

Dip Your Finger into the Book about Max Ernst's Books

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——— By paying close attention to the material body of the book, Max Ernst's (1891–1976) oeuvre extends beyond literature and represents a significant contribution to the artist's book in the 20th century. In his book design, Ernst emphasises the importance of the body of the book and thus seamlessly puts theory into practice.

The year 2019 saw the publication of *“tunke den finger ins tintenmeer”*. *Max Ernst und das Buch* (“dip your finger into the sea of ink”. Max Ernst and the Book) which presented a previously largely unknown body of Ernst's literary work. I used this book along with a comprehensive annotated bibliography as the main reference in the exhibitions I had the pleasure to curate in cooperation with the Paul Clemen Museum Bonn. The shows took place in the Art and Museum Library Cologne and the University Museum Bonn.

By drawing on this curatorial project as well as the current scholarship on the materiality of the book, the article focuses on two topics: first, it presents an overview of Max Ernst's largely unknown poetic and essayistic work, including the discovery of a document that was lost for 65 years. Second, it is a case study of the material body of a book about books. By quoting and transforming Ernst's book designs, the graphic designers implemented a very surprising postmodern design concept.

Keywords: artist's book of the 20th century, visual artist Max Ernst as a poet, literature beyond literature, intermediality, material turn, paratext.

I.

Max Ernst (1891–1976) received worldwide recognition as a visual artist. His work is regularly exhibited in the collections of major museums. In 2005, a his hometown Brühl near Cologne opened a dedicated museum – Max Ernst Museum Brühl des LVR. What has been written about him in the more than 100 years since the beginning of his artistic career fills yards of bookshelves. And yet there are blind spots in his artistic oeuvre that are still overlooked: apart from his better known so-called illustrated books, there is an experimental, intermedial literary work which is, in fact, a literary work beyond literature. Furthermore, it pays close attention to the body of the book itself. Many handwritten documents, drafts and letters testify to how important the book design was to Max Ernst. Other key features of Max Ernst’s writings are multilingualism – he wrote in three languages, German, French, and English – and the author’s fundamental will to reinvent himself time and again, according to his famous dictum: “An artist who has found himself is lost”¹. He used to translate his own texts himself, and when he did so, he used to rewrite them. This is why there are many different printed versions of his writings as well as many different editions of his books. In *Medieval Studies*, Paul Zumthor characterised the mobility of the texts on the basis of oral tradition with the “beau terme” (beautiful notion) of “mouvance” (mobility), as was conceded to him by his counterpart Bernard Cerquolini². Ernst’s writings clearly exemplify the preservation of the mobility of texts, even in the written tradition, which is completely contrary to the aesthetic of the ‘masterpiece’, the finished ‘final version’. It corresponds to Ernst’s conviction that an artist should not find himself. By interweaving image with text and subjecting themselves to constant change his books make a significant contribution to the genre of artist’s book in the 20th century.

II.

Henceforth, we shall gain access to Ernst’s literary work from the perspective that considers the materiality of the book or, even better, its

1 Max Ernst, “Rede anlässlich der Entgegennahme des Lichtwark Preises der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg, 13.01.1964”, in Gabriele Wix, *Max Ernst. Maler, Dichter, Schriftsteller* (München: Fink, 2009); online: 2019, <https://doi.org/10.30965/9783846748121>.

2 Paul Zumthor, *Essai de poétique médiévale* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), 71. See also: Paul Zumthor, *Toward a Medieval Poetics*, trans. Philipp Bennett (Minneapolis, Oxford: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Bernard Cerquolini, *Éloge de la variante. Histoire critique de la philologie* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1989), 120 (footnote 19).

objecthood or thingness³. Within the framework of the so-called ‘material turn’, through which the significance of materiality in literary production – whether by poets, artist-poets or, as we shall see, even scientists, as will be shown – has also come to the fore, it is Gérard Genette who is considered to be the authoritative founder. As early as the 1980s, Genette extended the concept of literature toward the very notion of the book and introduced the category of “paratexts” – the elements that put forth the presence of the text as such. According to his provocative thesis, “Mais ce texte se présente rarement à l’état nu” (This text rarely presents itself naked)⁴. However, he was not received in the English-speaking world until 1997, when the first translation into English was published⁵.

Since his theory of paratext can be assumed to be widely known today, I would like to focus on the aspect that has been largely ignored so far: what can we say about the material body of the first edition of 1987 where Genette presented his investigations into the paratexts, and what does it tell us about his theoretical approach?

Astonishingly enough, the title of the first edition consists of a single word, the metaphor *Seuils* (Thresholds). The book was published in the series “collection Poétique”, founded by Genette and Tzvetan Todorov. In line with the layout of this series, it is a brochure in a plain white, strictly typographic cover; there are no illustrations, nor any graphic elements. That alone is a clear message, especially in view of the new edition of *Seuils* at the Éditions Points of 2002, which presents itself with a full-page color illustration on the cover⁶. The cover illustration shows a child standing in front of a threshold – detail from a baroque painting by Pieter de Hooch, “The Mother” – and appears to have no reference to the content of the book⁷.

As for the first edition, the author’s name is written in orange-red letters on the top of the cover with the title “Seuils” printed below in black ink. Both the author’s name and the title are set close to the bleed-edge,

3 See: Christian Benne, *Die Erfindung des Manuskripts. Zu Theorie und Geschichte literarischer Gegenständlichkeit* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2015).

4 Gérard Genette, *Seuils. Collection poétique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1987), 7.

5 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts. Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Richard Macksey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

6 Genette, *Seuils*.

7 Pieter de Hooch, „Die Mutter“ (The Mother), about 1663, 95,2 x 102,5 cm, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Gemäldegalerie.

classically centered, both in identical type size. At the bottom of the cover, two lines are also set close to the bleed: the name of the series in very small black letters, and underneath – in the same type size as the headlines and thus rather conspicuous – the publisher’s name in orange-red: “aux Éditions du Seuil, Paris”.

The author’s nonchalance and elegance could not be more evident: the book is adorned with a metaphor – “seuils” (thresholds) – which in turn refers back to the publisher’s name “Seuil”. This is not just a “sly wink at his long-time publisher, Editions du Seuil”, as Richard Macksey suggests in his preface to the English edition⁸. In an inimitably sovereign, ironically self-referential gesture, the subject of the study is translated into a typographic image and thus conveyed to the reader by the cover that seems to be saying: this book is about the thresholds that make the text present in the first place, and the thresholds the author is interested in are those of analogue book publications. Every book, and this is the message, too, is inseparably linked to the publisher and – in a supplementary way – the entire network with its cultural, scientific, sociological and economic constituents.

Moreover, the title serves as a metaphor that belies a still latent notion of immateriality and the pure spirituality of literature, which is why Genette’s theory is more topical than ever before. Today, digital transformation processes, in which leafing through the book shifts to navigating across the surfaces, have sharpened the view of the “sophisticated spatial arrangement of book-shaped textuality”, as Carlos Spoerhase puts it as one of the protagonists in the discourse around this book⁹. On the other hand, Genette’s approach maintains an awareness of the materiality of any mediation, digital or analog.

III.

“tunke den finger ins tintenmeer” (dip your finger into the sea of ink) is the beginning of a poem from Max Ernst’s cycle *Paramythen*, published in 1955 in German. A different version, entitled *paramyths*, was first published in 1949. Referring to ink, a material for writing as well as

⁸ Richard Macksey, “Foreword”, in *Gérard Genette: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), XVII. (first edition 1997).

⁹ Carlos Spoerhase: *Linie, Fläche, Raum. Die drei Dimensionen des Buches in der Diskussion der Gegenwart und der Moderne* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2016), 51.



1.

Max Ernst, „tag- und nachtleich“, in: Max Ernst, *Paramythen*, Köln: Verlag Galerie Der Spiegel 1955, n.p. Photo: Jean-Luc Ikelle-Matiba

Max Ernst, tag- und nachtleich, in: Max Ernst, *Paramythen*, Köln: Verlag Galerie Der Spiegel, 1955, Jeano-Luco Ikelle-Matibos fotografija

drawing, the invitation to dip your finger into the sea of ink is the leitmotif for approaching Max Ernst as a writer.

In order to better understand how Ernst works as a poet, it is worth taking a closer look at the double page from the volume *Paramythen* [fig. 1]. The poem, with the opening line that serves as the leitmotif for our investigations, is printed on the left-hand side. Opposite the poem, there is an illustration – no text without picture, that is almost the rule with Ernst. We assume that it is a pen-and-ink drawing. In fact, at the beginning of his career, Ernst disguised the nature of these illustrations and described them as drawings. Only later did he reveal the collage technique that involves on scissors and glue.

For the collages, Max Ernst selected – more or less – ‘suitable’ backgrounds and motifs from old fashioned wood engravings of popular

scientific magazines, catalogues or romance novels from the 19th century and assembled the cut-out parts into enigmatic, surreal worlds. Like a writer who turns his manuscripts into printed words, he printed his collages, carefully making sure that the seams remained invisible.

The picture displays a surrealistic scene. A young girl is standing on a ladder, leaning against a street lamp. Apparently, she is fascinated by a big butterfly in front of the lantern. Strange enough, she does not seem to feel threatened, either by the serpent or by the skeleton around her. In the background, some men are observing the scene, thus doubling the viewer's perspective and creating a dynamics of watching and being watched. Every detail contains cross-references to Ernst's work, which cannot be followed up here. I would rather like to pursue the question of the relationship between image and text. Here we encounter a phenomenon that is characteristic of Ernst's writings. First of all, the text is not stable. In this case, the words made their way from English into German after being freely transferred by Ernst himself and then from German into French as a translation done by another author with the participation of Ernst. In the end, this French version underwent another revision by Ernst.

In contrast to the texts, which vary from language to language and from edition to edition, the images remain stable – unless they are completely omitted. In the first English version from 1949, the only textual references to the image are 'streetlights' and the possessive pronoun 'her' [fig. 2]. Only in the subsequent German and French versions, are there more references to the picture. From this we learn that the image does not just illustrate the text. On the contrary, the image does have any influence on the text. It is not a one-sided relationship, but rather an interaction between image and text. For example, in the first English version of 1949, there was no invitation to put your finger into the sea of ink; Ernst only wrote it for the German version from 1955.

It is remarkable that Ernst's texts can nevertheless do without any pictures at all. Indeed, the texts are printed separately, in this case in the edition of his writings titled *Écritures* from 1970, while the collages were shown in exhibitions independently of the texts¹⁰. With her statement,

¹⁰ Max Ernst, *Écritures* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 383–398. The contributor is working on a German edition of Max Ernst's writings which is due to be published in 2021.



2.

Max Ernst, front cover of *Paramythen. gedichte und collagen*, proof by L.C. Wittig, Darmstadt, by order of Karlsruhe: Fragmente Verlag, 1954, Foto: Jean-Luc Ikelle-Matiba

Knygos viršelis, Max Ernst, *Paramythen: gedichte und collagen* [Paramitai: eilėraščiai ir koliažai], red. L.C. Wittig, Darmstadt, Karlsruhe: Fragmente Verlag, 1954, Jeano-Luco Ikelle-Matibos fotografija; reprodukuota: Gabriele Wix, ed. 2019, p. 225

“Ernst made a work by mixing oil and water”, Lucy Lippard refers to the ambivalent relationship between the two media in a nutshell¹¹. As far as the interplay of image and text is concerned, here we can observe an interaction as well as the autonomy of image and text.

¹¹ Lucy Lippard, “Max Ernst. Passed and Pressing Tensions“, in *The Hudson Review*, vol. 23, no. 4 (Winter, 1970–1971): 701–709.

IV.

Turning now to the books, in which the *Paramyths* were published. All in all, there are five different editions:

1. Max Ernst, *At Eye Level*. *Paramyths*, exhibition catalogue, Beverly Hills, California: The Copley Galleries, 1949, pp. 23–39.
2. Max Ernst, *Paramythen*, Köln: Verlag Galerie Der Spiegel, 1955 (reprint with new cover design in 1964).
3. Max Ernst, *Paramythes*, Paris: Le Point Cardinal, 1967.
4. Max Ernst, “paramythes”, in: *Écritures*, Paris: Gallimard, 1970.
5. Max Ernst, *paramythen. paramyths. paramythes*. *Spiegelschrift 2*, Köln: Verlag Galerie Der Spiegel, 1970.

With regard to these five already known versions, the statement by the Fragmente Verlag has long puzzled researchers: in a newsletter from this publishing house, the-then 27-year-old publisher Reinhard Maria Gerhardt, stated in April 1954 that a book by Ernst entitled *Paramythen* would be completed in the next few days¹². The newsletter informed in detail about the format, the different editions, binding, paper, price, and so on. At that time, the young German publisher was particularly interested in contemporary American literature. Probably this is why he noticed the American edition of *Paramyths* in 1949 and asked Ernst for a German edition for his publishing house. Max Ernst agreed to cooperate and translated the texts into German. *Paramythen* was to be the first edition in Gerhardt’s publishing house. Shortly after the announcement in the newsletter, the young publisher committed suicide. That also meant the end of his publishing house. There were no traces of the book which, according to the newsletter, was about to be completed. His widow, Renate Gerhardt, kept all documents under lock and key.

Surprisingly, in January 2019, just in time for the exhibition and the book on the Ernst project, an antiquarian bookseller offered a contact print of the very edition of the *Paramythen* which Gerhardt had announced in 1954 [fig. 3]. This document consists of twelve DIN A 4 leaves. The edges are torn, the paper is light-brown and water-stained, and the sheets are

¹² Rainer Maria Gerhardt. *Umkreisung. Das Gesamtwerk*, ed. Uwe Pörksen (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2007), 240.



3.

Max Ernst, no title, in: Max Ernst, *At Eye Level. Paramyths*, exhibition catalogue, Beverly Hills, California: The Copley Galleries

Max Ernst, be pavadinimo, in: Max Ernst, *At Eye Level. Paramyths*, exhibition catalogue, Beverly Hills, California: The Copley Galleries, 1949, pp. 26–27, Jeano-Luco Ikelle-Matibos nuotrauka

stapled. The cover sheets are single sheets of paper, the other sheets are double-folded in Japanese binding style. The headlines of the poems are right-justified, the verses loosely set and placed at the lower type area, thus looking exactly like the German version from 1955. Rainer Maria Gerhardt's typographical signature becomes particularly clear against the background of the American first edition which was written in continuous lines [fig. 2]. After 65 years, the find proves that – without making this transparent – Gerhardt's concept had become reality in the edition of the *Der Spiegel* gallery, and the edition of the *Paramythen* announced in the newsletter was not lost. The layout from the publication of the *Der Spiegel* gallery in Cologne from 1955 is identical with the contact print.

This richness of variations is also to be found, for example, in Max Ernst's first collage novel, *La femme 100 tête*, whose length varies from a

book of over 300 pages with 182 illustrations, to a newspaper page of four columns, to a small volume of 20 pages, all without any illustrations, and in the latter variation even the genre changed from novel to poem¹³. His third collage novel, *Une semaine de bonté*, to give another example, first appeared as a sequence of five booklets in colourful covers and was then published as a book¹⁴.

V.

In 2019, Max Ernst's literary book work was presented in two exhibitions, the Art and Museum Library Cologne, which is part of the Ludwig Museum, Cologne and the University Museum Bonn in cooperation with the Paul Clemen Museum Bonn¹⁵. The accompanying publication was conceived not as an exhibition catalogue but as an independent, comprehensive reference book¹⁶. The main focus was on how to represent the specific approach to Ernst's books adequately, which means that not only the contributors, but also – to a greater extent than usual – the graphic designers played a decisive role.

I would like to summarise the collaboration with the graphics team, Silke Fahnert and Uwe Koch, Cologne, in the form of a short workshop report. Among other things, Uwe Koch had published a catalogue raisonné of Martin Kippenberger's books in a double function, as editor and designer¹⁷. The Ernst project could be assumed to be executed with great

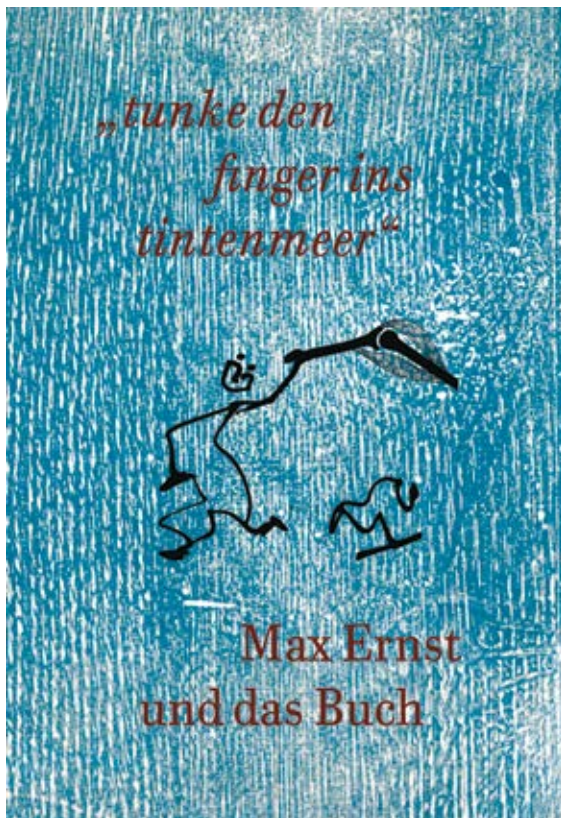
¹³ See: Gabriele Wix, „Kommentierte Bibliografie“, in *„tunke den finger ins tintenmeer“*. *Max Ernst und das Buch*, ed. Gabriele Wix (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2019), 192–201. See also: Gabriele Wix, „Der Text erscheint selten nackt. Max Ernst, La femme 100 têtes“, in *Beihefte zu editio*, vol. 37 (2014): 173–195.

¹⁴ See: Wix, „Kommentierte Bibliografie“, 206–214. See also: Gabriele Wix, „Max Ernst und Lawrence Weiner“, in: *editio. Internationales Jahrbuch für Editionswissenschaft*, vol. 26 (2012): 157–173.

¹⁵ For details see the homepage of the *Art and Museum Library Cologne*: <https://museenkoeln.de/kunst-und-museumsbibliothek/default.aspx?s=6560> and a comprehensive photo documentation on the homepage of the *Art Documentation Centre Cologne*: <https://museenkoeln.de/kunst-und-museumsbibliothek/default.aspx?s=6760>.

¹⁶ Gabriele Wix, ed., *„tunke den finger ins tintenmeer“*, in *Max Ernst und das Buch* (Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther König, 2019). With contributions from Marcel Beyer, Renée Riese Hubert, Jürgen Pech, Joachim Rickes, Gabriele Wix and Harald Wolter-von dem Knesebeck and a comprehensive annotated bibliography. For a view into the book see: <https://museenkoeln.de/kunst-und-museumsbibliothek/default.aspx?s=6813> and https://fahnertkoch.de/works/2019_max_ernst_und-das-buch.html.

¹⁷ Uwe Koch, *Annotated catalogue raisonné of the books by Martin Kippenberger 1977 – 1997 / Kommentiertes Werkverzeichnis der Bücher von Martin Kippenberger*, Köln: Verlag der Buchhandlung Walter König, 2002.

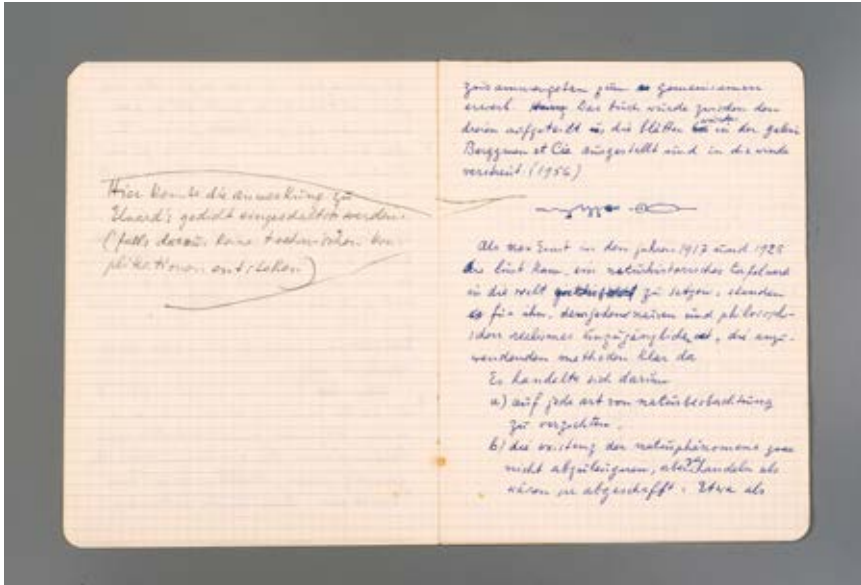


4.
Frontcover of Gabriele Wix, ed.,
„tunke den finger ins tintenmeer“.
Max Ernst und das Buch. Köln:
Verlag der Buchhandlung Walther
König, 2019.

Knygos viršelis, in: Gabriele
Wix, ed., „tunke den finger ins
tintenmeer“. Max Ernst und
das Buch, Köln: Verlag der
Buchhandlung Walther König,
2019

sensitivity. In fact, the inquiry was immediately met with great enthusiasm: “A book about books, that is the supreme discipline.” When the designers presented their draft, the book was created exactly as I would have wished it to be: without me having a concrete idea of what it was.

The design of the cover plays with the manifold levels of Ernst’s creative work as an artist, poet and book designer [fig. 4]. The two little figures who seem to greet the reader – there are another two who toddle off in the end on the back cover – are part of a series of ink drawings which were created by Max Ernst while working on a stage play for the book *Histoires Naturelles II* (natural histories II), published by Galerie Der Spiegel in 1965. The manuscripts show that writing and drawing go hand in hand in his work [fig. 5].



5.
Max Ernst, manuscript of „Anmerkungen“, 1965,
archive of Galerie Der Spiegel, Cologne. Photo: Jean-
Luc Ikelle-Matiba

Max Ernst, Pastabų rankraštiš, 1965, archive of
Galerie Der Spiegel, Cologne, Jeano-Luco Ikelle-
Matibos fotografija

Likewise, the background of the cover also refers to the visual artist: It was an invitation card from the 1950s from which the designer took the motif. It shows the technique of frottage or rubbing technique. Ernst discovered frottage in 1925 in a small village on the French Atlantic coast, when rubbing the wooden structure of a washed-out plank floor of an inn on a piece of paper. “Histoire naturelle” (natural history) was the title of the book with frottages which he published in 1926 and returned to in 1965, and thus the circle is closed.

The decisive thing of the designer’s concept was to interweave the outstanding features of Ernst’s books into the design of “*tunke den finger ins tintenmeer*”, the book about his books. In doing so, the graphic designers had in mind above all the first edition of *Une semaine de bonté*. It is characterised not only by the colourful covers, but also by a very distinctive typography [fig. 6]. The expressive colours divide the tintenmeer-book into

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6.

Max Ernst, *Une semaine de bonté ou les sept éléments capitaux*, Paris: Éditions Jeanne Bucher, 1934. Photo: Jean-Luc Ikelle-Matiba

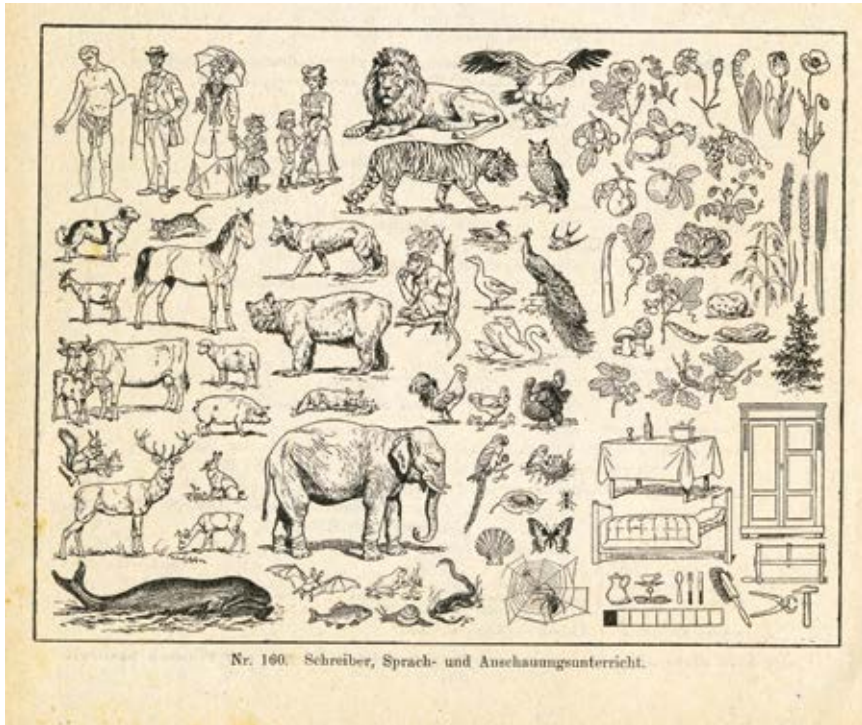
Max Ernst, *Une semaine de bonté ou les sept éléments capitaux*, Paris: Éditions Jeanne Bucher, 1934, Jeano-Luco Ikelle-Matibos fotografija

its individual chapters, and also the typography – slightly modified – was adopted for the chapter and the article headings¹⁸. A very convincing idea was to reuse the leading colour of each chapter for the individual contributions by printing half of the page vertically on the verso in the respective colour. Here again, the name of the author and the complete title of the article is to be found. This not only offered a good orientation when turning the pages, it also meant a certain appreciation of each individual author.

Special effort was put into the design of the annotated bibliography. In advance, the way in which Max Ernst's books were to be depicted had been discussed with the graphic designers and the photographer, and we agreed on a uniform grey background and a diagonal view of the books in order to make their volume clear rather than when depicting them flat¹⁹. Due to the shooting technique, the illustrations were usually in landscape format and took up half a page of the book. The introductions to the

¹⁸ To look inside the book see the link in fn. 16.

¹⁹ Taking the photographs was a particular challenge in that the extremely valuable loaned items had to be photographed on site, and only a few books could be transported and photographed in the studio. To look inside the book see the link in fn. 16.



7.
 Schreiber, *Sprach- und Anschauungsunterricht*,
 in: *Katalog der Kölner Lehrmittel-Anstalt*, Leipzig
 1914, no. 160

Schreiber, „Sprach- und Anschauungsunterricht“,
 in: *Katalog der Kölner Lehrmittel-Anstalt*, Leipzig,
 1914, no. 160, p. 142, Nuskennota: Jürgen Pech;
 reprodukuota: ibid, 41 p.

respective works were full-length, and the detailed information on the individual editions were set in two columns. The focus on the materiality of the book was taken into account not only formally, but also in terms of content, as the bibliographical information included all information on size, binding, paper, typeface, illustrations, printers, designers, etc.

It is the table of contents and the acknowledgements that book designers do not always pay particular attention to. I was pleasantly surprised that the book designers had allowed themselves to play a game with Max Ernst's pictorial motifs. For his early painted work Ernst used a greatly reduced reproduction of an illustration board language learning material from the beginning of the 20th century [fig. 7], and it is discussed and depicted

in one of the contributions in the book²⁰. The designers copied individual motifs from it and thus illustrated, somewhat disrespectfully, the usually rather monotonous pages of the table of contents and acknowledgements. On the latter, for example, the bear stretches out its fat rear end towards the viewer and turns its head towards him with a mischievous grin. The ‘table’ of contents is decorated with a laid table. On the title page, a thick whale fills in the space just to create a balance on the double page²¹.

VI.

In conclusion, it can be said that the book design reflects the specific character of Ernst’s books. It emphasises the importance of the material body of the book, and thus it forms an almost self-evident translation of theory into practice.

In addition, the self-ironic, postmodern approach of interweaving multitude of layers is not only an expression of *Zeitgeist* and joy of playing. It is at the core of Ernst’s understanding of the artist. In 1964, when he was over seventy years old, he said on the occasion of receiving the Lichtwark award:

A real artist does not really do anything, in any case nothing in the sense that he would need or deserve recognition for. An artist has only one task in his life: never overestimate himself, never take himself too seriously, and always be clear about how far his merits might reach²².

Last but not least, we should not miss the pun in translation: the artist’s last name ‘Ernst’ means ‘serious’ in English.

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20 Wix, ed., „tunke den finger ins tintenmeer“, 41.

21 To look inside the book see the link in fn. 16.

22 Max Ernst, „Rede anlässlich der Entgegennahme des Lichtwark-Preises der Freien und Hansestadt Hamburg (13.1.1964)“, in *Gabriele Wix 2009 und 2019*.

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Gabriele Wix ———

Dip Your Finger into the Book about Max Ernst's Books

Santrauka

Kyštelk pirštą į knygą apie Maxo Ernsto knygas

Gabriele Wix

Reikšminiai žodžiai: XX a. menininko knyga, menininkas Maxas Ernstas kaip poetas, literatūra ir anapus literatūros, materialusis posūkis, paratekstas.

2019 m. pirmąkart viešai pristatyta iki tol mažai žinota menininko Maxo Ernsto (1891–1976) literatūrinė kūryba. Parodos, kurias man teko garbė kuruoti bendradarbiaujant su Paulo Clemeno muziejumi Bonoje, vyko Kelno meno muziejaus bibliotekoje ir Bonos universiteto muziejuje. Kaip Maxo Ernsto dailei, taip ir jo literatūrinei kūrybai būdinga eksperimentinė intriga. Jo kūryba – internacionalinė ir tarpmedijinė, o su knygos materialumu glaudžiai susijusi forma kito su kiekvienu nauju leidiniu. Ir iš tiesų Ernstui pavyko išsiplėsti už literatūros ribų, o jo knygos tapo svariu įnašu į XX a. meninės knygos žanrą.

Jo literatūrinę kūrybą tinkamiausia yra interpretuoti iš knygos materialumo, tiksliau – objektiškumo arba daiktiškumo perspektyvos. Vadinamojo „materialiojo posūkio“ kontekste išryškinama materialumo svarba literatūrinėje poetų, menininkų ar net mokslininkų kūryboje, o šio judėjimo pradininku laikomas Gérard'as Genette'as. Be kita ko, galima būtų teigti, kad Genette'o parateksto teorija yra kaip niekad aktuali, pavyzdžiui, parateksto samprata plačiai vartojama naujųjų medijų teorijoje. Tuo pačiu itin svarbu pabrėžti, kad skaitmeninė transformacija, kurios kontekste knygos puslapių sklaidymas keičiamas skaitmeniniu naršymu, privertė, Carloso Spoerhasės žodžiais tariant, atidžiau pažvelgti į „subtilų erdvinį knygishkojo tekstualumo pateikimą“.

Ernsto literatūrinės kūrybos visuma dar nėra iki galo išnagrinėta. Dėl jos svarbos pagalbini publikacija „*Kyštelk pirštą į knygą apie Maxo*

Ernsto knygas“. *Max Ernst ir knyga* buvo sumanyta ne kaip parodos katalogas, o kaip žinynas su išsamiai anotuota bibliografija. Pagrindinė leidinio užduotis – adekvatus Ernsto knygų pristatymas, vadinasi, svarbus vaidmuo teko ne tik bendraautoriams, bet – kur kas labiau nei įprastai – ir grafiniams dizaineriams.

Šiame straipsnyje nagrinėjamos dvi temos. Viena vertus, tai Ernsto literatūrinės ir knyginės kūrybos analizė, kurioje aptariami įvairūs 1949–1970 m. parašytų trumpų tekstų rinkinio *Paramitų* tiražai. Čia svarbu paminėti, kad neseniai buvo atrasta iki tol nežinoma 1954 m. parengta knygos signalinė kopija, kuri pasirodė esanti trūkstama grandis šios knygos leidybos istorijoje. Kita vertus, tai paties materialiojo knygos kūno tyrimas. Cituodami ir transformuodami Ernsto knygos dizaino elementus, grafikos dizaineriai įtvirtino itin netikėtą postmoderniojo dizaino sampratą. Tuo būdu parodinės knygos dizainas ne tik atspindi specifinį Ernsto knygos pobūdį, bet ir pabrėžia knygishkojo kūno svarbą ir kone savaime suprantamu būdu išverčia teoriją į praktiką.