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1990 / HARRIET BART / OBJECT POEMS / 2010

Walker Art Center Library

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December 15, 2010–February 15, 2011

## FOREWORD

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Walker Art Center owns *THE BOX IN A VALISE*, a witty creation by Marcel Duchamp, who devised the idea of fabricating his works (familiar to art lovers) in signed and numbered miniature versions – a small urinal, a tiny typewriter cover, Paris air. They were the first multiples – small-scale sculptures that seemed more affordable and more accessible than the unique works. Multiplication was the message.

Every December for the past twenty years, the artist Harriet Bart, creator of the *WINTER PROJECTS*, has been making and sending multiples. These multiples echo her larger finished works. There are similarities, particularly in her use of repurposed materials: felt, shells, gold leaf, texts on paper, cords, and small boxes. These multiples serve as a holiday greeting for sixty or more friends and colleagues. Moreover, they are produced for just \$5.00 as giveaways (in the spirit of Fluxus) and are packaged to go through the US Mail. Poetry in a little black box is how some collectors have put it as they reach into their mailboxes and find a package from Harriet Bart. Many measure the passage of time with their gift from Harriet. They have collected some twenty years' worth of multiples that are often housed together on a special shelf, much like the one seen in the Walker Library vitrine. The artist calls these multiples Visual Objects/Poems. Recipients call them treasures to be cherished.

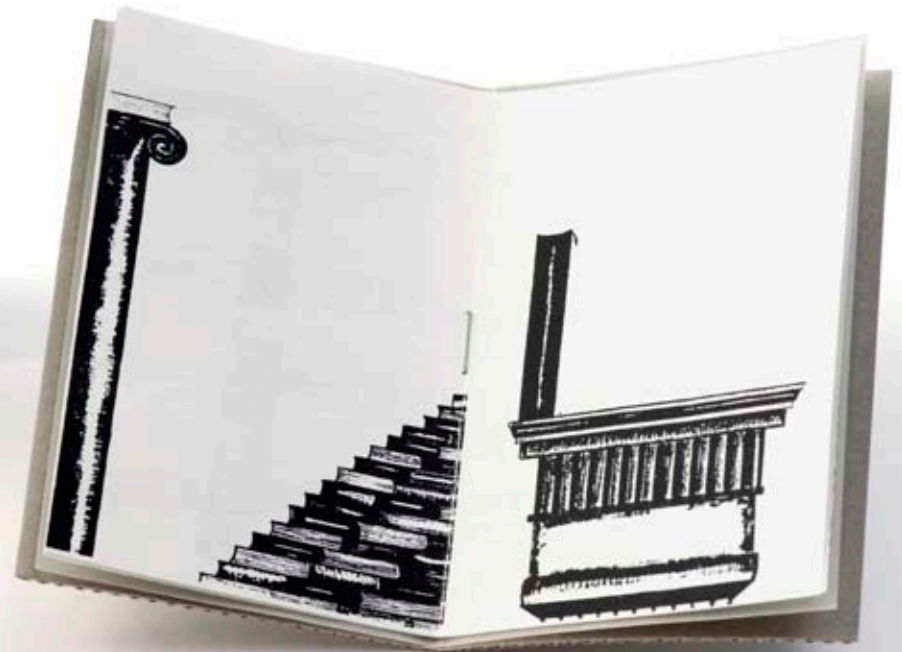
Rosemary Furtak  
Librarian  
Walker Art Center



*1990*

**Architexts**

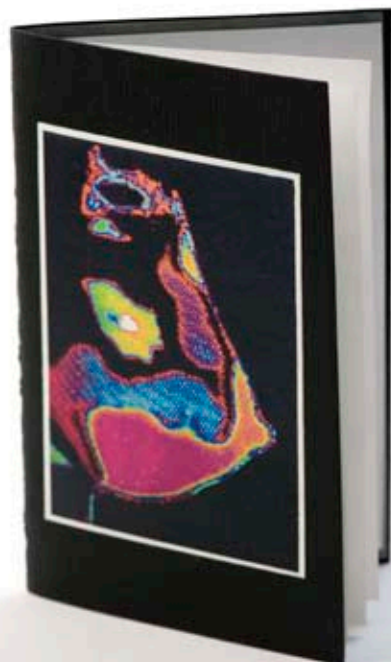
My first "editioned" book, made from photocopies of my larger charcoal drawings and printed at Kinkos. Cover art from found bookplate.



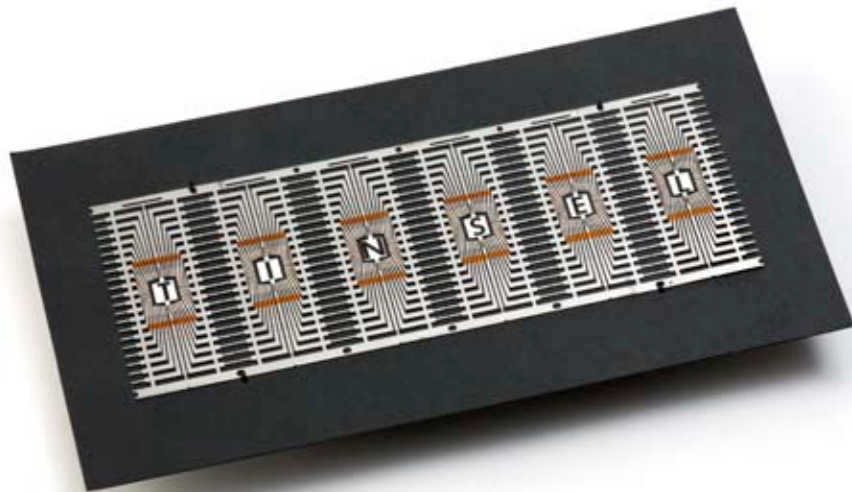
*1991*

**A Story about the Body**

Based on a short story by Robert Haas and conceived while I was a resident fellow at the MacDowell Colony. Inspired by a friend's illness, the subject is breast cancer.







**1992**

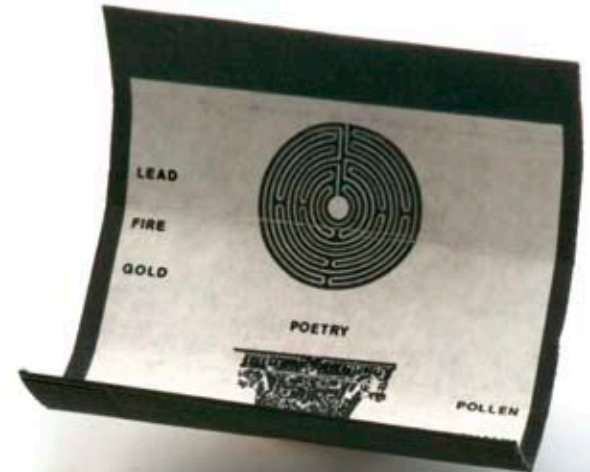
**Tinsel**

An object/definition.

**1993**

**Elements**

Based on a wall drawing and installation from the exhibition *Dialogue: Alchemy of the Word* at Dolly Fitterman Fine Arts, exploring the alchemical elements of transformation. The glass vials contain lead, fire, gold, poetry, pollen, builder's chalk, iron filings.



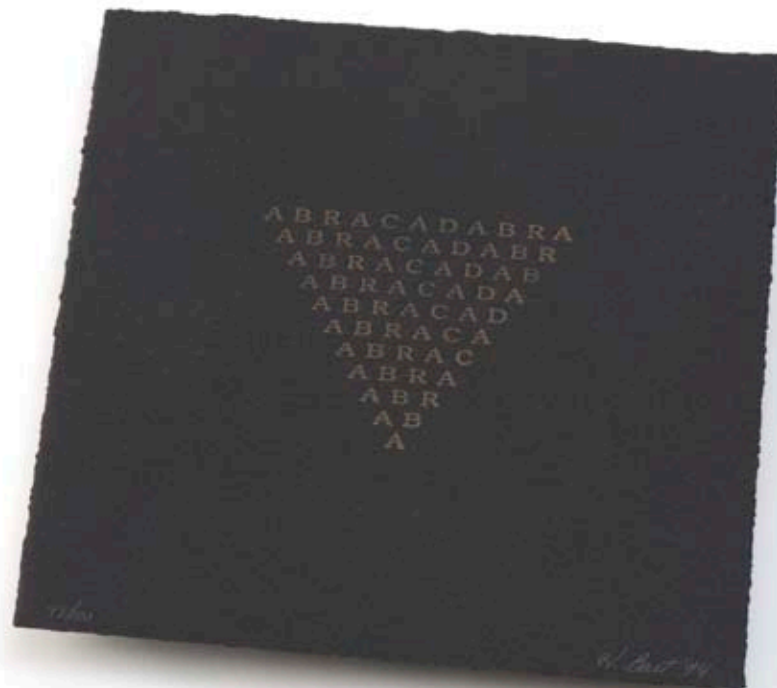


**1994**  
**Found Poetry I**  
 Found stone,  
 gold leaf, sliced  
 sheet music.

**1995**

**ABRACADABRA**

Late 17th-century  
 mystical word  
 used as a charm to  
 ward off illness.



*1996*

**Found Poetry II**

Child's wood block  
with mathematical  
symbols, gold leaf,  
collaged dictionary  
text, cut book pages,  
contained in a cloth  
mailing pouch.





*1997*

**Long Life and  
Measured Days**

Hourglass timer,  
red tape measure,  
shredded paper  
money.



*1998*

**Pencil Icon**

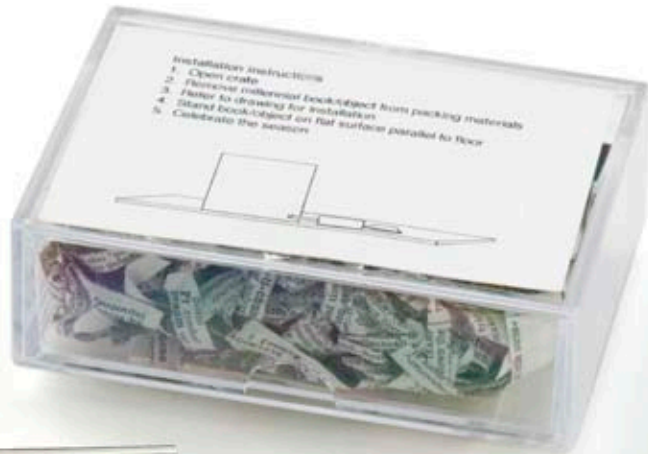
A text-wrapped pencil presented as an icon of the written word.



*1999*

**Demeter Waits/  
Persephone Pines**

Inspired by the myth of Demeter (Queen of the Fertile Earth) and her daughter Persephone (Queen of the Underworld). This is from my research on agricultural myths for an outdoor sculpture and gallery installation at the Weisman Art Museum (1996).



**2000**

**Fin de siècle**

A small lead-covered book containing images of a clock face, Stonehenge circle, labyrinth, planet Earth – held together by a padlock and key.

**2001**

**Fragile**

Wood box containing:  
A hollow egg covered with gold leaf on a nest of dried moss, a small square of red silk antique kimono cloth, a fragment of a poem by Wendell Berry printed on paper.

“Be joyful though  
you have considered  
all the facts.”

The piece is a  
talisman of hope  
and a reminder  
of our fragility.



**2002**

**Concrete Poem**

An object/poem.  
Found objects  
and words fitted  
into a ready-made  
plastic box.





**2003**

**Little Snail**

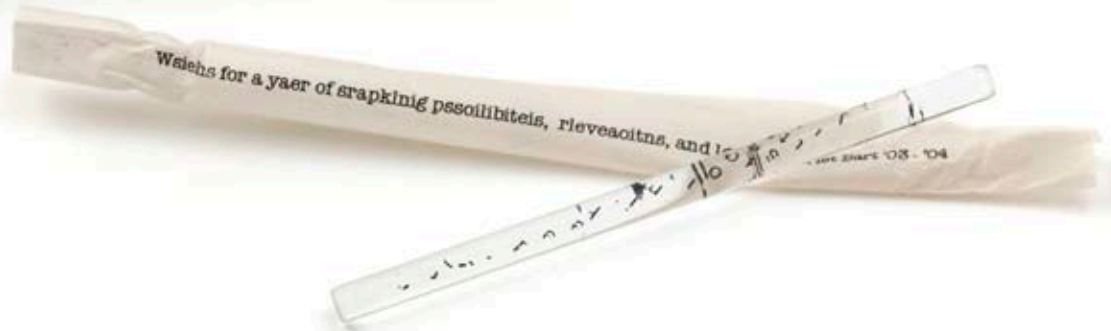
I remember, as a  
child, collecting  
insects and putting  
them in jars with  
a little grass  
for food. A gold  
leaf snail shell  
containing a paper  
scroll, printed with  
a haiku, sits on  
a bed of shredded  
paper money in  
a lidded plastic jar.

Haiku by Issu

little snail  
inch by inch  
climb Mount Fuji







**2004**

### **Sparkling Revelations**

Glass rod with deconstructed press-on letters, wrapped in a paper scroll. If the first and last letters of a word are accurate, the rest of the letters can be scrambled in any order and the word is still readable.

“Wsiehs for a yaer of srapklnig pssoilibiteis, rleveaoitns, and lgiht”



**2005**

**Winter Mandala**

+ shaped glass connector from a research lab in a glass-topped, disk-shaped aluminum tin filled with glass shards. Shimmers like newly fallen snow. Based on a large installation using shards of glass for the Indianapolis Art Center.



**2006**

**Reflections**

Silver-gray, disk-shaped compact with mirrored interior containing a mylar disk printed with the word "REFLECT," which is then mirrored as the viewer sees himself/herself.



**2007**  
**Still Life**

The smallest installation I've ever done. The red satin pouch contains several components – among them, an inventory of objects, installation instructions, and a printed paper installation base.

2008

## Liberian

### Grandfather's Story

A Liberian tale told to me by my father's hospice nurse as he lay dying. The aluminum tube contains a bundle of seven sticks gathered in the woods of Northern Minnesota and tied together with hemp. The story is printed on hand-made paper that wraps around the bundled sticks.





**2009**

**Seeing Red**

Inspired by  
Sarah Palin's  
speech at  
the Republican  
National  
Convention in  
St. Paul, MN.

"The only difference  
between a pit bull  
and a hockey-mom  
is lipstick."

The red-tipped  
bullet is the lipstick.  
I call the shade  
of red "pit bull."



**2010**

**Past Imperfect**

*fini*, a summation:

Altered book

from a previous  
installation.

CD envelope

containing a gray

felt disc with lyrics  
from "Anthem,"

by Leonard

Cohen, printed

in a spiral.

"Ring the bells that still can ring  
Forget your perfect offering  
There's a crack in everything  
That's how the light gets in."

On the back of  
the envelope  
is a chronology  
of the *Winter  
Projects* from the  
last 20 years.



Harriet Bart's installations, objects, and books have been exhibited extensively throughout the United States and Germany. She has completed more than a dozen public art commissions in the United States, Japan, and Israel. She is a guest lecturer, curator, and founding member of the Traffic Zone Center for Visual Arts in Minneapolis, MN. Bart has been the recipient of fellowships from the Bush Foundation, McKnight Foundation, NEA Arts Midwest, Minnesota State Arts Board, MacDowell Colony, and Virginia Center for Creative Arts. Since 2000 she has published seven fine-press artists books and won two Minnesota Book Awards. Her work is included in many museum, university, and private collections, including: Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Gallery of Art, Library of Congress, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Weisman Art Museum, Jewish Museum, National Museum of Women in the Arts, New York Public Library, and Sackner Archive of Visual and Concrete Poetry.

Design: Clint Greene, Hopkins/Baumann

Photography: Rik Sferra

Cover Stock: 80# Mohawk Jute Loop Cover

Text Stock: 80# Reincarnation Matte Text

Bindery: Foil Stamp Covers, Trim, Fold, Open Spine Glue Bind

Fonts: Gotham Light, Hoefler Titling, Didot

Printing: Print for Change

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