

**BOOKS THAT ARE
LIKE WALKING
IN QUIET SPACES**
ARTIST'S BOOKS,
UNREADABLE BOOKS,
PREBOOKS
AND THEIR HEIRS

Valentina Valecchi

Roma Tre University

Department of Education Science

valentina.valecchi@uniroma3.it

ESSAY 123/07

BRUNO MUNARI

ARTIST'S BOOKS

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

NARRATIVE COMMUNICATION

This paper's aim is to be a comparative investigation of artist's books of the second half of the twentieth century and a selection of books in the current realm of children's publishing, in order to establish significant points of contact and intersection between the two worlds, even though they are considered distant and separate. In both arenas, it is possible to identify books characterised by the absence of verbal and iconic code and by multi-sensory communication relying almost exclusively on paratextual elements. The forerunner of these experiments seems to be Bruno

Munari's *Libri Illeggibili* [Unreadable Books] series, a selection of artwork that forgoes text in favour of an aesthetic function alone, which gave rise to new research, including *I Prelibri* [Prebooks] by Munari himself, which is a series of twelve books that differ in colour, material, and shape and that lack a narrative. The latter is a model that will become a source of inspiration, in more recent years, for the likes of Katsumi Komagata or Hervé Tullet, who are today authors of innovative 'open works' whose communicative effectiveness derives from the hybridisation of artistic languages.

INTRODUCTION

After World War II, an era when aesthetic and semiotic analysis and reflections on verbal and visual communication flourished, the book –the utmost repository of content that needs to be conveyed and a privileged medium for the transmission of knowledge– unexpectedly started having negated communication, composed of unreadable, hidden, torn, and indecipherable words.

In the multifaceted and complex landscape of artist's books, a substantial number of works are easily noticed. These works can subject the user to a variety of experiences on the theme of the absence or negation of words as well as images. In them, writes Sara Guindani in *The Book as a Work of Art*,

words are isolated, dismembered and detached from their material support. Their semantic transparency, their implied and transitive power are denied so that we are forced to accept their irreducible conditions of matter, sound and colour (Maffei, Picciau, 2008, p. 28).

Emblematic of this interesting *leitmotif* found in the verbovisual research of the last century (Ferrari, 2007) are Vincenzo Agnetti's *Libro dimenticato a memoria* (1969), which only has white margins of the pages but no central area that normally has printed words, or the *Enciclopedia Treccani cancellata* (1970) by Emilio Isgrò, who used a marker to cross out words in these books that were intended to represent the *summa* of knowledge. The list could go on, with Lucio Fontana's *Concetto spaziale* (1966), a gold accordion-like book with perforated pages, or with Piero Manzoni's *Life and Work* (1969), made from a hundred transparent pages without printed words, or, again, with Irma Blank's *Romanzo Blu* (1997), whose wafer-thin blank pages are a monochromatic ultramarine blue, and, finally, with an example of a book-object such as Mirella Bentivoglio's *Il disgelo del libro* (1986), an onyx sculpture in the shape of an open book.

These are a few examples among many, of books broken down to their skeleton and physical connotations, in which

the authors' desire to focus on the graphic and tactile aspects of the visible surface of the pages emerges to the point of altering their two-dimensional space and making it so that, as in Lucio Fontana's famous slashed canvases, it is the physical and concrete space that runs through them—and not the one represented—that becomes the sole protagonist, along with colour, marks and matter.

Unreadable, and seemingly provocative, these books display a tension toward aphasia—sought after and declared by the authors—aimed at raising questions about the evocative power of words by virtue of their absence and the intention to invite the user to contemplate, rather than read, by seeking new symbolic apparatuses. The written word, in the age of mass communication, increasingly manifests itself as restrictive and insufficient, while the idea shows itself to be too extensive for it to be expressed, and for the concept to be translated. “Fundamentally, the true artist of the future will be a wordless poet who writes nothing”, wrote Yves Klein (1991, p. 206) paradoxically.

It could be assumed that these sophisticated reflections may have exclusively invested the field of contemporary art research on the book, without affecting, due to their complexity, children's publishing, which is often considered the 'lesser handmaiden' of book production because of the supposed 'simplicity' of its contents.

In this paper we will show how some rivulets of this twentieth-century artistic trend actually reached the younger set through the experiments of some authors.

LIBRI ILLEGGIBILI [UNREADABLE BOOKS]

The early and germinal antecedents of the aforementioned artist's books can be identified in Bruno Munari's *Unreadable Books* series. The first example was presented in 1949 at the Salto bookstore in Milan and its history would be as long as the very author's life. We are in the era of the begin-

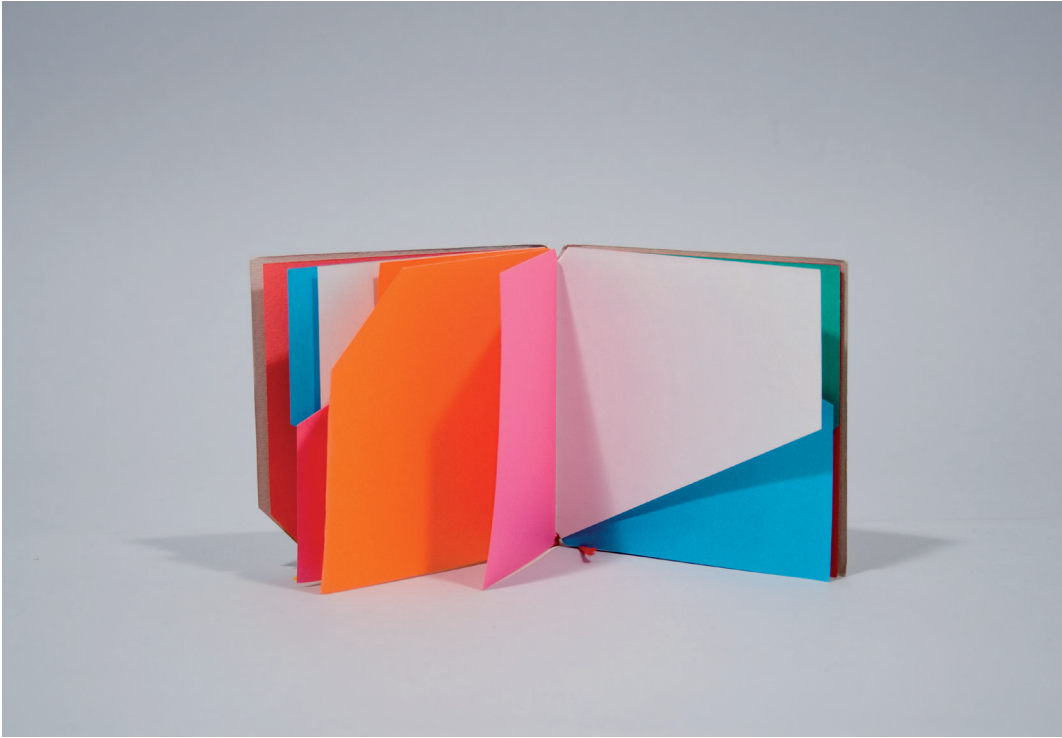


Figure 1 Bruno Munari,
Unreadable Book MN 1, 1984

ning of the Movimento Arte Concreta [Concrete Art Movement], founded by Munari together with a group of artists after World War II to promote a particular kind of abstractionism that, opposing 'lyrical' abstraction, advocates for a predominantly geometric orientation that is free from any imitation or reference to the outside world: for the concretists, the image to be painted had to be universal, exact and transparent, obeying objective laws of mathematical derivation, free from the hindrances of a narrative and signifier.

Within this context, the Milanese artist creates non-figurative paintings open to different perceptual interpretations, such as the *Negativi-positivi* series and several artist's books that represent an innovative and stimulating convergence between Concrete Art theories of visual art and graphic design, another discipline in which "the Leonardo of twentieth century Italian art" was a master (Restany, 1999, p. 254).

We are talking about *Unreadable Books*, which were created after observing the communication capacity of a simple mock-up and questioning how the book could be an object in itself with its own visual language, forgoing text communication in favour of aesthetic function alone.

Thanks to them, the artist succeeds in giving “one final splay to the role of the book as information by eliminating its essential characteristic –legibility– and thus opens the way to its final deflagration” (Maffei, Picciau, 2008, p. 12).

Even though, as we shall see, *Unreadable Books* offer numerous insights regarding new alternative forms of reading, they were named this way by the artist “because there is nothing to read”, where ‘reading’ is intended in the traditional sense of the term, i.e. as a simple deciphering of signs, “but there is much to be learned through the senses. It is like a walk in a silent space that stimulates our different sensory receptors”, as Munari liked to say (Pittarello, 1993, p. 6).

Unreadable Books are works of art in book form. They express themselves through their very existence phenomenologically; the material nature of paper, from a simple support for print and images, now becomes the communicator of a message, taking advantage of factors such as thickness, transparency, page size, colour, gloss, matte, die-cuts, and folds.

Alberto Mondadori was the first editor of Munari’s editorial work, and he was able to understand its high potential from the very beginning. Mondadori wrote, “Unreadable books ‘are the first of a new language that has close kinship with cinema and music and, I believe, may one day become a ‘genre’, just as today alongside sculpture we have the ‘Useless Machines’”(Mondadori, 1950, s.p.). In fact, if we look closely at the pages without text or images and borrow Pierpaolo Antonello’s words, we can say that we are faced with a “quasi-musical experience, in which the turning of the pages is rhythmic rather than led by a narrative” (Antonello, 2019, p. 343).

It is useful to cite a few examples so that the reader can better understand their characteristics: *The Unreadable Red and White Book* (1953) features horizontally cut red and white

pages in various formats. The pages intersect to create variable two-tone layers depending on how the reader chooses to arrange them. In *The Unreadable Book N.Y.1* (1967) designed for the Museum of Modern Art in New York, a red thread runs through perforated, transparent pages on which black circles are printed in various positions. And finally, *Il libro illeggibile MN1* (1984), designed for the Corraini publishing house which has reprinted it numerous times, has simple pages of different colours cut diagonally to form various combinations by flipping through the pages.

But the production of *Unreadable Books* does not end there. It has a long history. It continued even when the creative momentum within the Concrete Art Movement tapered off in the 1990s.

From this lengthy experience it seems important to us to point out some features that coincide with some of the foundational elements of Munarian research tout court:

- the great importance of colour and material, an aspect the author focuses on meticulously in all his art and design objects (Munari, 1971, pp. 356, 357);
- the multi-sensoriality, a derivation of both experiences in the Futurist sphere and frequentations of Eastern culture: “If we take into account our other senses, people will slowly get used to doing so and they will discover that there are many sensory receptors that let us learn about the world we live in”, Munari wrote (1981, p. 380);
- the presence of dynamism (the author’s mobiles and experiments in kinetic art are examples), rendered here through the lines drawn by diagonal page cuts and colour contrasts that create a rhythmic effect;
- simplicity, in the sense of the strenuous achievement of bringing out fundamental elements of the image such as rhythm, balance, contrast, composition, proportion, and symmetry/asymmetry. In this regard, Munari stated: “To complicate is simple, simplifying is complicated. [...] Everybody is able to complicate. Only a few can simplify. In order to simplify, you have to take away. And to take away,

you have to know what to take away, as a sculptor does when he chisels away all that extra material from a stone, to make his sculpture. Taking away rather than adding is to recognise the essence of things and to communicate them in their essential nature” (Munari, 1992, pp. 53, 54);

- the technique of displacement, meaning the intent to provoke disorientation of the viewer in order to capture his or her attention and break away of the ordinary and the usual (Fiz, 1999);
- interactivity: in keeping with the democratic, anti-elitist, participatory idea of art that drives the artist, these paper sculptures allow people to compose their work by flipping through it.

With Munari, passivity in the face of the artwork and the book vanishes in a definite way. It is the user who composes the canvases, intervenes on the pages, and imagines the stories.

Unreadable Books make each one become a unique copy and each reader become an author.

I PRELIBRI [THE PREBOOKS]

Due to their peculiar characteristics, scholar Pierpaolo Antonello (p. 344) notes that *Unreadable Books* constitute an example of *crossover picturebooks* (Beckett, 2012). They can successfully be experienced by adults as well as children who cannot read. It is therefore not surprising that their production also became part of the famous workshops conducted by Munari starting in the 1970s, and still frequently implemented by educators who adhered to his method, such as Beba Restelli and Roberto Pittarello. As the Milanese artist stated, hands-on activities inspired by *Unreadable Books* are interesting because every child can make his or her own book, and it will be a book that communicates the child’s state of mind and personality, even if he or she cannot explain in words the reason why he or she did it. Can anyone explain a piece of music with words? (Pittarello, 1993, p. 6).



Figure 2 Bruno Munari, *The Prebooks*, 2002

The same experiments belonging to a world considered elevated and sophisticated like the artist's book, moreover, would also become the subject of children's literature –an invisible and marginalised form of literature (Beseghi, Grilli, 2011)– thanks to the fact that Bruno Munari saw from the very beginning the educational potential of multi-sensory communication and thus decided to adopt and extend the ideas that started during the workshops to the publishing sector dedicated to young children.

Beginning in 1929, Munari started dedicating himself to children's books. It was a period in which he participated in research of the second Futurism and its typographic revolutions, and the Milanese artist soon began to subvert every hierarchical structure of the illustrated book, going on to put the peritextual elements in the foreground. Throughout his long career he devoted himself to the illustrated book with constancy and great care, believing that it could be a valid tool

to operate in society, as it is an art object capable of a capillary dissemination of its poetic power, “the only antidote to the vulgarity of the world and its commodification” (Garrera, Triulzi, 2019, p. 12). With Munari, books are devices that respond to the utopian need to poetically re-found society, saving it from homologation, consumerism and inauthenticity.

Interestingly, even when addressing children, the author displays the same distrust of words that characterised his visual research in general, favouring the image first and foremost and its independent communication abilities (Maffei, 2008, p. 27), giving ample space for reflection regarding the material nature of the book (Beckett, 2018; Campagnaro, 2019).

The apex of this revolution initiated in children’s publishing is reached by *I Prelibri* [The Prebooks], first published by Danese in 1980, now part of the Corraini catalog. They are dedicated to preschoolers and seem to be a “tautological demonstration of the futility of storytelling” (Maffei, Picciau, 2002, p. 29). The pages of the twelve square booklets with different materials and bindings, with no story to tell, have a few stylised shapes and many abstract images, engravings, die-cuts, buttonholes, buttons, and strips. They are objects that aim to arouse wonder, because Munari said,

culture is made up of surprises, which are things we did not know before, and we must be ready to receive them all and not reject them for fear that the castle we have built for ourselves will crumble (Munari, 1981, p. 232).

Direct heirs of the *Unreadable Books* (Munari, 1981, pp. 225-239), the Prebooks are a response to Munari’s view of the importance of democratic and pedagogical dissemination of an experimental and modernist artistic language. Once again, the work is open-ended, and the child user, the only real protagonist of the Prebooks, has the opportunity to invent his or her own story and to freely make use of his or her own capacity for imagination. In the twelve small books, “another” dimension of reading is manifested, a “gymnastics for the mind”, as Annie Mirabel (2008, p. 32) writes, meaning “the creative ability to connect different

elements, to interpret them, to relaunch them beyond with our imagination” (Varrà, 2012, p. 82).

Nicoletta Gramantieri observes that as the reader flips through these books and wonders what, in the absence of story, they want us to do,

there is an enactment of most of the narrative mechanisms underlying picture books, novels and fiction in general. We find accumulation, subtraction, and dilation, and we are led to make predictions that are sometimes confirmed and other times not confirmed. We find repetitions, variants, and revelations, and with pleasure readers will spot and recognise them (Gramantieri, 2012, p. 216).

The Prebooks, true sculptures in book form, are able to express themselves through a plastic and material dimension; in the absence of themes and content, the emphasis falls on elements that are typically found in poetry or music, such as rhythm, assonance, expressiveness, and dynamism, recalling emotions that cannot be expressed in words.

THE 'HEIRS' OF UNREADABLE BOOKS AND PREBOOKS

Boero and De Luca (1995, p. 324) state that “Munari gives us solutions that are also typographically ingenious [...] a plurality of ideas, stimuli, and provocations capable of opening up many avenues for the illustrator-writers of future generations”. Many of the author’s books have taken on the status of cult objects. They have become landmarks of children’s publishing and important objects that are studied from different standpoints, including history (Terrusi, 2012), graphic and visual elements (Salisbury, 2015), categories related to time (Varrà, 2012), play (Campagnaro, 2016), and space (Campagnaro, 2017), as they are original examples of artist’s books and object-books that can be subjected to careful aesthetic analysis (Mirabel, 2008; Beckett, 2012).

In particular, the success and revolutionary scope of the Munari books mentioned here is also evidenced by the nu-

merous books for young children that were inspired by them and have been published over the past four decades. It is precisely because of the Prebooks that the now established Japanese graphic designer Katsumi Komagata created the *Little eyes* series in 1991 (Komagata 1991a-1991e). Consisting of twelve small square books with purely visual content and no text, the series uses the expressive properties of die-cut paper and simple shapes. The first five books in the box set, designed for infants as young as a few months old, are characterised by ‘pure abstraction’ and asemic communication. Their purpose is to invite visual and tactile discoveries together with adults by offering a vocabulary of art and visual communication through a repertoire of printed or carved geometric shapes. These are book-objects that are presented in the format of triptychs, and they determine reading at the rhythmic pace of triple time. They force one to take time and leave the eyes free to move and observe changes as the pages go by. In book n. 3, *Play With Colours*, for example, simple red *polka* dots on a white background become green *polka* dots on a red background on the next page and then turn into red dots on a green background. It is a contrast that causes “une sensation aussi vive qu’une piquête d’insecte”, Mirabel (2008, p. 32) writes.

When it comes to references to the Munari legacy, we could cite numerous other works, such as the following examples. *Jet de boules* by Miloš Cvach (1998, limited edition of 50 copies), an artist’s book commissioned by the Centre des Livres d’Artistes at Saint Yriex la Perche in 1998, for the *Books of Childhood* exhibition: the pages have several round spots that grow, collide and explode, negatively or positively, on folded, accordion-like pages that can turn into an architectural element that can be displayed in a play space. Also, by the same author, we can cite *Dans Tous les Sens* (2007, limited edition of 50 copies), another book-sculpture in rough cardboard bound with rings and with minimal geometric shapes: avowedly an heir to Bruno Munari’s *Unreadable Books*, the user can open it in all directions and compare and contrast painted and die-cut geometric shapes, with solids and voids

that can be discovered by one's fingers. *Le Petit Livre des couleurs* (1997, limited edition of 50 copies), by Ianna Andréadis, has fabric pages with different formats that value the tactile experience of reading and allow the user to play with colours while flipping through it, observing colour contrasts and assonances. *Basic Space* (2015) by Fanny Millard is a hardback playbook/book-object with simple illustrations and abstract geometric shapes in red and white that allows the theme of architecture to be explored by creating voluminous shapes with fold-out pages: the book turns into a three-dimensional object the user can enjoy with the body and in space. By using one's imagination, it can become a house, a school, and a space for dreaming. *Organic space*, by the same author (2017) is an invitation to experiment with organic forms from nature, imagining oneself immersed in a landscape with the triangular hardback pages that can be folded and arranged at will. It is a tool designed to expose children to the notions of territory and it is an initiation into the relationship with the concepts of surface, distance, and margins, in a playful way.

And finally, we also have the famous *Jeu de sculpture* (2012; 2020) and *Jeu des Formes* (2015) by Hervé Tullet. These books have hardback, die-cut pages allow youngsters to 'enter the space of the book' and engage with the language of sculpture. These are, once again, book-objects and playbooks, without any figuration or programmed pedagogical intentions other than those aimed at stimulating creativity and testing design skills and manipulative abilities. The book-object can be used as a structure from which to build a personal installation, which is always different depending on the position of the coloured inserts that can be placed and embedded in the available slots, according to the user's free choice.

The books just listed, a special category of children's books that could include many others that have been recently released, seem to be united by aniconism, or the absence of narrative and symbolic codes. At first glance, their characteristics and aesthetic qualities do not seem all that different from the artist's books we addressed in the first



Figure 3 Hervé Tullet, *Il gioco della scultura*, 2020

part of this paper. In all of the cases, because of these poly-form objects that do not allow themselves to be caged in by schematics and definitions and that do aim for active, multi-sensory enjoyment, art has moved out of the galleries and into familiar, everyday life.

These examples point out what is usually considered secondary and sometimes overlooked in book design. By eliminating the verbal code and the iconic code, at least what is intended as a traditional figurative one, the communication abilities of the graphics code of the page and the code of the packaging, the materials, the external shape, and the cover emerge in the foreground. As far as children's books are concerned, as mentioned by Chiara Carrer (Dallari, 2007), we can also add the code of the mediator and the way the book is utilised, which is particularly important when preschoolers are guided by an adult who initiates forms of questioning and cognitive processing.

BOOKS THAT ARE LIKE 'OPEN WORKS'

Unreadable Books, Prebooks and their “heirs” found in both the artist’s book section and the section for young children do not tell stories, reveal truths, or offer answers. Like all modern abstract works they reject the possibilities of traditional understanding. Rather, they confront us with the still, silent space of pages that become spaces of research and start to resemble non-figurative or monochromatic pictorial works. They represent an entirely different opportunity for encounter in the onslaught of visual stimuli that pervades us every day and they constitute precious silent spaces as opposed to the density of chaotic information we receive daily. Their aesthetic quality and essence as crossover works, open works and total works of art (Cantatore, 2019), bring about awe and curiosity. They capture your attention, and open themselves up to questions.

As Umberto Eco (1972, pp.153-184) wrote, the purpose of the open work is to convey an ambiguous message, to provide room for the possibility of interpretation, to offer *stimuli* endowed with indeterminacy, without claiming to be the vehicle of an objective message, so that the reader is induced to a series of ever-changing ‘readings’.

It will therefore be necessary to reflect on some of the dangers of misunderstanding when enjoying works such as the ones that are analysed and especially when adults mediate how the books are used by children.

In the preface of Beba Restelli’s book *Giocare con tatto* (2002, pp. 12-15), Alberto Munari speaks about his father’s work and warns about prejudices regarding concepts such as ‘art’ (as well as ‘play’), very often linked to stereotypes implanted in common opinions, which see the work as an object that must always convey meaning. When it comes to abstract works of art, it is often believed that the result can only be achieved by expert connoisseurs and the field is abandoned, judging the terrain to be too difficult for the uninitiated and the young.

The books that were presented emancipate themselves from the preconception that it is necessary to be prepared with meanings to be conveyed or elements to be taught. They propose adventures for the eye, explorations for the senses, putting even the youngest children on the path of formal research of expressive possibilities, as they skilfully offer a confrontation with visual communication tools and techniques. It is an important opportunity for awareness of how images work, as they are cognitive objects that are only seemingly easy to read.

Therefore, we consider the books analysed here as works to be enjoyed without having to translate them into words, which is the same as that artistic genre that emancipates itself from the concept of imitation of nature: music. Music is an art that is understood “as a construction of pure shapes, of nonrepresentational character, which nevertheless through this abstract playing can create emotion in its user, and that is precisely what its beauty consists of”, Barbieri (2011, p. 32) writes. The association with non-figuration with music was, moreover, in the program of the artist who is traditionally referred to as the founder of abstractionism, Kandinsky, who with the abolition of mimetic depiction causes painting to move away from the universe of prose to “the advantage of that of the sonic, more intuitive, more mystical, more sublime” (Barbieri, 2011, p. 34).

Let us then return to communication that is intended as a challenge that goes beyond words. Based on what we have examined so far, books can be seen not only as containers of written discourse but can represent an opportunity to access the terrain of freedom of expression proper to contemporary art and to confront the possibilities given by detachment from the usual, and of going beyond the ordinary. There is no need for translation into words. One touches, in silence, the most intimate, unspeakable strings of existence, without having to explain.

Silence, which has a real starring role here, is moreover an increasingly necessary practice for contemplating the

world and processing *stimuli* (Torralba Rossellò, 2012). It is no accident that in the books that were analysed, as well as in a great many other illustrated books, silence is a frequently present narrative object (Campagnaro, 2020). Silence can put the brakes on the acoustic and visual *pollution* of repertoires associated with prevailing banal and stereotyped stories and often oppressive pedagogy; it can also be a resistant tool to encourage visual contemplation and the approach to an aesthetic experience.

REFERENCES

- Antonello, P. (2019). Visible Books, Unreadable Books: Bruno Munari's Iconotextual Playground. *Italian Studies*, 74(4), 331-351. doi:10.1080/00751634.2019.1658919
- Barbieri, D. (2011). *Guardare e leggere. La comunicazione visiva dalla pittura alla tipografia*. Rome, IT: Carocci.
- Beckett, S. (2012). *Crossover Picturebooks. A Genre for All Ages*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Beckett, S. (2018). Crossover Picturebooks. In B. Kümmerling-Meibauer, *The Routledge Companion to Picturebooks*, New York, NY: Routledge.
- Beseghi, E., & Grilli, G. (Eds.). (2011). *La letteratura invisibile. Infanzia e libri per bambini*. Rome, IT: Carocci.
- Cantatore, L. (2019). Il libro per bambini come opera d'arte totale: Bruno Munari, Lele Luzzati, Maria Lai. In A. Antoniazzi (Eds.), *Scrivere, leggere, raccontare...La letteratura per l'infanzia tra passato e futuro*, Milan, IT: FrancoAngeli.
- Campagnaro, M. (2016). The Function of Play in Bruno Munari's Children's Books. A Historical Overview. *Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica*, 93, 105-111. doi: 10.6092/issn.1970-2221/6449.
- Campagnaro, M. (2017). Bruno Munari's Visual Mapping of the City of Milan: An Historical Analysis of the Picturebook nella nebbia di Milano. In N. Goga, Kümmerling-Meibauer, B. *Maps and Mapping in Children's Literature: Landscapes, seascapes and cityscapes*, Amsterdam, NL: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Campagnaro, M. (2019). Materiality in Bruno Munari's Book Objects: The case of Nella notte buia and I Prelibri. *Libri & Liberi*, 8(2), 359-379. doi: 10.21066/carcl.libri.8.2.7
- Campagnaro, M. (2020). The materiality of silence. The curious cases of Munari, Charlip and their picturebooks with no pictures. *Revista do Programa de Estudos Pós-Graduados em Literatura e Crítica Literária da PUC-SP*, 24(7), 4-20. doi: 10.23925/1983-4373.2020i24p4-23.
- Dallari, M. (2007). *In una notte di luna vuota. Educare pensieri metaforici, laterali, impertinenti*. Trento, IT: Erickson.

- Eco, U. (1972). *Opera aperta*. Milan, IT: Bompiani.
- Ferrari, D. (2007). La parola negata. Parole cancellate, strappate, illeggibili, indecifrabili. In G. Belli, *La parola nell'arte. Ricerche d'avanguardia nel'900*. Milan, IT: Skira.
- Fiz, A. (1999). *Omaggio a Bruno Munari*. Milan, IT: Mazzotta.
- Garrera, G., & Triulzi, S. (2019). *Il libro dei bambini per bambini. Gli anni Sessanta e Settanta: la rivoluzione*. Rome, IT: Diacritica edizioni.
- Gramantieri, N. (2012). L'albo illustrato e il suo lettore. In Hamelin, *ad occhi aperti. Leggere l'albo illustrato*. Rome IT: Donzelli.
- Guindani, S. (2008). Fine del narrativo? Testo, immagine e corpo nel libro d'artista. In G. Maffei & M. Picciau, *Il libro come opera d'arte*. Mantua, IT: Corraini.
- Klein, Y. (1991). *Les Écrits (1965-1990)*, vol. 1, Bordeaux, FR: CAPS Musée.
- Komagata, K. (1991a). *Little eyes 1 - Firstlook - Beginning for babies*. Tokyo, JP: One Stroke.
- Komagata, K. (1991b). *Little eyes 2- Meetcolors - Second step for babies*. Tokyo, JP: One Stroke.
- Komagata, K. (1991c). *Little eyes 3 - Play with colors - Advanced for babies*. Tokyo, JP: One Stroke.
- Komagata, K. (1991d). *Little eyes 4 - One for many - Learning for children*. Tokyo, JP: One Stroke.
- Komagata, K. (1991e). *Little eyes 5 - 1 to 10 - Learning for children*. Tokyo, JP: One Stroke.
- Maffei, G. (2002). *Munari. I libri*. Milan, IT: Silvestre Bonnard.
- Maffei, G., & Picciau, M. (2008). *Il libro come opera d'arte*. Mantua, IT: Corraini.
- Millard, F. (2015). *Basic Space*. Bordeaux, FR: Extra éditions.
- Millard, F. (2017). *Organic Space*. Bordeaux, FR: Extra éditions.
- Mirabel, A. (2008). Bruno Munari. In Collectif (Les Trois Ourses), *Quand les artistes créent pour les enfants* (pp. 16-26). Paris, FR: Editions Autrement.
- Mondadori, A. (1950). *Libri illeggibili di Munari*. Milan, IT: Libreria A. Salto.
- Munari, B. (1953). *The unreadable red and white book*. Hilversum, NL: Steendrukkerij de Jong & Co.
- Munari, B. (1967). *The Unreadable Book N.Y.1*. New York, NY: Museum of Modern Art.
- Munari, B. (1980). *The Prebooks*. Milan, IT: Danese Edizioni.
- Munari, B. (1981). *Da cosa nasce cosa*. Bari, IT: Laterza.
- Munari, B. (1984). *The Unreadable Book MN1*. Mantua, IT: Corraini.
- Munari, B. (1992). *Verbale scritto*. Mantua, IT: Corraini.
- Pittarello, R. (1993). *Per fare un libro*. Turin-Milan, IT: Edizioni sonda.
- Restany, P. (1999). Un Peter Pan di statura leonardesca. In B. Finessi, *Su Munari: 104 testimonianze, 152 inediti di Bruno Munari*. Milan, IT: Abi-tare Segesta.
- Restelli, B. (2002). *Giocare con tatto*. Milan, IT: FrancoAngeli.
- Salisbury, M. (2015). *100 Great Children's Picture Books*. London, UK: Laurence King Publishing.
- Terrusi, M. (2012). *Albi illustrati. Leggere, guardare, nominare il mondo nei libri per l'infanzia*. Rome, IT: Carocci.

- Torralba Rosselò, F. (2012). *Volti del silenzio*. Magnano, IT: Qiqajon.
- Tullet, H. (2012). *Jeu de sculpture*. New York, NY: Phaidon.
- Tullet, H. (2015). *Jeu des Formes*. New York, NY: Phaidon.
- Varrà, E. (2012). Albo e tempo. In *Hamelin, Ad occhi aperti. Leggere l'albo illustrato*, Rome IT: Donzelli.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

- Boer, P., & De Luca, C. (1995). *La letteratura per l'infanzia*. Rome-Bari, IT: Laterza.
- Munari, B. (1968). *Design e comunicazione visiva*. Bari, IT: Laterza.

Article available at

DOI: 10.6092/issn.2724-2463/15135

How to cite

as article

Valecchi, V. (2022). Books That Are Like Walking in Quiet Spaces: Artist's Books, Unreadable Books, Prebooks and Their Heirs. *img journal*, 7, 328-347.

as contribution in book

Valecchi, V. (2022). Books That Are Like Walking in Quiet Spaces: Artist's Books, Unreadable Books, Prebooks and Their Heirs. In A. Luigini, V. Menchetelli, (Eds.), *img journal 7/2022 Wordless Images* (pp. 328-347) Alghero, IT: Publica. ISBN 9788899586300



© 2022 The authors. The text of this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.