



After 10 Years, NY Art Book Fair Still Abuzz

September 18, 2015
by Cristina Schreil

For the tenth year, print appeared to be alive and thriving in Long Island City.

On Thursday evening, art intersected with books both new and affordable, rare and prized, at the opening of the [NY Art Book Fair](#) at [MoMA PS1](#). Last year lured more than 35,000, according to fair organizer [Printed Matter](#). At this year's Preview opening on September 17, 2015, hundreds crowded in to survey the 370 presses, galleries, independent publishers, booksellers and artists from 29 countries spread across the New York City museum.



Visitors crowd MoMA PS1's courtyard at Thursday night's preview. Photo by Cristina Schreil.

"It feels so solidified now," said Zach Fischman, who works at and manned the booth for [Harper's Books](#), a bookshop and art gallery in East Hampton, N.Y. "Printed Matter's Art Book Fair just kind of feels like the inevitable best thing to go to this weekend."

Amid the buzz, some acknowledged shifts in the publishing industry.

"This fair's always so exciting because it brings such a dynamism to what's otherwise a bit of a dying medium, that is the printed book," said Harper Levine, owner of Harper's Books, who added there's always a "tremendous vibe" at the fair. "I think the current state of art books is both really strong and really weak simultaneously. I think there's a young, voracious audience for books that maybe doesn't quite have the money yet to buy the books at a level that can sustain all the publishing and all the traditional ways that books have been published."



XE(ROX) & PAPER + SCISSORS' selection of artists, zinesters and small presses in MoMA PS1's courtyard. Photo by Cristina Schreil.

Levine stressed that it's clear to see the under-30 crowd gravitating toward more affordable items, with many exhibitors offering cheap or free zines and pamphlets. A case in point, [David Zwirner Books](#), the stand-alone publishing house of the New York City / London art gallery, had bright signs advertising "Zines! Zines! Zines!" amid piles of hardcover books.

"I don't know if it's translated yet to keeping everybody in business," Levine said, noting the varied mix of art media available at almost every booth. Harper's area displayed a large artwork — and an accompanying hardcover book — by Japanese photographer [Daisuke Yokota](#). "That's the beauty of this fair is that all the organizers have realized that all these movements are intertwined."

Jeremy Sanders, owner of [6 Decades Books](#), which relocated from New York to San Francisco six months ago, specializes in rare artists' books. Sanders offered that he's often asked if Kindles and other devices have impacted sales negatively. His response? It hasn't really hurt the world of art books, which he described as "unknown by 99 percent" of people.

"A lot of us in this business spend a lot of our working days sitting in a room alone with a lot of books and not talking to people so at least once a year it's nice to be in a place where there's a critical mass of people that care," Sanders said.

He said the fair's demographic has remained young in the full 10 years that 6 Decades has been involved. This year, the station also displays art posters from the '60s and '70s.

Downstairs and outside in The Small Press Dome, wherein 20 exhibitors were set up along the wall facing a vibrant collection of work by artist trio Paper Rad, one station that attracted more curiosity than others. [nothingtoodoo press](#), based in the Catskills in New York State, opted for a blanket instead of a table and displayed books anchored with a mountain theme fringe. Big rocks collected upstate held open the books, which supported piles of soil, seeds, or honeycombs. The publisher describes its location as perched "from an old wood boat on the top of a mountain" on the book fair's website.

Canadian artist [Terence Koh](#) exhibited at the fair for a second time. He projected a video of the inside of a cocoon beehive chamber he constructed, and said it's more about offering an experience than selling books. His art practice includes handmade books, zines, photography, sculpture, installation, prints and performance.

Koh's booth featured chairs and, after sitting, he would dribble tree resin into fairgoers' palms, instructing them to breathe in the scent. It offered an unexpected interaction at the book-focused fair, and perhaps a testament to the event's key relationship between print and art of all forms.

"I think it's great everywhere," Koh said of the fair as a whole. "It's like this good vibe around; happy energy around."

BASIC FACTS: Printed Matter's NY Art Book Fair will be held from September 18 to 20, 2015 at [MoMA PS1](#), 22-25 Jackson Ave, Long Island City, NY 11101.

Fair hours are Friday, from 1 to 7 p.m.; Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m.; and Sunday, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Admission is free. www.nyartbookfair.com.

Printed Matter is a non-profit organization devoted to fostering artist books. Closing its 10th Avenue on Saturday, September 19, 2015 they will reopen in Chelsea on 26th Street in October 2015. www.printedmatter.org.

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