

THE ALCUIN SOCIETY AMPHORA 124

19th Annual Awards for Excellence in Book Design in Canada

2000





THE ALCUIN SOCIETY

THE ALCUIN SOCIETY was founded in 1965 by G.A. Spencer for book-lovers world-wide to promote a wider appreciation of what goes into finely wrought books. The name “Alcuin” was chosen to honour the memory of Alcuin of York (735 to 804 AD). Alcuin was a man who cared not only about books but also handwriting which he rescued from the proliferation of bastard styles of the period. As, Charlemagne’s “Minister of Culture”, Alcuin selected the most pleasing and certainly the most legible script of his day, and gave it official blessing. Known as the “Caroline Minuscule”, it ultimately led to our modern lower-case alphabet.

To further its aims, The Alcuin Society engages in a wide range of activities many in collaboration with the Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing at Simon Fraser University: lectures, workshops, exhibitions, and competitions. Annual design awards are made by a panel of judges for the best in Canadian book design. *Amphora*, the Society’s quarterly journal, covers a wide range of topics related to the book arts: collecting, typography, type design, type-setting, calligraphy, paper making, ornamentation, illustration, printing and binding.

CONTENTS

1	Preface
2	Introduction
6	This Year's Judges
8	The Award Winners
11	Poetry
14	Prose Fiction
19	Prose Non-Fiction
20	Prose Non-Fiction – Illustrated
23	Children's – Illustrated
28	Pictorial
33	Reference
37	Limited Edition
42	The Alcuin Society

PREFACE

THIS YEAR SAW A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE in the process of adjudicating the entries in the annual Alcuin Book Design competition. In the previous eighteen competitions, judging had been confined to a single day. For the year 2000 both the number of entries and the number of participating publishers increased by twenty-five percent over the previous year. In anticipation of a more exacting process we therefore planned to spend two days.

Thus, on a sunny Friday morning in late April, this year's judges, Karin Oest, George Maddison, Gordon Robertson and George Vaitkunas, were each handed an identical list of 286 entries arranged into nine categories specified by the submitting publishers. Their task for the first day was to select independently the finalists in each category. It was a long, quietly thoughtful day, and in the end 106 finalists had been chosen.

On Saturday, the four judges, assisted by Roberto Dosil, exchanged opinions on the relative merits or deficiencies of the previous day's selections. The ideal of a symphonic blending of all aspects of design and materials proved elusive. Rarely did unanimity of opinion occur among the judges. Ultimately the final selections necessitated compromise.

This year it was the intention of the Alcuin Society, our benefactor Dr. Yosef Wosk and the Design Committee, to increase the visibility of the competition. Through advertising to the industry, creating bilingual entry forms, inviting experienced and recognizable judges from across Canada and a national exhibition schedule for the winning entries, we have taken another in a series of planned steps. We look forward to further challenges in next year's competition.

MARK STANTON
Design Committee Chair

INTRODUCTION

IN COMMENTING ON THE ALCUIN SOCIETY'S 19th Annual Awards for Excellence in Book Design, I must begin by explaining the criteria for selecting winners in this particular year. How could I do otherwise, when anyone looking over the list must surely be asking, "where are the winners?" The competition was not short on entries. These totaled 286, a figure twenty-five percent higher than the number of entries in 1999. Yet in five of the eight categories, no first place was awarded. In one category, Prose Non-Fiction, neither a first nor a third place was awarded despite the fact that there were 48 submissions. Clearly, designers and publishers are owed an explanation for the reluctance of the four judges to award in a competition that drew so many entries.

A *issue* is the occurrence of very basic design errors, found mostly in text pages, that overshadowed the good work that was done in the year 2000. These we attributed to either an unawareness of the principles of good typography, or simply a slack approach to their execution. Either way, the resulting poor aesthetic quality of so many books was deflating. As judges, our criteria were to appraise the book as a whole, cover and text together, so that if one let the other down, the book failed. After working independently in selecting finalists on the first day, we were struck by the kinds of typographic awkwardness we were routinely encountering. The following day, when we defended our choices in an effort to reach consensus, we found that in identifying the typographic faults in the selections of other jurors, many of our own choices fell victim to the same criticism. We realized that we had all forgiven errors to advance a book for one reason or another, most commonly on the merits of a strong cover. But in coming together as one critical voice on the second go-around, we decided it was incumbent on us to take the hard line, in fairness to the design excellence that *was* in evidence, and, perhaps more important, to affect a wake-up call to designers and book publishers in this country.

Here are some examples of the faults we found all too often: books with badly kerned running heads that were far too large or heavy; copyright pages unaccountably set at the same size and leading as text type; folios of enormous weight, haphazardly placed, often accompanied by superfluous lines or ornaments; display pages that lacked the spatial relationship and overall balance of type that is so crucial to design; and clumsy grids, or an unawareness of the grid entirely. Overall, we found too many books showing an inability to craft type respectfully, to compose or capture its nuance upon a page, or to carry a well-created design concept from beginning to end.

In the panel forum that followed the adjudication of the books, our collective complaints prevailed as the topic of discussion. Questions arose from this. Are publishers hiring designers more for their ability to get a readable set of pages produced than for their aesthetic judgement? If so, wherein lies the fault? Is the publisher as responsible for accepting poor design as the designer is for producing it? For that matter, are the publisher and designer recognizing the difference between good and bad design? If a publisher hires the designer who has ability to compose type and execute a good book design, will this cost more than hiring another designer who does not? If the publisher is relying on an “in-house design template” that gets applied to a body of text, perhaps by an in-house intern or novice designer, why isn’t that template up to the standard of good design? Is there some role the Alcuin Society should play, such as providing feedback to publishers on why their books weren’t selected, or suggesting improvements so that next year’s judges might see a more consistent level of competency? These are some of the questions that were raised.

That said, it’s time to report on the variety of talents that *did* produce high-quality work in this year’s show. All Limited Edition books, printed by letterpress, upheld the stellar command of typography that such books have been known for in Canada for so many decades. Typographic excellence of a

more complex nature was the standard in the Reference category. Here, the very challenging relationship of type and image was exquisitely executed by all winners, and then some. The first place winner, *Encyclopédie visuelle des sports*, was particularly impressive in its intricate marriage of text and image. These elements adhere to a strong grid, but one that allows for a great deal of freedom within its boundaries. The more direct and conventional *In the Sweet Kitchen*, the second-place finisher, offers a very clear and skilful presentation of the material, with tasteful embellishment.

Interaction of images and type were well handled by all winners in the Pictorial Books category. A first place was not awarded, as the judges didn't find a jacket as elegant and refined as the very thoughtful interiors. A beautifully resolved text was in evidence in *Susan Point: Coast Salish Artist*. And as is often the case in this challenging category, other winning entries were all very strong, self-affirming pieces. Images and text in Children's Illustrated books ran the gamut from the simplest of relationships to very dense and complex integrations which characterize a sizeable portion of the genre. The highest award this year honoured the simple, direct approach taken in a book entitled *My Sister Gracie*, which offers a very spare presentation that allows the reader to enter the book easily.

In Poetry, *Sensory Deprivation / Dream Poetics* is comprised of concrete poems. Consequently the typographic element found in the interior is in short supply, but the judges found this title to be a straightforward and refreshing piece of work, particularly in the minimalist presentation of its cover. The second and third place winners in Prose Non-Fiction Illustrated, were polar opposites in typographic sensibility. The former, *As the Centuries Turn*, is formally successful in its adherence to careful, conventional placement of text and image, and the latter, *Remembering Tim Horton*, renders type in a direct engagement with content. Throughout *Remembering Tim Horton*, type is oversized and knocked-out in white over hockey photos, resulting in image / type

constructions that create tension between the static and fluid. In Prose Non-Fiction, the judges recognized only *Dancing from the Heart*. Its jacket is appealing in its relationship of vertically rendered display type to a well-positioned photo and smaller modifying type placed skillfully on several horizons.

The winning entry in Prose Fiction, *Realia*, has an appropriately quiet jacket that is low in colour content, with display type well positioned vertically, nicely letter spaced, and accented by a discrete string of Japanese characters. The text follows this sensibility beautifully with its vertically oriented display type and carefully set body copy. *Rocket Science*, in second place, is an extremely alluring piece given over to a casual, contemporary feel. It's a gem of a design. On the cover, a daring use of funky colour combinations and equally funky type is a sheer visual delight. The carryover of this aesthetic into the text is handled perfectly. The small text type with bold folios hung in wide margins is a breath of fresh air that reflects back to the cover imagery. In all, the judges did not feel that 2000 was a good year for book design in Canada. While a number of titles may have been worthy of recognition not enough were in evidence in this competition. There is a real, identifiable problem in the setting of type, one that clouds a large segment of Canadian book design. This problem could easily be solved with a little education in the right places. Should that be done, we would likely see a level of consistency that would put us in good stead with book design outside our borders, and design in general as it is applied to other industries within Canada.

GORDON ROBERTSON

Toronto

THIS YEAR'S JUDGES

From left to right: George Vaitkunas, Gordon Robertson, George Maddison, and Karin Oest.



GEORGE VAITKUNAS was educated in design at the University of Alberta, Yale University, and in Switzerland. Prior to opening an office in Vancouver in 1989, he worked as a senior designer with leading firms in Toronto and Boston. He is the recipient of national and international awards for book design and has taught at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design, Simon Fraser University and the Maine School of Art.

GORDON ROBERTSON started his career as a book designer at the Coach House Press in Toronto almost twenty years ago. Since 1992 he has worked freelance, and recently became involved as the art director and designer for Thomas Allen Books. Awards include the International Book Design Exhibition, Leipzig; many Alcuin citations; and numerous awards from *Studio Magazine*, *Applied Arts*, and the American Institute of Graphic Arts.

GEORGE MADDISON is Associate Director at UBC Press. Several decades ago his obsession with books inadvertently got him into book-selling and then publishing where he has worked in almost every position from editor to sales and marketing in educational, trade, and scholarly publishing in both Toronto and Vancouver. Art Director is one of the many hats he wears at UBC Press.

KARIN OEST was born and educated in Germany and received a degree in visual communication design from the School of Arts and Design in Kiel. She has lived and worked in Montreal since 1990. In addition to being a typographer and book designer, Karin is also a children's book illustrator.



THE AWARD WINNERS

POETRY

First Prize	Not Awarded
Second Prize	Sensory Deprivation/Dream Poetics
Third Prize	A Dream of Sulphur
Honourable Mention	Apostrophes IV: Speaking You is Holiness

PROSE FICTION

First Prize	Realia
Second Prize	Rocket Science
Third Prize	Not Awarded
Honourable Mention	Anton Chekhov Was Never In Charlottetown: Stories by J.J. Steinfeld
Honourable Mention	The Blind Assassin
Honourable Mention	The Words of My Roaring

PROSE NON-FICTION

First Prize	Not Awarded
Second Prize	Dancing from the Heart: A Memoir
Third Prize	Not Awarded

PROSE NON-FICTION-ILLUSTRATED

First Prize	Not Awarded
Second Prize	As the Centuries Turn: Manuscripts and Books from 1000 to 2000
Third Prize	Remembering Tim Horton: A Celebration
Honourable Mention	The Transforming Image: Painted Arts of Northwest Coast First Nations

CHILDREN'S-NON-ILLUSTRATED

No Awards



CHILDREN'S – ILLUSTRATED

First Prize	Not Awarded
Second Prize	My Sister Gracie
Third Prize	Elton the Elf
Third Prize	Yuck, a Love Story
Honourable Mention	The Kids Book of Canada's Railway and How the CPR was Built
Honourable Mention	Pa's Harvest: A True Story Told by Ephrem Carrier

PICTORIAL

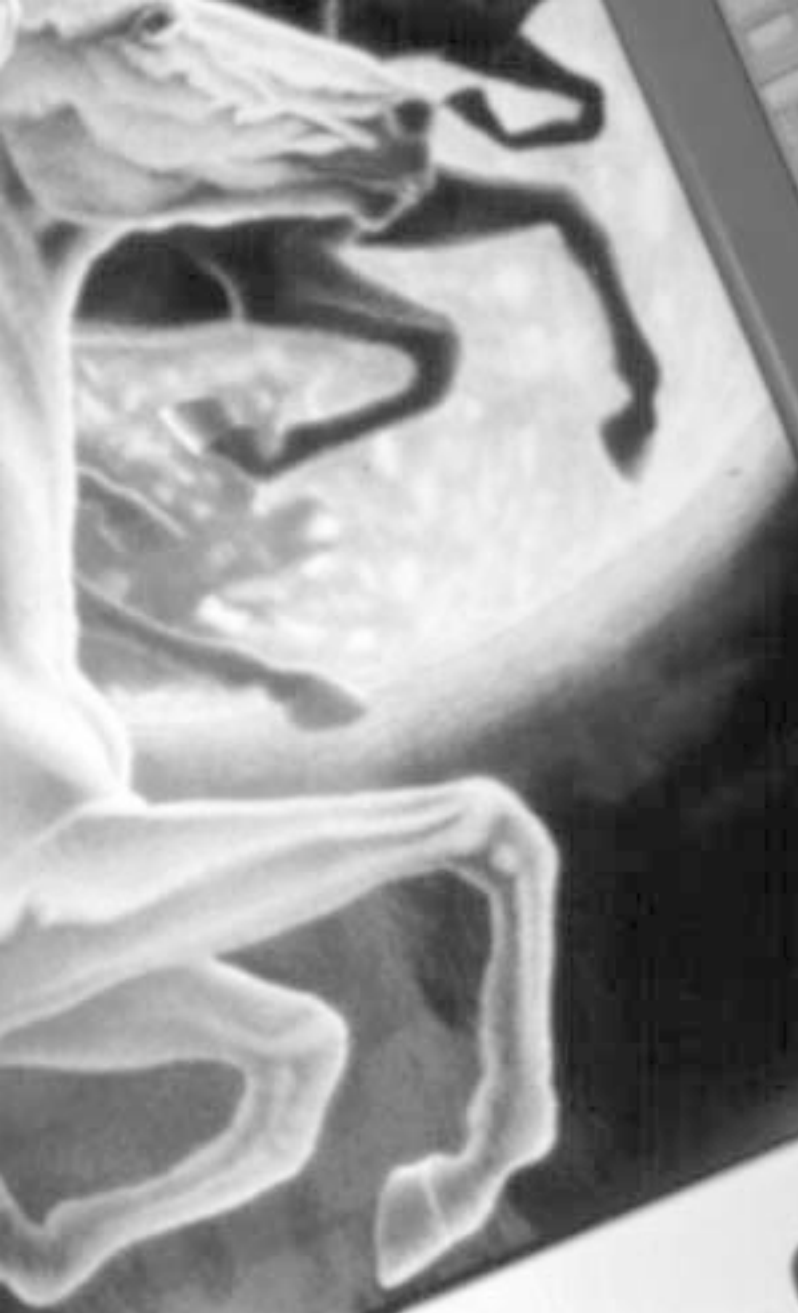
First Prize	Not Awarded
Second Prize	Susan Point: Coast Salish Artist
Second Prize	Canvas of War: Painting the Canadian Experience / 1914 to 1945
Third Prize	Architecture Canada 1999: The Governor General's Medals for Architecture
Third Prize	The Artful Dodger: Images & Reflections
Honourable Mention	Art BC: Masterworks from British Columbia

REFERENCE

First Prize	Encyclopédie visuelle des sports
Second Prize	In the Sweet Kitchen: The Definitive Guide to the Baker's Pantry
Third Prize	The Savoury Mushroom: Cooking with Wild and Cultivated Mushrooms
Honourable Mention	Premium Beer Drinker's Guide: The World's Strongest, Boldest and Most Unusual Beers

LIMITED EDITION

First Prize	Home Country: Selected Poems by Al Purdy
Second Prize	Charles Van Sandwyk: An Interim Bibliography 1983 to 2000
Third Prize	If Stones Could Speak
Honourable Mention	From Alph Bites: A Primer



The Man
CARY FAGAN



The **BOOKS**

Genes
CMT

TITLE
Sensory Deprivation / Dream Poetics

AUTHOR
Damian Lopes

PUBLISHER
Coach House Books

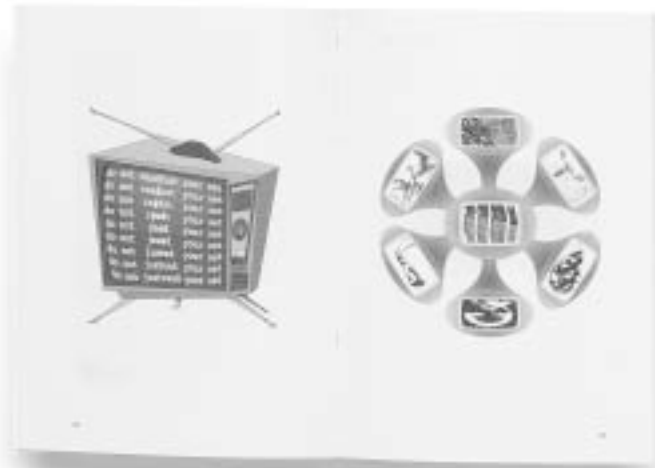
COVER DESIGNER
Damian Lopes

TEXT DESIGNER
Damian Lopes

ILLUSTRATOR
Damian Lopes

PRINTER
Coach House Printing

SIZE
12.5 x 17.5 cm





TITLE

A Dream of Sulphur

AUTHOR

Aurian Haller

PUBLISHER

McGill-Queen's University Press

TEXT DESIGNER

Typho Litho Composition Inc.

ILLUSTRATOR

Sonia Chow

PRINTER

AGMV

SIZE

13 x 18 cm



TITLE

Apostrophes IV
Speaking You is Holiness

AUTHOR

E.D. Blodgett

PUBLISHER

The University of Alberta Press

COVER DESIGNER

Alan Brownoff

TEXT DESIGNER

Alan Brownoff

ILLUSTRATOR

John Freeman

PRINTER

Friesens

SIZE

16.5 x 16.5 cm





TITLE
Realia

AUTHOR
Will Aitken

PUBLISHER
Random House Canada

COVER DESIGNER
Jonathan Howells

TEXT DESIGNER
Sharon Foster Design

PHOTOGRAPHER
Keith Ng

ILLUSTRATOR
Sonia Chow

PRINTER
Quebecor Printing

SIZE
14 X 21.25 cm





TITLE

Rocket Science

AUTHOR

Julia Gaunce

PUBLISHER

Pedlar Press

COVER DESIGNER

ZAB Design & Typography

TEXT DESIGNER

ZAB Design & Typography

PHOTOGRAPHER

Unknown

ILLUSTRATOR

E. A. Hobart

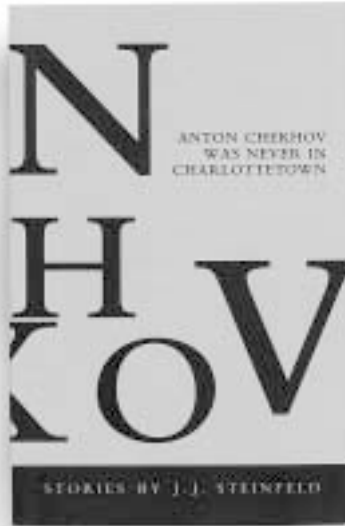
PRINTER

Transcontinental Printers

SIZE

13 X 19 cm





TITLE

Anton Chekhov was Never in Charlottetown
Stories by J.J. Steinfeld

AUTHOR

J.J. Steinfeld

PUBLISHER

Gaspereau Press

COVER DESIGNER

Andrew Steeves

TEXT DESIGNER

Andrew Steeves

PRINTER

Gary Dunfield at Gaspereau Press

SIZE

14.5 x 23cm





TITLE
The Blind Assassin

AUTHOR
Margaret Atwood

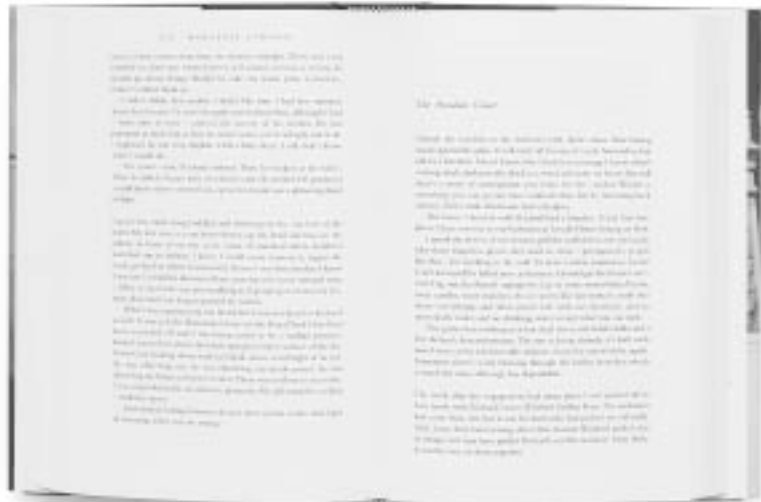
PUBLISHER
McClelland & Stewart Ltd.

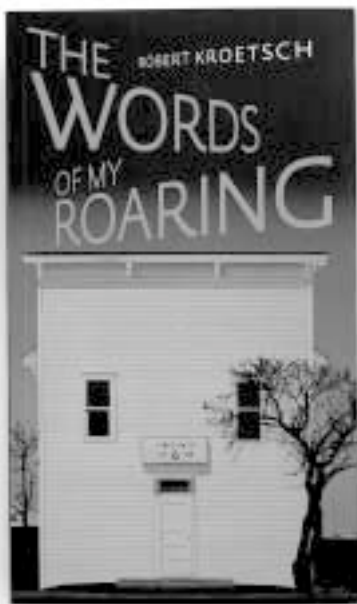
COVER DESIGNER
Kong Njo

TEXT DESIGNER
Maria Carella

PRINTER
Friesens

SIZE
16 x 23.5 cm





TITLE
The Words of My Roaring

AUTHOR
Robert Kroetsch

PUBLISHER
The University of Alberta Press

COVER DESIGNER
Alan Brownoff

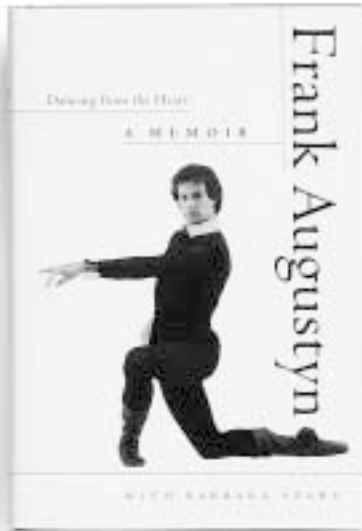
TEXT DESIGNER
Alan Brownoff

ILLUSTRATOR
David Thauberger

PRINTER
Friesens

SIZE
13.5 x 23 cm





TITLE
Dancing From the Heart: A Memoir

AUTHOR
Frank Augustyn with Barbara Sears

PUBLISHER
McClelland & Stewart Ltd.

COVER DESIGNER
Kong Njo

TEXT DESIGNER
Kong Njo

PRINTER
Friesens

SIZE
16.5 x 23 cm





TITLE
As the Centuries Turn
Manuscripts and Books from 1000 to 2000

AUTHOR
Anne Dondertman

PUBLISHER
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library

COVER DESIGNER
Stan Bevington

TEXT DESIGNER
Stan Bevington

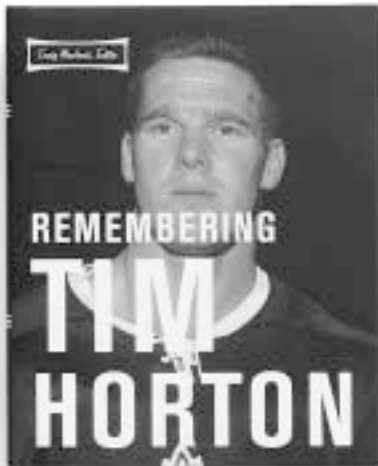
PHOTOGRAPHER
Jim Ingram

ILLUSTRATOR
Various

PRINTER
Coach House Printing

SIZE
21.5 x 20.5 cm





TITLE
Remembering Tim Horton
A Celebration

AUTHOR
Craig McInnis, Editor

PUBLISHER
Stoddart Publishing Co. Limited

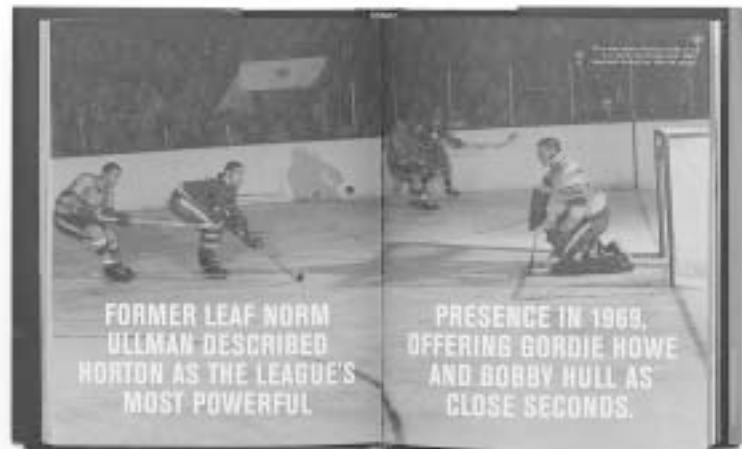
COVER DESIGNER
Bill Douglas

TEXT DESIGNER
Bill Douglas

PHOTOGRAPHER
Hockey Hall of Fame

PRINTER
Friesens

SIZE
14.5 x 19 cm



TITLE

The Transforming Image
Painted Arts of Northwest Coast First Nations

AUTHOR

Bill McLennan and Karen Duffek

PUBLISHER

UBC Press

COVER DESIGNER

George Vaitkunas

TEXT DESIGNER

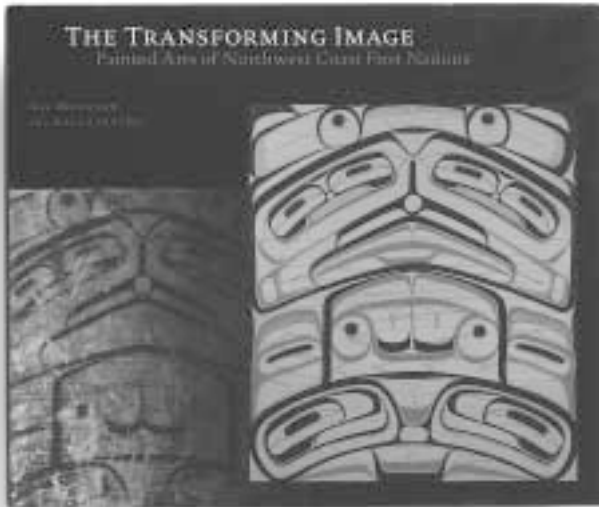
George Vaitkunas

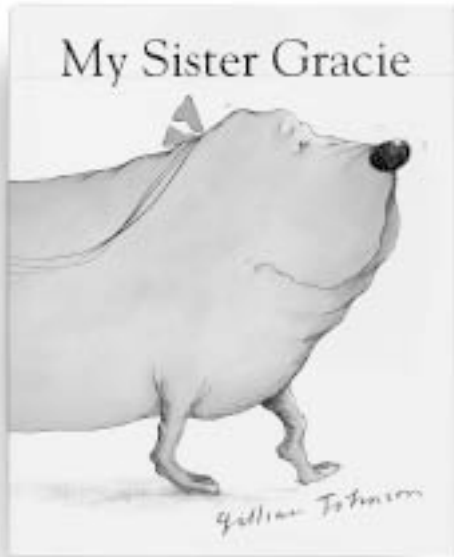
PRINTER

Friesens

SIZE

23 x 28 cm





TITLE
My Sister Gracie

AUTHOR
Gillian Johnson

PUBLISHER
Tundra Books

COVER DESIGNER
Kong Njo

TEXT DESIGNER
Kong Njo

ILLUSTRATOR
Gillian Johnson

PRINTER
South China

SIZE
20.5 x 25.5 cm





TITLE
Elton the Elf

AUTHOR
Lisa Mallen

PUBLISHER
Lobster Press, Alison Fripp

COVER DESIGNER
Marielle Maheu

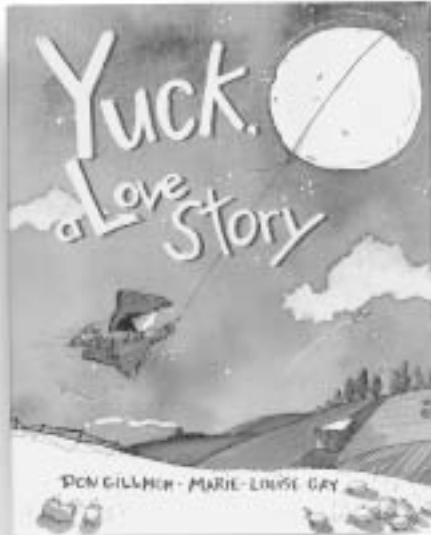
TEXT DESIGNER
Marielle Maheu

ILLUSTRATOR
Rogé

PRINTER
Kromar Printing Ltd.

SIZE
21 X 25.5 cm





TITLE
Yuck, a Love Story

AUTHOR
Don Gillmor

PUBLISHER
Stoddart Kids

COVER DESIGNER
Marie-Louise Gay

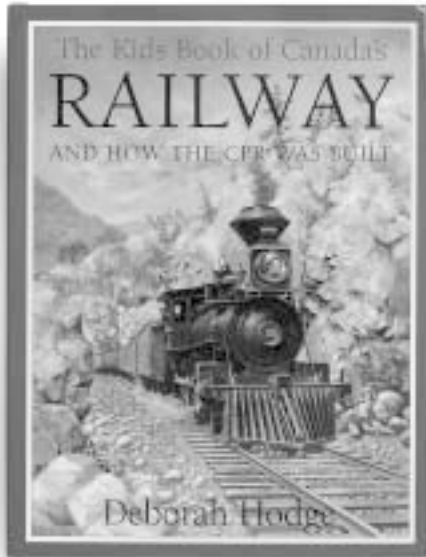
TEXT DESIGNER
Kathryn Cole and Marie-Louise Gay

ILLUSTRATOR
Marie-Louise Gay

PRINTER
Book Art Inc.

SIZE
21 X 27 cm





TITLE

The Kids Book of Canada's Railway and
How the CPR Was Built

AUTHOR

Deborah Hodge

PUBLISHER

Kids Can Press

COVER DESIGNER

Julia Naimska

TEXT DESIGNER

Julia Naimska

ILLUSTRATOR

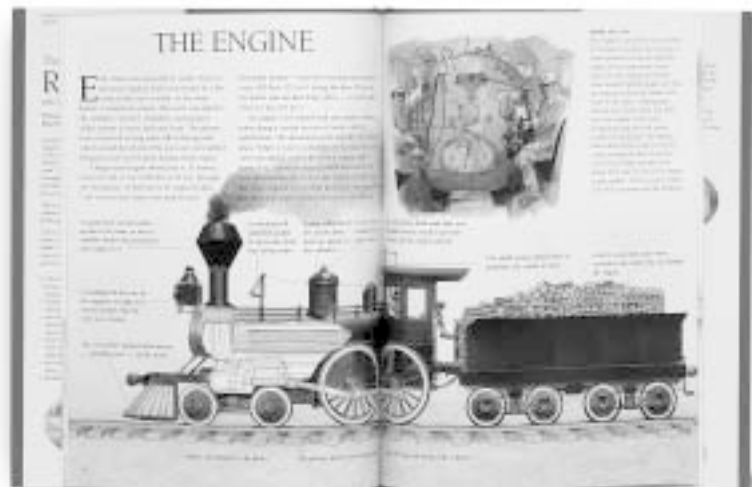
John Mantha

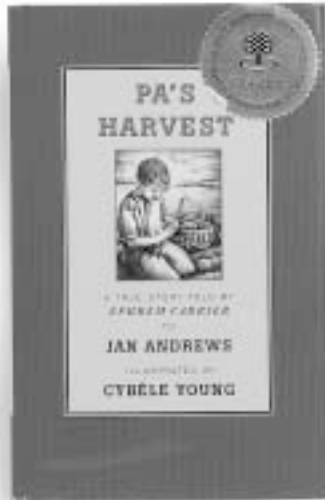
PRINTER

Wing King Tong Co. Ltd.

SIZE

23 x 30.5 cm





TITLE

Pa's Harvest
A True Story Told by Ephrem Carrier

AUTHOR

Jan Andrews

PUBLISHER

Groundwood Books

COVER DESIGNER

Michael Solomon

TEXT DESIGNER

Michael Solomon

ILLUSTRATOR

Cybèle Young

PRINTER

Everbest Printing Co. Ltd.

SIZE

11.5 x 18.5 cm





TITLE

Susan Point
Coast Salish Artist

AUTHOR

Michael Kew, Peter Macnair, Vesta Giles,
Bill McLennan

EDITOR

Gary Wyatt

PUBLISHER

Douglas & McIntyre and
University of Washington Press

COVER DESIGNER

George Vaitkunas

TEXT DESIGNER

George Vaitkunas

PHOTOGRAPHER

Kenji Nagai

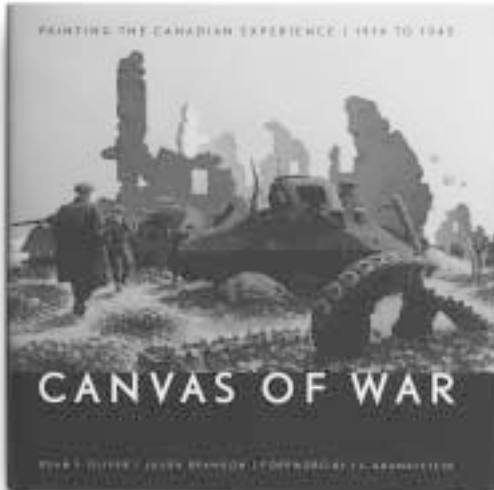
PRINTER

Hemlock Printers Ltd.

SIZE

23 x 28 cm





TITLE

Canvas of War

Painting the Canadian Experience / 1914 to 1945

AUTHOR

Dean F. Oliver, Laura Brandon

Foreword J.L. Granatstein

PUBLISHER

Douglas & McIntyre, Canadian War Museum, and
Canadian Museum of Civilization

COVER DESIGNER

Peter Cocking

TEXT DESIGNER

Peter Cocking

PRINTER

Friesens

SIZE

25.5 x 25.5 cm



TITLE

Architecture Canada 1999
The Governor General's Medals for Architecture

PUBLISHER

Tuns Press

COVER DESIGNER

Hahn Smith Design

TEXT DESIGNER

Hahn Smith Design

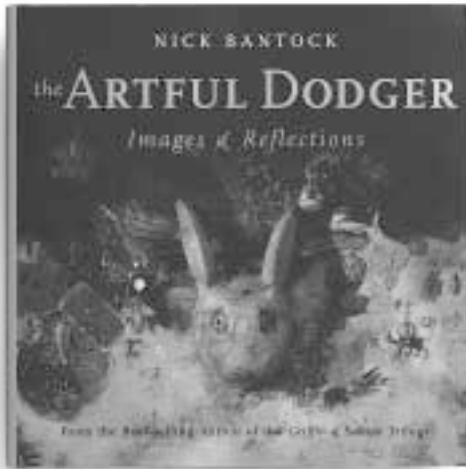
PRINTER

Friesens

SIZE

21.5 x 21.5 cm





TITLE
The Artful Dodger
Images & Reflections

AUTHOR
Nick Bantock

PUBLISHER
Raincoast Books

COVER DESIGNER
Jacqueline Verkley

TEXT DESIGNER
Jacqueline Verkley

ILLUSTRATOR
Nick Bantock

PRINTER
Hong Kong

SIZE
23 x 24.5 cm





TITLE

Art BC
Masterworks from British Columbia

AUTHOR

Ian M.Thom

PUBLISHER

Douglas & McIntyre and Vancouver Art Gallery

COVER DESIGNER

George Vaitkunas

TEXT DESIGNER

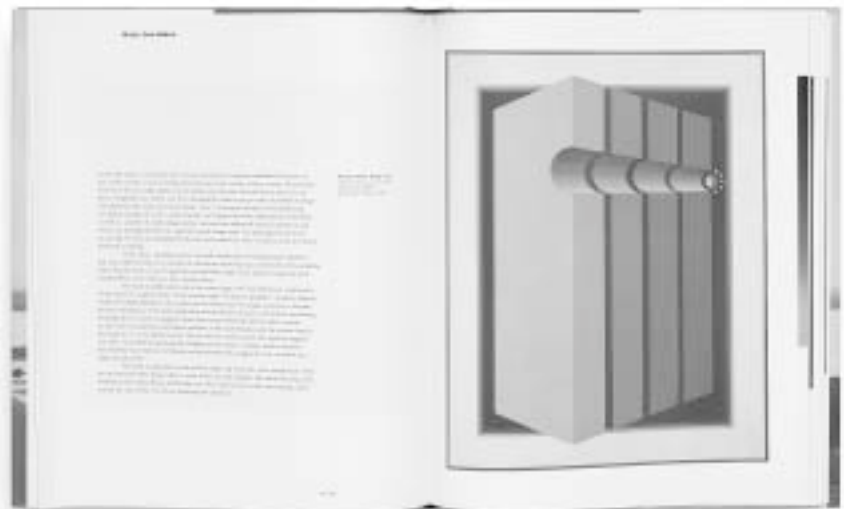
George Vaitkunas

PRINTER

Hemlock Printers Ltd.

SIZE

24 x 30.5 cm





TITLE
Encyclopédie visuelle des sports

AUTHOR
QA International

PUBLISHER
Editions Québec Amérique

COVER DESIGNER
Anne Tremblay

TEXT DESIGNER
Anne Tremblay

PHOTOGRAPHER
Various

ILLUSTRATOR
QA International

PRINTER
Friesens

SIZE
14 X 21.5 cm





TITLE
In the Sweet Kitchen
 The Definitive Guide to the Baker's Pantry

AUTHOR
 Regan Daley

PUBLISHER
 Random House Canada

COVER DESIGNER
 Sharon Foster Design

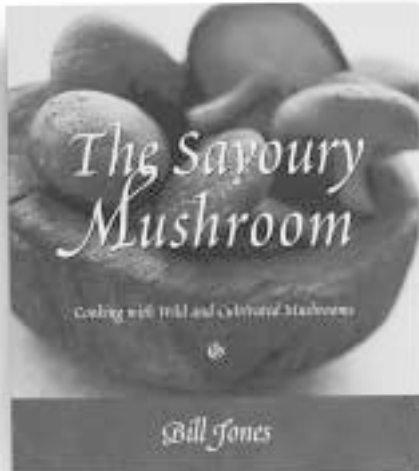
TEXT DESIGNER
 Sharon Foster Design

PHOTOGRAPHER
 Rob Fiocca

PRINTER
 Damian Lope

SIZE
 17.5 x 23 cm





TITLE

The Savoury Mushroom

Cooking with Wild and Cultivated Mushrooms

AUTHOR

Bill Jones

PUBLISHER

Raincoast Books

COVER DESIGNER

Gabi Proctor / Design Geist

TEXT DESIGNER

Gabi Proctor / Design Geist

ILLUSTRATOR

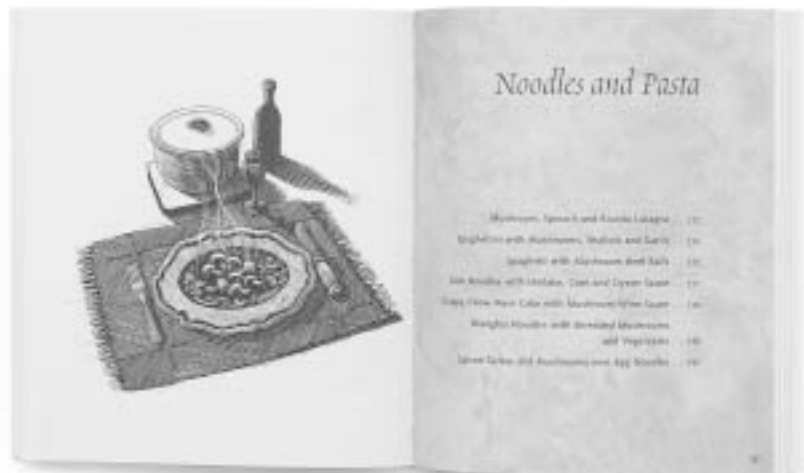
Roy Schneider

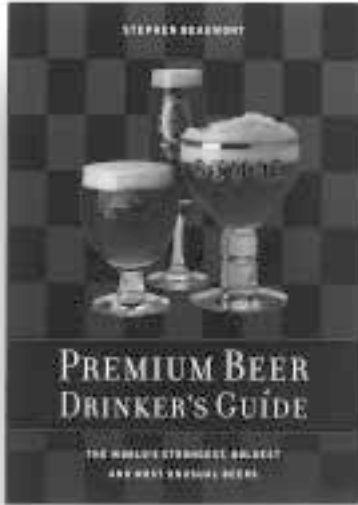
PRINTER

Transcontinental Printing

SIZE

14 X 21.5 cm





TITLE
Premium Beer Drinker's Guide
The World's Strongest, Boldest and
Most Unusual Beers

AUTHOR
Stephen Beaumont

PUBLISHER
Firefly Books Ltd.

COVER DESIGNER
Linda Gustafson

TEXT DESIGNER
Linda Gustafson

COVER PHOTOGRAPHER
Hal Roth

TEXT PHOTOGRAPHER
Various

PRINTER
Damian Lope

SIZE
18 x 25.5 cm





TITLE

Home Country
Selected Poems by Al Purdy

AUTHOR

Al Purdy

PUBLISHER

The Church Street Press

COVER DESIGNER

Alan Stein, Don Taylor

TEXT DESIGNER

Alan Stein, Don Taylor

ILLUSTRATOR

Alan Stein

PRINTER

Alan Stein

SIZE

28 x 32 cm





TITLE
Charles van Sandwyk
An Interim Bibliography 1983 to 2000

AUTHOR
Charles van Sandwyk

BIBLIOGRAPHER
Rollin Milroy

PUBLISHER
Heavenly Monkey and cvs Fine Arts

COVER DESIGNER
Rollin Milroy

TEXT DESIGNER
Rollin Milroy

ILLUSTRATOR
Charles van Sandwyk

PRINTER
Rollin Milroy at Heavenly Monkey

SIZE
15.5 x 22.5 cm





TITLE
If Stones Could Speak

AUTHOR
Timothy Findley

PUBLISHER
Gerard Brender à Brandis

COVER DESIGNER
Gerard Brender à Brandis

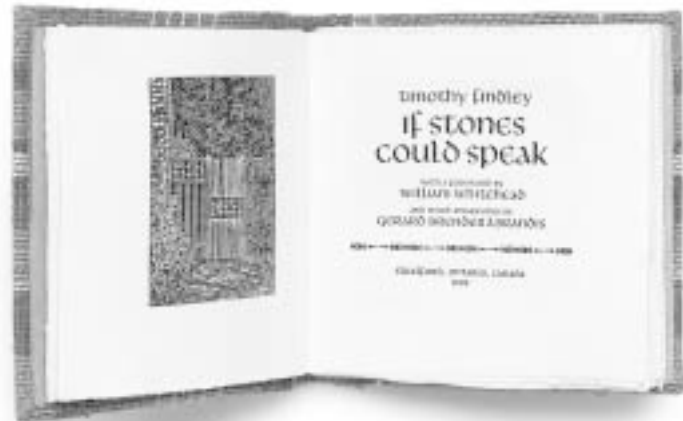
TEXT DESIGNER
Gerard Brender à Brandis

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