



colophon

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A colophon is the text found at the end of a book, manuscript or portfolio that contains information relative to its production and design. In early manuscripts this included the title of the book, the scribe's name, where it was transcribed. The toils of transcription are often evidenced in marginalia, such as "let the copyist be permitted to put an end to his labour" and "thank God, it will soon be dark" (Diringer 1967:33) and the colophon provided a space of personal reflection for the scribe, often containing warnings, blessings and curses directed at those who sought to alter texts in any way. The colophon came to mark a labour's end and express the scribe's relief and desire for reward (De Hamel 1992:44).

The shift in the colophon from the personal notation to that of the publisher's monogram and design details (typeface, font size, ink, paper, edition number) has meant a shift in voice. No longer speaking for the scribe, the colophon is the self-conscious reflection of the book on itself and is a quintessential oxymoron. Derived from the Greek word for summit, it is often a structural afterthought, competing with the contents and frontispieces for authority. It is at once the book's psyche, reflecting on its identity, its ontology, its existential crisis: and simultaneously the reducer of the idiosyncratic and imaginative body of text to a list of finite, prosaic information.

The colophon is the denouement, following the climax or the explicit. It is the moment of finality, the text to end all text and the end of ends. In this manner, it is analogous to the Revelation 10:10 tract that describes St John eating the book, sweet in his mouth and bitter in his belly. A symbol of the apocalypse, the text (and word) is consumed. Of course in the process of reading the text is metaphorically consumed and digested as it becomes understood and internalised, but it is this dysphagia, St John's difficulty in swallowing the text, that is symbolically held within the colophon. Far from being a tonic, the colophon reminds us that the text is purely a construction -- an invention, and, as a result begins a slow, cannibalistic process of self-consumption.

This body of work brings together three great knowledge systems, the Medieval Rose window, Diderot's Enlightenment Encyclopédie, and the consummate contemporary reference -- the Google search engine. Initially intended as a translation of Ephraïm Chambers' Cyclopaedia, Diderot and d'Alembert's Encyclopédie (1751-66) became a publication instrumental in determining contemporary philosophical and political thought in the 18th century. Comprised of 35 volumes, 71 818 articles and 3129 illustrations, the Encyclopédie structured its contents according to the 'system of human knowledge', broken into three branches: Memory (history), Reason (philosophy) and Imagination (poetry). In its comprehensive taxonomy, the Encyclopédie denied the hierarchical divisions between manual/skilled labour and state/church, upsetting a rigidly ordered social system and opening the pathway to civil revolution. It is this dichotomy between reason and revolution within bodies of knowledge and their reception that is of interest to this visual body of work.

The project is divided into four conceptual groupings: the contents, the index, the library and the colophon. 'Encyclopaedia' literally translates as a 'circle of knowledge' and thus the choice of circular format is as much a visual play on this as it is a direct reference to particular rose windows in French Cathedrals. The prints are mirrored by textual pieces, this visual pun 'reflecting' both on the symmetrical construction of the prints and on the binary structure on which many knowledge systems are based.

'The contents' began with a series of three linocuts. In a temporal conflation, the 'System of Human Knowledge', was subjected to a Google image search. The inevitably arbitrary results were then translated into repetitive images in Photoshop, using rose windows as templates. The interpretation of these images as linocut, a largely imprecise medium, resulted in certain slippages and a degree of mis-translation. The prints display an apparent internal

logic combined with random image selection, alluding to the impossibility of categorising all human knowledge when meaning is contingent and codes of textual and visual representation are fluid. The linocuts are paired with mirrors, deep sandblasted with numerical information relating to possible hits when conducting the image searches, and with hypertext symbols that denote reference points.

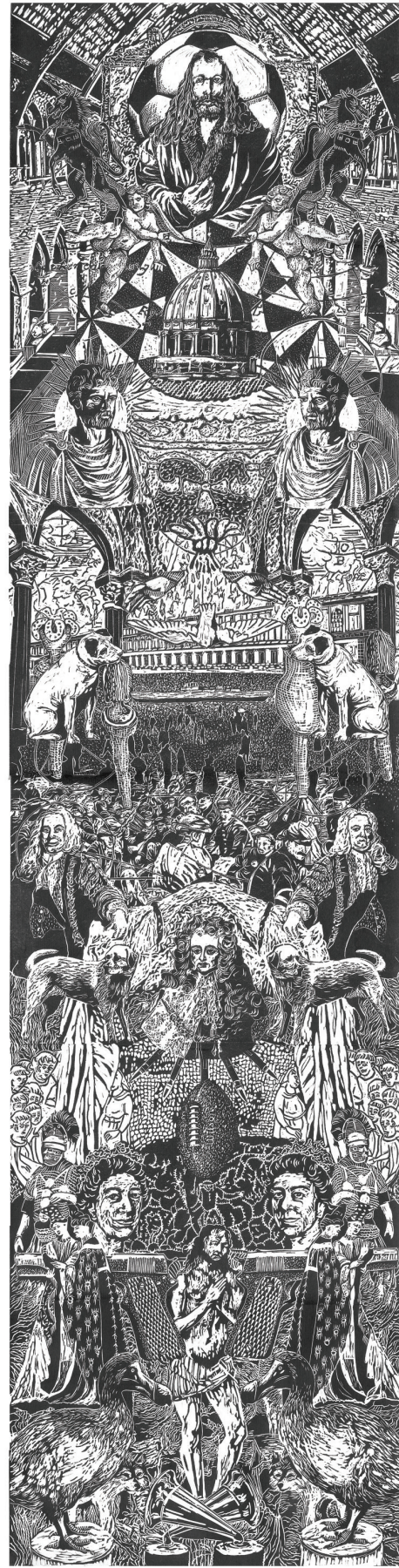
A similar process has been deployed in the construction of the etching images. Phrases from encyclopaedic entries on memory, reason and imagination taken from The New Universal Encyclopedia have been entered as image searches. Frequently hyperlinks were followed so that the final selection of images was quite a few degrees from the point of departure. The etchings are paired with laser-cut text pieces based on the encyclopaedic entries where the leading has been contracted to the point that the type becomes illegible and the reference inaccessible.

The series of digital prints introduce a further layer in the relay between reference, text and image. Electron microscope images made of the materials used in the first print series: lino, ink and paper were translated into formats based on wooden church grilles. In a final corruption of the source, these prints have been reduced to post-script errors -- the last in a cycle of the untranslatable -- and these errors produced as etchings.

'The library' includes two wooden benches, reminiscent of pews, cabinets and arks. The seats of the benches are each punctured with three trefoils, allowing visual access to the fluorescent, white interiors that contain collections of various sorts. Diderot's Desire contains 1000 index cards with URLs for 1000 websites referencing Diderot. Catherine's Purchase contains 328 pieces of chalk inscribed with the Dewey decimal numbers for all the encyclopaedias in the University of Cape Town collection. The title sites 'the library of the Enlightenment' - the purchase by Catherine the Great of Diderot's

The Knowledge Chambers
2007
sizes variable
Compendium of the exhibition

References:
De Hamel, C. 1992. Medieval craftsmen: scribes and illuminators. University of Toronto Press: Toronto.
Diringer, D. 1967. The illuminated book: its history and production. Praeger: New York.



2904 books used as reference in the creation of the Encyclopédie.

Two 'lancet windows' form the outer panels of the index. The works resemble leaded windows and the design is made up of a's and z's derived directly from the pages of the Encyclopédie. These are iconophors - a specific form of illustration emerging in late 17th French dictionaries in which the objects represented start with the given letter. The central icon of AAC is Newton's prism, heralding the beginning of the Enlightenment, whereas -ZYM contains an image of the guillotine, signalling its end. The large chromed steel and mirror 'rose window' is based on one from Lausanne Cathedral. Titled Imago Mundi, it refers to the medieval system that sought to represent everything of the known world within a geometric order. It is comprised of 25 units, echoing the 25 pieces that make up the exhibition and giving the exhibition its own internal logic. Imago Mundi is the 25th piece and its central quatrefoil is a small version of itself. This central element provides clues as to reference and its loss both in the small mirror textual elements (html code for hyperlinks) and the 12 compasses (which are directionless). The six laser-cut mirror sections are each comprised of images extracted from the etchings and linocuts, whereas the steel sections are comprised of text taken from websites referenced and from Diderot's entry on the encyclopaedia itself.

'The colophon' is the final chapter in The Knowledge Chambers and consists of a long panel wherein the composition is based on a composite of Albrecht Dürer's wood engraving series Apocalypsis cum figuris. 36 images derived from a Wikipedia search chain, beginning with apocalypse and ending with book, were then applied to the composition and rendered in linocut. The panel is flanked by a cut-out steel text, and a print taken from the corroded steel of the oxymoronic Revelations 10:10 that describes St John eating the book: "his mouth was sweet as honey, but his belly was bitter".

A footnote provides empirical evidence in order to support theoretical arguments, and is proof of an appropriate and academic research methodology.

Apocalypse - Dürer - Alte Pinakothek - The Baptism of Christ - Madaba Map - Saint Peter's Basilica, mosaic - Saint Peter's Basilica - Castel Sant'Angelo - Haidrian - Roman legion - military - weapon -

missile - projectile - spheroid - Euclid - frontispiece - Vyacheslav Ivanov - Konstantin Somov - Sergei Rachmaninoff - Victor talking machine company - nipper - dog - wolf - dodo - Oxford University Museum of Natural History - table of natural history - Cyclopaedia - George II - Robert Warpole - United kingdom - coat of arms - Elizabeth II - Marriage Duc de Berry - illuminated manuscripts of St Bernard - book

Revelation 10: 10
 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. And I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it my stomach was made bitter. I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It tasted as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I had eaten it, my stomach turned sour. I took the little book from the Angel's hand and it was sweet honey in my mouth, but when I swallowed, my stomach curdled. So I took the little book from the angel's hand and ate and swallowed it; it was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but once I had swallowed it, my stomach was embittered. I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and in my mouth it was sweet as honey; and when I had eaten it, my stomach was made bitter. So I took the small scroll from the hand of the angel, and I ate it! It was sweet in my mouth, but when I swallowed it, it turned sour in my stomach. I took the little scroll from the hand of the angel and ate it. The taste was as sweet as honey, but my stomach turned sour. So I took the small scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. In my mouth it tasted sweet as honey, but after I ate it, it was sour in my stomach. And I took the little scroll out of the hand of the messenger, and did eat it up, and it was in my mouth as honey - sweet, and when I did eat it - my belly was made bitter; And I took the little book out of the hand of the angel, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth as honey, sweet; and when I had eaten it my belly was made bitter. Then I took it from the angel's hand and ate it. It was sweet as honey in my mouth, but it made my stomach sour after I had eaten it. Then I took the little scroll from the angel's hand and ate it. It was as sweet as honey in my mouth, but when I ate it, my stomach became bitter. And I took the book of the angel's hand, and devoured it, and it was in my mouth as sweet [as] honey; and when I had devoured it, my womb was bitter. from the angel's hand and ate it. It was sweet like honey in my mouth. But when I

'The colophon':

http://en
 2008
 linocut
 120cm x 30 cm.

Oxymoron i)
 2008
 iron oxide on paper
 60cm diameter

Oxymoron ii)
 2008
 corroded laser-cut steel
 60cm diameter

