

Broad Street Review

where art and ideas meet

What's new at *Broad Street Review*

ARTICLE OVERVIEW

The intimate confines of the Print Center show off the subtly colorful and sensually tactile works of the New York-based handmade paper giant Dieu Donné, alongside an exhibition of new photography works. A.D. Amorosi reviews.

WHAT, WHEN, WHERE

Collaborative Histories: Dieu Donné + By the Book Vol. 2: New Photography Publications. Through April 21, 2018, at the Print Center, 1614 Latimer Street, Philadelphia. (215) 735-6090 or printcenter.org.

ABOUT [A.D. AMOROSI](#)



A.D. Amorosi is a Philadelphia-based journalist and editor who started his local career writing a gossip column for the late Philadelphia *City Paper*, before veering into features and reviews on all things cultural, culinary, and political for the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *Daily News*, and Philly.com. He is all about animals and dogs in particular, especially his greyhound, Django.

Print Center
presents
'Collaborative
Histories: Dieu
Donné + By the
Book Vol. 2'

A.D. Amorosi on January 16, 2018 in Art

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Print Center presents 'Collaborative Histories: Dieu Donné + By the Book Vol. 2' Works on (and in) paper

A.D. Amorosi

January 16, 2018 in *Art*

The Print Center's cozy aesthetic makes an excellent match with the tactile art of hand papermaking. Susan Gosin and Bruce Wineberg's collective Dieu Donné ("God Given"), founded by the pair in 1976, is about furthering and experimenting with the age-old art form while stressing the role of collaboration among artists and craftspeople. So it makes sense to combine the two (along with a second exhibition of photographic work) for the Print Center's *Collaborative Histories: Dieu Donné + By the Book Vol. 2: New Photography Publications*.



Saleem Ahmed's "Rani Road" (2017), archival inkjet print, from 'By the Book Vol. 2: New Photography Publications' (Photo courtesy of the Print Center)

Pulp fictions

Its curators focus mostly on the intersection of prints and artist books, to say nothing of their breadth and gentle beauty. Considering the exquisiteness of this medium, it's worth examining how and why present-day artists use paper in a digital or post-paper universe. Perhaps it has

something to do with persistence: making something whose ragged edges and indentations can't be witnessed or felt on a touchscreen.

There are many highlights in the show among Dieu Donné's handmade paper prints and its volumes in the Dieu Donné Press imprint. Artist Chuck Close is here made bite-size and holy with "Watermark Self Portrait," a Shroud of Turin-esque creation that uses the traditional watermark process to hauntingly emboss his visage into pulp. That you can only spy Close's image when light passes through the print further marks the value of paper within the digital realm.

Plus, there's just something sensual about the mystery and process of it: the fiber's density, the game-playing of the light. Less sexy and more childlike — but equally tactile — is Do Ho Suh's squiggly blue "Staircase." Suh stitches threads into soluble gelatin, then lays them onto freshly pulled sheets of cotton paper pulp. The result looks like an Etch-a-Sketch gone wild, immediately bringing to mind an entire childhood of games and craft.

Painter Mark Strand's soft sculptural, layered book collage "Method," also recalls children at play. Its hand-manipulated pulp letterpress screenprints (together with a poem by the late Polish poet Wisława Szymborska) seem to vibrate on the page.

Universal and personal

Staying on book, so to speak, *By the Book, Vol. 2: New Photography Publications* peers into a world of present-day photographers, some local, such as Julianna Foster and Saleem Ahmed. There's opposition and contradiction, as well as representations of the universal and personal, in seeing Ahmed's burnished colors and ornate settings presenting the diversity of women and spaces in his hometown of Udaipur, India, displayed near Tim Carpenter's sparsely spaced black-and-whites.

By creating their own book forms (even self-publishing at times), the artists of *By the Book* create their own worlds and settings in which they control all commentary. A room full of this feels like strolling through a solar system where each environment holds its own drama and atmosphere.

<http://www.broadstreetreview.com/art/print-center-presents-collaborative-histories-dieu-donne-by-the-book-vol.-2#>