

»Best Book Design from all over the World« 2014



The 14 Award Winners

Photography: Ulli Neutzling, ulli neutzling designbuero, Hamburg, Germany (www.neutzling.com)

Unique of its kind in the world, the annual book design competition »Best Book Design from all over the World« has been held in Leipzig since 1963.

Since 1991 the Stiftung Buchkunst in Frankfurt am Main and Leipzig has been responsible for overseeing it. The international competition assesses books which have previously been judged and singled out for merit by specialist panels in their respective countries of origin.

In 2013, the contest celebrated its 50th anniversary, and again, an independent, international jury convened in Leipzig with the task of selecting fourteen outstandingly designed books.

Here are the awarded publications from 567 of the best books from 30 countries: the best of the best!

Award Winners

»Schönste Bücher aus aller Welt« /

»Best Book Design from all over the World« 2014

Jury panel in Leipzig, February 7th and 8th, German National Library

GOLDENE LETTER

Switzerland

Lisa Wenger, Martina Corgnati

Meret Oppenheim. Worte nicht in giftige Buchstaben einwickeln

Das autobiografische Album «Von der Kindheit bis 1943» und unveröffentlichte Briefwechsel

Design: Bonbon, Valeria Bonin und Diego Bontognali, Zürich

Printer: DZA Druckerei zu Altenburg, Altenburg

Publisher: Scheidegger & Spiess, Zürich

ISBN: 978-3-85881-375-6

A weighty folio of substantial size dedicates itself to the letters of Meret Oppenheim. At the heart of the sources under investigation is the facsimile of the album "Von der Kindheit bis 1943" ["From childhood until 1943"], published here for the first time.

From a design point of view the challenge here is to organise a large dismembered body of text in such a way that the reader is impelled to read it by more than just a sense of duty. On the other hand the fact that the display of her own personality was anathema to Oppenheim calls for typographical discretion.

The large-sized typeface does not have wide spacing, yet its pronounced bold-fine style allows the two-column typesetting enough space to breathe. Footnotes are positioned unconventionally, namely in single or double columns of the narrowest width between the main columns. The text is printed in dark grey. The overall effect is one of politeness and organised structure. The idea of altering the background of each page of the album in the facsimile section to multi-coloured pastel shades has been marvellously realised. The change of paper underlines the precious nature of the original documents.

The work is presented unpretentiously yet self-confidently in a cloth-laminated card sleeve on which the elements of its design order can truly resonate.

GOLD MEDAL

Germany

gta D ARCH Ausstellungen, ETH Zürich (ed.)

Buchner Bründler - Bauten

Publisher: gta Verlag – Zürich (Switzerland)

Design Concept: Ludovic Balland, Andreas Bründler, Daniel Buchner – Basel (Switzerland)

Design and Composition: Ludovic Balland und Gregor Schreiter / Ludovic Balland Typography Cabinet – Basel (Switzerland)

Printer: Offsetdruckerei Karl Grammlich GmbH – Pliezhausen

Bookbinder: Lachenmaier GmbH – Reutlingen

ISBN: 978-3-85676-297-1

An architect's monograph which has been solidified into visual poetry. On the book's wide spine we read not only its title, but also the blurb which has been positioned here, using the same sober yet delicate typography which sustains the whole book. The cover already bears witness to the disciplined but extravagant taste of architecture and book. The potential offered by a contents table is exploited to the full, stretching as it does here over 29 pages, connecting the subject groupings which are summarised under particular mottos with interviews and raising what is otherwise generally such an unassuming zone of a book to nothing short of a literary genre.

The book follows a concept of presenting the individual constructions with a minimum of text, and its photographs on matt absorptive paper – mostly monochrome, sometimes with reduced colour saturation – leave behind their impressions thanks to their contemplative staging. Between the projects, moreover, a contrast is created which could hardly be greater: using Bible paper for fold-out pages the construction drafts are tantamount to an invitation to industrial espionage. And for this the book even has a special tool at the ready – a bookmark showing the increments of the various scales. A work of graphical engineering.

SILVER MEDAL

Austria

Helmuth Lethen, IFK

Katalog der Unordnung

20 Jahre IFK

Publisher: Internationales Forschungszentrum Kulturwissenschaften an der Kunstuniversität Linz, Linz

Designer: Christoph Schörkhuber, Linz

Printer: Grasl Fairprint, Bad Vöslau

Rather than "catalogue of disorder", as its title might be translated, this book could just as well have been called "catalogue of order". For this it is indebted to its ironic borrowing of classic Swiss typography with which the macro-structure of this Austrian book is organised. Sans-serif typefaces, its confinement to just three font sizes, an anaxial type-area with margin, a top margin with generous white space and vibrant page headings, detailed contents pages with forewords on grey card.

Yet some things are nevertheless surprising. The book's components are constantly re-sorted in the multiple table of contents. Not until the fifth list does one reach what one would normally expect by way of summary of contents, here consistently bearing the heading: page numbers. Within the book's interior the columns are not fixed, exchanging places with the margin as required.

But what really stands out is the typeface. With hot lead typesetting it would sometimes happen that a character from another typeface would smuggle its way into the line of print. In printer's jargon this was then known as a "printer's pie". Here the typesetting is made up exclusively of such printer's pies, with eight different sans-serif typefaces being wildly jumbled together. And, surprisingly, this apogee of typographical chaos engenders a pleasantly shimmering appearance. Order or disorder is a matter of the perspective from which one regards the complexity of the given circumstances.

SILVER MEDAL

Austria

Lisa Maria Matzi

Schwarze Hunde & Bunte Schafe

Designer: Lisa Maria Matzi, Wien

Printer: Höhere Graphische BLVA, Wien

In this diploma dissertation the author and book designer – one and the same person – presents her family. Starting with the unorthodox shared living arrangements of her parents there unfolds a congenial panoply, introduced with great candour, wit and subjective self-distancing. The unconventionality with which the family members make their appearance in various episodes and quotes matches that of the presentation of texts and images on each page of the book. For this the designation of a new genre might even be conceivable: amusing typography.

Without any hint of drama the reader is made acquainted with various absurdities and quirks, and the author's handling of typography is no less light-footed. Quotes seemingly taken out of context are related by a subliminal typographical coherence, and cross-references and diagrams act as a sober means of increasing the comic effect. Using traditional book materials and with fine finish of printing and binding it serves as a personal monument to a fleeting piece of family theatre.

Just as the boundaries of everyday life are dissolved, so are those of the book's pages. It is wonderful to read and to see just how true to life Dadaistic energy can still be today.

BRONZE MEDAL

Germany

JAK, Hamed Taheri

JAK

Publisher: EXP.edition – Stuttgart

Design: Demian Bern – Stuttgart

Printer: Offsetdruckerei Karl Grammlich GmbH – Pliezhausen

Bookbinder: Lachenmaier GmbH – Reutlingen

ISBN: 978-3-00-039050-0

An absolutely normal book – is what this book is not. On leafing through it, leaves fall out, but not the pages themselves, rather inserts in various forms. Everything not free to move stays put – that which is technically known as a book. And yet its free elements are an intrinsic part of it, no less so than the imagination of its authors and the artist – and no less so than the imagination of its readers and beholders.

Not only between author and reader is this book a document of interactiveness, but also between book and spirit. Of course its particular form remains a special case, but it makes it obvious to us, and tangible too, what the true intention of a printed book is, whether with or without text. It makes

an example of the first maxim to be found within it, a quote from Jean-Paul Sartre: "... Thus unlike a tool, the book is not a means to a particular end: it commends itself as the very purpose of the reader's freedom."

BRONZE MEDAL

Germany

Tomasz Gudzowaty (ed.)

Keiko

Publisher: Hatje Cantz Verlag – Ostfildern

Composition and Design: Marek Mielnicki / veryniceworks – Warschau (Polen)

Editing: Jan Scheffler / prints professional Jan Scheffler & Kerstin Wenzel GbR – Berlin

Printer: Offsetdruckerei Karl Grammlich GmbH – Pliezhausen

Bookbinder: Lachenmaier GmbH – Reutlingen

ISBN: 978-3-7757-3521-6

A new standard for the colour black. What richness of nuance, atmosphere and pictorial quality the alleged absence of colour can evince! This photographic project in book form also refutes generally assumed appearances: black-and-white equals graphic. Its features: cardboard cut-flush binding with black fabric spine; transparent glossy spine embossing; thick cover card with neither inner edge nor standing edge; three-sided colour edging in black around the whole body of the book including the cover edge; loose hinge at the front making for perfect 180 degree opening; black endpapers; bi-colour printing of the richly contrasting photographs; duplex black and black glossy. And what about the pictures? With 75% tonal values or even in the blackest of zones the differentiation of shapes is still just about perceptible; reproduction and printing techniques become signets of the meaning of photographic visual language. The subject matter? The hulk of a shipwreck, rust, dirt, sweat, mud, naked feet, kilotons of weight and muscle power – the deconstruction of steel and bodies. It is seldom that the beholder of a book is tantalised so directly with a single colour spectrum.

BRONZE MEDAL

Germany

Christian Lange

Lange Liste 79 – 97

Publisher: Spector Books – Leipzig

Composition and Design: Christian Lange – München

Print and binding: DZA Druckerei zu Altenburg GmbH – Altenburg

ISBN: 978-3-940064-51-6

Christian Lange's book "Lange Liste" is in fact nothing more than lists of expenses from his mother's housekeeping books, beginning in 1979 during the time of the GDR and extending up until 1997. What makes this book so special is its reduced design. The lists have the typography of long till receipts which bear witness to thrift of glaring dimensions, however. Illustrated with photographs which have been joined to the lists to form a collage, the book has wonderful haptic qualities – its choice of paper, the eschewing of colour and statistical appendix leave a convincing aftertaste of dealing with everyday life under restrictive circumstances.

Using the principles of conceptual art, this insight into a private life lived in German real socialism as well as after its demise ends up becoming a sociologically inspired study; the lists it contains can

practically be read as diaries. Simple, charming and attractive: a superb contemporary historical document.

BRONZE MEDAL

China

Hou Hanru, Ou Ning (chief editor)

Liu Xiaodong's Hotan Project & Xinjiang Research

Publisher: China CITIC Press

Designers: Xiaoma & Chengzi

ISBN 978-7-5086-3821-8

This book is presented in the form of a compilation documenting an extensive art project. Diary entries, sketchbook drawings, photographs, overpainted photographs, large-format plein air painting on canvas right through to a podium discussion and coverage of the exhibition's reception culminate in this self-contained artist's bookbeauty.

The design concept therefore goes way beyond that of a standard documentation: by outlining rather than simply juxtaposing the very different phases of the enterprise it has successfully transformed the process-driven nature of the project into a durable medium – that of a book – thereby alternating between glossy and matt materials, between coarse and fine typography, between colour and monochrome.

You can really be persuaded you are feeling temperature, air and earth, indeed the whole atmosphere of what is taking place on the book's images. Yet the question keeps coming back: is such a thing – imparted atmosphere – actually possible? This book offers an opportunity to examine just this possibility. Perhaps it is through its atmosphere that the reader may gain an inkling of the original subject matter. If this is the case, then the credit belongs to its design concept.

BRONZE MEDAL

Poland

Monika Hanulak

Typografia niepokorna

Publisher: Miasto Stołeczne Warszawa and Pracownia Ilustracji Akademii

Sztuk Pięknych w Warszawie

Designer: Monika Hanulak

ISBN: 978-83-63269-08-1

Much effect with sparing means: three colours only, a simple layout, open and voluminous paper, no jacket. This is a large-format documentation of a workshop held at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts on the subject of an archaic yet anarchic image technique, namely paint sprayed over templates – stencils.

Using the widest possible range of contrasts – black, neon red, mint green – the book's colours have all the hipness of having been dabbed into the book straight from the street. In the first part of the book the reader browses through a series of stencils, enjoying their graphic reduction and their micro-drops trickling away at the edge of the templates. This is followed by generously composed and mostly double-page photographs showing the progression of the workshop from the initial sketching through to the actual spraying of the pictures on the wall of the building. And even in the prepress the photographs are subjected to anarchic treatment, the three aforementioned colours

being dispersed in reverse gradation among the usual colour channels such that they, too, somehow make a stencilled impression.

The book's choice of thick paper, which would also be almost suitable for making silhouettes, is the obvious one to have made. Also the open spine in which the stitching and curvature of the plies are clearly visible is nothing less than one would expect: this jacket-less book has turned out as a finished example of something provisional, just as the provisional nature of stencil technique itself is the perfect graphic means.

HONORARY APPRECIATION

Iran

Mohammad Reza Bayrami

Hello Stone (Sange Salam)

Publisher: Asr-e Dastan

Designer: Majid Zare

Illustrator: Amir Maftoon

ISBN: 978-600-6970-06-6

How does this paperback from Iran manage to draw attention to itself without doing so conspicuously? Its two-colour jacket illustration appears as a pictorial summary of its fable. Simple, linear strokes in entwined composition achieve a strong build-up of suspense. Contrasts are increased through the relief of lacquered black forms. Curiosity is aroused on picking up the book and being beckoned in to read by the continuation of the drawing on unusually punched jacket flaps.

An attractive touch is to be found in information about the author being placed ahead of the inner title, namely on curtailed pages using brownish paper. The text, in calligraphic Persian script, is rendered in a blackish brown on particularly yellowy paper, airily set with a double measure of indentation. The overall impression is subtle and literary, the muted colour scheme congenial and mysterious at the same time.

HONORARY APPRECIATION

The Netherlands

Ben IJpma, Ben van Melick

Ik ben een gemankeerde saxofonist. Lucebert & jazz

Publisher: Huis Clos – Rimburch/Amsterdam

Designer: Piet Gerards Ontwerpers

ISBN: 978-90-79020-21-8

Bold serif-emphasised characters take up their due space on the surface of the slipcase in self-confident and matter-of-fact manner. So big are they that the words do not fit on a single page, thus without further ado one finds oneself holding the whole object and rotating it. But where is the entrance? The cardboard used for the slipcase, skilfully put together from a single piece, has at least two seams, so even the act of taking out the book is itself an experience.

A second experience follows immediately, for almost of its own accord the rear part of the jacket falls through the open spine and into the hand. Within this flap two CDs have been elegantly fixed with rubber foam points. These serve as a complement to the subject matter of this special book: the interconnections between poetry and jazz within the pictorial and lyrical work of the Dutchman Lucebert.

Unruffled typography without right-hand justification, clear-cut changes of paper and typeface, discreet pagination, breezy and stable treatment of images together with an extensive index turn this thematic compendium into a functional joy.

HONORARY APPRECIATION

Norway

Red. Audun Lindholm

Som fra mange ulike verdener

Om Ole Robert Sundes forfatterskap

Publisher: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag AS

Designer: Andreas Töpfer

Printer: TBB, a.s

Bookbinder: TBB, a.s

ISBN: 978-82-05-42995-6

A collection of essays is not always the most gratifying assignment for a book designer. Authors often have their own annotation style, the footnotes are short or long, there is a mixture of more extended paragraph texts with a motto here and a few illustrations there. Sections are either numbered or have subheads or neither, there may be enumerations, sometimes extensive citations need to be indented, sometimes they are italicised within the main body of text.

Such is the case in this collection of contributions on the work of the Norwegian writer Ole Robert Sundes. The typographer's approach to these editorial necessities is an assertive one. Using a classically reliable type-area he allows the annotations to overlap as necessary with the type-area as marginal notes placed at roughly the same height as the corresponding text; the titles of the cited authors' books are in italics with underlining. From the point of view of orthodox teaching such examples would not always have been regarded as evidence of typographical sensitivity. Yet here they contribute to a vitality which is more than merely formal. Chapter beginnings are generously presented with abstract and symbolic graphics as if they were individual title pages.

The overall care taken in the finish of the book extends to the understated embossing of the lines on the paperback's title, the allure of its combination of grey and orange leaving its mark from the boldly coloured endpapers right through into the interior of the book.

HONORARY APPRECIATION

China

Organizing Committee of "The Beauty of Books in China" of Shanghai Press and Publication Administration

The Beauty of Books in China 2010-2012

Publisher: Shanghai People's Fine Arts Publishing House

Designers: Liu Xiaoxiang, Liu Xiaoxiang Studio

Photographer: Ding Guoxing, Liu Xiaoxiang Studio

ISBN 978-7-5322-8554-9

This corpulent, large quarto volume about fine books from China has 294 pages, which given its weight and its thin paper may seem puzzling. And indeed there is much more paper involved, since as a result of a modern interpretation of French fold – folded sheets whose open pages are stitched along the middle and the folds of which point outwards – there are over 240 visible pages which are

not counted. This can be most clearly verified by means of the didactic banderole placed around the slipcase, itself open on both sides.

With its presentation of 60 books this is a captivating concept: on the left-hand page the book's exterior, on the right the respective jury text and technical data. Then one deliberately opens up a fold-out section revealing across the width of four successive pages sensitively photographed and perfectly printed images which have been intuitively arranged in a soothing yet exciting fashion. The design is so congenial to the beholder that there is a sense of actually holding the depicted books themselves.

Such elaborate finish calls for unhurried handling – this is not a book for just flicking through. This reduced tempo is something to be thankful for, since it results in the exquisiteness of the whole design – both that of the 60 beautiful books and of the catalogue itself – being shown off to wonderful advantage.

HONORARY APPRECIATION

Japan

Yuan Okada

tottorich

Publisher: Doyo Bijutsusha Shuppan Hanbai

Designer: Masahiko Nagasawa

Printer: Morimoto Print Co., Ltd.

Bookbinder: Morimoto Print Co., Ltd.

Price: ¥2,100

ISBN: 978-4-8120-1955-9

Minimalism is not a synonym for asceticism. At any rate the features of this quietly-spoken Japanese poetry volume are more elaborate than might be apparent at first glance. The jacket in grey, matt paper with few lines and forms is printed in three colours. The covering of this slim paperback with rounded spine resorts to bluish-grey paper, and its banderole is printed with extensive use of yet another nuance of grey.

Yellow endpapers and a yellow headband shine like bright light through a grey sky. And before the vertical Japanese verses like hanging chains cast spells of airy veils onto the pages there are title lines printed in grey on a specially glued paper of individual quality – and with an ornamental stroke using watermark technique.

Not being able to read Japanese need not be a hindrance to an aesthetic appreciation of its typography. In fact then it is even more noticeable that there are no gaps on the surface of the paper, but rather a field of serene nuances.

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JURY PANEL

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Maren Katrin Poppe (production manager, publishing director | Germany)
Prem Krishnamurthy (graphic designer, curator | U.S.A)
Manja Hellpap (graphic designer, bookseller, lecturer | Germany)
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