Manystuff Workshop

An ideal library: content & formalization

March 28-29-30, 2011
SINT-LUCAS, GENT
During these three days, students will think of the creation and installation of an ideal library of the Graphic Designer. From a collective selection of publications, thoughtful and argued, owned or "reproduced", they will formalize this selection in a system and organization setup.

The book is a fundamental object in the life of a graphic designer: first because he is one of its creator, also because he gets from it substance to be educated and open-minded. Books specialized in graphic design or typography, but also all kind of books that bring something to his thinking in all areas, in any form, the graphic designer is a big consumer.

What would be the ideal library for a graphic designer? Which books would it be constituted with? And why?

After the selection of books is set up, students will think of an installation system highlighting the characteristic elements of this compilation. The selection and installation will be composed with owned books (personal, borrowed from library...) but also reproduced books (printed cover placed on another one to restore its materiality, printed & stapled pages of a book ... or other tricks). The idea is to give to these books a significant materiality.

Students will finally provide a bibliographic & utilization guide note/instructions about the Library and its utilization.

- Scenarios & angles of approach

A library refer to a building/space, an institution but also a collection, a selection, a specific corpus of books. In french, the word for library, "bibliothèque", is the same for the space, the library, and the bookcase, the furniture for books in a private place.

The workshop is referring to both aspects, the content and its shape/formalization in space.

- Means: computers with Internet, printer & copy machine, paper (A3 & A4), wood/nails/hammer OR other material in order to build the library system/furniture.
A library is a collection of sources, resources, and services, and the structure in which it is housed; it is organized for use and maintained by a public body, an institution, or a private individual. In the more traditional sense, a library is a collection of books. It can mean the collection itself, the building or room that houses such a collection, or both. The term "library" has itself acquired a secondary meaning: "a collection of useful material for common use." This sense is used in fields such as computer science, mathematics, statistics, electronics and biology. It can also be used by publishers in naming series of related books, e.g. The Library of Anglo-Catholic Theology. Libraries most often provide a place of silence for studying (...).

A bookcase, or bookshelf, is a piece of furniture, almost always with horizontal shelves, used to store books. A bookcase consists of a unit including two or more shelves which may not all be used to contain books or other printed materials. Shelves may be fixed or adjustable to different positions in the case. In rooms entirely devoted to the storage of books they may be permanently fixed to the walls and/or floor. Bookcases frequently have doors that should be closed to protect the books from air pollution, and bookshelves are open-fronted. These doors are almost always glazed, so as to allow the spines of the books to be read. Especially valuable books may be kept in locked cases with wooden or glazed doors. A bookshelf normally stands on some other piece of furniture such as a desk or chest. Larger books are more likely to be kept in horizontal piles and very large books flat on wide shelves. (...)

A lectern (from the Latin lectus, past participle of legere, "to read") is a reading desk with a slanted top, usually placed on a stand or affixed to a some other form of support, on which documents or books are placed as support for reading aloud, as in a scripture reading, lecture, or sermon. To facilitate eye-contact and improve posture when facing an audience, lecterns may have adjustable height and slant. Persons generally use lecterns while standing. (...)

![Library and bookshelf image](image-url)
Left: ANTONELLO da Messina, St Jerome in his Study, c. 1460, Oil on wood, 46 x 36 cm, National Gallery, London // Right: Eden Morfaux, ÉTUDE, 2008 , d'après Saint-Jérôme dans son étude, Antonello Da Messina, 1475 bois mdf, 4,18 x 1,80 x 2,92 m

Left: Livre des Miracles de Notre-Dame -BNF- 1456
Hidden bookshelf-door / Secret passage / Trompe-l'œil

(...) Secret passages are used as a plot element or as part of the setting in mythological stories, fiction, and in television programs or films. Secret passages in old buildings, castles, haunted houses, and the lairs of villains or superheroes enable characters to secretly enter or exit the building, access a hidden part of the structure, or enter a supernatural realm. These passageways are often opened by pulling a disguised lever or lock mechanism. In some cases, a certain book on a bookshelf serves as the hidden trigger for the mechanism (...).

Trompe-l'œil, which can also be spelled without the hyphen in English as trompe l'oeil, is an art technique involving extremely realistic imagery in order to create the optical illusion that the depicted objects appear in three dimensions.
The Library of Babel

"The Library of Babel" (Spanish: La biblioteca de Babel) is a short story by Argentine author and librarian Jorge Luis Borges (1899–1986), conceiving of a universe in the form of a vast library containing all possible 410-page books of a certain format. The story originally appeared in Spanish in Borges's 1941 collection of stories El Jardín de senderos que se bifurcan (The Garden of Forking Paths).

Borges's narrator describes how his universe consists of an enormous expanse of interlocking hexagonal rooms, each of which contains the bare necessities for human survival—and four walls of bookshelves. Though the order and content of the books is random and apparently completely meaningless, the inhabitants believe that the books contain every possible ordering of just a few basic characters (letters, spaces and punctuation marks). Though the majority of the books in this universe are pure gibberish, the library also must contain, somewhere, every coherent book ever written, or that might ever be written, and every possible permutation or slightly erroneous version of every one of those books. The narrator notes that the library must contain all useful information, including predictions of the future, biographies of any person, and translations of every book in all languages. Conversely, for many of the texts some language could be devised that would make it readable with any of a vast number of different contents.

Despite — indeed, because of — this glut of information, all books are totally useless to the reader, leaving the librarians in a state of suicidal despair. This leads some librarians to superstitions and cult-like behaviour, such as the "Purifiers", who arbitrarily destroy books they deem nonsense as they move through the library seeking the "Crimson Hexagon" and its illustrated, magical books. Another is the belief that since all books exist in the library, somewhere one of the books must be a perfect catalog of the library's contents; some even believe that a messianic figure known as the "Man of the Book" has read it, and they travel through the library seeking him.
Private case – Enfer (hell)

In a library, the « Private case », called Enfer (hell) in french, is a section where books forbidden to the public are stored. Created in the early nineteenth century, we still find a few. Initially, it was a room in which were locked or lock books, most often erotic, forbidden to the public. Originally, the Private case appeared in monasteries in the days when the Catholic religion was powerful.

Chained library

A chained library is a library where the books are attached to their bookcase by a chain, which is sufficiently long to allow the books to be taken from their shelves and read, but not removed from the library itself. This practice was usual for reference libraries (that is, the vast majority of libraries) from the Middle Ages to approximately the 18th century, as books were extremely valuable during this period. The chains were used to provide sufficient security.

It is standard for chained libraries to have the chain fitted to the corner or cover of a book. This is because if the chain were to be placed on the spine the book would suffer greater wear from the stress of moving it on and off the shelf. Because of the location of the chain attached to the book (via a ringlet) the books are housed with their spine facing away from the reader with only the pages' fore-edges visible (that is, the 'wrong' way round to people accustomed to contemporary libraries). This is so that each book can be removed and opened without needing to be turned around, hence avoiding tangling its chain. (…)

Sol Lewitt, Autobiography, 1980

Autobiography, a highly unusual pictorial presentation, describes LeWitt's work space, tools, cabinets for storage, furniture, books, appliances, clocks, records and tapes, pieces of art and family photographs. The book moves sequentially from the general to the specific, building up a very personal and revealing account of the artist and his involvements. It provides interesting clues to LeWitt, what he thinks, what he does and how he lives. Each of the nine photographs on every page is arranged in a grid format, LeWitt's method of organizing information.
J'aime lire, french magazine for children

PENGUIN DONKEY designed by Egon Riss

etc., etc. ...