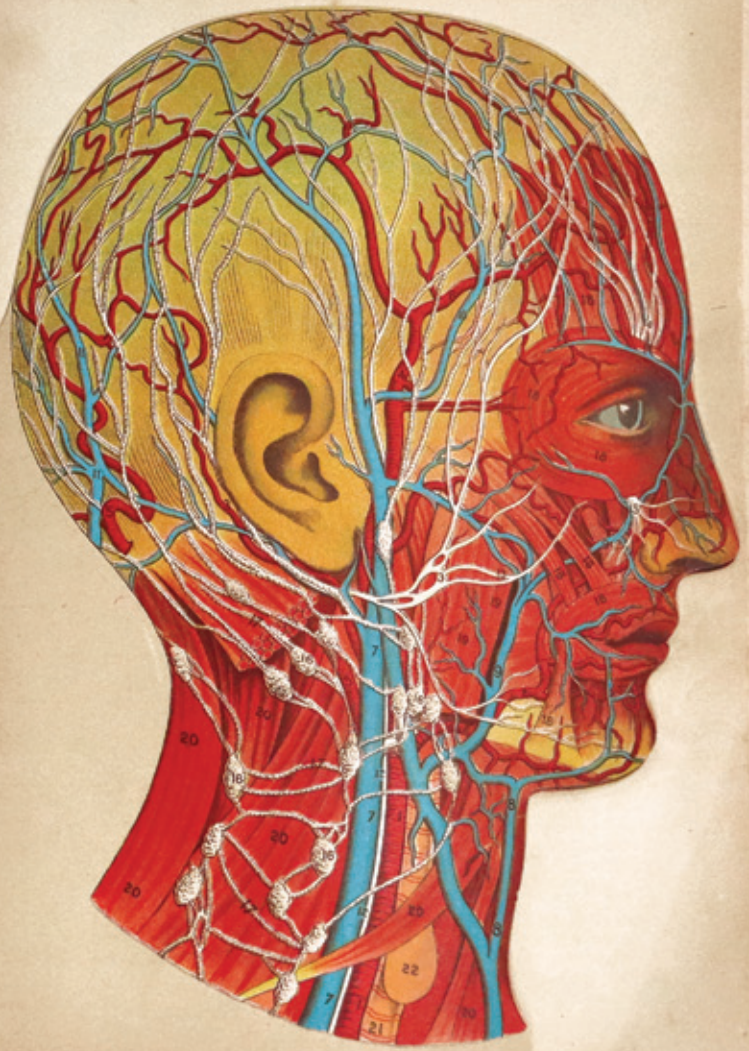
CASE 6: HUMANS—THEIR PHYSIOLOGY, PHOBIAS, AND CONCERNS

The use of layered flaps in medical books to demonstrate the functions of the human body has a long history, dating back centuries. Jonathan Miller and David Pelham's books are more recent examples that use movable pop-up structures to illustrate anatomy. While psychology is difficult to visually depict, *The Pop-Up Book of Phobias's* three-dimensional pop-ups and claustrophobic illustrations deftly manages it. The last book in the case examines the trauma of revealing one's sexuality, while providing a guide and information on resources on how to do so.

[29] *Revised Edition of The Practical Home Physician and Encyclopedia of Medicine: A Guide for the Household Management of Diseased*. Guelph, ON: World Publishing Co., 189- .

This huge, dense volume of over 1,300 pages is intended to provide medical information for the ordinary householder, as well as a quick reference for the practicing physician. The work covers everything from physiology, disease identification, possible treatments, medications that can be made at home or purchased, poisons, and how to provide care for the ill and injured. The majority of the work is text interspersed with relevant illustrations in both black and white and colour. The illustrations range from anatomical depictions to drawings of plants, both poisonous or used as medications. The authors use overlaid coloured flaps to portray the human male torso and the head. The illustrations show the organs, as well as the circulatory and nerve systems. The flap illustrations for the human head include illustrations of sections of the the brain that are responsible for various thought processes.





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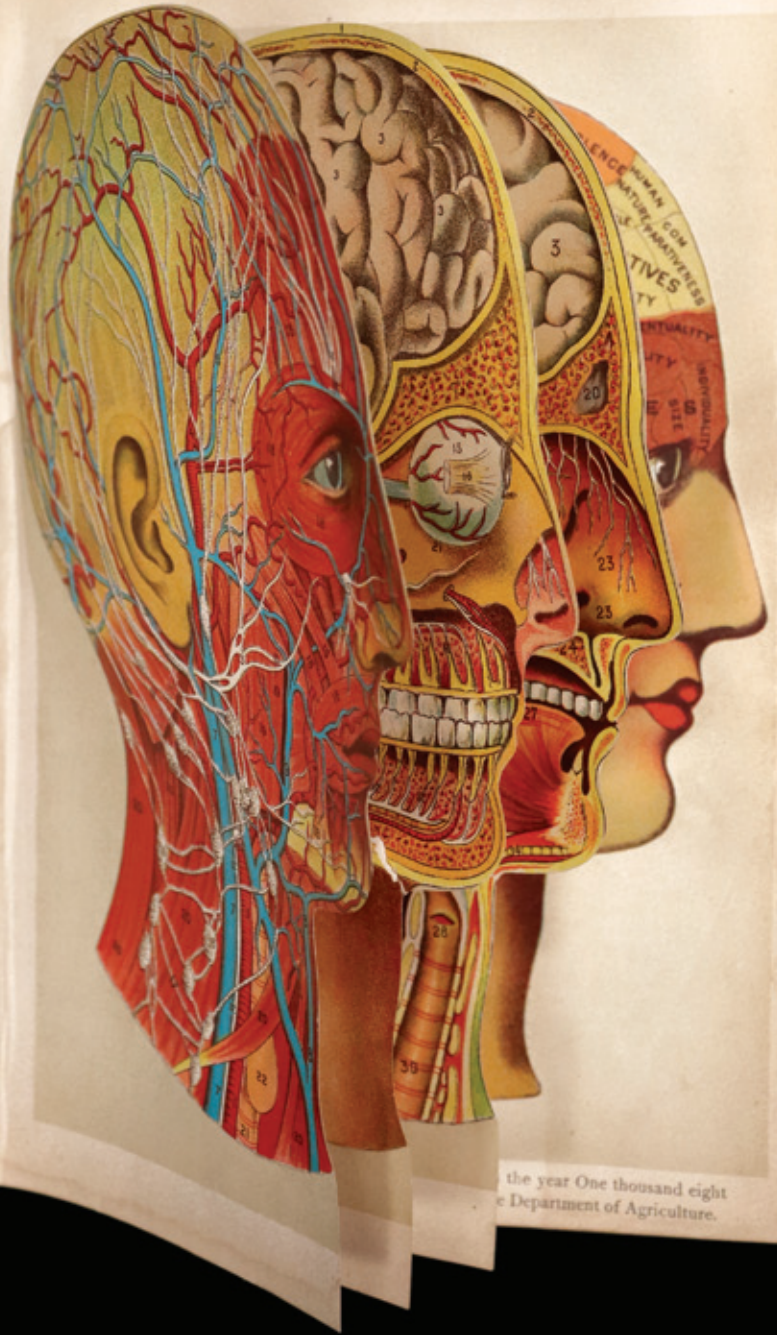

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e Department of Agriculture.

[30] Jonathan Miller and David Pelham. *The Human Body: A Three-Dimensional Study.* London: J. Cape, 1983.

Miller and Pelham take what would have been considered a frivolous medium—pop-up—and created a serious teaching aid on human physiology. The book is directed at a general reader, and is designed to be three dimensional and interactive. Using the pop-up mechanisms, the reader can make the lungs breath and the muscles contract. The text is by Miller, who was an author, actor, theatre director, and physician. It is direct and and clinical, using the correct medical terminology for the aspects and processes within the human body. The book was designed by Pelham and illustrated by Harry Willcock, with paper engineering by Vic Duppa-Whyte and David Rosendale.

[31] Omid Razavi. *Let Me Out!: A Pop-Out About Coming Out.* Toronto: Bounce Creative Inc., 2018.

Let Me Out! aims to assist and encourage young people through the often-difficult process of revealing and openly discussing their sexuality with their family, friends, and community. The text is spare and the pop-ups are primarily simple, with interactive elements such as pull-tabs and flaps. The end pages provide further information and resources available to the reader and their families. The paper engineering is by Tito Perilla.

[32] Jonathan Miller and David Pelham. *The Facts of Life: A Three-Dimensional Study.* London, J. Cape Limited, 1984.

The Facts of Life follows up on Miller and Pelham's *The Human Body*. The work describes and illustrates the human reproductive system from conception to the birth of the child. Miller's text in this work is similarly forthright and clear, but not overly clinical. The pop-ups are three dimensional and direct. As in the previous book there are interactive elements. This book was also illustrated by Willock, with paper engineering by John Strejan, James Diaz, David Rosendale, and Pelham.

[33] Gary Greenberg. *The Pop-Up Book of Phobias.* New York: Harper Collins, 1999.

Written by comedian Greenberg and primarily illustrated by author Balvis Rubess, who is known for his disquieting illustrations, with animation by Matthew Reinhart, the work manages to be both funny and convincingly frightening, without mocking the subject or the reader as their worst fears rise up from the spread to confront them.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to both Janet Dewan and Barbara Tangney for their financial support of this exhibition catalogue. I would like to thank Loryl MacDonald who encouraged my interest in curating an exhibition on pop-up books for the Fisher Library. Timothy Perry was my first Fisher liaison for the exhibition. His help and suggestions were invaluable when I began to seriously work on this project in very early 2020. At the same time, Liz Ridolfo became a very valued resource, providing advice and bringing me new possibilities of books to consider for display. My time in the Fisher Reading Room was always a pleasure. I want to thank Andrew Stewart and Dustin McMurphy, the Reading Room Coordinators, for their assistance and patience. The Fisher's former conservator Linda Joy was instrumental in guiding some of my choices on what and how to display, along with repair work on some of the books. The look of the exhibition is entirely due to the Fisher's conservator Maia Balint. Paul Armstrong took the photographs of the exhibition items reproduced here. Finally, I would like to thank John Shoesmith, who also provided advice on artist-made movable books held at the library, and Marie Korey for editing the catalogue.

FURTHER READING

History

James Findlay. *Pop-up, Illustrated Books, and Graphic Designs of Czech Artist and Paper Engineer, Vojtěch Kubašta.* Fort Lauderdale, Fla.: Bienes Centre for the Literary Arts, 2005.

Peter Haining. *Movable Books: An Illustrated History.* London: New English Library, 1979.

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"Wow, open this": Paper Engineering in Books and Artist Books. Bruce Peel Special Collections Library. Edmonton, Alberta: University of Alberta Libraries, 2014

Paper engineering

Carol Burton. *The Pocket Paper Engineer: How to Make Pop-Ups Step-by-Step. Volume I: Basic Forms.* Glen Echo, Maryland: Popular Kinetics Press, 2005.

Duncan Birmingham. *Pop-Up design and paper mechanics: How to Make Folding Paper Sculpture.* Lewes, United Kingdom: The Guild of Master Craftsmen LTD, 2010.

Artist books

Claire Van Vliet and Elizabeth Steiner. *Woven and Interlocking Book Structures from the Janus, Steiner and Gefn Presses.* Vermont: Janus Gefn Unlimited, 2002.

Hedi Kyle and Ulla Warchol. *The Art of the Fold: How to Make Innovative Books and Paper Structures.* London: Laurence King Publishing Ltd., 2018.

Jean-Charles Trebbi. *The Art of Origami Books: Origami, Kirigami, Labyrinth, Tunnel and Mini-Books by Artists from Around the World.* Barcelona, Spain: Hoaki Books, S.L., 2021.

Most of the authors and paper engineers of the works in the exhibition have websites that include their profiles and views of their past and current works, as well as further works in progress. I would like to point out in particular Robert Sabuda's website: robertsabuda.com.