

UNBOUND BOOK PROJECT
ARTSPACE

Project Title: Containment and Spillage

Artist Collaborators:

Jo Yarrington, Morgan Post, Samuel Dole

Containment and Spillage is a book object that questions nuclear waste from power plants in Connecticut, the process of using water as coolants in the reactors and the potential effects of the flow of radioactive materials. Containment and Spillage is the product of collaboration between three visual artists. The construction of the book and its contents are informed by the interweaving of their personal histories and practices as artists, the history of nuclear power and photography in Connecticut and the political nature of selected sculptural books in the Alan Chasanoff collection.

The book juxtaposes imagery of the still active Millstone Nuclear Power Plant in Waterford CT (activated in 1970) and the site of the decommissioned Connecticut Yankee Nuclear Power Plant in Haddam Neck, CT. Research into the visual process involved investigating the two plants' histories, practices and documented environmental issues and concerns; photographing the plants and its surroundings; and collecting samples of organic material from the sites. The group met with Dr. Shanon Reckinger, Engineering Professor of Fluid Dynamics at Fairfield University and nuclear engineer, David Harding, to explore the dynamics of flow specifically relating to Nuclear Power Plants and the surrounding environment/soil and waterways.

The book is constructed to take on several configurations. The 13" H x 13"W x 13" object is contained in a large case for storage made of lead and painted a "1950's kitchen green" using lead-based paint and aged with a sense of decay. Upon opening the lead case the book's separate components fit together by magnets to construct a cube. This structure transforms into a Magic Lantern, viewing station, sample storage and container for photographs of the nuclear power plant sites. The separate panels of the book are made from a mix of materials including brass, stainless steel, lead, magnets and glass. The book unfolds and reconfigures its shape to accommodate its varying functions as an evolving narrative.

The book object and its contents are defined by contextual dichotomies: absence/presence, interior/exterior, seen/unseen and containment/spillage. The design of the outer shells of the book is informed by an exploration of Connecticut's industrial connection to early photographic practice around the late 19th century, including the pivotal influence of brass and lens

manufacturing in Waterbury. Key components include the use of Uranium for a number of processes and procedures employed in the formation of the book; images of the sites and surrounding areas have been printed with the Uranotype process and the stained glass panel containing soil and water samples made from Uranium glass that glows yellowish green under UV light. The lantern configuration of the book is designed to project modern recreations of magic lantern slides depicting pertinent Connecticut sites, appropriated images of cancer cells, gathered soil, food and water samples, documentation from the Nuclear Regulatory Commission and other agencies. The pedestal on which the piece sits is designed with a self-contained projection screen for presentation of the slides within the gallery space as well as an integrated LED light box for personal review of the slides on an individual basis.

The group wishes to thank its collaborators in the fabrication of the book including Jack Loranger for providing the hand-made uranium glass, Dorie Guthrie of Urban Glass in Brooklyn New York for her contribution of the uranium glass forming and shaping, Bernard Klevickas for the metal fabrication of the lantern and its case and Chris Denson for his construction of the custom wood pedestal on which the piece sits.