



MATERIAL MEETS METAPHOR

A HALF CENTURY OF BOOK ART BY RICHARD MINSKY

©2010 Yale University and Richard Minsky

Cover: Detail of *The Crisis of Democracy*, 1980

MATERIAL MEETS METAPHOR:
A HALF CENTURY OF BOOK ART BY RICHARD MINSKY

An exhibition at the
Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library
William H. Wright Special Collections Exhibit Area
Yale University
August 2 – November 29, 2010

Curator: Jae Jennifer Rossman, Assistant Director for Special Collections

With assistance from
Mia D'Avanza, 2009 Kress Fellow in Art Librarianship
Molly Dotson, 2010 Kress Fellow in Art Librarianship



Richard Minsky has been making and remaking artists' books and related encampments for fifty years. His involvement parallels the lifespan of book art's late-twentieth century regeneration and efflorescence, and suggests future directions. Indeed, Minsky deserves master gardener status as sower and nurturer of the (first) Center for Book Arts (CBA) in New York City. CBA has served as a book art hub since it opened in 1974, recognized as a destination for every artist of note in the U.S. and beyond.

Minsky is best known for sculptural bookworks in which he alters an existing or "found" book. Passionate about social justice and informed by his studies in economics, his metaphorical transmutations may appear amusing or even shocking, thus instigating sustained consideration by the viewer. Time and reflection reveal how a particular title, transmuted through Minsky's ministrations, embodies the ramifications of political maneuvers or social inequalities. A centerpiece of the exhibition is Minsky's magnum opus, the Bill of Rights series, which presents a theatrical tutorial on contemporary challenges to each of the first ten Amendments.

The work and archive material in "Material Meets Metaphor: A Half Century of Book Art by Richard Minsky," on view at Yale University's Robert B. Haas Family Arts Library, provides an unprecedented opportunity to study these fantastical bookish voyageurs. In addition, the exhibition explores Minsky's other passions, as an experimental printer whose publications include works by other artists and writers, and as a collector and scholar of American decorated publishers' bindings. From past to present to future, visitors will also view experimental works by Minsky the technophile, ever curious to integrate cutting edge technology into the book's material and metaphors.

Betty Bright

Author, No Longer Innocent: Book Art in America 1960-1980



The Bill of Rights Series

Since 1993 Minsky has been creating works based on The Bill of Rights. He created several unique works in response to individual Amendments, then decided to create an editioned set of ten works, each responding to one Amendment. The edition was originally scheduled to consist of 25 sets, but only nine have been produced. For eight of the pieces, Minsky chose an already published book that somehow reflected the idea of one of the Amendments. For the Eighth and Tenth Amendments he reprinted texts specifically for this edition. Then he executed a “material meets metaphor” binding on each to further enhance his statement. Minsky included the text of each Amendment as part of the piece.

In the installation photo above, The Bill of Rights set occupies the large cabinet to the right.

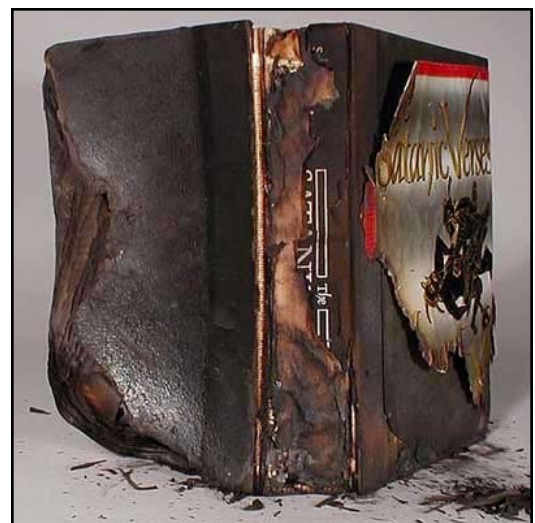


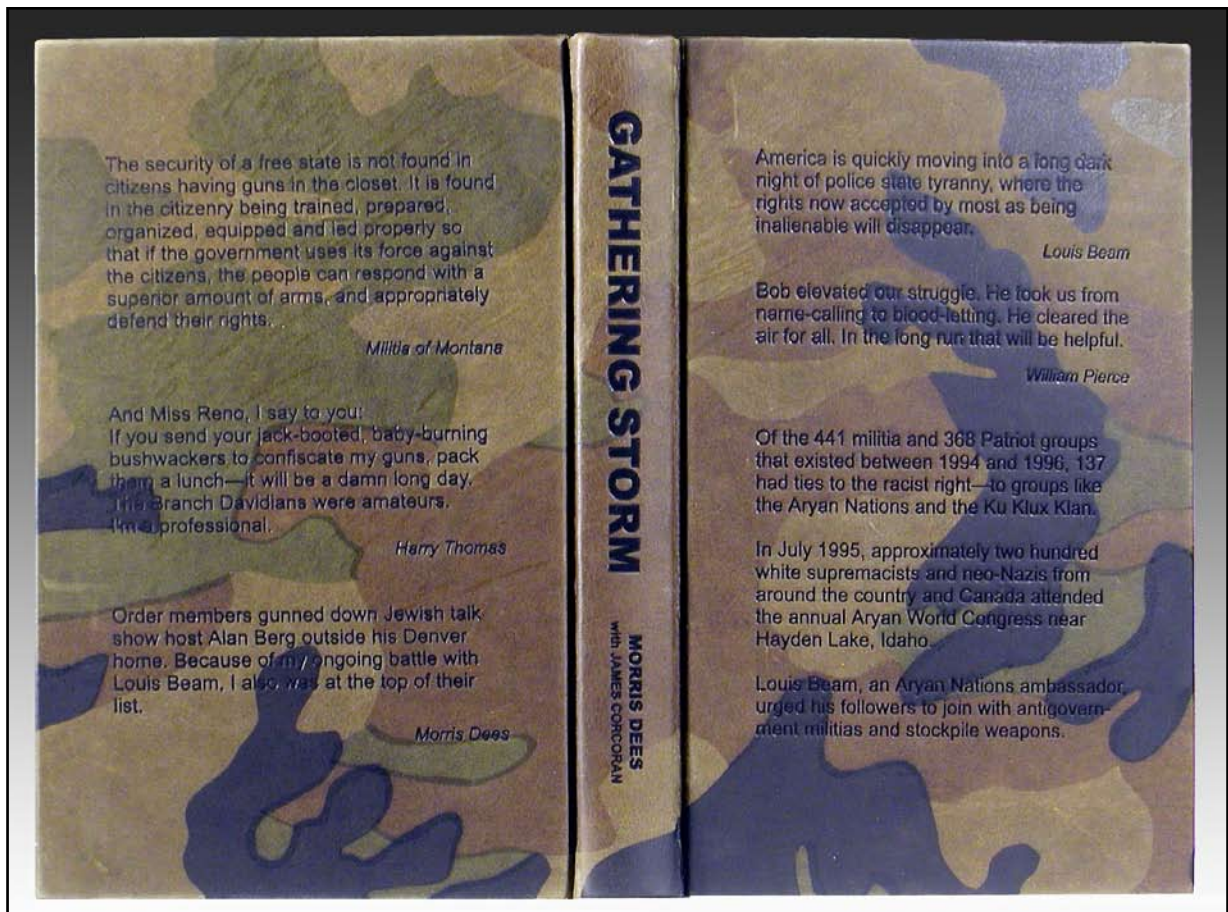
The First Amendment
Reliquary for the Ashes of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.

Upon publication the author lost the freedoms of Press, Religion, Speech and Assembly in some countries. The Fatwah issued on Rushdie, and the book-burnings made headlines around the world. The fact that an ancient form of censorship exists in the 21st century warrants the inclusion of this book in the series. This is a sealed book-shaped reliquary containing the burned book. To the right is the book after burning, before being placed in the reliquary.

Ink-jet on paper laminated to binder's board, with polyurethane and UV filter coatings, stained glass, 23K gold leaf, felt covered wood base with 23K gold stamped text of The First Amendment.





The Second Amendment
Gathering Storm: America's Militia Threat
by Morris Dees with James Corcoran

A well regulated militia, being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed.



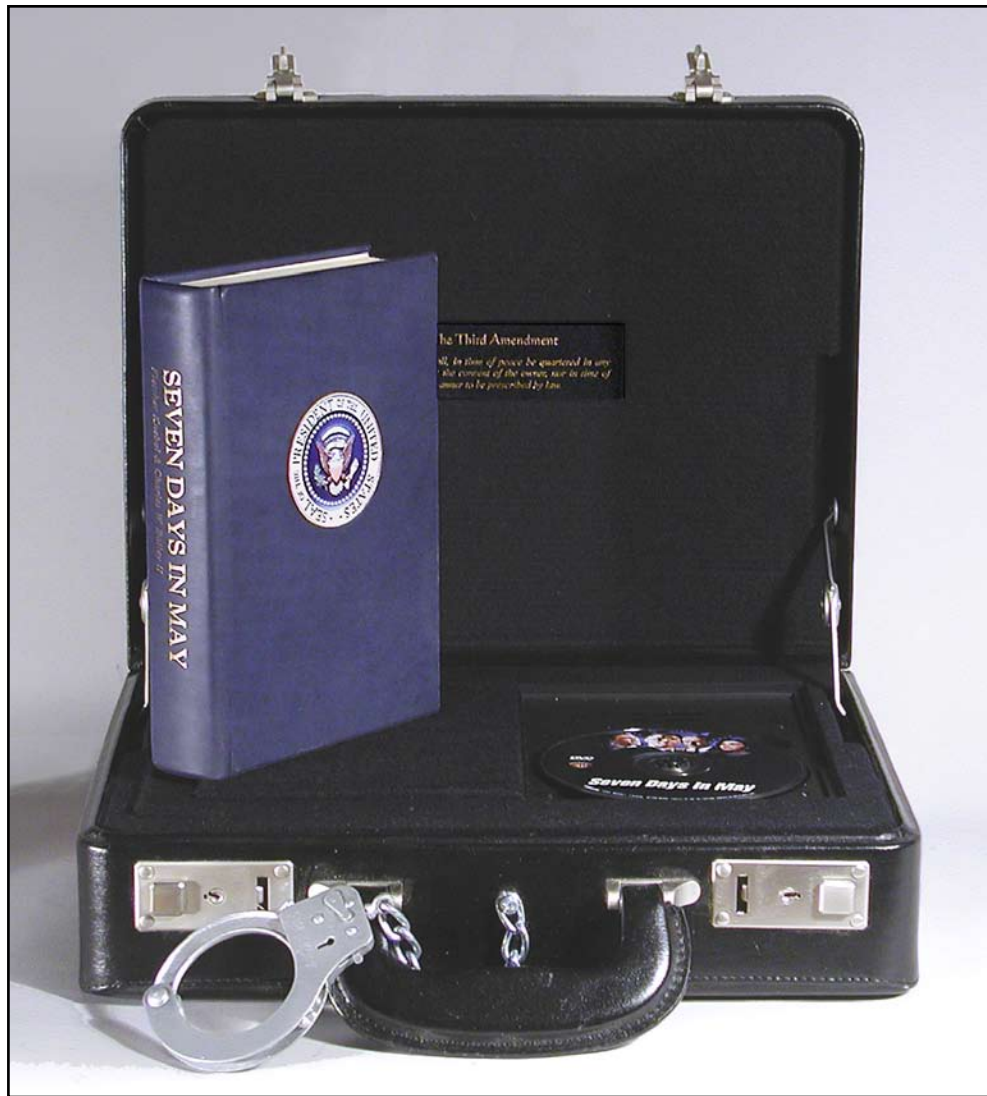
Morris Dees is the Founder and Chief Trial Attorney of the Southern Poverty Law Center. This book documents the hate group roots of the militia movement. Dees is intimately familiar with the players. Militia spokesman and former Ku Klux Klan Grand Dragon Louis Beam was prosecuted by Dees when he led the KKK intimidation of Vietnamese fishermen in Texas. Dees' office was firebombed, and his commitment to freedom has made him a target of racist assassins. The front endpaper (detail,

left: inkjet and gold leaf on Rives BFK) is an image of the author as a target and saint. The halo is gold leaf, as in medieval and Renaissance icons.

The Militia movement in the United States expanded dramatically in the mid 1990's. Spurred by the Randy Weaver incident at Ruby Ridge and the catastrophe at Waco, fear of government abuse led to militia organizations in every State. Many militias then broke into small cells of about five members, a strategy followed by the Al Qaeda network.

The binding is camouflage leather, foil stamped in black with quotes from the text on the front and back covers. The protective enclosure is camouflage cotton cloth with the text of the second amendment printed inkjet on khaki cloth.





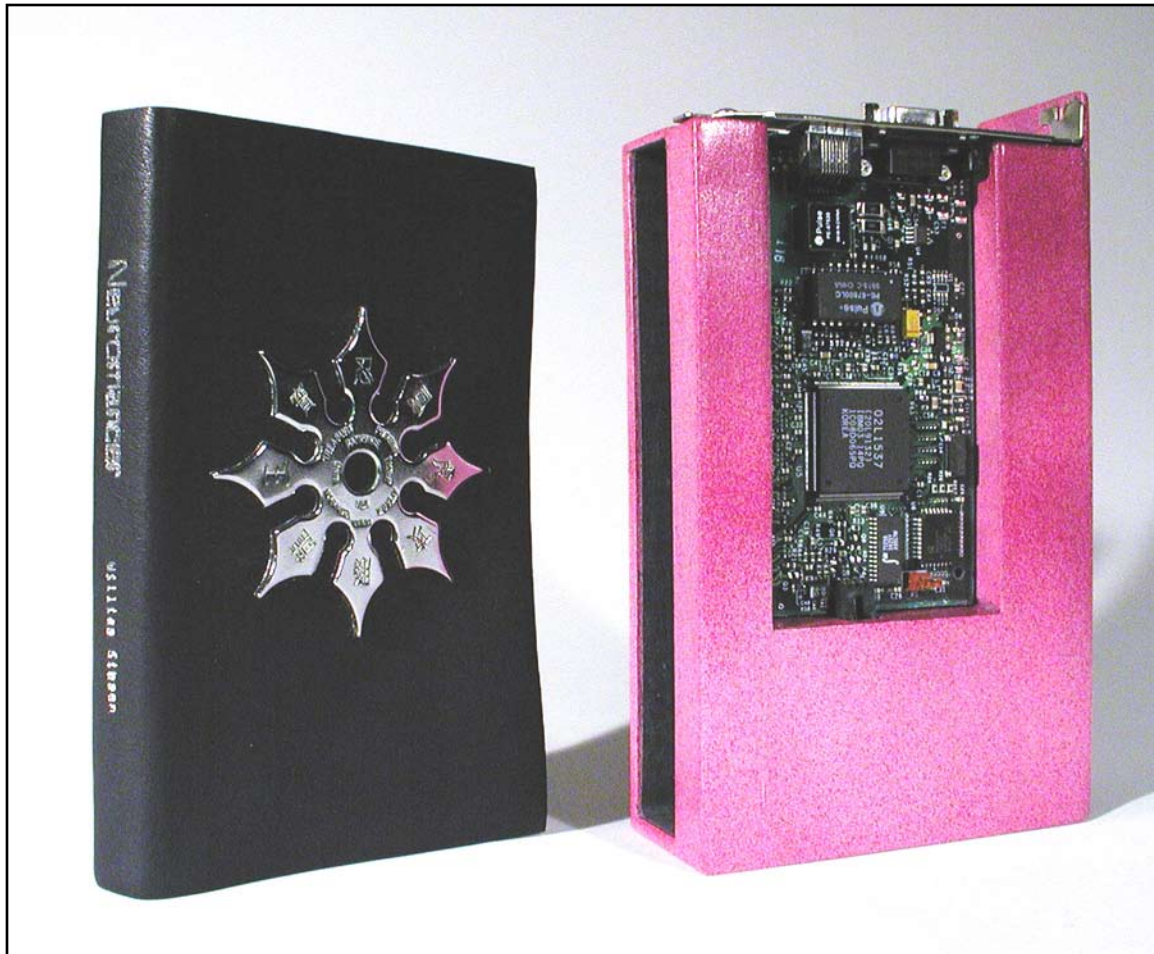
The Third Amendment
Seven Days in May
 by Fletcher Knebel and Charles W. Bailey
 with a dvd of the film starring Burt Lancaster and Kirk Douglas
 directed by John Frankenheimer; screenplay by Rod Serling

No soldier shall, in time of peace be quartered in any house, without the consent of the owner; nor in time of war, but in a manner to be prescribed by law.

The Third Amendment sets a clear boundary on military authority. In this classic story the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is seeking to quarter himself in The White House. The case represents the one carried by the Presidential attaché that holds the code to authorize a nuclear strike.

The text of the third amendment is stamped in 23k gold on black board, in a recessed panel inside the case cover. The book is bound in blue calf with 23k gold title on spine. Inlaid seal is lacquered inkjet on Rives BFK mounted on 2-ply museum board. Endpapers are blue Canson Mi-Teintes.





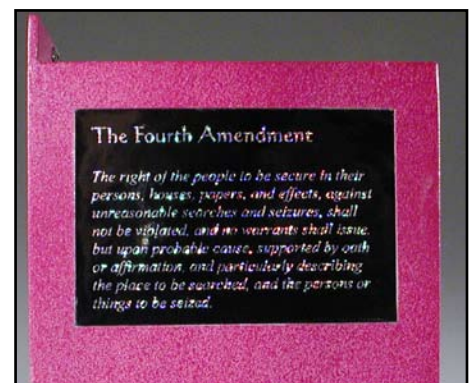
The Fourth Amendment
Neuromancer
 by William Gibson

The right of the people to be secure in their persons, houses, papers, and effects, against unreasonable searches and seizures, shall not be violated, and no warrants shall issue, but upon probable cause, supported by oath or affirmation, and particularly describing the place to be searched, and the persons or things to be seized.

The novel that introduced us to Cyberspace. Every day there are more issues about government searches of our emails, web habits, and hard drives. You can read about the implications at The Electronic Frontier Foundation.

The book was originally issued as a paperback in 1984 and received major awards for science fiction writing. The binding is in limp black leather, to preserve the soft feel of the paperback. A shuriken (Ninja throwing star) is on the cover, and is an image that appears throughout the text. The pink slipcase has the text of the fourth amendment hot-stamped in hologram foil on one side. The hologram makes the text appear as colored code from a distance.

On the other side of the case (Case is also the name of the protagonist) is an embedded Network Interface Card. In the novel, Case jacks into the cyberspace network through a neural interface.





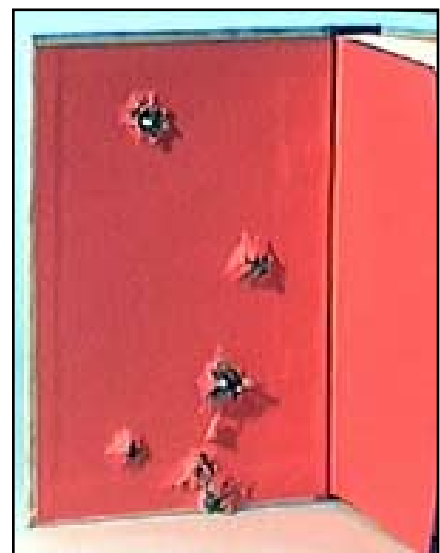
The Fifth Amendment
BRANCHES
 by Mitch Cullin
 illustrated by Ryuzo Kikushima

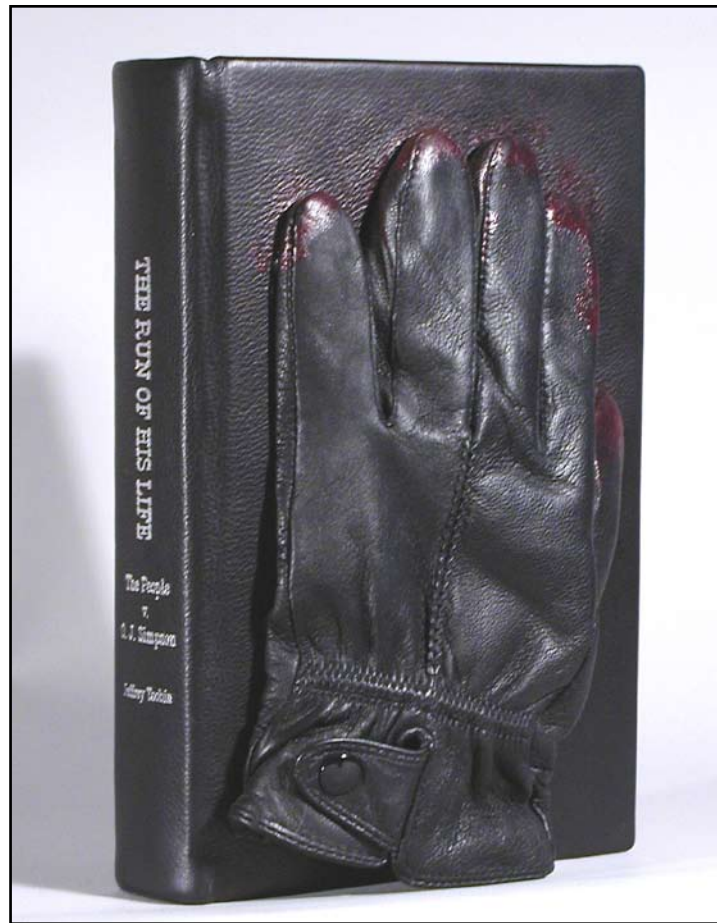
No person shall be held to answer for a capital, or otherwise infamous crime, unless on a presentment or indictment of a grand jury, except in cases arising in the land or naval forces, or in the militia, when in actual service in time of war or public danger; nor shall any person be subject for the same offense to be twice put in jeopardy of life or limb; nor shall be compelled in any criminal case to be a witness against himself, nor be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law; nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation.

Written in the first person as the story of a Sheriff in Texas who is judge, jury and executioner.

Each copy of the book has 9mm bullet holes shot through the cover, a Sheriff badge, and the title is affixed as a name badge. This edition of *Branches* includes color prints of the 16 illustrations, tipped in over the black and white reproductions in the book.

The box is made of the same uniform fabric as the book, with a black leather holster bearing the foil stamped text of The Fifth Amendment sewn to the cover.





The Sixth Amendment
The Run of His Life: The People v. O. J. Simpson
 by Jeffrey Toobin

In all criminal prosecutions, the accused shall enjoy the right to a speedy and public trial, by an impartial jury of the state and district wherein the crime shall have been committed, which district shall have been previously ascertained by law, and to be informed of the nature and cause of the accusation; to be confronted with the witnesses against him; to have compulsory process for obtaining witnesses in his favor, and to have the assistance of counsel for his defense.

This was the most public trial in history, with many questions about the jury, witnesses and defense counsel. It occupied the television networks day and night. Before the trial began, the author wrote in *The New Yorker* that the defense would play the “race card” and claim Mark Fuhrman was a racist who was framing Simpson because he was black.

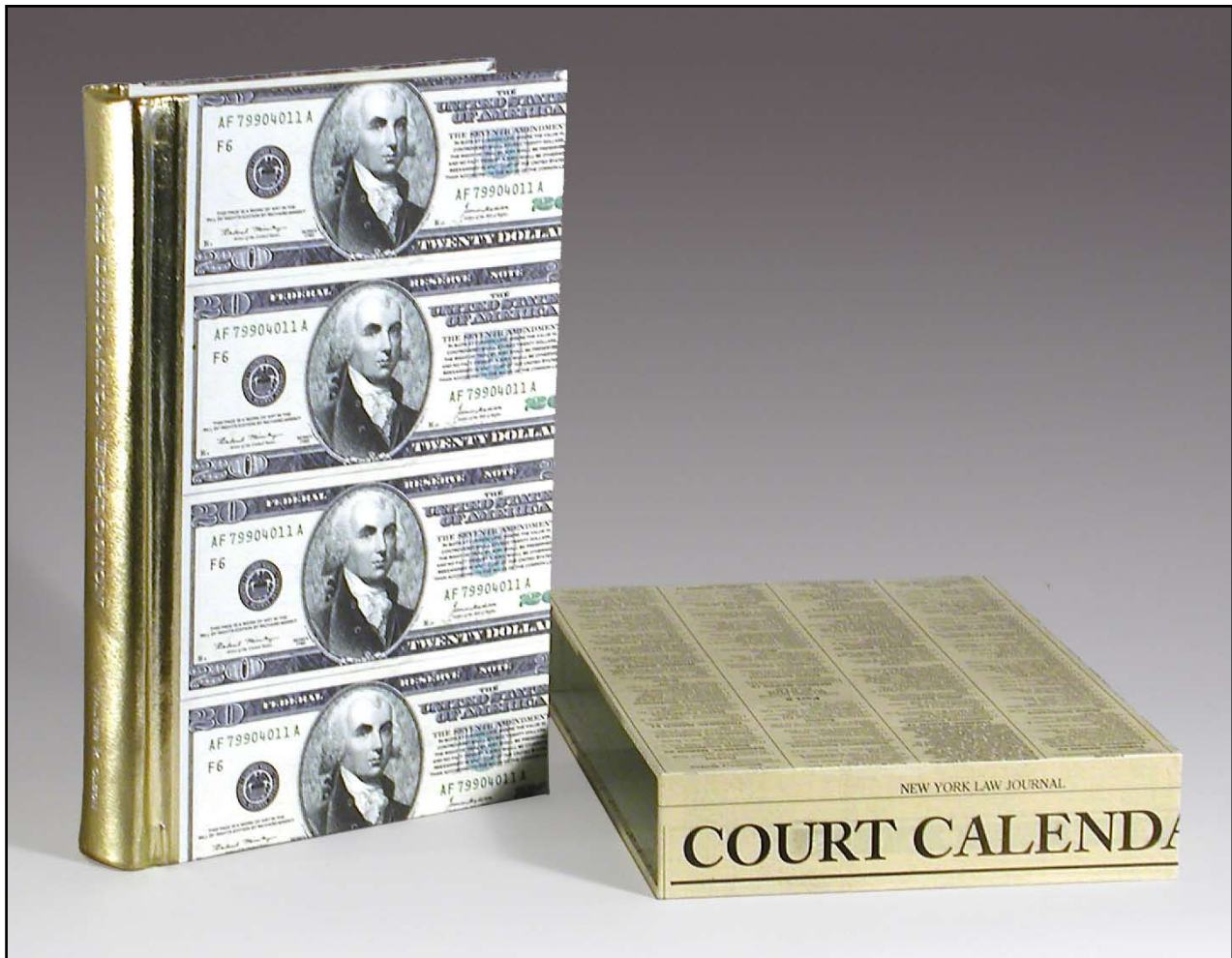
This binding is black leather, with doublures (inside cover) and hinge of the same leather. A black leather glove is on the cover, and acrylic paint. The title is foil stamped in P. T. Barnum, a typeface chosen because of

the circus-like environment of the trial. The endpaper [detail below] represents “The Race Card.”

The prosecution made a major error by having the accused try on the bloodstained black leather glove, which had shrunk, with an additional latex glove to prevent biocontamination. Simpson made a show of not being able to get it on. The defense line was “If it doesn’t fit, you must acquit.”

Right: Detail of “The Race Card” on the endpaper. It represents the defendant trying on the glove, holding a big knife (rather than the traditional sword), with blood dripping from the lower knife.





The Seventh Amendment

The Litigation Explosion: What Happened When America Unleashed the Lawsuit

by Walter K. Olson

In suits at common law, where the value in controversy shall exceed twenty dollars, the right of trial by jury shall be preserved, and no fact tried by a jury, shall be otherwise reexamined in any court of the United States, than according to the rules of the common law.

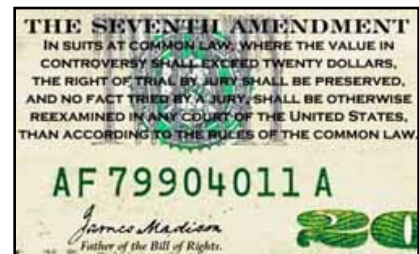
In 1789 twenty dollars went a long way. Since the 1970's, "civil" lawsuits have flooded the judicial system. Now a multibillion dollar business, the litigation industry proceeds on flimsy pretexts, preceding a search for evidence.



The spine of the binding is gold leather with the title foil stamped in silver (neither is the genuine metal). The gold and silver make it hard to

decipher. The covers appear to be a collage of \$20 bills, but closer examination reveals them to be artificial as well. Jackson has been replaced by James Madison, whose signature replaces that of the Secretary of the Treasury, and whose title reads Father of the Bill of Rights. The text of the Seventh Amendment is superimposed on the treasury seal, and there are several other changes.

The slipcase is covered with court calendar listings from the New York Law Journal. On any day you may find 20 broad-side pages listing lawsuits in New York. It is coated with two layers of ultraviolet filter acrylic.





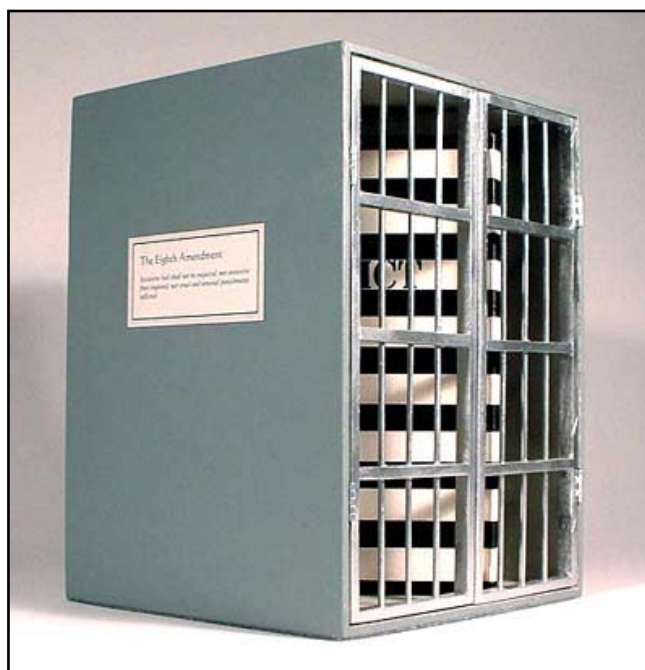
The Eighth Amendment
Forlorn Hope: The Prison Reform Movement
 by Larry E. Sullivan

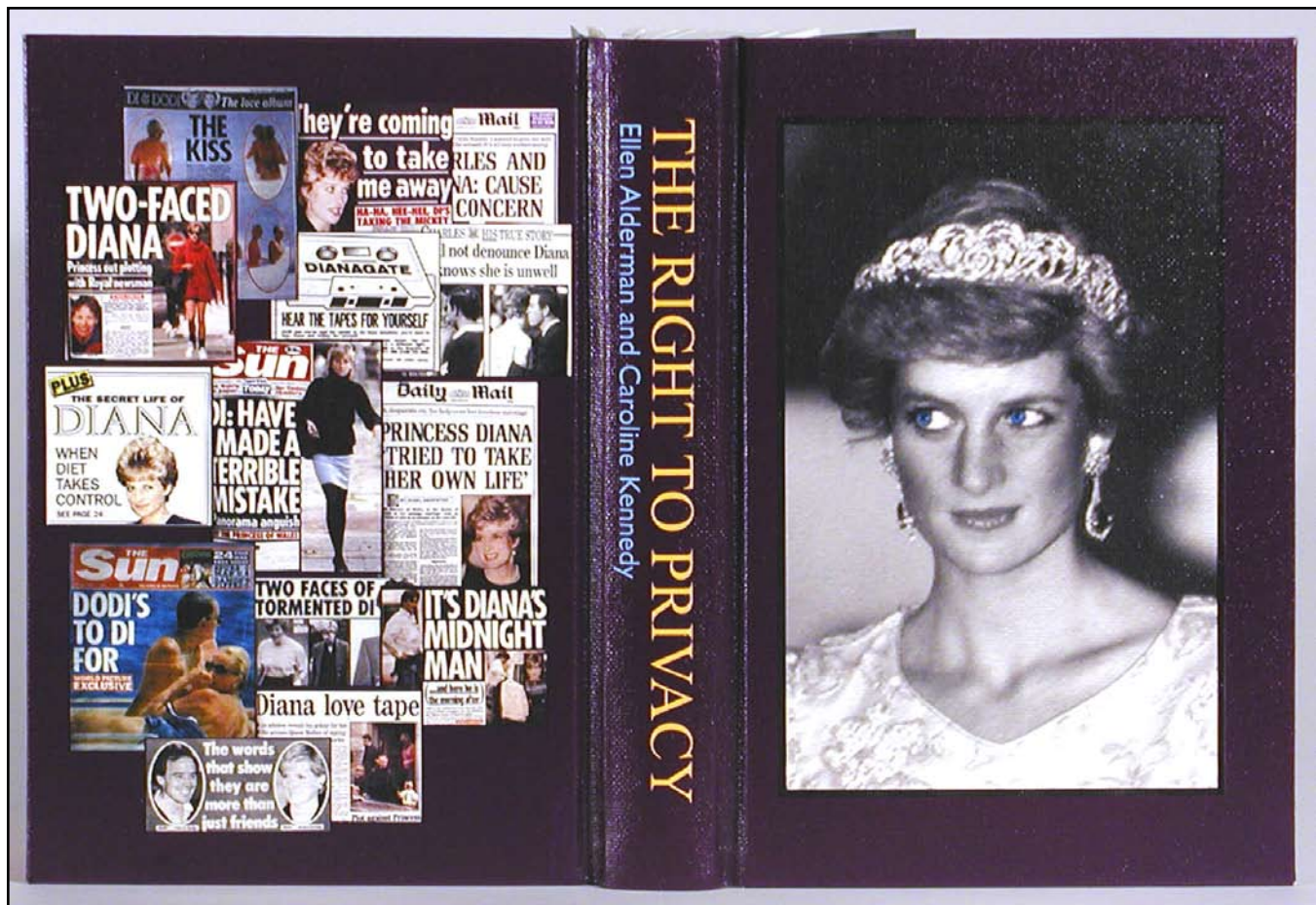
Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

During the 1990's the drive toward prison reform reversed. Prison libraries were closed, chain gangs and striped uniforms came back, and prison populations increased. The book is bound in stripes with the word "CONVICT" on the back cover, printed inkjet on canvas, and is chained to a miniature jail cell of painted wood.

The author, a former prison librarian, was Chief of the Rare Books and Special Collections Division at the Library of Congress when he attended a Minsky lecture in Washington, D.C., and commissioned a binding on his 1990 book with this title. For The Bill of Rights series, Minsky published a new edition of this book in 2002, for which Sullivan added a chapter on the reversal of prison reform in the previous decade.

Larry Sullivan is currently Chief Librarian at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice.



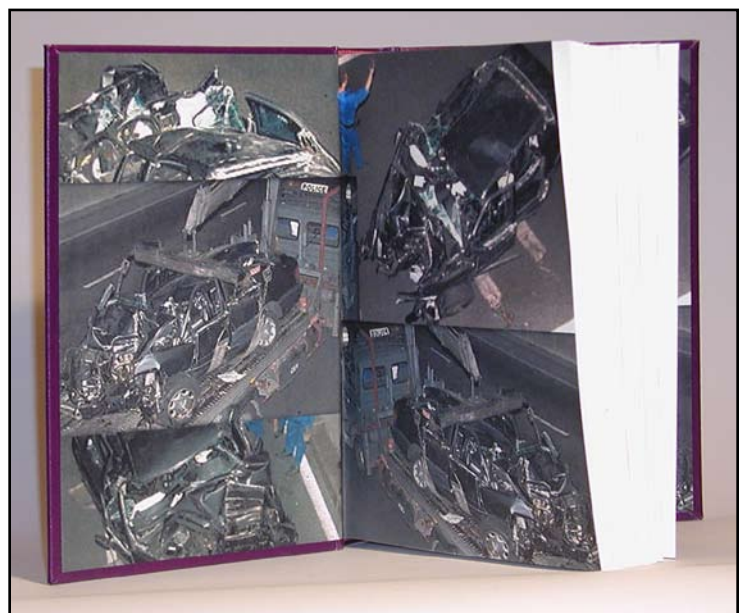


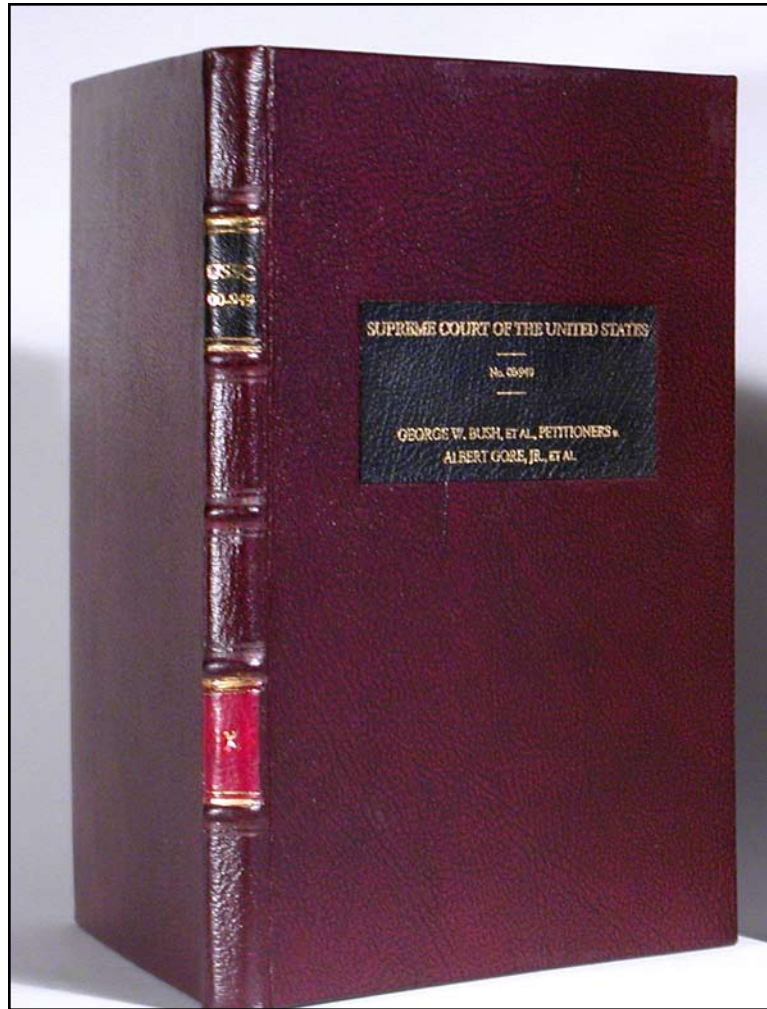
The Ninth Amendment
The Right to Privacy
 by Ellen Alderman and Caroline Kennedy

The enumeration in the Constitution, of certain rights, shall not be construed to deny or disparage others retained by the people.

We all assume we have a right to privacy, but every day that right seems to diminish. From our personal data on the internet to telemarketing at dinnertime, we are barraged. And that's just the tip of it. This book identifies many serious legal issues surrounding privacy considerations.

When people become public figures the violation of privacy becomes extreme. Occasionally those of us not in the public eye are reminded just how dangerous and invasive the thirst for vicarious living can be. The binding is an inkjet print on canvas of Princess Diana, with tabloid headlines on the back cover and endpapers with photos of her wrecked car. It comes in a velour lined black cloth box with the text of the ninth amendment printed on a Fabriano Roma label.





The Tenth Amendment
USSC No. 00-949
 by The Supreme Court of The United States of America

The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people.

This is the decision of the Supreme Court in the landmark case that determined the outcome of the 2000 election, Bush vs. Gore. This ruling, overturning a decision of the Florida Supreme Court, is arguably the most significant Federal intervention in states' rights in modern history. The edition was designed by Minsky using the texts of Justices concurring and dissenting opinions. It is printed by photocopy from the output of the Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) file downloaded by Minsky from the Supreme Court website the day it was issued, December 12, 2000. The paper is Southworth 100% cotton fiber paper. The binding is in classic law book style of full leather with raised bands. Red and black leather labels have the title in 23k gold and the roman

numeral "X", in a cloth slipcase with the text of the tenth amendment inset in gold on black board.

Normally we see the red label on top and the black one on the bottom, so there seems to be something subtly wrong. The title is also somewhat uneven and not exactly on the level. So at the same time as this volume looks like a classic law book from a distance, close inspection reveals this contemporary interpretation to be disturbing and somewhat crooked.



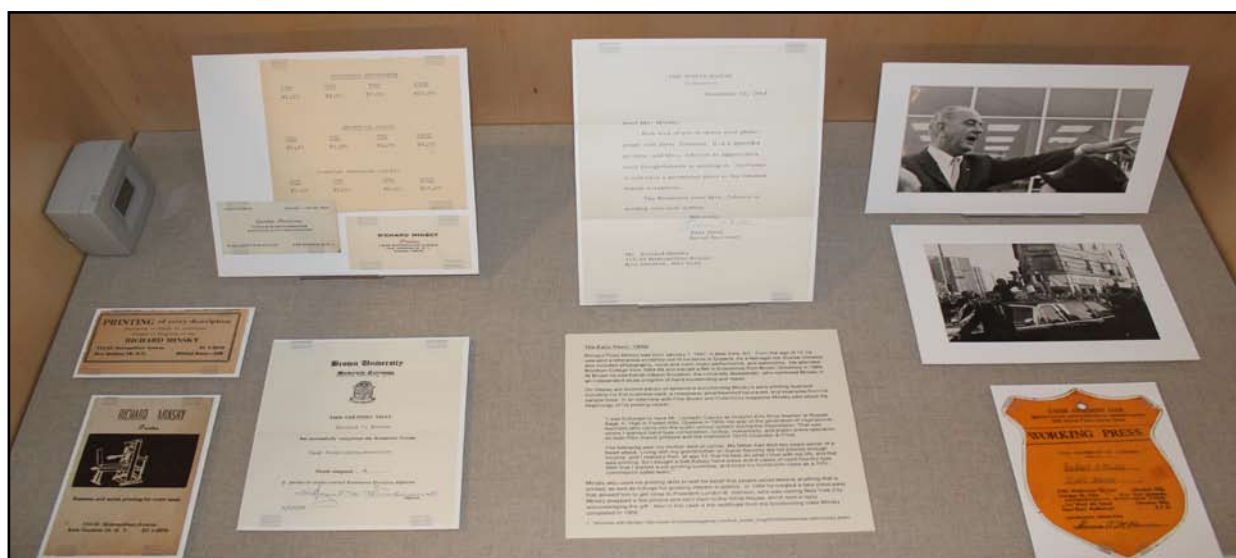
The Early Years: 1960s

Richard Philip Minsky was born in 1947 in New York City. From the age of 13, he operated a letterpress printshop out of his home in Queens. As a teenager his diverse interests also included photography, vocal and violin music performance, and astronomy. He attended Brooklyn College from 1964-68 and earned a MA in Economics from Brown University in 1969. At Brown he met Daniel Gibson Knowlton, the University Bookbinder, who mentored Minsky in an independent study program of hand bookbinding and repair.

On display are several pieces of ephemera documenting Minsky's early printing business including his first business card, a newspaper advertisement he placed, and examples from his sample book. In an interview with *Fine Books and Collections* magazine Minsky said about the beginnings of his printing career:

I was fortunate to have Mr. (Joseph) Caputo as Graphic Arts Shop teacher at Russell Sage Jr. High in Forest Hills, Queens in 1959. He was of the generation of inspirational teachers who came into the public school system during the Depression. That was where I learned hand type composition, lockup, makeready, and platen press operation, on both Pilot (hand) presses and the motorized 10x15 Chandler & Price.

The following year my mother died of cancer. My father had died two years earlier of a heart attack. Living with my grandmother on Social Security did not provide enough income, and I realized then, at age 13, that I'd best do what I love with my life, and that was printing. So I bought a 5x8 Kelsey hand press and 6 cases of used foundry type. With that I started a job printing business, and hired my homeroom class as a 15%-commission sales team.¹



Minsky also used his printing skills to test his belief that people would believe anything that is printed, as well as indulge his growing interest in politics. In 1964 he created a fake press pass that allowed him to get close to President Lyndon B. Johnson, who was visiting Brooklyn. Minsky snapped a few photos and sent them to the White House, which sent a reply acknowledging the gift. Also in this case is the certificate from the bookbinding class Minsky completed at Brown University in 1969.

1. "Interview with Minsky" http://www.finebooksmagazine.com/fine_books_blog/2010/06/interview-with-minsky.html



The Center for Book Arts

In 1974, with the goal of advancing and promoting the book arts, Minsky established the Center for Book Arts (CBA) at 15 Bleecker Street in Manhattan and moved his bookbinding and letterpress printing facilities there. CBA was the first organization of its kind and became the model for the establishment of similar institutions across the country. Today CBA is one of the country's most prominent non-profit organizations specializing in the book arts with active exhibition and education programs. In the exhibition is a photo of Minsky at the 15 Bleecker Street storefront in the early years, an example of letterhead from the 1970s, and an early course catalog.

The *Barbie* comic book, published by Marvel Comics, is the work of Minsky's life partner, Barbara Slate, an eminent graphic novelist. She parlayed familiarity with the Center for Book Arts into an educational adventure in the comic series for which she wrote more than 60 books. In this story Barbie teaches bookbinding at the CBA.

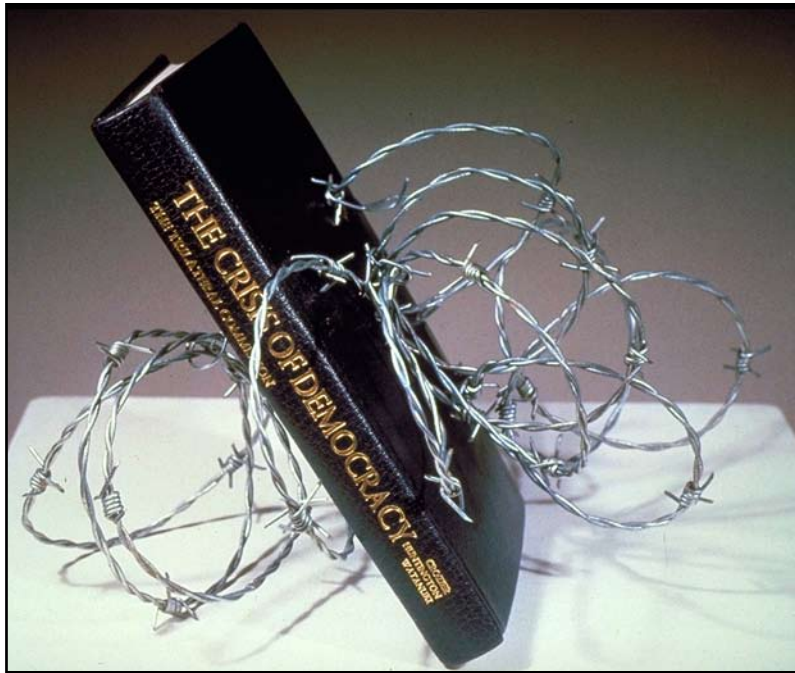


The Birds of North America
by Jacob H. Studer
New York: Natural Sciences Association of America, 1888
Binding by Richard Minsky, 1975

The Beginnings of Material Meets Metaphor

As a binder and photographer handling many works of art at the Hirshhorn Museum, Minsky was inspired to create his first binding intended to be an art object in 1971. He decided to pursue that career path and opened a hand bookbindery, printshop, and art gallery in Forest Hills, Queens. Minsky devoted himself to creating books that function as sculptural metaphors for the contents within—an approach he has described as “material meets metaphor.”

On display is a famous unique binding from 1975, which was part of a controversy in the early history of the Arts of the Book Collection at Yale. While on display in a Guild of Book Workers (GBW) exhibition, several vocal members protested that this was not binding. Minsky's binding was removed from the show, which presented more traditional fine binding. Then other more progressive GBW members lobbied for the work to be included in the show, and it eventually was. Over 30 years later the binding returned to Yale, this time as part of the permanent collection, when original owners William and Mary Herzog sold the work. The work was also shown in the retrospective exhibition, Guild of Book Workers 100th Anniversary Exhibition, at the Grolier Club in 2006. Minsky was asked to be a juror for the accompanying show of contemporary bindings.



The Crisis of Democracy

by Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki for the Trilateral Commission.

New York University Press, 1975

Binding by Richard Minsky 1980

Sheep, gold, barbed wire

[Above: on exhibit in 1981 at the Allan Stone Gallery in New York City]

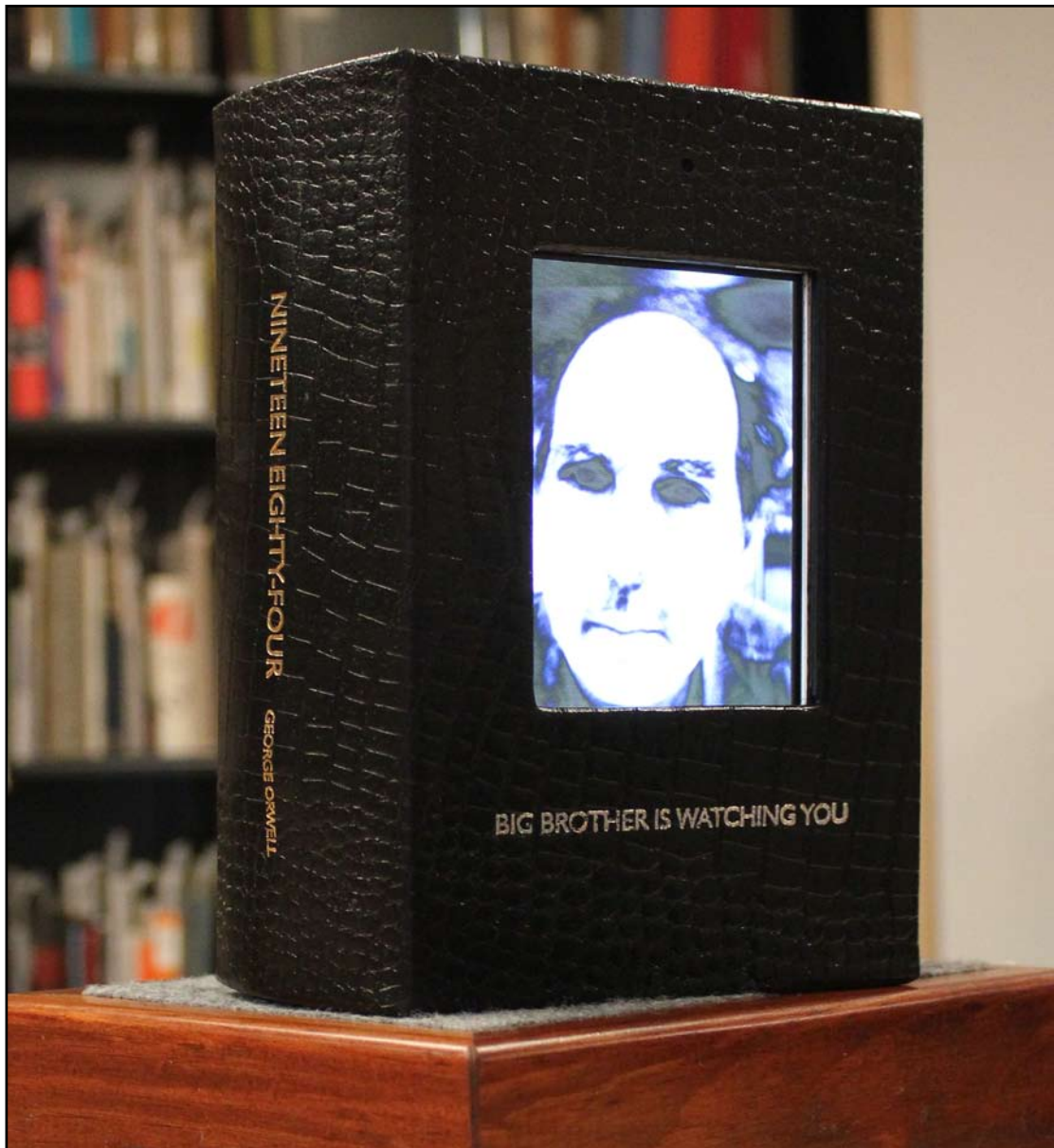
Material Meets Metaphor

Minsky has continued to make unique bindings that utilize the “material meets metaphor” concept throughout his career. This and the work on the facing page are further examples of how Minsky often used his work for political and social commentary through the selection of texts and the innovative bindings.

About *The Crisis of Democracy*, Minsky wrote: “This book was originally purchased as a paperback. The surface-dyed glazed sheepskin is abraded by the barbed wire every time the book is opened and closed, exposing the inner flesh that contrasts with the grain of the leather. The action is not so extreme as to cause the book to disintegrate rapidly, but slowly erodes the decorative surface of the skin. The 23K gold title remains bright.” [Also see the cover photo.]

In addition to being shown in numerous exhibitions in the United States, it was circulated through Africa and Latin America by The United States Information Agency in the Center for Book Arts exhibition “Book Arts in the USA” (1990), which Minsky organized. The exhibition poster designed by Pat Gorman for the related national conference is shown in the wall cases.





George Orwell. Nineteen Eighty-Four
New York: Harcourt, Brace & Company, 1949
Binding by Richard Minsky 2004
(On view at the front desk of Special Collections)

Minsky's binding concept for Orwell's infamous tale of state supervision includes a hidden camera that captures the viewer as s/he interacts with the work. He modified existing video technology to cause it to seem less sophisticated by delivering a grainy black and white image that evokes the time period of the book. Minsky often blends modern technology and traditional bookbinding techniques. In this work a traditional stamping technique is used to create the spine and front cover lettering: 23K gold lettering on the spine, while the slogan on the cover is stamped with hologram foil. Note that Minsky used the same lizard-grained cowhide to bind the physical version of SLART magazine, creating a subtle link between Orwell's ideas and the sometimes exciting, sometimes terrifying technology of the modern day virtual world.



Gerald Jackson
Adventures in Ku-ta-ba Wa-do
 Score by Richard Minsky
 New York: Richard Minsky, 1973
 Edition of 50 books, 100 records

Collaborations

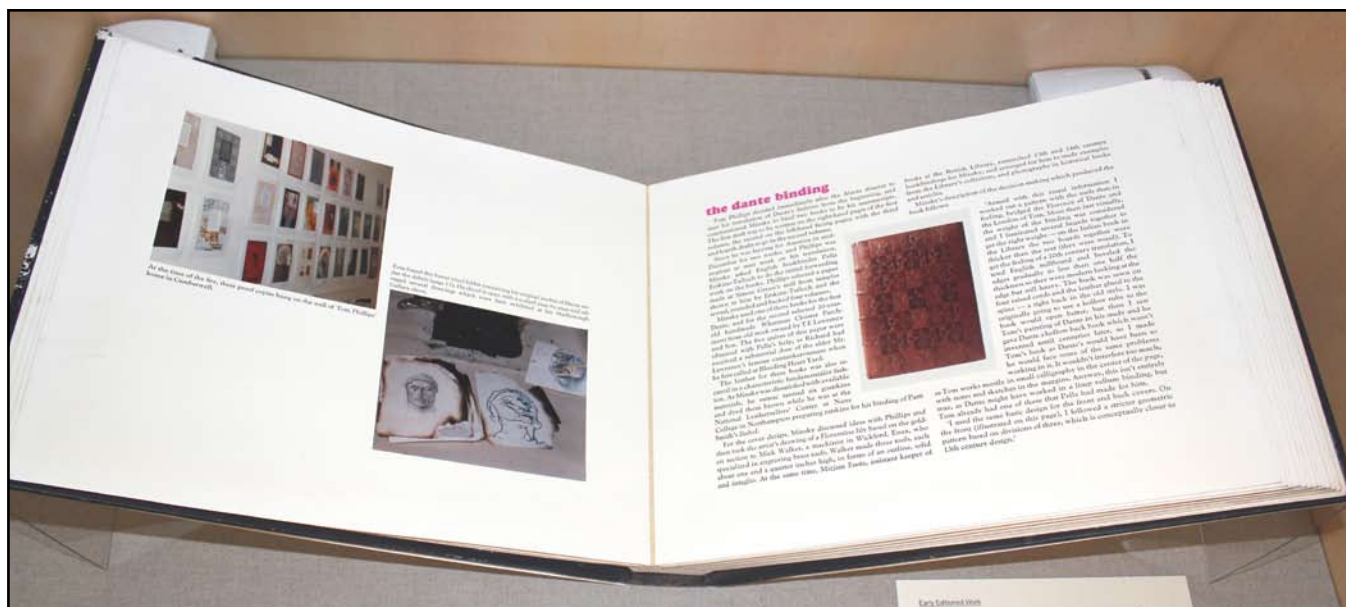
Minsky had a strong interest in music and theater, and was the Musical Director of Direct Theater, an Off-Broadway production company. He combined these interests with bookbinding and printing in *Adventures in Ku-ta-ba Wa-do*, for which he composed and performed music, as well as published the book based on Jackson's poetry and pastel drawings. Minsky created a process for producing the color field prints using an uncut linoleum block and variations in the makeready* to interpret the texture of

pastel on paper, with a more editionable result. In the wall case are ephemera from the Archive documenting the performance of this piece at Ornette Coleman's Artist House in New York's SOHO.

The musical score, which corresponds to the colors of the prints and uses the poems as a libretto, was used by the chamber orchestra during the recording. The musicians also had the color prints on their music stands, as the score called on them to interpret the colors with their instruments. The record jacket is signed by the performers and denotes that this is the first copy in the edition. The recording was made at New York's Mercury Studios in 1972. The original 8-track tapes and stereo mix tapes are in Yale's Richard Minsky Archive.



* Makeready: Thin paper placed under the tympan sheet of a letterpress, normally used to eliminate unevenness in the impression.



Pamela Moore, editor
 90 Photographs by Richard Minsky
 Cover and record label design: Pat Gorman
 Cover caricature of Minsky: Gerald Mynott
 Rear endpaper photo: Pat Gorman
 Rear endpaper lyrics by Kathy Fire
Libido performed by Kathy Fire and Reverse
Ode to a Dead Sheep by Tommy Weitzel

Minsky in London
 New York and London: Richard Minsky, 1980
 Edition of 25

As the US/UK Bicentennial Fellow (1978-79) Minsky traveled to London and was adjunct faculty at the Camberwell School of Art and Crafts, London College of Printing, and several other schools. This book recounts his experience in a pseudo-documentary fashion with commentaries by Minsky, the editor, and many of the people he encountered during that time. He associated with all classes of British culture, from the Heralds at the Garter Service to punk rockers.



While there Minsky met visual artist Tom Phillips and writer Jonathan Williams, among other notable figures. Later he collaborated with both artists on limited edition book projects. Shown is the description of the incident when Minsky had a meeting scheduled with Phillips on what turned out to be the day after a disastrous fire that gutted Editions Alecto, where the original edition of Phillips' *Dante's Inferno* was destroyed.



For this edition, Minsky produced some of the color photographic prints in the darkroom of the London College of Printing. The letterpress work was done by Minsky at the Center for Book Arts with the assistance of his former apprentice Dikko Faust. The commentaries by various people encountered in England were reproduced by letterpress with photoengravings of their original documents. The book is sewn on folded N-guards, clearly visible in the exhibit case, which enables the book not only to lie flat, but it can be opened in a full circle for exhibition purposes. Here it is displayed in a traditional conservation cradle. A pocket in the back cover contains a 45 RPM recording.





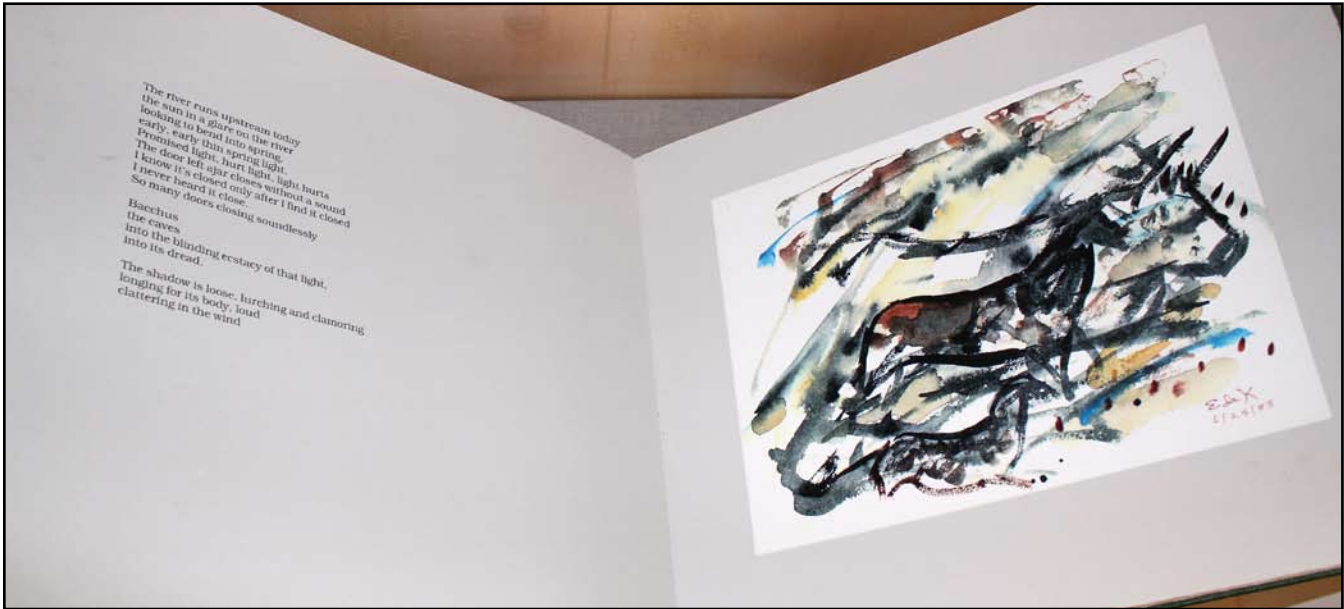
Maquette and Pattern: Blank Manuscript Book for Tom Phillips' Translation of Dante's *Inferno*
1979

Traditional Bookbinding

On view is a display Minsky created in 1979 showing two designs for the binding of a blank book that Tom Phillips commissioned to use for his translation of Dante's *Inferno*. After a fire at Editions Alecto consumed most of his drawings and prints for the project, Phillips vetoed the first of Minsky's proposed covers (left). Minsky's design incorporated the Florentine lily, a symbol that represents Dante's birth place of Florence, Italy, and was drawn by Phillips. The pattern of the binding is derived from a 13th century Florentine binding in the British Library.

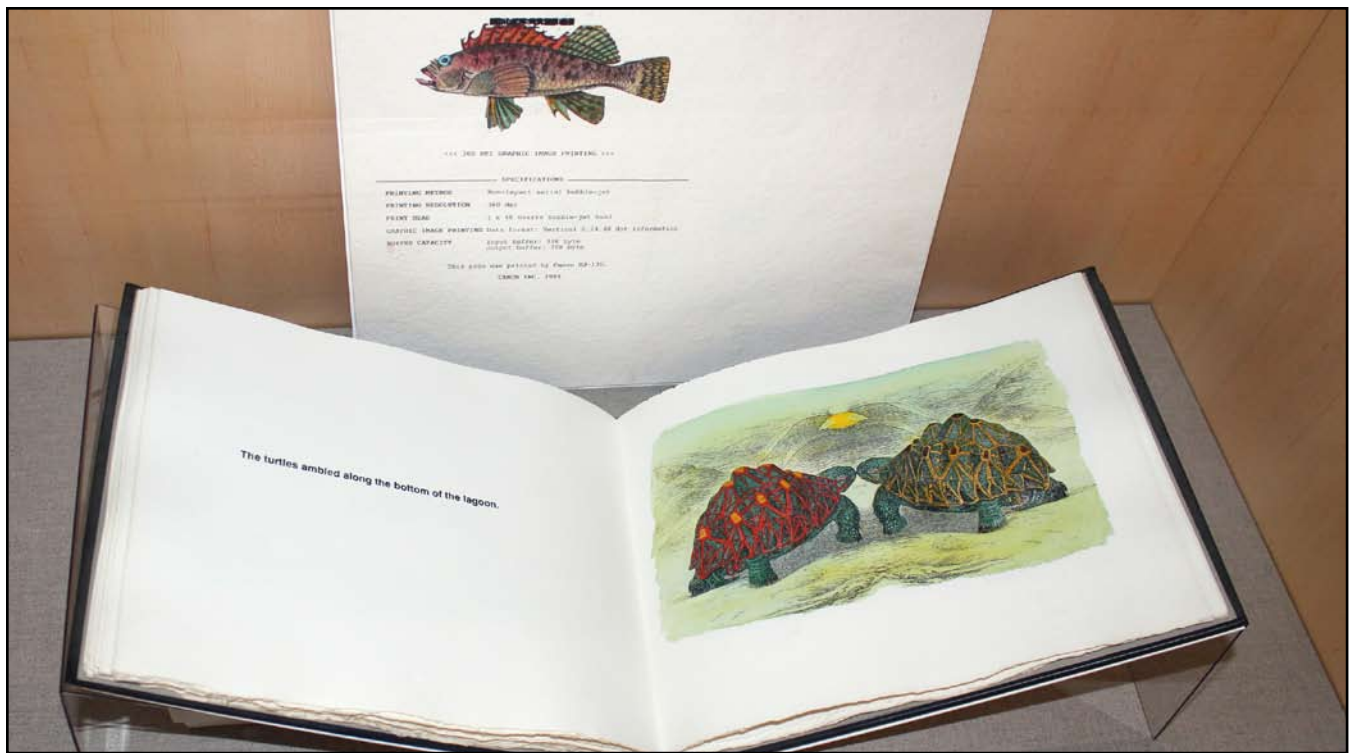
Minsky had three brass tools made from Phillips' drawing—a relief tool, an intaglio, and an outline. The variety of shades in the pattern was created by heating the stamping tool to various temperatures and making several impressions to burn the leather more or less. The center image is a photo of the finished binding. A smoke proof (above, right) was created first in the traditional manner using the brass hand tools that were then impressed through this pattern to transfer the design to the leather. The limited edition book *Dante's Inferno* by Tom Phillips is held by the Yale Center for British Art. In 1985 Thames and Hudson published a popular press version.

Minsky collaborated with Phillips again in 1989 on the project *Where Are They Now? (The Class of Forty-Seven)*. In this work, photocopies of collages by Tom Phillips were sent to poet Heather McHugh, who created poems in response to the images. Then Phillips "treated" McHugh's poems (a process for which the artist is known where he creates an artwork on top of a page of text, creating a new text). Minsky brought together all three components on handmade paper in his 1990 edition, also in the collection of the Yale Center for British Art. This was the first book Minsky issued with hand-colored inkjet prints on handmade paper.



Rose Slivka
Dreaming the Caves
Laser prints from watercolors by Elaine de Kooning
New York: Richard Minsky, 1991
Edition of 50

Minsky's friendship with poet Rose Slivka led to this work that documents another friendship, that of Slivka with artist Elaine de Kooning. In 1985 the two visited the caves in Altamira, Spain, and created work in response to their experience. Minsky juxtaposed their work in this book, publishing laser prints of de Kooning's watercolors posthumously with the assistance of the Estate of the artist.



Richard Minsky
Animal Magnetism
 New York: Richard Minsky, 1993
 Edition of 20 plus 5 deluxe copies

Experimenting with Media and Materials

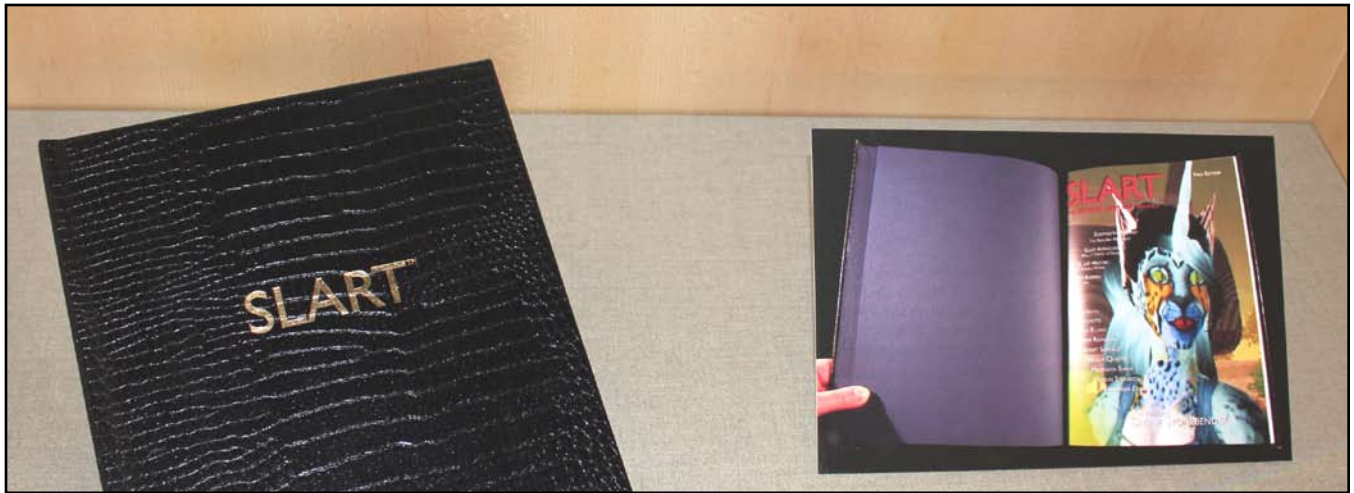
Minsky had and continues to have an interest in exploring the latest technology in delivering his ideas. As computers and printers evolved, Minsky was interested in using them to create the interior content of his books while still maintaining the level of quality of traditional printing. Laser printing was unsuitable for use with rough handmade paper. When Minsky read that Canon had developed a wide carriage inkjet printer he called and asked if he could test it with thick handmade paper. He found a paper, made in France by Richard de Bas, that worked well with the inkjet technology. This was used for the first copies of *Minsky in Bed*. Then deBas changed its formulation and the paper no longer worked with the inkjet. In the summer of 1990 Minsky was a visiting artist in the papermaking studio at Ox Bow (Saugatuck, MI, extension of The Art Institute of Chicago), and in addition to making a series of pulp paintings he developed a paper with properties similar to the original de Bas sheet. He then commissioned Paul Wong of the Dieu Donné Papermill to produce enough of this paper for his limited editions. Minsky had his own watermark cast in the sheets he commissioned for use in *Animal Magnetism* and later *Anathema Maranatha*. For *Animal Magnetism*, Minsky created the imagery on the computer by scanning and manipulating images of animals from engravings created in the 16th through 19th centuries.

Shown is the deluxe version of *Animal Magnetism*, which is bound in leather and comes with five prototype prints hand colored by Minsky; these are on view in the wall cases. The photograph of the turtle shows the "MINSKY" watermark in the specially produced paper, made visible by lighting the page from behind. On display behind the book is the first hand-colored inkjet test that Minsky created at Canon in 1988.



Jonathan Williams
Anathema Maranatha
 Drawings by William Anthony
 New York: Richard Minsky, 1993
 Edition of 27 plus 7 deluxe copies.

Minsky's collaboration with Jonathan Williams happened over a decade after their meeting in England in 1979. In this publication Minsky again takes on the role of publisher, bringing together writer and artist and ensuring a cohesive presentation of their work. While the book looks rather traditional at first, one sees that the poetry is certainly not traditional. This book also used cutting edge technology of the time: Minsky scanned the artist's pencil drawings and set him up with a stylus and tablet at the computer to alter them. Then Minsky printed the work inkjet on paper specially made by hand to facilitate this printing process. As with *Animal Magnetism* the paper bears a "MINSKY" watermark. Each book in the edition is hand colored with pencil. The Archive holds correspondence and proofs that document the development of this project. Shown are an earlier version and the final proof of the drawing to accompany the poem. Minsky notes that both artist and author preferred the term "drawings" to "illustrations" for the pairing of their work.



Richard Minsky
SLART: The Second Life Art World
 Stockport, NY: Richard Minsky, 2007
 Deluxe Edition, bound in lizard-grained cowhide

In November 2006 Minsky became active in the Second Life® virtual world. Second Life is an online world where participants can design their own characters, explore virtual spaces, and create and trade virtual objects, including works of art. Minsky started the online art journal SLART as a vehicle for the “critical evaluation” of this virtual art.¹ He published the print version of SLART in 2007 as an “archival record” of these online documents.² This is copy no. II of Minsky’s deluxe numbered edition.

Minsky’s activities in SL attest to his persevering involvement with artistic vanguards. His writings in SLART, which include an article entitled, “The Art World Market of Second Life,” also reflect his continued interest in economics. Minsky holds a Master’s degree in Economics from Brown University.

The binding of the real world edition of SLART is a sly comment on the practice of changing one’s appearance in SL. In this case the cow (leather used for the binding) has a lizard “avatar.”³

Following the confidential settlement of a trademark lawsuit in Federal court that Minsky initiated and prosecuted pro se,⁴ he stopped using the name SLART for his virtual art criticism and changed the name of his website and blog to *The ArtWorld Market Report*. ArtWorld Market is the name of his Second Life avatar. The Richard Minsky Archive has the holographic manuscripts of the legal briefs Minsky wrote for this case. It is considered a landmark in Intellectual Property Law, despite the fact that there was no judicial decision; the documents are still available online.⁴ Minsky serves on the Board of Directors of VIPO, the Virtual Intellectual Property Organization, a not-for-profit group that provides legal services to creators of virtual works.⁵

1. Richard Minsky, interview by Hrag Vartanian, “Art in Second Life, an interview with Richard Minsky,” posted March 31, 2007, <http://hragvartanian.com/2007/03/31/art-in-second-life-an-interview-with-richard-minsky/>

2. Richard Minsky, “Introduction,” in *SLART*, 1st ed. (Stockport, NY: Richard Minsky, 2007): 7.

3. E-mail correspondence with curator, July 16, 2010.

4. “Documents from Richard Minsky v. Linden Research, Inc., U.S. District Court for the Northern District of New York, Case No. 1:08-CV-819,” <http://3dinternetlaw.com/Trademark/Trademark/Minsky.html>

5. <http://www.vipo-online.org>

Second Life and SL are trademarks or registered trademarks of Linden Research, Inc.



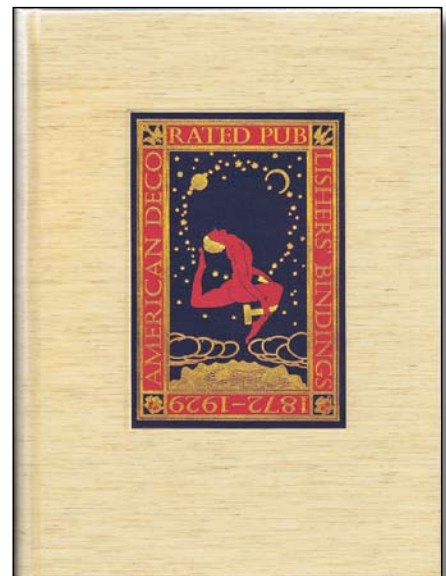
Richard Minsky
American Decorated Publishers' Bindings, 1872-1929
 Stockport, NY: Richard Minsky, 2006-2010

The Art of American Book Covers

Minsky published the first in this series of three in 2006 after spending years collecting examples and doing research on the artists who designed the covers. Publishers' bindings are cloth bound books with designs stamped on them (blind, gold leaf, or in color). Initially created as a cheap, yet still attractive, imitation of leather binding, the genre became an art form of its own by the mid- to late-nineteenth century. Minsky focused on the period 1872-1929 which is considered the artistic height of a development that started in the 1830s. After this period dust jackets became the norm and the actual bindings of trade books became very plain.

Minsky says of his project, "This is an artist's book, an exhibition catalog, and an exploration of art history seen through publishers' book covers."¹ Minsky's descriptions of each work are accompanied by images of the covers, collected and scanned or photographed by Minsky, presented in a large format volume with a binding inspired by the covers within. He created every aspect of this work that is both art object and important research tome. Shown is the deluxe edition of Volume I and the stamping die that was used to produce the cover for the limited edition of this same volume. Volume 2 is open to show the lushly illustrated interiors of the series. The cover design for volume 2 [right] is printed ink-jet on canvas, overstamped in 22K gold, and is adapted from a 1914 Rockwell Kent cover in the book.

Earlier this year the respected publisher George Braziller released a trade edition, *The Art of American Book Covers*, in which Minsky created a "greatest hits" version of his research aimed at a broader audience.



1. Richard Minsky. "The Book Art of Richard Minsky." <http://www.minsky.com/orderform-subscription1.htm>



Robert Louis Stevenson
The Philosophy of Umbrellas
 Philadelphia: The University of the Arts and Richard Minsky, 2008
 Edition of 100.

Contemporary Material Meets Metaphor

Minsky created this edition as the von Hess Visiting Artist at the Borowsky Center for Publication Arts at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia. He worked with master printer Lori Spencer to have the “paper” portion printed on a Heidelberg KORS one-color offset press. Minsky did the typography and layout for the text of Robert Louis Stevenson’s work *The Philosophy of Umbrellas*. The umbrella covering is made of DuPont™ Tyvek® and printed in 100 copies, divided equally between Minsky and The University of the Arts.

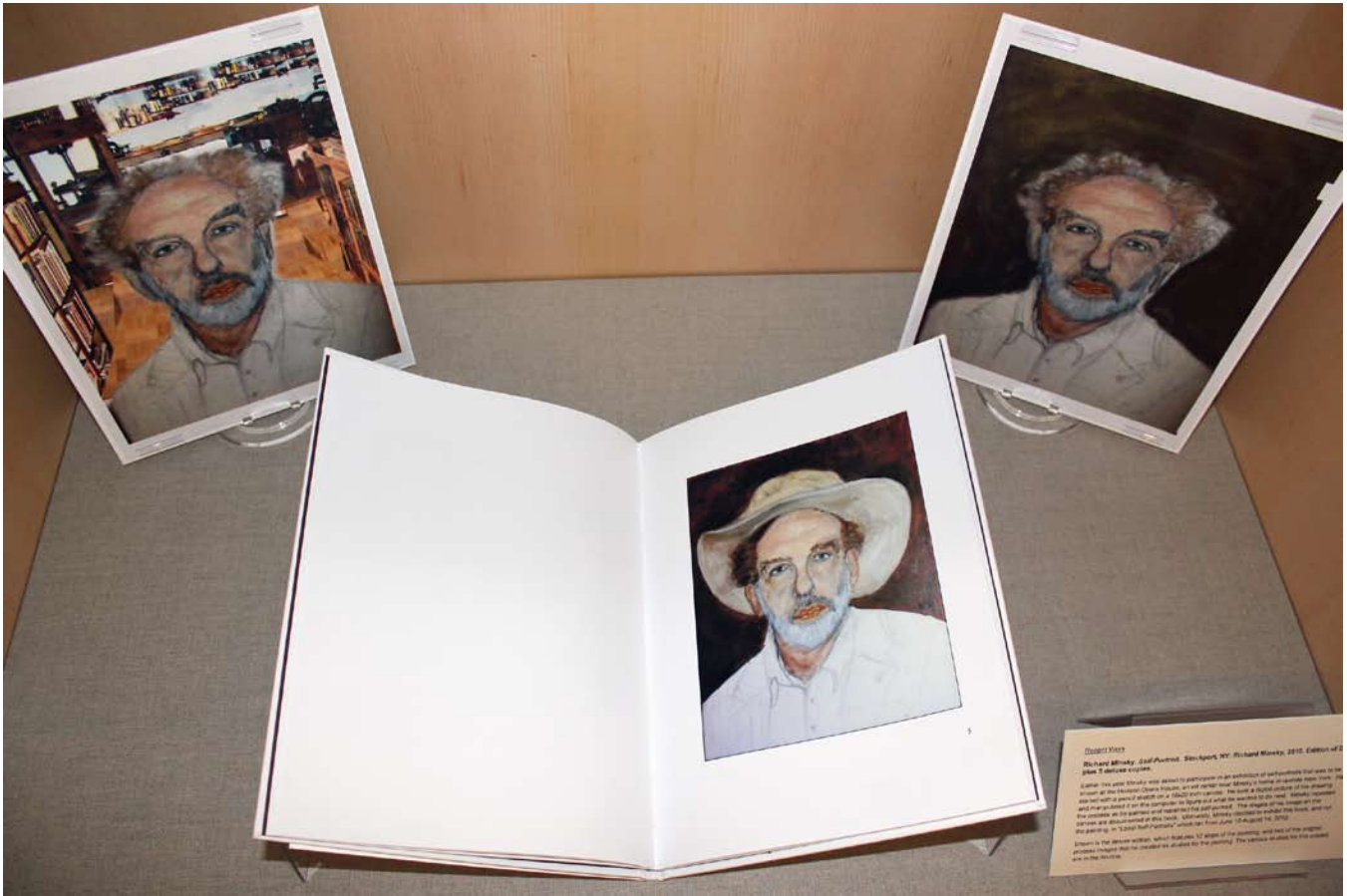
Minsky wrote about his experience in the Preface to the text, printed on the cylindrical slipcase:

“It seemed like the perfect opportunity to make an edition in honor of Judith Hoffberg, co-founder of ARLIS/NA and advocate of artists’ books. Judith is the Editor and Publisher of *Umbrella*, which celebrates its 30th anniversary this year as the main resource for information about contemporary artists’ books, mail art and Fluxus.

The obvious form for this work would be an umbrella with a text, but what text? I asked Judith for a suggestion and she sent this essay by R. L. Stevenson (1850-1894).”

Hoffberg passed away in 2009 and was honored at that year’s annual Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS/NA) conference at which Minsky spoke about her work with book artists.



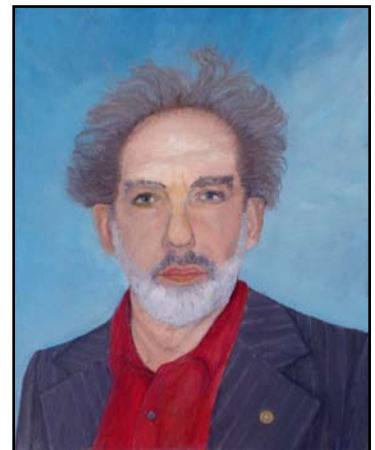


Richard Minsky
Self-Portrait
 Stockport, NY: Richard Minsky, 2010
 Edition of 25 plus 5 deluxe copies

Recent Work



Earlier this year Minsky was asked to participate in an exhibition of self-portraits that was to be shown at the Hudson Opera House, an art center near Minsky's home in upstate New York. He started with a pencil sketch on a 16x20 inch canvas, took a digital picture of the drawing and manipulated it on the computer to figure out what he wanted to do next. Minsky repeated the process as he painted and repainted his self-portrait. The stages of his image on the canvas are documented in this book. Ultimately,



Minsky decided to exhibit this book, and not the painting, in "Local Self-Portraits" which ran from June 12-August 14, 2010.

Shown is the deluxe edition, which features 12 steps of the painting, and two of the original process images that he created as studies for the painting. The various studies for this project are in the Archive.



Freedom of Choice
Three Poems of Love and Death by Lucie Brock-Broido
 Stockport, NY: Richard Minsky, 2009
 Installation view in the Special Collections Reading Room
 On loan from the artist

This recent work by Minsky pushes his “material meets metaphor” philosophy to the extreme. *Freedom of Choice* permits the reader to engage his/her full body in the reading experience.

He created this work specifically for the exhibition “Somewhere Far From Habit: The Poet and the Artist’s Book” sponsored by Longwood University and exhibited at The Pierre Menard Gallery, Cambridge, MA, November 6–December 5, 2009. The book of Brock-Broido’s poetry is published in an edition of 5, printed inkjet on J. Barcham Green 1976 handmade paper. Copy No. 1, on display, is bound in dark teal goatskin with 23K gold title, chained to an oak electric chair. Copies numbered 2 to 5 are bound in limp leather with gold title, no chair.

For the full experience, the reader can strap on the head restraint with three electrodes, applying one electrode to the leg. An MP3 player on the head restraint plays Minsky’s reading of the three poems, two of which concern shotgun suicides and one, an electrocution. On the back of the chair is a cabinet containing a 20 gauge shotgun, a Manila hangman’s noose, a wakizashi sword, razor blades, poison and a hypodermic syringe.

For more information on Richard Minsky’s work, including his own commentary, visit his web site, www.minsky.com



Yale library assistant Christopher Zollo experiencing *Freedom of Choice*.

