

Voorwoord - Oor die einders van die bladsy

Preface - Transgressions and boundaries of the page

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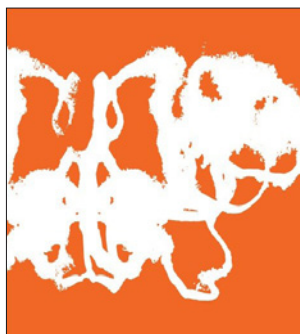
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Hierdie uitgawe van *Literator* word gewy aan die skeppende projek, *Oor die einders van die bladsy*. Die projek behels 'n transdissiplinêre ondersoek na die genre van die kunstenaarsboek. Die projek as geheel word verder ook binne die veld van praktykgebaseerde¹ navorsing geplaas. Betrokkenes vanuit 'n aantal dissiplines het meegewerk aan hierdie projek – waaronder ook Grafiese Ontwerp, Skryfkuns en Kunstgeskiedenis. Die projek is onderneem onder die vaandel van die Navorsingseenheid: Tale en Literatuur in die Suid-Afrikaanse Konteks sowel as die opkomende navorsingsnis vir Visuele Kultuur (t.w. Visuele Narratiewe in die Suid-Afrikaanse Konteks) by die Potchefstroomkampus van die Noordwes-Universiteit. Hierdie projek volg in die voetspore van die suksesvolle *Op die spoor van Kreatiewe Kreature-projek 2007–2009* (*Literator* 30[1]), wat op sigself ook 'n grootskaalse skeppende praktykgebaseerde navorsingsprojek was.

Oor die einders van die bladsy gee gestalte aan ons beskouing dat die skeppende dissiplines 'n deeglike en volhoubare navorsingskonteks tot stand moet bring en dat hierdie konteks praktiese kunspraktyk (wat voortkom uit diep ingebedde kennis) sowel as publikasies (wat 'n eksplisiete vorm van navorsingskennis is) moet insluit en na waarde moet skat. Om hierdie oogmerk te bereik, is 40 kunstenaars uit verskillende velde soos visuele kunste en skryfkuns genooi om kunstenaarsboeke te skep. Deelnemers sluit kunstenaars en navorsers verbonde aan akademiese instellings soos die Universiteit van Johannesburg, die Noordwes-Universiteit en die Universiteit van Pretoria in. Daar was ook 'n gemeenskapsaspek betrokke, waarvan die prominentste die Tambani-gemeenskapsprojek uit Venda was. Die kunstenaarsboeke is gedurende 2010 by groepuitstallings van die projek in Stellenbosch, Potchefstroom en Johannesburg uitgestal. (Vir 'n uitgebreide beskrywing van die projek en bestuursfasette daarvan, kyk asseblief na

1. *Praktykgebaseerde navorsing* is die term wat ons gebruik het op die tydstip toe die projek gekonseptualiseer en die titel daarvan geformuleer is. Die meer onlangse neiging is egter om eerder die term *praktykgeleide navorsing* te gebruik om sodoende die klem te plaas op die feit dat navorsingsuitsette vanuit die praktyk voortvloei en daarvan afhanklik is.



This edition of *Literator* is devoted to the creative project *Transgressions and boundaries of the page*, which is a transdisciplinary investigation into the genre of the artist's book. The project is situated in the context of practice-based¹ research. The disciplines involved in this project represent (but are not limited to) Graphic Design, Creative Writing and

History of Art. The project was conducted under the auspices of the Research Unit: Languages and Literature in the South African Context as well as the developing research niche for visual culture (entitled Visual Narratives in the South African Context) on the Potchefstroom Campus of the North-West University. This project follows in the footsteps of the successful *Tracking Creative Creatures Project 2007–2009* (*Literator* 30[1]), which was also a large-scale creative practice-based research project.

Transgressions and boundaries of the page manifest our belief that the creative disciplines need to negotiate and establish a sustainable and rigorous research context that circumscribes and values artistic practice (which emanates from tacit knowledge) as well as textual outputs (described as explicit research). In order to address this pursuit, 40 artists from diverse creative fields such as visual arts and creative writing as well as related spheres of practice were invited to create artist's books for the project. The participants included artists and researchers from academic institutions such as the University of Johannesburg, the North-West University and the University of Pretoria. The project also included a community dimension – most notably the Tambani community project located in Venda. The artist's books produced by participants were shown at dedicated group exhibitions in Stellenbosch, Potchefstroom and Johannesburg during 2010. (For a detailed description of the project and related management issues, please refer to Ian Marley's article entitled *Investigating the appropriateness of the theory of organisational knowledge creation as a management*

1. *Practice-based research* was the term used when the project was conceptualised and the title formulated. However, more recently the tendency has been to use the term *practice-led research* to emphasise the fact that research outputs emanate from and are reliant on practice.

Ian Marley se artikel in hierdie uitgawe van *Literator*.) Hierdie veelfasettige projek was toegespits op uiteenlopende uitkomst. Spesifieke doelstellings het die volgende ingesluit:

- Om 'n konseptuele en funksionele ruimte vir kreatiewe praktyk oor dissiplinegrense heen daar te stel. Binne sodanige ruimte sou deelnemers hulle kon ingrawe in verskillende kreatiewe fasette van praktykgebaseerde navorsing en navorsingsdata kon genereer waaruit publikasies sou kon voortvloei.
- Om die skeppende groepsdinamiek van hierdie tipe projek te ontgin ten einde interdisiplinêre navorsing te stimuleer.
- Om praktisyns bewus te maak van die aard en prosesse van praktykgeleide navorsing. Sodanige insigte is daarop gemik om hulle eie praktyk meer doelgerig as navorsing in te klee.
- Om 'n geleentheid te bied vir kritiese refleksie en evaluering van die praktykgebaseerde benadering of struktuur wat ons volg; ook met die mikpunt om spesifieke navorsingsuitsette soos geakkrediteerde artikels, kongresbydraes, ensovoorts te lewer.
- Om 'n bydrae te lewer tot die huidige akademiese gesprek oor praktykgeleide navorsing met sy uiteenlopende benaderings en toepassingsmoontlikhede om sodoende by te dra tot die nasionale en internasionale debate oor die status en aard van praktykgeleide navorsing.

Om aan hierdie doelstellings te kan bereik is die projek oor drie jaar beplan. In die eerste jaar (2009) van die siklus is die projek beplan en van stapel gestuur. Hierdie fase was daarop gerig om die projek te kontekstualiseer en om toepaslike teoretiese raamwerke uit te bou. Die grootste deel van die jaar is gewy aan skeppende ontdekking en produksie. Kunstenaars het tydens hierdie fase hulle skeppende werk uitgevoer en daarvoor gereflekteer. Die voortbrenging en toepassing van ingebedde kennis (*tacit knowledge*) is beskou as die hoofaktiwiteit van die projek tydens die eerste jaar van die projeksiklus.

Die kunstenaarsboeke is tydens die tweede jaar (2010) van die siklus uitgestal. Inligtingssessies en gespreksgeleenthede is by die onderskeie uitstalruimtes aangebied. Hierdie aktiwiteite vorm deel van die proses van disseminasie van skeppende uitsette en kennis. Die skeppende werk sowel as die openbare interaksie is deurlopend gedokumenteer en deur middel van 'n projekwebblad beskikbaar gestel. Die laaste jaar (2011) van die projeksiklus het behels dat eksplisiete navorsingsuitsette gelewer word in die vorm van 'n gedrukte en digitale katalogus, 'n colloquium, akademiese artikels en kongresreferate.

Ons kan hierdie projek as 'n ryk verkenningstog beskryf. Eerstens spog die projek met 'n verskeidenheid fassinerende en boeiende kunstenaarsboeke wat op sigself 'n bydrae gelewer het tot die uitbreiding en bevraagtekening van die kunstenaarsboek as genre. Uit hierdie skeppende fase het navorsingsartikels voortgevloei wat op hulle beurt 'n aantal kwessies voortspruitend uit die boeke belig, ondervra en dekonstrueer. Twaalf van hierdie artikels verskyn in hierdie spesiale uitgawe van *Literator*.

model for practice-led research in this edition of *Literator*.) This was a multifaceted project, and our aims were varied. Specific aims included are the following:

- Create a space – conceptually as well as functionally – for creative practice across disciplines. In this space, participants would be able to participate in various creative dimensions of practice-led research and generate research data from which explicit (textual) research outputs can be developed.
- Tap into the creative group dynamics of such a project in order to stimulate interdisciplinary research practice.
- Improve practitioners' awareness of and insight into the nature and processes of practice-led research to allow them to formalise their practice more purposefully as research.
- Stimulate critical reflection on and evaluation of the practice-based research approach or structure, also with the purpose of yielding explicit research outputs in the form of accredited journal articles, conference contributions and the like.
- Contribute to the current discourse on practice-led research with its diverse approaches and applications, with a view to contribute to the national and international debate on the status and nature of practice-led research.

In order to achieve these aims, the project was managed in a three-year cycle. The project was planned and launched during the first year (2009) of this cycle. This phase was designed to contextualise the project and to outline relevant theoretical points of departure. The rest of the year was dedicated to artistic exploration and production. During this phase, artists engaged and reflected on their creative production – both individually and collaboratively. The generation and application of tacit knowledge was seen as the most significant activity of this first year.

During the second year (2010) the artist's books were exhibited. To complement the exhibitions, various walkabouts and information sessions were held at the venues. These activities together make up that part of the process that is characterised by the dissemination of artistic outputs and knowledge. Throughout this phase, the creative work and public interaction were extensively documented and made public by means of a project webpage – which also served as a central source of contextualising information and source material for further research. The final year (2011) of the project entailed the generation of explicit research outputs in the form of a printed and digital catalogue, a colloquium, scholarly research articles and conference papers.

This project can be described as a rich exploratory journey. It yielded a variety of provocative and intriguing artist's books, which in many ways can be said to have contributed to, questioned and expanded the genre of artist's books. Based on the creative phase, research articles were produced that explore, elucidate and deconstruct issues initiated by the artist's books. Twelve of these articles are presented in

Hierdie projek verkry sy lewensbloed uit ingebedde kennis sowel as eksplisiete kennis – maar genereer ook kennismodaliteite in die verskillende fases. Alhoewel eksplisiete kennis, met ander woorde teksgebaseerde uitsette, dikwels die kennisdimensie is wat die meeste aansien as navorsingspublikasies geniet het ons gehou by ons meer holistiese beskouing van kennis wat aan die begin van die projek uiteengesit is. Om die leser byvoorbeeld die belangrike verbinding tussen die twee tipes kennis te laat maak, is skakels na die projekwebblad by elke artikel ingevoeg. Sodoende kan die produk van ingebedde kennis (die artefak) saam met die eksplisiete kennis wat na vore kom in die artikels, beskou word. Afbeeldings van kunswerke op 'n rekenaarskerm is weliswaar nie die beste manier om na kunstenaarsboeke te kyk nie. Hierdie soort boek nooi jou immers uit om dit te hanteer sodat jy die tasbare, interaktiewe aard daarvan kan ervaar. Desnieteenstaande gee die visuele materiaal op die webblad die leser wel 'n indruk van die omvang en kompleksiteit van die projek as geheel. Ons glo daarom dat die webblad die artikels in hierdie uitgawe sal belig en verryk. Benewens 'n oorsig van die projek bevat die webblad (www.bookboek.co.za) ook biografiese inligting van die kunstenaars, afbeeldings van elke kunstenaarsboek, besonderhede van uitstallings en die gemeenskapsprojekte, asook verwante publikasies – met inbegrip van die katalogus. Verder bevat die *Litera*-afdeling van hierdie uitgawe van *Literator* skeppende skryfwerk wat uit die projek voortspruit.

Die eksplisiete navorsingsuitsette wat in hierdie uitgawe van *Literator* vervat is, word uit verskillende oogpunte benader. Die eerste drie artikels bied 'n raamwerk vir die projek, die uitstalling en die gedagte van kunstenaarsboeke as sodanig. In die eerste artikel gee Ian Marley 'n konteksmatige oorsig oor die projek as geheel en dui hy aan hoe kennis in die veld van multipraktisyn-praktykgeleide projekte tot stand kom. Hy argumenteer dat kennis in hierdie konteks 'n subjektiewe en sosiaal-gekonstrueerde fenomeen is wat, indien dit reg bestuur word, tot die produksie van sowel ingebedde as eksplisiete kennis kan lei. Hy doen aan die hand dat Nonaka (1994) se teorie van organisatoriese kenniskepping 'n gepaste bestuursmodel in hierdie konteks is. In die volgende artikel argumenteer Rita Swanepoel dat die interdisiplinêre aard van *Oor die einders van die bladsy* daarop dui dat die uitstalling as geheel 'n tipe taalgebaseerde installasiekuns is wat die strekking van ons begrip van installasiekuns op 'n speelse wyse uitdaag. In sy artikel bied David Paton repliek op Johanna Drucker se versugting dat 'n sterker teoretiese basis nodig is om gesonde intellektuele omgang met die kunstenaarsboek te bewerkstellig. Paton ontwikkel 'n teorie van die kunstenaarsboek as 'n liminale en polivalente verskynsel met verwysing na Bakhtin se beskouings oor dialogisme en heteroglossia.

In die drie artikels wat hierop volg, reflekteer kunstenaar-navorsers oor verskillende aspekte van hulle skeppende prosesse. Leora Farber beskryf die oorsprong, historiese konteks en teoretiese hoekstene van haar kunswerk *The*

this special edition of *Literator*. To date, the project has also generated three national and five international conference papers and two additional research articles.

This project consequently drew on, and generated both tacit and explicit knowledge modalities during its different phases. Whilst the notion of explicit knowledge (and thus textual output) tends to be the most valued knowledge dimension that is presented in research publications, we have opted to remain faithful to the holistic conceptualisation of knowledge (in a perspective that values both tacit and explicit knowledge) that has been envisioned at the outset. For example, in order to facilitate the salient connection between the two types of knowledge in the mind of the reader, links to the project webpage have been inserted into each article – this means that the tacit knowledge product (the artefact) can be viewed in conjunction with the explicit knowledge presented in the articles. Whilst viewing art on a computer screen is not the ideal way to engage with artist's books (these books invite one to handle and experience them in a tactile and interactive manner), the visuals on the webpage do provide the reader with an idea of the scope and complexity of the project as a whole. We therefore firmly believe that the webpage will inform and enrich the articles included in this edition. The webpage (www.bookboek.co.za) contains an overview of the project, biographic information on artists and images of each artist's book, exhibition details and images, community projects, as well as related publications including the exhibition catalogue. Additionally, the *Litera* section of this edition of *Literator* contains creative writing emanating from the project.

The explicit research included in this *Literator* has been approached from different perspectives. The first three articles provide a framework for the project, the exhibition and artist's books as such. In the first article, Ian Marley contextualises the project as a whole and sets out to show how knowledge is generated in the sphere of multipractitioner practice-led projects. He argues that knowledge in this context is a subjective and socially constructed phenomenon which, if managed correctly, can give rise to both tacit and explicit knowledge. To this end, he proposes the theory of organisation knowledge creation as conceptualised by Nonaka (1994) as an appropriate knowledge management model. In her article, Rita Swanepoel argues that the interdisciplinary nature of *Transgressions and boundaries of the page* constitutes a type of language-based installation art which playfully ameliorates the notion of conceptual art. In his article, David Paton responds to Johanna Drucker's challenge that a stronger theoretical foundation needs to be developed with a view to facilitate proper intellectual engagement with the artist's book. Paton develops a theory of the artist's book as liminal and polyvocal phenomenon with reference to Bakhtin's notions of dialogism and heteroglossia.

In three subsequent articles, artists-researchers reflect on different aspects of their creative production. Leora Farber

futility of writing 24-page letters (2009). Hierdie werk vloei voort uit haar uitstalling *Dis-location/Re-location* van 2008. Op hulle beurt bied Christiaan van der Westhuizen en Rita Swanepoel 'n konteks en reflektiewe beskouing van die stappe in die proses van die skep van 'n digitale animasieboek. Hierdie boek bevat borduurwerke deur vroue wat by die Tambani-projek betrokke is. Sleuteltonele uit 'n tradisionele Venda-volksverhaal is op geborduurde panele uitgebeeld. Van der Westhuizen het hierdie tonele digitaal verwerk en geanimeer om uiteindelik 'n digitale kunstenaarsboek (*The Greedy Hippo*) te skep.

Leti Kleyn se artikel bespreek nog 'n samewerkingsprojek, *sanity on the line*. Hierdie boek bestaan uit konkrete poësie wat studente in Kreatiewe Skryfkuns aan die Universiteit van Pretoria onder Kleyn se leiding geskryf het. Kleyn gee 'n oorsig van die aard, kenmerke en moontlikhede van konkrete poësie en verwys na verskeie praktisyns in hierdie verband. Sy plaas haar studente se werk ook binne variasies van die genre. In 'n verwante artikel ondersoek Franci Greyling die skeppende remediasie wat Fanie Viljoen bewerkstellig het deur sy eie kortverhaal *Pynstiller* na 'n grafiese roman om te werk. Die verkenning van die skeppende proses en die finale produk word benader met verwysing na die konsepte *intermedialiteit*, *narratologie*, *prenteboek* en die teorie van grafiese vertelling. Greyling se artikel bevestig dat die kunstenaarsboek 'n ideale medium is waardeur grense uitgedaag en oorgesteek kan word.

'n Aantal artikels bied ook 'n kritiese blik op geselekteerde kunstenaarsboeke uit verskillende teoretiese oogpunte. Rita Swanepoel en Moya Goosen interpreteer Leora Farber se *The futility of writing 24-page letters* binne 'n feministiese, postkoloniale raamwerk. Louismarié Combrink bespreek die kunstenaarsboeke deur Paul Schutte (*Boom van my lewe*) en Richardt Strijdom en Jaco Burger (*Ad hominem*). Sy ontleed hierdie boeke met verwysing na manlike weerloosheid en die gepaardgaande deurbreking na konvensionele binêre skeidings tussen die geslagsrolle. In haar artikel bied Dineke van der Walt 'n vergelykende studie van *Die hebsugtige seekoei* ('n Vendaverhaal) en *Rooikappie*. Sy belig 'n aantal ooreenkomste tussen die stories en voer aan dat die idee van die groteske in albei stories gebruik word om die narratiewe boodskap te anker. John Botha se artikel bied ook 'n vergelykende studie – hy bied 'n oorsig oor die gebruik van fantasiebeelde in die animasie *The Greedy Hippo* en die film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000). Laastens bespreek Jean le Clus-Theron Strijdom van der Merwe se kuns sowel as die idee van aardkuns met verwysing na Van der Merwe se kunstenaarsboek en sy aardkuns. Sy toon aan hoe hierdie aspekte in die konteks van die historiese en eietydse kunsmark gelees en geïnterpreteer kan word.

Agt van die twaalf artikels in hierdie uitgawe kan as kritiese teoretiese studies van die kunstenaarsboeke beskryf word. Die oorblywende vier artikels handel oor breër aangeleenthede binne praktykgeleide navorsing. Alhoewel hierdie projek weliswaar 'n aantal kwessies en uitdagings ten opsigte van praktykgeleide navorsing aangepak het, is daar heelwat wat nog in hierdie veld gedoen moet word. Desnieteenstaande kan ons sê dat *Oor die einders van die bladsy*

explores the conception, historical context and theoretical underpinnings of her artwork *The futility of writing 24-page letters* (2009) – this work is a further development of the work shown on her 2008 exhibition *Dis-location/Re-location*. In their turn, Christiaan van der Westhuizen and Rita Swanepoel contextualise and reflect on the steps of the creative process leading to a collaboratively produced digitally animated book. This book first entailed that embroideries were produced by members of the Tambani project; these embroideries represent key scenes from a traditional Venda folktale, *The Greedy Hippo*. Van der Westhuizen then digitally animated these scenes to produce a final digital artist's book.

The article by Leti Kleyn explores another collaborative project, *sanity on the line*, which consists of concrete poetry produced by students in a Creative Writing course under Kleyn's guidance at the University of Pretoria. Kleyn offers an overview of the nature, characteristics and potential of concrete poetry with reference to diverse practitioners and situates her students' work in this genre. In a related article, Franci Greyling investigates the creative remediation achieved by Fanie Viljoen by rewriting his own short story *Pynstiller* [*Painkiller*] into a graphic novel. The creative process and the final product are investigated with reference to the concepts of *intermediality*, *narratology*, *picture book* and *comic theory*. Greyling's article confirms the premise that the artist's book is an ideal medium for challenging and transcending various boundaries.

Several subsequent articles present readings of selected artist's books from specific theoretical perspectives. Rita Swanepoel and Moya Goosen interpret Leora Farber's *The futility of writing 24-page letters* by means of a feminist, post-colonial framework. Louismarié Combrink engages with the work of Paul Schutte (*Boom van my lewe* – [*Tree of my life*]) and Richardt Strijdom and Jaco Burger (*Ad hominem*) and explores these in terms of masculine vulnerability and the transgression of conventional gender binaries. In her article, Dineke van der Walt presents a comparative reading of *The Greedy Hippo* (Venda folklore) and *Red Riding Hood*; she highlights a number of similarities and argues that the notion of the grotesque is used in both stories to entrench the narrative message. John Botha also offers a comparative analysis – he explores the use of fantasy imagery in the animation *The Greedy Hippo* and the film *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon* (2000). Finally, Jean le Clus-Theron explores the work of Strijdom van der Merwe and the concept of land art in the light of Van der Merwe's artists' book as well as his land art – and demonstrates how these can be read and problematised in the context of the historical and contemporary art market.

Of the twelve articles presented in this edition, eight can be characterised as critical theoretically informed readings of the artist's books, whilst four address larger concerns of practice-led research. Whilst this project has indeed addressed a number of concerns and challenges associated with practice-led research, much remains to be done in this

'n veel groter bewustheid van praktykgeleide navorsing in die skeppende dissiplines teweeg gebring het. Ons glo dat projekte soos hierdie steeds sal meehelp om ons begrip van die dinamiese aard van praktykgeleide navorsing te verfyn – veral ook van die saamwerkmoontlikhede daarvan. Ons hoop ook dat sulke projekte sal bydra tot die definiëring van navorsingskontekste binne navorsingsinstellings.

Ten slotte moet ons beklemtoon dat 'n projek van hierdie aard en omvang slegs kan slaag indien daar genoegsame ondersteuning van die betrokke instansie is. Ons was werklik bevoorreg dat die Dekaan van die Fakulteit Lettere en Wysbegeerte, die betrokke skooldirekteure en ook die direkteur van die navorsingseenheid almal opreg in die projek belanggestel het en dit hartlik finansiëel en met hulle goedgesindheid ondersteun het. Ons waardeer dit grootliks. Ons betuig graag ons dank aan al ons borge, veral die Nasionale Kunstraad (*National Arts Council*), alle deelnemers wat tot die sukses van die projek bygedra het, die eweknie-keurderspaneel vir hulle insigte, kommentaar en voorstelle, en laastens ook aan die redaksie van *Literator* vir die saamstel van hierdie uitgawe.

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regard. Nonetheless, *Transgressions and boundaries of the page* has created much greater awareness of the functioning of practice-led research within the creative disciplines. Consequently collaborative ties have been forged between staff members of the creative disciplines and those from History of Art in particular. It is our hope that projects like this one will continue to refine our understanding of dynamics of practice-led research and its collaborative potential, and in the process contribute to the institutional definition of research contexts.

In conclusion, we would like to highlight that a project of this nature can only succeed with sound institutional support. We were, indeed, very lucky in this regard: the Dean of the Arts Faculty, relevant school directors, as well as the research unit director were supportive and encouraging – financially and in terms of general goodwill. We would like to also extend our gratitude to all sponsors, in particular the National Arts Council, as well as participants who contributed to the success of the project, the peer review panel for their insightful comments and suggestions, and the *Literator* editorial team for the compilation of this edition.

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