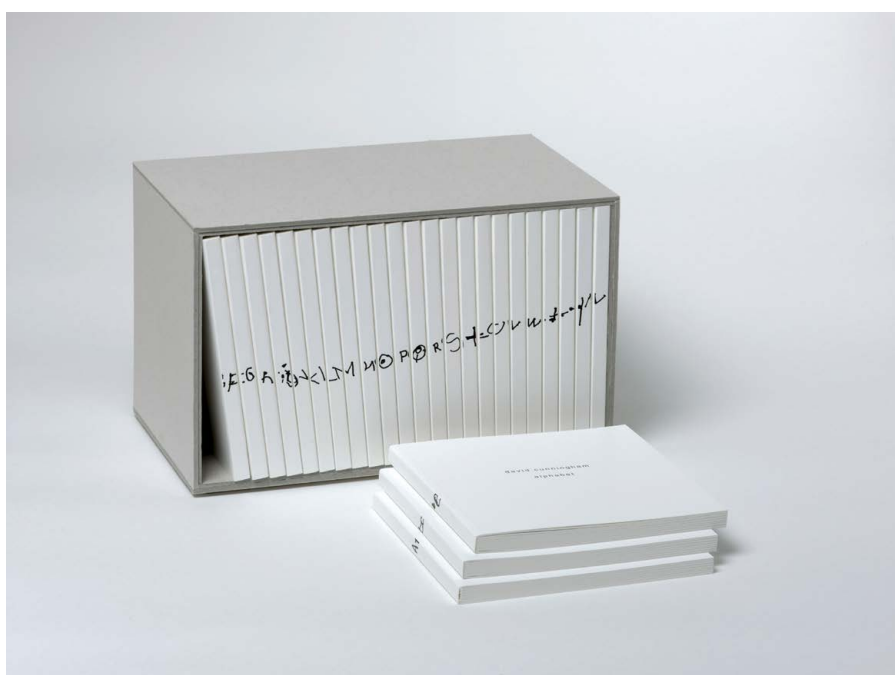

David Cunningham

Alphabet

©2010 David Cunningham and mfc-michèle didier



David Cunningham

Alphabet

About *Alphabet* by David Cunningham

Alphabet by David Cunningham consists of 26 volumes, as many volumes as there are letters in the Roman alphabet. Each volume proposes 97 different combinations of the 26 letters of the alphabet. These letters succeed one another in small writing in a horizontal line that scores the middle of every page. Each of these sequences follows a strictly distinct order. *Alphabet* has in total 2522 of these alphabetical series.

The *Alphabet* set of 26 volumes is limited to 50 copies, signed and numbered by the artist, and 10 artist's proofs.

If we consider that the Roman alphabet is characterised by, amongst other things, the order in which its letters follow each other – we know and refer to only one, now standard, alphabetical order –, the series of 26 letters that the artist produces in *Alphabet*, a titanic project started in 2005, could be regarded as representing as many new alphabetical systems, text positioned outside 'literature' with any metaphorical dimension internally excluded.

On the spine of each volume, runs a string of letters, the only one in alphabetical order, hand-written by a young girl, Mina. The alphabet, laboriously and at the same time playfully reproduced by a person who has not yet reached the age of reading and writing, no longer delivers a group of signs that lead to language supported by grammar, but gives rise to a series of intriguing graphs and small drawings that appear to have emerged from the depths of the ages of primitive art or magical art. We imagine more or less abstract figures, depending on the imagination of the child who has drawn them on paper. After all, if we take the letter A of the Roman alphabet, derived from the Greek alphabet, which itself stems from the Phoenician alphabet, we find it in the latter under the name of Aleph, which signifies Taurus, or "bull". And the drawing of this letter effectively reproduces, in a simplified manner, the animal's head...

Alphabet's sequences defy all alphabetical understanding, and, now and again, by pure chance, a random fragment or other offers a recognisable word. In parallel with the integral relationship of the spectator in David Cunningham's installation work, this process of recognition is essentially the reader's contribution.

David Cunningham's alphabets, generated by an algorithmic method that organises them according to a systematic disorder, bear a greater resemblance to mathematical formulae. In mathematics, an alphabet is only ever a set, the letters of which are its elements. Let us not forget that the Greeks used their alphabet for numbering before the Arabic numerals took over the function. We could conclude that the system developed by David Cunningham in his *Alphabet* implies a return to primitive origins, along the path of methodical deconstruction.

David Cunningham

Alphabet

Specifications

- The work consists of 26 volumes which total 2704 pages
 - Each volume is 15 x 15 cm and contains 104 pages
 - Printed on Phoenix Motion Xantur 150 g
 - Certificates numbered and signed by David Cunningham
 - Cover : bound in Phoenix Motion Xantur 250 g
 - The 26 volumes come in a slipcase
-
- Algorithm design and implementation © 2007 Daniel Jackson
 - Hand-written spine alphabet © 2010 Mina Obata Robinson
-
- Printed by Arte-Print, Brussels
 - Bound by Renaître, Brussels

Production

- Limited edition of 50 copies and 10 A.P.

Produced and published in 2010 by mfc-michèle didier, Brussels

All rights reserved. No part of this edition may be reproduced in any form or by any means without written permission of the artist and the publisher.