

# CODEX POLARIS TEXTS

A collection of texts about books from  
**Denmark · Finland**  
**Iceland · Norway · Sweden**  
with Faroe and Åland Islands

**Thinking metaphorically with the body**  
**Åse Eg Jørgensen**

CODEX ■ POLARIS

## THINKING METAPHORICALLY WITH THE BODY

I have a grey mother of pearl button, which is like a gentle, grey summer's day with a quiet, continuous rain. It has belonged to me for many, many years.

It represents a way of using the body – of thinking metaphorically with the body – which encapsulates my method of collecting. The body can be thought of as a measuring instrument for our efforts. Although virtual and conceptually based ideas should be absorbed – as a minimum – via the visual or auditory senses in order for them to be fully considered. It is necessary to hear, see or feel words for them to become a text or an idea. The body is a (sensory) tool for the recognition of books and objects that have it. *It is not verbally defined, but is connected to that feeling of resonance in the body, and sometimes it is enough that the thing has something in the manner of it.*

There are colours and shapes that vibrate against the eye, surfaces and materials that give deep satisfaction to let one's hand stroke and fingertips read, to press the cheeks against and to let one's lips slide over. Fragrances. Sometimes stench. The collection is read with the eyes and the hands. That a book sits well in the hands is a quality.

My collection has a very intuitive nature. I collect – or save – for a non-existent cabinet of rarities where all things are unique, all objects are a treasure. Therefore I do not (so far) collect entire series, and even if I collected a series, and there might be gaps in the series, there would be no gaps in my collection – on the other hand, there is nothing to prevent there being an entire series of something in my collection.

The collection could easily contain things other than books, and does – or books are on an equal footing with other collected or accumulated objects.

The collection is not a collection in the sense that it is collected. Things are simply grouped here and there, in my home and in the office, so that relationships emerge between them. Things that are grouped together can change their groupings and form new relationships. It is one of the great pleasures: letting books and things interact and form pairs or group. New relationships can be constantly created.

Sometimes things might be residing in the office when I am looking for them at home, and vice versa.

Sometimes they disappear for several months and suddenly pop up again – and can then be seen in a new light.

As a graphic designer I layout and place and steer books through production, so the collection is also a reference frame for my work.

I have always found great satisfaction in handicrafts, for example, knitting and embroidery – and the material consciousness that is created through this physical experience is continued over into the graphic work. My first experience with editing and graphic work was the artists' journal *Pist Protta* (started 1981). At that time, layout and printing was analogue, and we (Jesper Fabricius, Jesper Rasmussen, Claus Egemose and the present author) printed the first issue ourselves at Huset in Aarhus. We have since progressed from analogue to digital design and production – it was a fantastic thing, to be able to make our own typesetting and came closer to having control over the means of production.

My collection thus becomes incredibly mixed. There are some that are art works, for example, *Rødmand* [Red man] by Tal R, 1998, which is a collection of drawings and collages printed in shades of red, and some *that bring art works to mind*, such as *Svinedrengen* [The Swineherd] by Hakon Mielche, 1972, which through the use of red and the nature of the images – and its similarity to Jonathan Meese and Tal R's installation MOR at the National Gallery of Denmark, 2006 – has an affinity with *Rødmand*.

Two books, which both make use of the collage technique and both have a religious poetry content: In one case – *Footnotes and Headlines* by Sister Corita, 1967 – a “play – pray”-book with texts assembled from posters and magazines, printed in black and special colours. The other book – *Salmos* by Pedro Reyes, 2002 – is a sequence of book references, photos and clippings that fall into four chapters, all textually and pictorially dealing with Christianity. It is printed in 4-colours with coloured, semi-transparent paper sheets as separators for each chapter.

And two examples of folding books: Anna Fro Vodder's *Novelty Shape Bisquit*, 2004, where two folded sequences are folded into a snaking accordion fold to form a sculptural book-object and *Udflugter med bil* [Journeys by car] by Åse Eg Jørgensen, 2006, which is composed of nine fold-out pages of different lengths (up to 90 cm), each representing a journey to a location. The book becomes an unmanageable entity, where the reader's interaction with the book in the form of folding-out and folding-in are co-determinant on the images that are read. *Pist Protta* No. 63, 2009, consists of five individual and independent booklets, bound inside the same cover. Each booklet has its own front and back cover, and thus the shared cover forms five folds, one for each booklet. With this structure and binding the publication becomes labyrinthine and difficult to navigate and clearly takes on the character of an art work: If the content was reproduced in another form, for example, five separate booklets or five chapters in a book, it would simply not be the same work.

Many issues of *Pist Protta* also contain original material, linocuts or woodcuts, on one occasion a photograph which was attached with photo corners, and another time a piece of chewing gum that was meant to glue two pages together, hand-paintings, sewing, recordings, attachments – taken together there is a great deal of handicraft associated with this project, and the individual issues must be experienced with the body in a I:I relation. Exactly like my collection.

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