



William Kentridge, plate from *Receiver*, 2006

COLLABORATIVE HISTORIES: DIEU DONNÉ

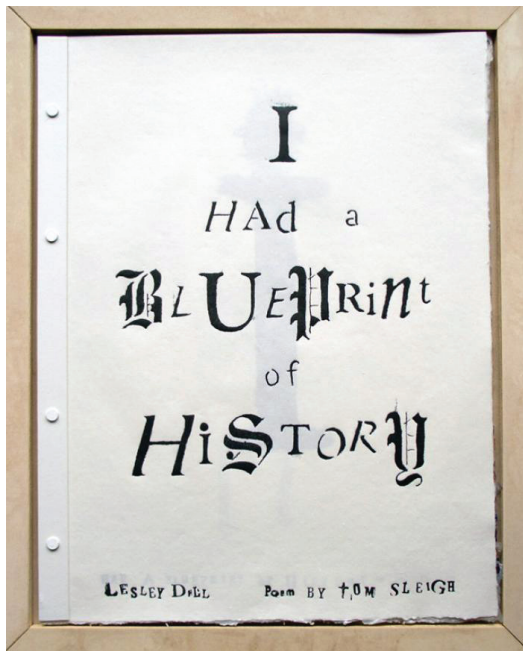
COLLABORATIVE HISTORIES: DIEU DONNÉ

January 9 — April 21, 2018

This exhibition brings together both unique and editioned works created at Dieu Donn , an organization that creates art using the process of hand-papermaking. The exhibition was co-curated by John Caperton, The Print Center’s Jensen Bryan Curator and Cynthia Nourse Thompson, Director of the MFA Book Arts and Studio Art MFA Programs at The University of the Arts, Philadelphia. Founded in 1976, the New York-based Dieu Donn  is unique for its intensive and inventive focus on handmade paper. It is also renowned for its embrace of collaboration and experimentation between artists and their highly skilled studio technicians.

“Collaboration and experimentation are essential to introducing artists from all practices to a medium that is new to them,” said Kathleen Flynn, Executive Director of Dieu Donn , “and to helping these artists realize unexpected and innovative outcomes in their work. Our studio collaborators work side by side with each artist in the wet studio, and encourage and support an artist’s experimentation. In turn, each artist challenges us to try new things and develop new approaches to meet their goals. A truly reciprocal and rewarding give-and-take.”

While it is often said that we have moved from a world where paper plays a central role in the transmission of thought to a “post-paper” virtual world, these works show us that paper still has an urgency that resonates with today’s artists. “Paper’s 2,000 year history plays an extremely valuable role in culture — supporting the proliferation of art, literature, education, commerce and religion worldwide,” said Flynn. “And the development of contemporary art in papermaking owes so much to the print renaissance in America during the latter half of the 20th century. In an increasingly interdisciplinary art world, we are confident that we play a vital role in honoring this



Lesley Dill, plate from *I Had a Blueprint of History*, 2012

legacy and ensuring that papermaking continues to remain relevant and dynamic for artists working today.”

Collaborative Histories includes a number of projects created in collaboration with Dieu Donn e’s co-founder Sue Gosin, under her personal imprint Dieu Donn e Press. “Gosin is a treasure to the artistic community,” said Thompson. Gosin’s approach to the fields of book arts, hand-papermaking and printmaking is uniquely transdisciplinary, “incorporating diversity of language, form and materiality.” Gosin’s endeavors include the creation of a number of ambitious book projects with renowned artists, several of which are included here, such as works by William Kentridge and Lesley Dill. The works in the exhibition highlight the remarkable potential of handmade paper as an artistic medium. For example, Chuck Close’s *Watermark Self-Portrait*, a faint image of the artist’s face, was created using the traditional watermark process. The portrait was

embedded in the paper during the making of the paper using a wire mesh matrix embossed with the image, which acted to compress the wet paper pulp to varying degrees. The resulting image is only visible when light passes through the paper, illuminating the differing densities of fiber.

Other artists' engagement with the process of papermaking is akin to collage and painting. An example is Mark Strand's book *Method*, created from wet pulp mixed with various pigments. Strand manipulated the colored pulp using his hands, paint brushes and squirt bottles. Once dry, the artist tore and cut the paper, the pieces of which were then collaged.

Finally, some artists approached the medium almost as a form of drawing. Do Ho Suh's *Staircase* is made of threads stitched into soluble gelatin and then laid on a freshly pulled sheet of cotton paper pulp. A mist of water dissolved the thin layer of gelatin, binding the threads to the pulp fibers.

In addition to commissioning new works by contemporary artists, Dieu Donn  fulfills its mission through offering exhibitions, public programs and educational activities.

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Free and open to the public

Tuesday - Saturday
11:00am - 6:00pm

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