

## Lubok Verlag

The Lubok Verlag was set up as publishing project following the encounter between the artist Christoph Ruckhäbele and the graphic designer and printer Thomas Siemon. Their common fascination with artist books and the enthusiasm for the medium of graphic art soon resulted in the idea of publishing original graphic books in high editions with linocuts by contemporary artists.

In 2007 the first issue of the original graphic Lubok Series was released. Its edition of 500 numbered copies soon was out of print. In January 2011 Lubok 10 was published. Each volume contains linocuts by about 10 different artists - Lubok 9 comprises more than 30 - who were mainly found in the beginning by publisher Christoph Ruckhäberle within the Leipzig art scene around the Academy of Visual Arts and the historic factory complex Spinnerei. One determinant thereby is the equality of the artistic positions, the compilation of young and established artists without any marking of the students and their so called masters. Only the format and the reduction of the colours black and white are compulsory - whereas Lubok 10 is the first issue printed in two colours- , everything else is left up to the artists. The connection between the single issues is therefore less in content than in form. To realize one's own artistic handwriting and one's own imagery in the often unusual and rather traditional medium of linocut is a challenge that the artists happily accept. They often use the Lubok series as an experimental field what leads to correspondingly manifold results.

As Christoph Ruckhäberle selects the participating artists, Thomas Siemon prints the books on his Präsident cylinder press of the year 1958 in his workshop edition carpe plumbum at the Spinnerei. The linocuts are printed from the original plate in editions between 300 and 1500 copies what allows to offer the books at affordable prices. Lubok books thereby continue the Russian tradition of the same named popular broad sheets: inexpensive originally printed graphics that were sold on funfairs since the 17th century. Like then art should become available for broad sections of the population, should become democratized. Without losing the pleasure of an original, its colours, its haptics and its smell, the high editions and the presentation as books make graphic art available - also for those to whom the art market with its complex mechanisms and more and more questionable speculations has always seemed or at least become strange.

The compilations of the Lubok series were received with great interest by all sides so that the network of participating artists could be constantly expanded. As in Lubok 3 mostly works by renowned Leipzig based artists like Christiane Baumgartner, David Schnell or Matthias Weischer can be found, Christoph Ruckhäberle assembles in Lubok 4 contributions by artists represented by his New York based gallery Zach Feuer, among them Dana Schutz and Justin Liebermann, and in Lubok 8 by artists from the Print Making Department of the Royal College of Art in London, including Adam Dant and Mark Titchner. Lubok 10 includes for the first time two-coloured linocuts by illustrators of the class under the direction of comic artist ATAK of the Kunsthochschule Burg Giebichenstein in Halle (Saale).

It might not be a surprise that the compiled issues of the Lubok series were soon joined by original graphic monographs, for example by danish artist Tal R („Chevalier“), Berlin based artist André Butzer („Die Fläche

siegt in jedem Falle über die Linien (in der Malerei)“), illustrator Christoph Feist („Langeweile war mein Motor“ or artist Katharina Immekus („Haus Helga“). Four monographic linocut books by the Leipzig book and poster artist Volker Pfüller who received numerous awards have already been published by Lubok Verlag, among them „Tierlein“ that was honoured as one of the most beautiful German books in 2009 by Stiftung Buchkunst and that is already out of print.

The enlargement of the publishing programme with publications printed in offset allow access to the medium artist book in the fields of photography, drawing and conceptual art. For exemple Adrian Sauer's book „16.777.216 Farben“ that reflects in three volumes upon the possibilities of digital photography or extensive sketch books by Tilo Baumgärtel („Skizzen 2002-2008“) and Matthias Weischer („LAPO“) have been published. For „Blake Book“, edited by David Lewis and released in 2010, 14 well-known artists like Keren Cytter and Thomas Hirschhorn slip in real and fictitious characters of movies, television, literature or the art world and assemble, incorporating their roles, photographs and visual material on the english poet and painter William Blake.

The children's book „Emma und Pferd Beere“ by Heike Geißler and illustrator Simone Waßermann was printed by using the technique of offset lithography and also became one of the most beautiful German books in 2009. This and the only pure text book by Leipzig artist Carsten Tabel („I'm not on fire“) add two additional perspectives to the medium artist book.

Lubok Verlag sees itself as a platform for artist books in a narrower and for print making in general in a wider sense. Through their involvement with the Lubok project artists of all genres, designers, curators, gallerists and bibliophiles should get to a mutual exchange not only on the revitalized medium of linoleum print. The cross-fertilisation and the constant energy flow of keen and inventive artists is not least the basis of Lubok Verlag's publishing work.

The growing presence at international art and art book fairs such as the New York Art Book Fair, the Independent Art Fair in New York or the London Art Book Fair promotes the international networking of the publishing house. In 2010 Lubok Verlag was invited as one of eight publishers to the Art Basel, section Off Press.

With Lubok exhibitions like in 2009 at the Museum der bildenden Künste Leipzig, in 2010 at Lyonel-Feiniger-Galerie in Quedlinburg or in 2011 at Kunstmuseum Spendhaus in Reutlingen the books and the participating artists receive a lot of important institutional attention and the wide cosmos of graphic art reaches a broad public. While Lubok books are presented on tables and become available not only for visual, but also for tactile and because of the thick lettpress ink even for the olfactory perception, individual graphic works by participating artists decorate the walls. Thereby it is important to allow a deep and diverse insight in the possibilities of contemporary graphic. Charcoal and pencil drawings are shown as well as etchings, lithographs, linocuts and wood engravings. The Lubok exhibition highlight so far is the exhibition „Lubok. Grafica contemporanea y libros de artistas de Leipzig“ with about 190 graphic works by 27 artists, that was shown in 2012 at Museo Nacional de la Estampa in Mexico City.

To exhibit books at the museum turns out to be another playful element in the art historically well-known discussion about original and reproduction and the hierarchy and value of the individual art genres. For Lubok Verlag and its contributors it is of course about understanding and distributing the art works in the form of affordable books, as commodities and objects of daily use. But that should not keep oneself from seeing the books as affordable art works that one can enjoy page after page and that can even be taken home.

Lubok Verlag