

Bill Harroff's Books

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I took a creative writing class in college and received an unjustified "A." The class helped propel me into the visual arts as I recognized my fundamental lack of vocabulary and writing skill. Below is one such example:

How the Frog Prince Transformed Into the Movable Book King (a visual fairy tale)

Once upon a time there lived the beautiful Princess Charlotte and her intended, Prince William. They were happily engaged in book art lives as academic librarians and artists. On November 22, 1989, William fell seriously ill. His days were spent bedridden in unrelenting pain. Unemployment, antibiotic overdoses, sleeplessness, and depression aggravated the condition. There seemed no end in sight despite the Princess' ministrations. Numerous specialists and three trips to the Mayo Clinic proved ineffective. William turned into a sad lonely embittered frog.

What a perfect time for making art! But how does one continue one's art path that, up to that point, consisted of books created of highly detailed life drawings? Eventually, the Frog Prince realized he had to give up his past.

Once he did, he discovered a new supportive imaginative family in the "Eternal Network" of correspondence art. No one judged him or his art. Costs were few. Other artists sought him out in dialogue. His mind turned to creative problem solving. The Frog's righteous anger found focus in satirical avatars.



Anne's Biography

It seemed inevitable that William the Frog would end up flat on his back for the rest of his life. How then to be employable and resume his career? He considered what would be anathema to all he held dear; becoming a digital artist!

And so, at last, all of the transformative elements were in place. William began creating funny little objects on his tummy to entertain Princess Charlotte. They laughed and assumed his new bookworks would never go beyond the two of them. The Frog Prince studied snowglobe containers, flutter (the proper term for the "snow" in snowglobes), and chemistry in order to bring his vision to life. He developed an inventive rhythm, direction, theme and unique style due to the creative limitations of the globes.



I Pledge



Catching a Few Zs

He slowly returned to exhibiting his artwork, even if he couldn't physically attend the shows. He found a following, support (thank you Women's Studio Workshop) and recognition.

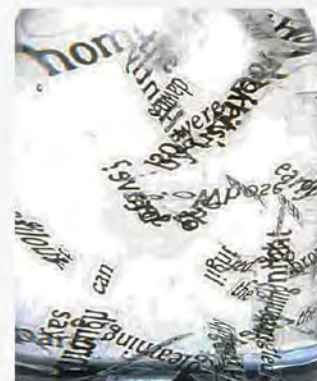
People realized that each "reading" of a snowglobe bookwork was an entirely new experience, as inviting as a traditional book. The words and symbols were liberated from the printed page and control of the order was shifted away from the creator and subject to the interactive manipulations of the viewer. The nature of these movable books caused the viewer to concentrate on both the meaning of the individual phrases and the intriguing, twisting forms in space.



Safe Sex



Bomb's Away: Iraq



Oh Say. Detail

In 1995, the snowglobe bookworks were recognized with a National Endowment for the Arts / Arts Midwest Visual Art Regional Fellowship, crowning William, the (unofficial) Movable Book King!

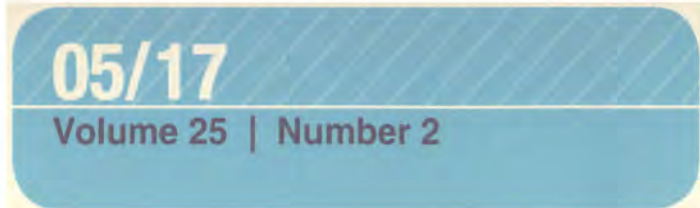
In addition, MOMA intended to create an entire line of the new King's snowglobes, but the museum's Board ultimately decided they would rather work with dead artists they no longer needed to "reward!"



The Black Hole: the Clarence Thomas Hearings



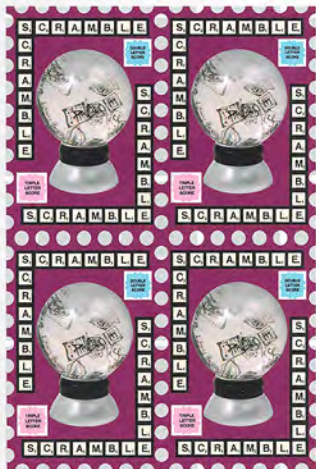
2B or Not. Detail



Where Do You Stand on the Flag



Bill's Rights: the 2nd Amendment



Scramble Artstamps

Princess Charlotte and King William, may not live happily ever after, but they're working at it. How the Movable Book

King morphed into Wascally Wee Willy is, perhaps, a tale for another day; as is his spontaneous mystical healing at the edge of suicide that set the course for his eventual recovery. (Though that is a story best told in other forums.)

We are still living through our tale. Real life rarely offers the simplistic moral satisfaction of fairy tales. The works reproduced in this article originated and developed during this "painful period."



Wascally Wee Willy Logo

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