

2022

KABK

BOOKS

MAKE

ALICJA KONKOL
CAMILLE DE NORAY
DANIEL GREMME
ESZTER NAGY
JULIJA PANOVA
KAROLINA USKAKOVYCH
LEONIE GORES
LISETTE ALBERTI
LODE DIJKERS
SHOUYI HE

FRIENDS

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"HOW WOULD YOU LIKE
TO GET LAMPOONED, MY LORD?"

ATELIER

OPEN DIGITAL LIBRARIES

“HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET LAMPPOONED, MY LORD?”

ROYAL ACADEMY OF ART (KABK)

2022 BOOKS MAKES FRIENDS

“HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET LAMPPOONED, MY LORD?”

educational research collaboration between the Master Non Linear Narrative at the Royal Academy of Art, The Hague, and the KB, National Library of the Netherlands, The Hague, lasting from February to July 2022.

The master Non Linear Narrative at the Royal Academy of Art takes the entanglement of relations in the global information society as a starting point, in order to examine sociopolitical issues in collaboration with external partners. From February to July 2022, students in the programme collaborated with the KB, National Library of the Netherlands in The Hague to scrutinise the book as publishing platform and create new, compelling narratives that link the alba amicorum to immediate issues affecting today.

The project *Books Make Friends* offered students direct access to the library's comprehensive catalogue of alba amicorum (friendship books) in order to look at these historical documents through a more contemporary lens. In the course of their research, students questioned contemporary issues like privilege, gender discrimination, colonialism and institutional archiving practices, but also recognised the craft of artisan bookmaking and the institution's openness to change. By mapping issues of urgency and showcasing them in the form of a book students revitalise the publishing format used by their ancestors. The publication should be seen as a two-dimensional exhibition space into which students were invited to contribute both a written reflection and an artistic response. Mapping, as a process of finding connections between facts, images, and transcripts towards building a coherent narrative, helps students piece together story fragments across time and space. As a research method, mapping is applicable to physical and social geography, changes that have occurred over time, personal and collective experiences, and individuals' perspectives on one's environment. The goal is not to prove what we already know, but rather reveal hidden patterns or untold stories, that assist us in relating to the past.

To guarantee the accuracy and completeness of academic knowledge and technical skills, external expertise was brought to the project. Guests included Rob Erdmann (senior scientist at the Rijksmuseum), Sophie Reinders (research fellow at Radboud University), Risk Hazekamp (bio-based photographer), Dick van Dijk (creative director at Waag), Sofie Jacobs (paper consultant at Papyrus) and Patrick Bakermans (bookbinder at Boekbinderij Brepols).

1 SHOUYI HE
WHERE DID I LOSE YOU, WHERE CAN I FIND YOU

Loss of cultural memory creates a divide between the present moment and the alba amicorum created three or four centuries ago. Jacobus Heybloed's alba amicorum provides an archive of 10 Dutch cities he visited during his 67 years. I used this

2 JULIA PANOVA
PUNCTURE

At the time, keeping an album amicorum required privilege as these gentle time-passing activities were inaccessible to most. To subvert excessive praise or romanticisation of these books, I invite you to look at them through embracing the industry or its personal involvement. I do this by using the library's decorated pages and draw from memory. These incomplete recollections created images that are more personal and autonomous. Boycotting the celebration of people who kept and wrote in alba amicorum for their exceptional achievement in the cultural field and its opulence has merit.

3 CAMILLE DE NORAY
CORELESS FORTRESS

'Coreless Fortress' is a dreamy and endless journey into Burchard Grossmann's first album amicorum, made between 1624 and 1645. The narrative unfolds in an allegorical route, capturing the author's attempt to find an object of attention and a graspable substance in it. Like a mask, they show as much as they hide. 'Coreless Fortress' discusses the absurdist character of an object that functions in a vacuum as an endless loop of reproducing privilege.

4 DANIEL GREMME
TO WRITE IS TO HIDE

In the fitful effort to write 'Coreless Fortress' I called on the library's collection of historical books on education, power, and time, thus separating them from lower social circles. Excessive aesthetics draw us to alba amicorum, lure the beholder to marvel, and soften the critical gaze that might otherwise notice the lack of artifacts from lower classes. I researched the privileged origins of Gerhard van den Eeckhout and their background in a three-dimensional space, and placed their names, translated from hand-written to digital bones, on the front. I literally illuminate what is often hidden by calligraphic perfection by placing nepotism, slavery, and capitalist power structures in bright light.

5 ESTZTER NAGY
THE BEST SELECTED

'The Best Selected' is a visual observation that muses on the question of what deserves to be preserved. Over the centuries, the citrus fruit has been called the 'golden fruit', symbolising money, status, and privilege in the West. By creating a collection of orange wrapping papers, I question why some documents are considered trash and others a treasure. I'm using a variety of alba amicorum, with a collection of 70 citrus fruit wrapping papers collected during spring 2022. This contribution compares the difference between handling and archiving. What would we discover if we treated our surroundings with as much care as the National Library handles its collection of alba amicorum? How could we learn to recognise the values of objects not being guarded behind closed doors?

6 LISETTE ALBERTI
NATURALIZING NARRATIVES

How natural are the narratives constructed by the alba when the silverfish – the embodied allegory – are deliberately kept from the collection? By keeping out actual natural processes, narratives are slowly yet actively constructed to form a colonial, imperial, and thus unnatural, reality. Using the trapped bodies and remnants of the silverfish caught by the library, this is an ode to the insects: nature's agents for keeping memory moving. Let them fly, let them feast on the alba amicorum, let them tell their own narratives we so painstakingly attempt to preserve.

7 KAROLINA USKAKOVYCH
UNCOATED. UNARMED

This series of collages emerged from a research project on the alba amicorum, which is primarily in family crests in alba amicorum. On coats of arms, fish signified a true, generous mind; eagles represented a person of noble nature; male animals were considered superior to females. Fast forward to the present: do we not also ascribe our own meanings to animals when using them as avatars or when sending cute animal stickers out to group chats? Could this be considered a

8 ALICJA KONKOL
THE NAME IS NOT INCLUDED

'The Name is Not Mentioned' highlights the absence of information about the women of the alba amicorum collection. This series of images was created by mapping two-dimensional images onto three-dimensional renders, celebrating the creative potential of this missing information. These visuals create a dialogue between the incompleteness and inherent narratives of cultural artifacts – in this case, the alba amicorum – to a digital reflection on the shortcomings of historical resources.

9 LODÉ NICOLAAS DUKERS
ALL ROTS BIT BY BIT

The physical collections of the KB are gradually disappearing over the end of the 20th century during which it is kept. Because of this, the KB is digitising their physical collection, formally called dematerialising. Yet, digital data is as much in danger of rotting away as material data. 'All Rots Bit by Bit' explores the similar processes of decay of both physical and digital data. Micro photography of damaged pages from the alba amicorum collection is used to create an increasingly decaying digital landscape, bringing both worlds of decomposition together.

10 LEONIE GONES
ALBA AMIWHORA

The visual essay 'Alba Amihwora' responds to the depiction of the Venetian Courtesan in alba amicorum. She stands out amongst the upper-class while men whose books have been carefully preserved. Sex workers are often misrepresented or not represented at all, and historically they are not welcome in institutionalised spaces. For Alba Amihwora, sex worker Kami Million claims her space in this well-printed publication. I want to highlight her presence in the past, in the present and future for the amazing work they do. Showing up in an academic space like this is part of our fight for de-stigmatisation. Holding space for us to exist is the bare minimum we need."

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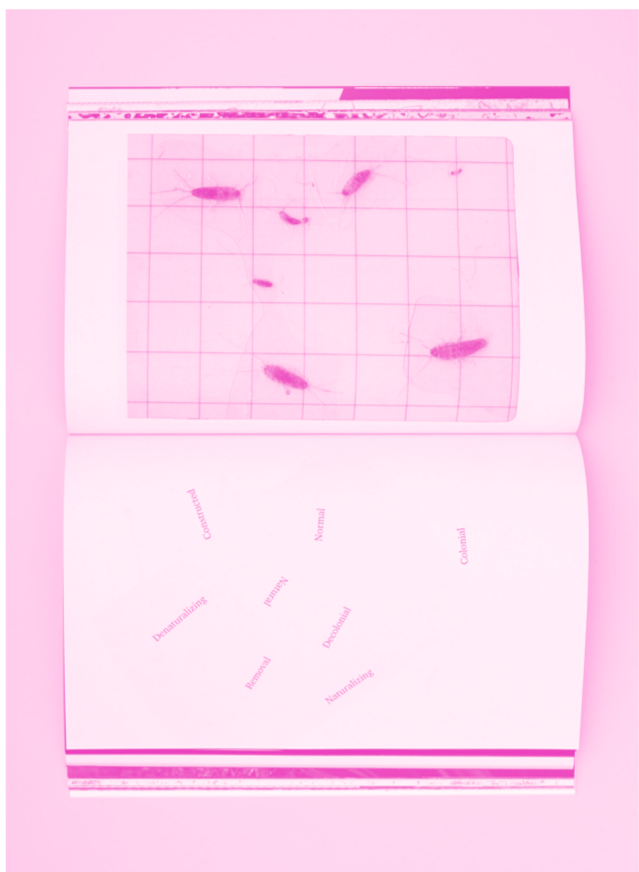
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8 Alicja Konkol
The Name Is Not Included



6 Lisette Alberti
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5 Estzter Nagy
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9 Lodé Nicolaas Dukers
All Rots Bit by Bit



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Alba Amihwora



Chapter 'Breaking the glass'



Front and back cover publication



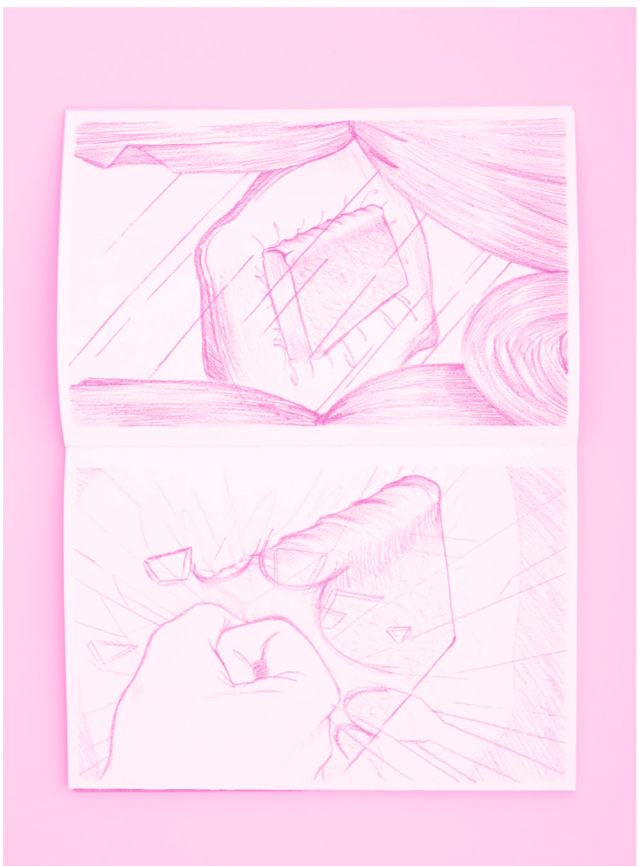
7 Karolina Uskakovych, Uncoated, Unarmed



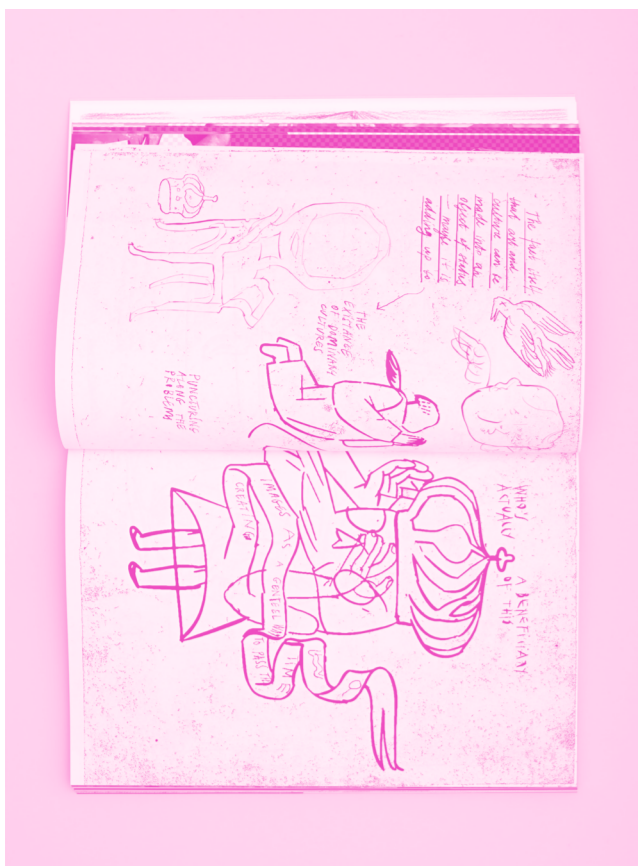
4 Shouyi He, Where Did I Lose You, Where Can I Find You



1 Daniel Gremme
To Write Is to Hide



3 Julia Panova
Puncture



2 Camille de Noray
Coreless Fortress



o f e n
d i g i t a l
l i v e r i e
The Hague

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