

A Questionnaire on the Photobook

Artists

Aaron Schuman | Alec Soth | Amak Mahmoodian | António Júlio Duarte | Brad Feuerhelm
| Daido Moriyama | Gerry Johansson | Guido Guidi | Hoda Afshar | Jason Fulford | Jo
Ractliffe | Lieko Shiga | Manuela Marques | Mårten Lange | Martin Parr | Pacifico Silano |
Paul Graham | Rinko Kawauchi | Sakiko Nomura | Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa | Terri
Weifenbach | Wouter Van de Voorde

By

José Bértolo

David Company

Aaron Schuman

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career?

For me, the photobook is the primary format through which I engage with photography today. Photographs themselves are paradoxical in the sense that they are incredibly detailed and rich with information — both in terms of their content, and in terms of the aesthetic choices made by the photographer — yet they also remain remarkably ambiguous when left to their own devices; context more than anything is what imbues them with meaning, purpose, depth, clarity and the potential to communicate beyond the limitations of the frame. As a younger photographer and viewer, I often used to fetishize the single photograph, obsessing over individual images, what they meant, and how they were made. But I came to realize that what is truly rewarding is to engage with photographs in relation to the constellations of images and information that we surround and support them with, which infuses them with layers of meaning, feeling and complexity that might otherwise go undiscovered. Eventually, I came to understand that a photobook is not simply a collection or catalogue of individual images, but is a singular work of art in its own right, which at its best is carefully designed and curated to communicate holistically, with each element within it speaking to and resonating amongst all the others, and collectively serving a greater purpose. The photobook offers the photographer so much potential in terms of being able to create, control and convey the underlying complexities and contexts within which their pictures are intended to be seen, understood and read — as well as the opportunity to use image, text, design, materiality, and the physicality of the book itself to weave together an elaborate tapestry of ideas, experiences and information — creating something that exponentially more interesting and engaging (for both photographer and reader), and so much more meaningful and enriching than the sum of its parts. Furthermore, a book has a “reader” rather than an “audience” — reading is generally an individualized act, and the book format alone innately encourages an incredibly direct, unique and intimate relationship to form between its author and each reader. Don’t get me wrong — I love a beautifully presented photographic print or a cleverly curated exhibition as much as the next person — but I do feel that the photobook is the ultimate format for photographic expression, in terms of allowing photography to serve as a genuine “medium” through which we can best communicate ourselves and connect with others at the deepest and most important levels.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

When I first started to consider publishing my own photobooks, I was already very aware of the importance of editing, sequencing, sizing and layout, having spent a lot

of time studying these intricacies with the books of others. But it wasn't really until I sat down with publishers and their respective designers to discuss the production of my books that I became entirely aware of potential and vast range of possibilities offered by their materiality, and the subtle importance of our physical experience of a book. Obviously, from having spent many years printing my own photographs — both in the darkroom and digitally — I understood that, visually, the type of paper used plays a vital role in how an image is read and received; matte versus glossy, warm versus cool, textured versus smooth, high-contrast versus low-contrast, dense tones versus flat tones, and so on. But when Michael Mack first walked me through some of the books he'd published, discussing in detail the feel of various papers on the fingertips, and how the texture and weight of a paper determined the reader's encounter and understanding of the work in terms of a tactile experience — i.e. how easily the pages turned, how stiff or flexible they were in the turning (partially revealing the next page or not to varying degrees), how they either lay flat or slightly curved in relation to the spine, how they subconsciously recalled or intuitively referenced the feel and associations we have of all of the different types of papers we've come across in our lifetime (from telephone books, to paperback novels, to magazines, to photographic prints), and so on — it completely blew my mind. In both the books I've published with MACK so far, we've incorporated two paper-stocks in order to create a subtle physical sensation or shift in the reader's physical experience while turning the pages. In *Slant* (2019), a body of work that incorporated both black-and-white photographs made in what might be called a traditionally "straight" documentary style and clippings from a local newspaper, we used a somewhat traditional-feeling paper for the photographs (with a slight varnish on the images themselves, to give them a bit of a fibre-based-print kind of depth and sheen), and a much thinner, recycled, more pulpy-feeling paper for the clippings, to refer back to their newspaper origins. In *Sonata* (2022), which conceptually and structurally is inspired by the classical sonata form within music, the book contains three "movements" — an exposition, a development, and a recapitulation; the first and third movements, which share some motifs and themes amongst them, contain color photographs which are printed on a rather smooth, photographic-print-feeling type of paper (which is deeply saturated and has a slight sheen), whereas the second movement is entirely a sequence of dizzying black-and-white pictures made in Italian olive groves, and is printed on a matte paper that has a slightly rougher, more "natural" feel. In both cases, the idea is that the reader not only sees subtle transition taking place within the book, but literally feels it as well. And that's not to mention all of the other design elements that are utilized in order to quietly support the work or guide the reader's experience — from the cover design and material, to the endpapers, to the binding, to the structure and pliability of the case, to the design and curvature of the spine, and even to the headband and so on. Of course, once you become aware of all of these possibilities, it is very tempting to want to take advantage of all of the bells and whistles on offer; it's easy to overdo it in the sense that the design can overwhelm the content or intentions of the work itself, and take center-stage, pushing the photographs and materials that are at the heart of it to the background, and into a supporting role. But so far, I've been lucky enough to work with designers who have understood (and insisted) that all of these choices

need to be considered in service of the body of work, and through extended conversations between us every decision is carefully justified in relation to its intentions, and how we can utilize design and materiality to further strengthen, support and communicate these to the reader, both physically and conceptually.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

I tend to both photograph and research in quite an intuitive manner, gathering lots of seemingly random images, materials, ephemera, bits of information and so on that I inherently find interesting, in the knowledge that some of it will eventually gain further relevance within the context of a book or project, and quite a high proportion of it will probably be culled, or saved for future use. Once I sense that a particular theme, idea, pattern or obsession is beginning to surface or form within this amorphous collection of material — and once I feel this starting to pull me in a more distinct direction; personally, emotionally, intellectually or otherwise — that's when I start to consider ways in which I might focus my attention, and approach the photographing, editing and sequencing process with a bit more rigor and intention. I begin to try to more clearly identify and refine the underlying themes that I'm exploring, and when it comes to thinking about the eventual book, I start to consider ways in which I might devise an overarching conceptual or symbolic structure that will help me sort the photographs and materials, and build meaningful relationships between them for both myself and the reader. Often, when I'm developing this structure, I look for inspiration from outside of the photobook tradition, alongside spending a lot of time with many of my favorite photobooks trying to unpick how they are so successful on a structural level. For example, my first book, *FOLK* (2016), evolved from an exhibition that I'd had two years earlier at an ethnographic museum, so its editing, sequencing and design drew a lot from the curatorial process of that show — thinking of each double-page-spread as portion of wall on which images and objects hung and developed a physical relationship to one another; and thinking of the overall book as a spatial experience for the reader, akin to wandering from wall to wall and room to room, whilst mentally building an intricate network of connections between them. This book also drew inspiration from the ways in which various ethnographic catalogues and publications incorporate photographic materials and visualize objects and artefacts. In *Slant* (2019) — which was made in and around the town of Amherst, Massachusetts; the hometown of the poet Emily Dickinson — the layout, sequence and structure of the book drew inspiration from slant-rhyme, a poetic device used frequently by Dickinson herself, as well as from the local newspaper, the *Amherst Bulletin*, where I found the clippings that were included in the book, as well as from classic photobooks, such as *Time In New England* (1950) by Paul Strand and Nancy Newhall, and *Wisconsin Death Trip* (1973) by Michael Lesy, which both interweave photographs and appropriate texts together in fascinating and incredibly effective ways. And as I mentioned previously, *Sonata* (2022) structurally and sequentially draws its inspiration from the classical

musical form of the sonata, with three interrelated movements coming together to form a singular composition and holistic sensorial experience for the reader, as well as from a wide range of photobooks, including Christian Marclay's *Things I've Heard* (2013), Lee Friedlander's *Apples and Olives* (2005), Matthew Connors's *Fire in Cairo* (2015), and many more. Again, in all three of my books, the intention is for these underlying conceptual foundations or symbolic structures to subtly support and enrich the reader's experience and understanding of the work itself in book form, rather than overwhelm it – so they may go entirely unnoticed at first glance. But my hope is that, even if it's on a subconscious level, they will help to bring further meaning, purpose, depth, context, clarity and complexity to the projects as a whole, and allow the diverse and somewhat ambiguous individual component parts to coalesce into singular and consolidated work of art, which is both captivating and rewarding in its totality.

Alec Soth

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

Something I love about photography is that it can be distributed so many ways. I often make the analogy to music. In the digital era, photographs can be “streamed” for free or seen “live” in exhibitions. I think of the book as being analogous to the vinyl album. While not as democratic as the web, it is still somewhat affordable and broadly distributed. Having come of age in a pre-digital era in smaller city without very many photo exhibitions, the photobook was my primary source. As a consequence, it is almost always the first form of distribution I think of for my work.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

The way I tend to remember photobooks in my library is by touch. I make an emotional connection to the weight of the book and the tactile quality of the cover. I pay a lot of attention to this in my own work. I also experiment. I’ve made large and small books using everything from newsprint to the finest papers.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

I find it difficult to explain editing as so much of it is intuitive. But I generally have a few consistent practices. When I start a project, I decide on a rough number of pictures to include in the book. I think of this as being analogous to the length of a film. Most filmmakers, I assume, know before shooting if they are going to make a thirty minute episode, a ninety minute feature film or a four hour epic. After taking significantly more images than the number I choose, I begin editing. I make small thumbnail prints so that I can see them all at once. I then begin something that looks like a game of solitaire. After I develop a rough sequence, I make larger prints and a dummy so that I can experience the feeling of flipping the page. This process then gets translated into an InDesign file so that I can make faster changes. It’s only until late in the process that I discuss the sequence with my publisher.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I'm exceedingly lucky to work with a publisher who respects my vision but also gives clear, thoughtful feedback and has a good eye for design. The quality of the collaboration is quite rare, so I have little desire to work with other publishers.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

While these fairs play an important role in the culture and economics of the photobook, due to where I live and my schedule, I tend to engage with them infrequently.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

There are far too many to name. The reason I have a large library is so that I can continually find new sources of inspiration. This inspiration can come from obvious elements like the photographs and sequences but can also come from nuanced design details.

Amak Mahmoodian

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

In light of what is happening globally, and the atmosphere that encircles us with personal, social and political issues, photobooks for me are evidence and testimonies for those yet to come.

For some of my projects, the photobook is a wonderful transition from single images to the whole narrative. The book is an in-between space, into which the readers are transported, where my narrative and their's blend together.

Books and sketchbooks are in the centre of my practice. In sketchbooks I invent a character who is caring, dealing, living, suffering, researching and looking for the answer. I find the answer in the active process of responding through my sketchbooks, rather than in the outcome. My books are strongly connected to my sketchbooks and the process of making them.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I choose the materials that highlight the importance of the story that the reader holds in their hands as a book. For instance, *Shenasnameh* is a small book exactly the same size as an Iranian *Shenasnameh* (birth certificate), covered with the fabric Iranian women are forced to wear for their ID photographs. It is the same fabric Iranians have been burning in the streets of Iran in the last 64 days, in the protests against the morality police, injustice and oppression.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

At the beginning my approach to the process of sequencing is deeply intuitive. My recent book *Zanjir* is structured as a circular narrative referencing the idea of time (the eternal return) positioning both Taj and I at each side of the book to collide in the middle where the myth (*Shahnameh*) and death are represented with red tattoos. This is also where past and present meet to create a new narrative. The historical images and my images are never on the same spread, almost as they were running after each other. Taj's excerpts always appear in the recto pages in italics and my text in the verso pages with a standard font visualising this back-and-forth dialogue.

In the sequence and edit of *Zanjir* we used archetypal symbols such as: heaven (associated with power), earth (associated with fertility, or the nurse of all living things), blood (related to life, dignity of inheritance, death), and light (symbolising mental and spiritual qualities). As well as metaphors created with the combination of images and text. The design used a variety of sizes and positions for the photographs creating a certain flow and hierarchy helping us to translate the idea of “distance” to the reading experience. For example, using full bleed images for a more immersive experience to smaller ones placed in the corner of the page to objectify others. The book tries to blend the different timelines into one (historical and contemporary), blurring the lines of what conforms to the past and the present but acknowledging their provenance.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

For last two books, *Shenasnameh* co-published by RRB Photobooks and IC Visual lab in 2016 and *Zanjir* published by RRB Photobooks in 2019, I decided to work with the publisher who knew the work and importantly my relationship with my work and subjects, which is the core of my practice. This helped me to analyse and identify the narrative structure and sequence in response to the issues I intend to identify through the project.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

Personally, at the beginning of my journey I found them scary. But, through the time and conversations I had with friends and artists who I am inspired by, I learned to attend the book fairs that are relevant to my practice. Book fairs and Photobook festivals are meadows of resources, inspirations and sometimes feedback. This helps me not only in learning about other artists but also in understanding my own practice.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

I have several inspirations and they change as I change. In my opinion each photobook has something to offer, like a view, you take and carry within what suits you and who you are.

My personal canon is not a photobook, it is a book (in seven parts) with no images yet evocatively visual, *In Search of the Lost Time*, by Marcel Proust.

António Júlio Duarte

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

The photobook format has been increasingly important in my work. My working process is very much about finding balance between how single images work and how they generate different meanings as sequences, and the book format is perfect for that. My first books were closely tied to exhibitions, so the pictures in them were selected more with the exhibition in mind than the book. They are more catalogues. *White Noise* is the first work I edited as a book from scratch. That was 2011. Since then, photobook became my elected way of expression. Books and exhibitions pose different challenges. I like them both. In an exhibition I deal with the relation between an architectural space and photographs as tridimensional objects. In a book, the images appear in succession, there is a stronger sense of time. These are different ways of thinking and experiencing.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I do have a strong intuition of the general aspects of the book I am working on from the beginning, like the size or the format. As the editing work progresses, these aspects become more detailed and more technical. Final decisions about paper and materials are made together with the publisher, the graphic designer, and the printing technicians.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

My approach is more intuitive than conceptual or symbolic. I take reality as it is and work from there. Photographs are visual, but I think of them much in musical terms: single photographs as songs and books as music albums. The way they relate to each other has to do with the idea of rhythm and harmony, and they produce meaning in a poetic sense, by setting tones and suggesting moods.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I've been working mainly with one publisher — Pierre von Kleist — since *White Noise*. We did five books together in the last eleven years. We have a relationship based on trust and that's essential for me. I edit in close collaboration with them and give them access to all my images. They are there from the beginning.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I think photography and book fairs are helpful for promoting my work and for seeing new works, but personally I prefer to enjoy books and shows quietly.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

Too many to enumerate here. Christer Strömholm's *Poste Restante*, Gaylord Herron's *Vagabond* and Brassai's *Paris de nuit* still haunt me. With few exceptions I like books that look like books — pages between covers — rather than *art objects*. I prefer a badly designed book with good photographs than a very sleek one with poor content.

Brad Feuerhelm

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

I do not consider the photobook a format. I consider it a medium and it is the primary medium in which I desire to work. I do not see my own practice as being relevant outside of the medium of the photobook anymore. It is a medium at its infancy and the field for its interpretation is only being considered now in my opinion. I do not show my work in any other manner, nor do I intend to. If given the chance, the exhibition of my work will be in a form dedicated to the photobook. I would not deviate my images and their assembly in an exhibition from that of the photobook medium. In short, I would be interested in the expansion of the photobook into new forms of exhibitions, but categorically refuse the work to be disassociated from the original form.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I have a clear idea of the format of the medium that I am personally drawn to which is not experimental and borders on the conservative photobook form. I am not interested in anything that deviates from that. I see my work as being “read” in a form that rewards a reader of images with significant subtle planting of images within the book to encourage deeper ruminations through symbolic usages of images in their flow throughout. Size may vary as may paper stock, but the form is classic in nature for me.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

All forms of sequencing and editing/culling of images are dependent on the ideas behind the conceptual framework of the photobook. There are many ways to sequence a book, some of which I am currently identifying by quasi-mathematical choices as well as architectural undergirding. There is no one single solution, but there are effective strategies one can enlist to “read” the photobook in a certain way. It is important to think about the various iterations of form that can help enable these tactics for sequencing and editing. From there, the designer becomes a key element. Types of meaning are somewhat arbitrary as the notion of such is pitted between the leverage between intention and interpretation of concept. This is to

suggest that what I may want from my work could be vastly different than how the viewer “reads” it, and I can play with that in many ways, so meaning, as with absolutes, is nothing more than a game of possibility between artist and audience.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I have worked with a decent amount, including notable ones such as MACK, Self Publish Be Happy, Witty Books, VOID, Chaco, and the Archive of Modern Conflict. It seems that many publishers are opting to work with an artist once or twice depending on sales, or the artist’s visibility. MACK seems to do both. They have single books such as mine that they cater too, but also repeatedly put out books by their better selling artists such as Paul Graham, Alec Soth, Alessandra Sanguinetti, etc. Though I would like to have one prolific publisher who can cater to the number of books that I wish to publish, it has been rewarding to work with new ones as I continue through my work. Ultimately, this, along with my reviewing and writing on photobooks has given me enough insight to consider my own aims with publishing. As per the second part of your question, different publishers demand different things with designers. Some like MACK have an in-house designer, while others allow you to bring your own designer, and some allow both. There are other publishers that demand they edit, sequence, and design your books. They may be open to suggestion, but in the end, they want brand control when publishing your work. This is a difficult position unless you are extremely flexible with your work. I can do both, but prefer to not let a publisher touch my sequencing.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

Not at all, but that may change in the future. I enjoy Offprint in Paris when I go to Paris, otherwise, they are not terribly important to me. If I am not publishing, or if I do not have something new out, I do not see the point in them personally. I would also say that I am in a rather unique position in that I am highly networked through all my various activities. I wear many hats and that allows me to connect with a large audience, but also with critics, etc. on a firsthand basis. In short, I do not need the fairs. Again, this is a fairly unique position. My privilege of my hard work and visibility coupled with a strange ability to work social media platforms means that I have reach.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

I continue to be inspired weekly by photobooks. As a reviewer and a passionate lover of the medium built over a couple of decades, I can fully say that I love what I do and

I love seeing people make books. Hardly a week goes by where I don't find something amazing for me. This week it was Alessandra Sanguinetti's *Some Say Ice*, Saskia Groneberg's *Büropflanze*, and Lucile Boiron's *Mise en pieces* are inspiring me currently.

What is not to love? I think people who struggle with the ceaseless torrent of photobook, the end of year lists, and so on, are better served elsewhere. I do not have a personal canon, but I seem to lean into Northern European and German photobooks quite heavily with Laurenz Berges's *4100 Duisburg*, Keld Helmer-Petersen's *122 Color Photographs*, Manfred Willman's *Das Land* and Volker Heinze's *Ahnung* being four photobooks which I would not part with easily. That said, I would easily say that I have owned thousands of photobooks over the course of the last 25 years of my interest.

Daido Moriyama

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

A photobook is an essential medium for me. I believe that photobooks are the best way to distribute my images all around the world rather than exhibition prints in galleries or museums.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

It is definitely important, but I leave everything up to publishing houses. I prefer not to decide by myself.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

I do not edit by myself.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

Except for exhibition catalogs and international publications, I generally make photobooks only with publishers whom I trust. A photo book is a collaborative creation between an editor and a designer, so I just hand them my photographs which become a foundation. The reason that I do not participate is because I would not be able to produce anything better than my own thing if I make my own thing. By leaving everything up to editors and designers, I hope to discover new myself and new perspectives, which I did not even know.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I am happy for any opportunity if a large audience could see my photographs.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

William Klein's *New York* and Weegee's *Naked City*.

Gerry Johansson

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

It has over the years grown to become very important. I have a background as designer for a publishing company that goes back to 1970. My first little catalogue, 36 pages, was published in 1980. That was a catalogue for a local exhibition. Nowadays it is usually the other way around, a bigger book accompanied by a small exhibition. For me the book and the exhibition with the silver gelatin print is equally important. Just different types of objects.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

Most of my books have a very simple and basic design. The designer Henrik Nygren in Stockholm formulated in 1998 when we worked with the book *Amerika*. It has a small and very economical format 24 x 17 cm with small pictures, 9,2 x 9 cm. The book was self-published so it was important to keep costs down. I needed a lot of pages to get the right flow of images and the book has 224 pages and is printed on a cheap book paper. The book had a cardboard cover which looked nice but that unfortunately meant that the book didn't open up very well. For the next book *Sverige*, 2005, we changed the cover to a light brown linen hardcover with tipped in images on cover and back cover. The design was used for the next four books and variations of the design has been used for most of my books.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

When I planned my first little catalogue I spent a lot of time trying to get the 33 pictures in a logical order. When I some years later looked at the edit just couldn't understand what I had tried to achieve.

In my later books, from *Amerika* (1998) onwards, the edit is much simpler, just based on a very simple idea. You might say conceptual, but I don't like the word and I'm certainly not a conceptual photographer. I don't want to create stories with my pictures and I don't want pictures to talk to each other. Each picture is a new story and that was the reason for just putting the pictures in alphabetical order starting with *Alzheimer* and ending with *Zell*. The idea is so simple and obvious that the readers quite soon understand the editing principle. This principal is used for at

least half of my books. A few are edited in geographical order, or in time order. In one book, *Ulan Bator* (2009), the pictures are in the same order as they were photographed. In some later books there might be sub orders like small chapters within the alphabetical order. You can see it in *American Winter* (2018), *Esker*, (2021) and *Spanish Summer* (2022). Some of my books have quite a number of pages, usually around 320 pages and circa 200 photographs. What I hope to achieve with that is that the reader gets a bit exhausted and must put the book away and have a pause. It just becomes a bit too much.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I think that over the years I have tried most combinations of publishing. I have been a publisher, a self-publisher, a self-publisher in cooperation with a gallery or another publishing company and I have had my work published by other publishers. All combinations have worked fine. Sometimes I have approached publishers and sometimes they have contacted me. Since I'm a person who likes to do everything myself, and I hate to argue for my work, I would say that self-publishing is great if you can afford it. It's a lot of work, but it is very rewarding if you manage to sell your books. Patience is important and when they are sold out you miss them terribly. The *Amerika* book took 12 years to sell out.

I'm educated as a graphic designer myself, but I have only designed a couple of my own books. I have been lucky to work with two designers, Henrik Nygren and Greger Ulf Nilsson, who believe that you can only improve a design by removing stuff.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I rarely go to book fairs, but I go to Paris Photo every year. There is just not time for fairs. I'll much rather work on new books or be in the darkroom.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

Books by Atget, Paul Strand, Walker Evans, Lee Friedlander, Winogrand, Robert Adams, Eggleston, Chris Killip, Michael Schmidt, and Guido Guidi are always wonderful to read. But if I must single out one book it would be *Beauty in Photography: Essays in Defense of Traditional Values* by Robert Adams.

25th of Oct 2022

Guido Guidi

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I suppose the simplest way to show our photographic work, or rather our prints, is to give them to the viewer, perhaps to a friend, in the same box that contained them while they were still virgin. However, we must be careful of the sequence that the friendly viewer, usually not very diligent, will surely mess up.

But don't worry — this little earthquake can lead to beneficial afterthoughts.

The Book is definitely the best way to display one's work to a wide, more or less demanding audience who will not be able to change the sequence except by skipping a few pages or flipping backwards. The shrewd photographer will have foreseen all this.

The book format I prefer is 30x30cm. or 24x30cm., horizontal or vertical, as the case may be, and I always use the same coated paper.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

For a book, the sequence is fundamental. I concede that my approach is mainly intuitive-visual, the interest in photographs being dialectical. I do not look for meaning but for significance.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

Wonderful — I prefer to work with one single publisher.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I am a bit wary.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

Several books. I would make too long a list. I will just mention *Un Paese* by Paul Strand.

To be in my canon, a book should usually feature these:

- a. quality of the photographs.
- b. quality of the printing.
- c. simplicity and clarity of editing.
- d. design should not prevail.

Hoda Afshar

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

I have always appreciated the creative possibilities that the photobook offers. But it wasn't until I started making films in 2018 and exploring more seriously other ways of working with images than I was used to, that I became more interested in presenting my work in this format. Making video works taught me a lot about the role of time and movement in storytelling, for example; and photobooks similarly allow one to play with narrative sequences and to create a sense of passage and movement. Previously I had mostly thought about these things in the context of exhibiting my work.

I don't see photobook as a medium suited for every project because it's always the nature of the subject that determines the format and aesthetic that I choose. For instance, I knew early on with *Speak the Wind* that I was shooting it for a photobook.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

The material dimension of photobooks is fundamental, as it is this that distinguishes the medium from other modes of presenting images; and just like the compositional aspect of photographs, it can be manipulated in different ways to communicate different ideas and stories. This became a central element of *Speak the Wind* — using the photobook itself to convey the story I was telling — but I had no clear ideas in advance about how I would approach this. In general, I do not approach making a new work with such preconceptions; I like to treat each project as a journey, and let such decisions resolve themselves after spending time with the work and letting it speak to me.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

I would say that my approach involves all of the above. Broadly, I am interested in exploring stories through photography, so when I am editing a work I am always looking for connections between images that might serve to structure the narrative. But as for my approach: it all depends on the idea and the story; and as I was saying earlier, I tend to let such decisions resolve themselves.

If anything, I would say that my approach is most inspired by poetry (perhaps since this was the first art form that I encountered), in that I tend to choose and sequence images as though they are words that form lines whose meaning might be read on multiple levels simultaneously.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

In fact I have only worked with one publisher to date — MACK — so needless to say I have been fortunate in this respect. Our relationship was trusting and cooperative from the beginning, and I can say it probably would have been impossible to make *Speak the Wind* without the input of the whole creative team there. I had pretty big ideas about the project from the start, and MACK made it happen.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

While photography and book fairs are integral to the survival of the industry, I must confess I do not engage with them much as an avenue for sharing my work. Again I am fortunate to have a publisher like MACK behind me. I would instead say that I love the community aspect — they are a place where kindred souls meet, and I have had a wonderful time meeting old and new friends at fairs and festivals, discovering new and surprising artists and works and so on.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

I wish I could say that I have a personal canon, but the photobook world is so vast, and the works that have inspired me are so many and so diverse, that I would struggle to come up with a comprehensive list. Also, my primary engagement with photobooks has been as a photography teacher; and that has made me appreciate a wider range of works than those that have immediately influenced me. I would say instead that the photographers and photobooks that have touched me most deeply seem to share a similar “quiet” approach to their subject matter. I am thinking, for example, *Halfstory Halflife* by Raymond Meeks, *Museum Bhavan* by Dayanita Singh, *Tranquility* by Heikki Kaski, *On Abortion* by Laia Abril, Sam Contis’s *Deep Springs*, *Lunario* by Guido Guidi and *Life is Elsewhere* by Sohrab Hura.

Jason Fulford

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

In general, it seems that individual images are ambiguous. The meaning comes when the picture interacts with other things: a reader, another picture, words, the way it's presented, the moment in history when it's seen, or myriad other things. I've learned to love this quality and to play with the ambiguity of the image. I love to make books because you can create relationships between pictures/page/text, that point the reader toward certain meanings. You can fix those relationships on the page, and they will remain, as long as the book survives. So, the book is a way of preserving those intentional arrangements.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

For me, content dictates form. So, images and ideas come first, and then the materials are chosen to best hold the content.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

I try to avoid obvious connections. Sometimes, with an easy connection, the initial effect is powerful, but then satisfaction diminishes over subsequent readings. I'll use chance in the editing process, to present myself with options that I wouldn't have preconceived. The goal is to create relationships that will keep giving over time. Ideally there will be multiple layers of meaning — easier ones on top, then more complex the deeper you go.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I've worked with several publishers — The Ice Plant, The Soon Institute, Aperture, Phaidon, MACK — and have good relationships with them all. Each offers something unique, in terms of audience, sensibility, and support.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I go to a few book fairs every year. Mostly it's social — a chance to reconnect with other photographers and publishers, to meet people who are reading the books, and to compare notes with everyone. You get to see books in person that you've only seen on your phone. You exchange advice and ideas about practical things like printers, paper, ink, distribution.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

A few, off the top of my head:

Girls, Some Boys and Other Cookies by Ute Behrend

Jens F. by Collier Schorr

Wisconsin Death Trip by Michael Lesy

American Pictures by Jacob Holdt

272 Pages by Hans Peter Feldmann

Spare Bedroom by Roe Ethridge

Jo Ractliffe

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

Probably my first “photobook” was in 1998. It was a postcard-sized, ring-bound, limited-edition book of 28 photographs of the N1 national road, taken at one hundred-kilometre intervals, from Johannesburg to Cape Town and back again.¹ But I’m trying to think back to when I first heard, or registered, the term “photobook” — certainly not back then in 1998, perhaps not even when I started working on the Angola books ten years later.² By then I had made a number of exhibition catalogues, fold-out leaflets that also served as forms of documentation for exhibitions — and also the odd artist’s book. I thought of photography books as “proper” books, ones with hard covers; I hadn’t considered the idea of a photobook constituting its own distinct genre.

South Africa in the years leading to my adulthood was a place of isolation, surveillance and control; television had finally arrived in 1976, but stringent censorship laws carefully monitored what we could see and hear. Art, photography, music and literature also suffered under extensive restrictions and many photographers and/or their work were banned outright — the most prominent example being Ernest Cole’s *House of Bondage* (1967). When I started photographing, there were virtually no books on photography beyond “coffee-table” books *National Geographic* style, hobbyist periodicals and “how to” manuals. I had scant knowledge of the work of other photographers, local and international — one exception being Sam Haskins’ *Cowboy Kate & Other Stories* (1964), which had been in our house when I was young and I rather dismissively viewed it as little more than a pin-up book. By 1983 I owned an anthology titled *World Photography*, edited by Bryn Campbell, that my father had brought back from an overseas trip in 1982, a copy of Robert Frank’s *The Americans* (1959) and the obligatory *On Photography* (1977) by Susan Sontag.

The 1970s and 1980s saw a surge of political activity and mass mobilisation triggered by the 1976 Soweto uprising, and with it a generation of local artists and photographers whose work reflected the urgency of the times and was primarily directed towards exposing the workings of the apartheid state and mobilising political change. And while a strong activist publishing culture had emerged by the

¹ Driving to Cape Town on the N1 national road in January 1996, I made an inventory of the road every hundred kilometres — a homage of sorts to John Baldessari’s *The Backs of All the Trucks Passed While Driving from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, Calif., Sunday 20 Jan. 63, 1963*. On the return journey, I came across three donkeys lying in a gully alongside the road. They had been shot. Back on the road afterwards, I missed the next 100-kilometre mark. Sometime later I talked about the incident with writer Mike Nicol, and asked if he would consider writing something. The book opens with his story, a fictional reconstruction of the shooting followed by the road images and a close-up of the ground at the site.

² *Terreno Ocupado*. Johannesburg: Warren Siebrits, 2008; *As Terras do Fim do Mundo*. Cape Town: Stevenson, 2010; *The Borderlands*. Barcelona / Mexico City: RM, 2015.

1980s³, for many, making an individual photography book was out of mind and out of reach.⁴ But my attentions were turned more towards challenging what I saw then as the limitations of social documentary — manifest via explorations into photomontage, lithography and screen-printing, artists' books, utilising plastic cameras, video and, in particular, installation — taking the photograph off the wall⁵ and later, into the public space⁶. All of which share with photobooks, questions of how photographic modes translate across different spatial registers — how the exhibition space approximates the space of the page; or a sequence of images photographed in real time is evoked through binding methods, for example.

Covid and the extended periods of lockdown inadvertently provided an opportunity to rethink some of these earlier explorations and to realise a sequence of photographs across various formats, two of which were books. *Being There* (2021) comprised a sequence of 51 “core” photographs presented as framed prints on the wall, within other sequences in a short film⁷, as a photobook and a handprinted, handbound “soundbook”, into which sound from the film was embedded into the binding and construction of the book itself.

2. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

My editing process and the way I put narrative or sequence together has much to do with the influence of corresponding interests that intersect my photography, such as writing, literature and film, music, and also an early background in printmaking. But underpinning much of my work is an understanding of the photograph as inherently fragmentary, always part of a larger whole. I'm interested in the way the fragment functions in photographic terms and as an element in the construction — or disruption — of narrative. The notion of the fragment runs through my work from the beginning: it's in the photo-montages of the *Nadir* series (1986-8), the home-movie like “stills” of *reShooting Diana* (1990-5), the multiple-exposure filmstrips of *Johannesburg Inner City works* (2000-04). Even the diptych and triptych sequences

³ Ravan Press, established in 1972, one of the larger anti-apartheid publishing houses, was also the publisher of *Staffrider*, a significant journal of the 1970s and 80s, which published the work of photographers, graphic artists, young writers and community-based organisations alongside well-known writers. *Staffrider* also mounted an annual photography exhibition during the 1980s.

⁴ For instance Santu Mofokeng's *Black Photo Album / Look at Me* was made in 1997 but only published as a photobook in 2013.

⁵ *Reshooting Diana* (1995) constituted an installation of fifty photographs suspended from the gallery ceiling. On the adjacent wall, *A Sunny Day* comprised five postcard racks, the postcards made up of cut-up duplicates of the photographs on show. Viewers were invited to take a postcard away with them — a souvenir, and literally a piece of the exhibition.

⁶ *End of Time* (1999) is the exhibition that grew out of *NI: every hundred kilometres* and was presented in the remote Karoo town of Nieu-Bethesda. Three billboards were erected along the national road near turn-offs to the town so passing travellers would encounter the image of a donkey looking out from that landscape. Two works were installed in the gallery: a life-size portrait of the dead donkey and the 28 photographs of the road.

⁷ *Something this way comes* (2021) was made in collaboration with filmmaker Catherine Meyburgh and composer Philip Miller.

in the Angola series are mostly configured afterwards, some utilising frames from different rolls of film.

And it extends from my photographic seeing through to the way images and sequences are put together. I guess this is where everything else enters the picture; by that I mean how listening to Tom Waits and reading Kerouac as a teenager led me to William Burroughs and his notion of “cut-ups”, for example. And how that brought me to read T. S. Eliot anew, because Burroughs viewed *The Wastel Land* as the greatest cut-up poem ever. Looking at photomontage led me to Eisenstein’s theories around montage, ideas around juxtaposition and the crash or collision of fragments, which later connected with John Baldessari and his work with film stills, and it all comes together in ideas around the fragment. I’ve been working in this manner pretty much since the 1980s. It’s not something I’m overly self-conscious about — mostly it’s quite a playful process and one that values indeterminacy rather than closed meanings.

My editing process usually begins while I’m still working. Proof prints are pinned up in my studio, in groups according to “in”, “maybe” and “out”; these groups are not fixed, and as new images enter the equation, existing pictures may change designation or fall out altogether. When I begin making a sequence, I think of syntax and rhythm and when things need to draw breath. This could translate visually in any number of ways such as formal repetition — a shape or line, or tonal density, or emptiness, for example. I might interrupt the rhythm of a sequence with a jarring juxtaposition or introduce something fugitive to destabilise an apparently coherent sequence. At this stage, I’m not overly focussed on content, what’s depicted in an image; I’m more interested in the kinds of relationships that run through or repeat across pictures and what happens in the spaces between. Earlier today, I found an exhibition statement from the mid-1990s, which talks about an interest in “what we don’t expect from photographs; what they leave out, their silence... what happens in these furtive spaces of betweenness”. It still holds in many ways.

In the past, I’ve sometimes worked in formats where the individual image is put to work in service of the larger body or photographic essay. On occasion I’ve discarded an image — even one I felt had merit — because it could not find its place in the narrative or sequence. A few years ago, while convalescing from an injury, I spent some time going through my negative files and looked again at some of those pictures. Alongside some new work, these former discards developed into the exhibition and photobook, *Signs of Life* (2019). There my editing strategy was very different. I approached those images as if they were found pictures, not my own, which allowed me to project freely onto them and put them into configurations and associations I might not have otherwise. It was quite invigorating to see the dynamics that emerged from this random assemblage of disparate images.

3. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

Generally, I think it's important that there's a good cohesive sense of a team between the photographer, the designer and the editor/co-ordinator. And following on from that, a good connection with the printer. Working from South Africa with printers in other countries can be cumbersome — especially if there are issues with language. There have been a few anxious moments regarding print quality in two books but in the end, things worked out. Overall, I've been fortunate; I have enjoyed good working relationships with people I hold in high regard. Each time I complete a book, a new question arises, something that provokes a challenge for the next.

With three exceptions, all of my books have been either self-published or produced in collaboration with Stevenson, the gallery that represents my work. There I work with Sophie Perryer who co-ordinates and edits Stevenson's publications and Gabrielle Guy who designs most of their books. It's a relationship I value and I think it works really well and has many advantages, the most immediate being the knowledge, skill and expertise they bring to each project, not to mention a working condition of collegiality and respect, which makes for a joyous experience. To date we have worked on five books, including *As Terras do Fim Do Mundo* (2010), *Being There* (2022) — and *Photographs: 1980s – now* (2020), which was published by Steidl. *The Borderlands* (2015) was published by RM. Working with Ramón Reverté was both exciting and enriching — if not a little unnerving at first. He was startling in his clarity of vision and challenged all my preconceptions about the ways books should look and function. It's a book that taught me much and I hold that experience very dear.

4. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I attended the Kassel Fotobook Festival in 2011. *As Terras do Fim do Mundo* had been shortlisted and I was invited to present the work in the talks programme. I remember listening to a talk on Latin American Photobooks by Ramón Reverté. It's hard to explain; I recall little of what he said beyond a bit about image, text and design all being inextricably linked elements, but I had one of those epiphanous moments as something happened between the words being spoken and the images being shown on the screen. I cannot say much more than that except I came out of that talk changed.

Those few days in Kassel were significant; there's a certain intensity that comes when a group of people with very particular shared interest comes together for a short period — and with a host of activities crammed into the programme as well! Conversations after talks, during lunch on the grass, at dinner and late at night in the hotel bar were invigorating and some have since developed into enriching collegial friendships. I felt I had found a home of sorts in that world. Paris Photo feels similar although it has been some years since I was last there and I feel the absence of that quite keenly.

5. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

I have a somewhat measly awareness of contemporary photobooks, mostly due to the fact that international photobooks simply don't make it to South Africa so either you have to travel to them, or get them shipped here, which is a risky business. I haven't travelled much in the past seven years, so I either look at websites — a woefully insufficient method — or the libraries of fellow photographers.

I don't have a personal canon, although my attention is directed primarily towards the books of photographers whose work I admire — or books that either share an interest with something I am working on at a given time, or alternately, exhibit various qualities that I find powerful or evocative and/or useful for my own thinking. But above all, the question that most compels me is that of the textual photobook — for want of a better term. I think I'm only just beginning to grasp what that means for me and, more importantly, beginning to find ways of working where such expression might be appropriate — which is seldom when you're working in a documentary mode and are obligated to provide context. So it's about the "right" kind of text and setting up the conditions for image and text to interact — or not — on equal terms, and how this is supported by the design of the book.

I've made a list that includes a number of seminal books, which may seem like overused examples of the photobook. But even 10, 30, 50 years later, they continue to reveal something new to provoke, engage, challenge and move me — and I marvel at the photographs.

Robert Frank, *The Americans* (1959)

Danny Lyon, *Conversations with the Dead* (1971)

David Goldblatt, *Some Afrikaners Photographed* (1975)

Josef Koudelka, *Gypsies* (1975)

Richard Avedon, *In the American West* (1985)

Chris Killip, *In Flagrante* (1988)

Manuel Alvarez Bravo, *Revelaciones* (1990)⁸

Larry Sultan, *Pictures from Home* (1992)

Jillian Edelstein, *Truth & Lies* (2001)

Dana Lixenberg, *The Last Days of Shishmaref* (2008)

Daniel Blaufuks, *Terezin* (2010)

Léonie Hampton, *In the Shadow of Things* (2011)

Christian Patterson, *Redheaded Peckerwood* (2012)

Diana Mater, *Evidence* (2014)

Graciela Iturbide, *Des Oiseaux* (2019)

⁸ I have since acquired other books and more comprehensive exhibition catalogues of his earlier works such as that from MOMA in 1997, but this book was my first of his work.

Lieko Shiga

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

I think that the process of closing the book and making it personal is completely different from the exhibition. Also, I think that books are a rare thing that can reach far from the place where the author lives, in a form different from the Internet.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

Everything changes depending on the work each time.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

Photographs are expressed on static paper, so I would like to ask what kind of imagination the viewer has between the photographs, and how to connect the “between” that is normally invisible. I take great care when editing.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

Both are very important.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

To “open” a work is to say, “I think it is very important because it will give the artist an unexpected response. In order to look at the world in a more diverse way, I would like to see many exhibitions and presentations of my work”. I think that they have a deep influence on each other.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

Many!!!

Manuela Marques

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

A great importance. The book makes it possible to create new rules of appreciation and appearance of images, it is an original space, where crossings and links are woven. The place of the book is also that of the combination of different skills. It is a singular format that interacts with a specific production environment.

The place of the photobook has changed enormously throughout my career. Although I was always surrounded by photography books, I didn't feel the need to work on this.

Of course, from the beginning, when the means of production allowed, the catalogues accompanied my exhibitions. But the creation of a book, which frees itself from the exhibition context becomes a space that keeps track of the evolution of a work while being a singular object, a new place of intervention.

The links that are woven between the different modes of representation of photographic work (exhibitions, interventions by photography) must find in the book a certain accuracy of coexistence and dialogue. Even if the book can be an autonomous element, it also accompanies and prolongs the artist's work with extensions that enrich and question it.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

No clear ideas, but sometimes desires that are sometimes vague and which little by little take shape. It also happens, as with my last book, *Echoes of Nature*, that the ideas are clearer, at least in the final intention. The different choices that are made for it to become a book (format, type of paper, cover, etc.) have emerged as it is developed.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

The relationship I have with the editing and sequencing of the book is of several orders: first intuitive of course, I trust in intuition, but also, at another stage of the process, more conceptual.

I try to ensure that the book, although it is a new space for intervention, is also a place where choices are made. The sequence of images must, page after page, lead

our vision and our mind towards an understanding and/or a questioning of what we see.

So, this is a very important phase for me. But I would say that it corresponds to an essential moment in my work: that of setting up an exhibition.

The two spaces are different, but they get my attention. I think what's also very important is the idea of rhythm. Finding the rhythm of the book is like finding the rhythm of an exhibition.

The Japanese notion of "ma" has been a key for me to understand certain things.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I live with a photography book publisher and we have many discussions about it. Working with a publisher is a precious moment in the creation of a book, it can be a nice cooperation, you must find the publishing house in which a good quality dialogue is established. But, depending on the project, it may be interesting to collaborate with different types of publishers, depending on their editorial approaches.

I believe that the artist is always the designer of something, he is then led to work with publishers and graphic designers.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

Not really. This is more important when it accompanies an exhibition.

Otherwise, the places that are specifically devoted to art books (bookstores, museums, art centers, etc.) are very favorable to the visibility of the book.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

I am not really inspired by photography books. I often find inspiration in books that are not necessarily in the artistic field.

Recently I have looked a lot at Giuseppe Penone's books and often come back to *Tarefas Infinitas: Quando a Arte e o Livro se Ilimitam*.

But so many others are also important...

Mårten Lange

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

The photobook is central to my practice. It has been from the start, even before I considered what I'm doing to be a career. Making photographs and assembling them in books is my primary work, and exhibitions are like translations of that work into a space.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

Books are intimate objects and their shape, size and tactile properties are very important. I usually have a general idea of what I want to use, but I prefer working with a book designer who specializes in photobooks.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

My editing process is quite intuitive. I find connections between images and try to show these connections to the reader by using juxtaposition, repetition and sequencing. The sheer amount of images is also important. My recent work has been composed of quite large collections of photos. I'm always trying to create an "image world" that the reader can stay in, and my books need to be a certain length to achieve that effect.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I started out with self-publishing but since then I've worked with many different publishers. Some of these collaborations have been great, others less so. The best publishers are the ones with a holistic view of the process, who understand that everything from editing to designing to marketing needs to be in sync.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

Not really. I mostly go there to meet my friends, and maybe buy books that are recommended to me. These fairs are usually pretty hectic, so it's hard to browse for books there. Bookshops are better for that.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

I'll skip this question.

Martin Parr

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

It is still the best way of communicating. Nothing can touch it.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I try and ensure that the design and physicality of the book echo the theme. This doesn't always happen, but I do try.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

Editing is pretty straightforward. I take the best images and ones with a strong narrative relevant to the book, and dump the rest.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I work with many publishers and have a hunch who is the right person for each project.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

It is always good to bring books to new audiences, so the likes of Paris Photo are very good at finding these.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

There are so many, the 650 books that Gerry Badger and I put in our 3 volumes [*The Photobook: A History*, Volumes I, II and III] are a great starting point.

Pacifico Silano

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

I've always enjoyed the photobook as an act of finality. It's a way of closing a chapter metaphorically and physically on a project. At least that's how I have always viewed it. The photobook is a more democratic way for my art to exist where anyone can purchase it. I was thrilled to be able to reinterpret my large scale photo installations into this hand held, collapsible art object that a viewer could either page through or expand into a sculptural, photo object. This new way of iterating my work was incredibly inspiring and has influenced my most recent works in the physical shape that they take.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I work a lot with ideas of revealing and concealing in my art. The accordion book format really lends itself beautifully to those themes. I knew that I wanted to take the idea of a monograph and toss it out to create something unique and special. The book became this brand new way of seeing these images very familiar to me. It reminded me just how fluid a photograph can become and how they're hard to pin down. This slipperiness was something I knew I wanted to replicate in the form and materiality. The size of the book when collapsed on itself looks unassuming and closely resembles the size of the original magazine pages I appropriate. So all of those ideas were in my head when starting out on this project.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

It started off intuitive and quickly became about relationships between signifiers in the work. It was a very collaborative experience with Sarah Piegay Espenon and Lewis Chaplin, my book publishers. I know the photos in my archive so well that having an outside perspective was really wonderful. There was an exchange back and forth where we would make suggestions till we got the sequence just right. In the end it created this fever dream of images bleeding into one another. I wanted a feeling more than anything and I think we really encompassed that.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I have done two books in my life as an artist. One was early on with a small publisher called Silent Face where I designed the entire book from scratch called "Tear Sheets". It was a great way to play with the images I had at the time and helped prepare me for all of the work on "I Wish I Never Saw The Sunshine" with Loose Joints. Both were really informative experiences. I was just so blown away by the success of my 2nd book. It moved me that people connected with the ideas behind the work, were enjoying living with it and that it sold out. I know that this was all possible due to the collaborative relationship with Sarah & Lewis. I think they are the best photo book publishers out there and it was such an honor to work with them.

I am in the very early stages of talks about what my next book will be. They will be who publishes it when the time comes. They have a deep understanding of my work and I trust them fully.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

Anytime my work can go out into the world and reach a wider audience I am very grateful. I've done many international fairs and I think it is important because my work is very much about America but needs to be able to translate overseas. So it challenges me to think about ways the work can be entered.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

I absolutely loved Mark McKnight's *Heaven is a Prison*. The book comes wrapped in one of his gorgeous black and white photographs of the sky. The only way you can get to the work is through tearing the sky to open the book. It's this beautiful gesture and metaphor for his photographs like a petit mort.

As far as canon goes it has to be Nan Goldin's *Ballad of Sexual Dependency*. It was the first photobook I picked up that completely changed my view on what a photograph could do. I actually paid my rent a week late because I was such a poor art student that I decided I couldn't live without owning it. I've had the same copy since I'm 18 years old.

Paul Graham

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

Woah, a triple decker question! ok:

Très important — it's how I first saw serious photography, and that's probably true for most people. It's still where I first head to at Paris Photo — the books in the main fair / Polycopies / Offprint — it's so alive and energising! You want to see where it's happening — go look at the books.

Books are, of course, a very different experience to the gallery wall. It is the artist and their viewer in a dance. That might be a subtle waltz, or an intimate tango, a wild rock 'n roll ride, but it is just you and the artist, together.

Galleries — well, they are inter-related of course, and although you don't have the same intimacy as the book, you do have scale, you have presence, you ask for physical engagement — for the viewer to come into a space and move around. It is also possible to make a living from the gallery, but sadly not from photobooks.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

Listen to your work — it will tell you what it would like to be! *A Shimmer of Possibility* told me it needed each brief moment in time, each sequence, to be given its own dignity and space — hence the 12 hardback volumes. *Does Yellow Run Forever?* wanted to be smaller, intimate, diary-like with a soft fabric cover. My first three books were horizontal/landscape format, but the next three were all vertical/portrait format. You have to hear your work, let it speak to you, not impose your ego on it.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

It starts intuitive of course — has to. Then your mind begins to catch up and see threads run through what you've done, and will put some order on them. But you must be light, and respect what the subconscious gifted you — the work has its own meanings, I try not to impose. The more you do that, the more you tether things to a single reading, a single interpretation — and that is a sad thing. Let it sing!

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I've been with Michael Mack since the beginning of him starting MACK, so that's my home, and I don't see anything to be gained by playing hop-scotch with publishers. Maybe other people do, and — well — whatever works for you.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I was at New York Art Book Fair the other weekend, and on the ground floor the big galleries had their stands — Gagosian, Marian Goodman, Zwirner, Pace, etc. And, well, I have to be polite here, but they just aren't "on the same page" — they are engaged with publishing doorstep catalogues of their major artists. That's not at all what art-books can be — to find that, you had to go up to the indy & artists' floors. It's ok, it is necessary to have a 500-page catalogue on this or that major painter, but... the energy and creativity was all upstairs, with the small independent publishers.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

Too many to mention. No personal "canon", just love the egalitarian nature, love the ability to discover young/new artists, love the intimacy, love the creativity, love the surprise, love the freedom, love the energy.

Rinko Kawauchi

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

Making a photo book helps me to organize my thoughts.

Then I can move on to the next one.

By making a photo book, I have some ideas in order, which makes it easier for me to create the exhibition space.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I don't have a clear vision for the materials of the book, but I have a vague idea of what I want to create, which I discuss with my trusted book designer and an editor.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

By creating a sequence, I can communicate my ideas to the viewer.

By intuitively selecting and connecting photos, I aim to reveal symbolism and generate a variety of emotions.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

Editors and designers who have worked with me many times are easy to work with because we have a trusting relationship.

It is also good for newcomers to work with me because they can take on new challenges.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I think it is important to be internationally active.

It is a pleasure to share my work with a wider audience.

Personally, I try to stay oriented to work with publishers and galleries in many countries, not just only Japanese publishers and galleries.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

My first interesting experiences with photography books were with Sally Mann's *Immediate Family*, Terri Weifenbach's photobooks, and the work of Sarah Moon.

I don't know why, but at the time I was attracted to women photographers.

I also try to get a copy of Stephen Gill's and Viviane Sassen's book every time a new one comes out.

Sakiko Nomura

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

A photobook is very important. It is also essential in terms of finding out what I am doing. The more I make photobooks, the more I realize their significance. I think that there is a difference in recognizing what you see when you appreciate photographs in an exhibition space with the size of photographs, spacing between them, and the flow of time, and that through photobooks within your personal space, time, and place.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I believe that each photo has a suitable paper and size. It is a lot of fun going on in the process.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

Intuitive, visual, conceptual, and symbolic... everything is crucial, but it first begins with intuition. In making a photobook, I start off with several photographs, then cut them down by going back and forth in different approaches and getting lost in the process.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I prefer to work with both publishers including a close one and a new one. I make photobooks with publishers and book designers together, which is necessary and important.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

Hmm... I don't have any idea about a specific role.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

Numerous photobooks have inspired me, but I do not have a personal canon. I get more influenced by what is going on in front of my eyes than by photobooks.

Stanley Wolukau-Wanambwa

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

It has always been a primary means of engaging with the thought and work of other artists. I learned art photography through books of art photography, and continue to find them a rich and compelling form. I don't think of it in relation to other forms of exhibition/publication at all.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I work with really good bookmakers and try to be a good collaborator. All the material dimensions of a book come from those discussions and from immersion in one another's work and thought.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

I have literally no hard and fast rules other than kill your darlings. I'm not ever aiming to produce singular meanings in books — just a set of conditions in which various interrelated ones might emerge distinctively for differing readers of the work.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I hope that my collaborative relationships are life-long partnerships and conversations.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

Yes, I look at work from artists based all over the world constantly. Book fairs are important for the business of the photobook, but also for the web of social

relationships between practitioners of the form. That latter part has always been the part I'm really interested in.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

Too many to cite.

Terri Weifenbach

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

In the 70's when I was earning a bachelor's degree, my first thoughts were influenced by painting which I was practicing at the time. I saw photography, like painting, as single representations. This singularity of painting affected me, and it was important to me that each photographic image I made could stand alone even when part of a group. There were photobooks at this time that foreshadowed and informed the way we think of photobooks now, as objects and works in themselves, (Ed Ruscha's *Twenty-six Gasoline Stations*, Walker Evans's *American Photographs*, and, of course, Robert Frank's *The Americans* as examples). However, I was looking for books in order to see as much as I could in the world of photography, not at that point for the book as object. Monographs and catalogs were dominant. The history of the photobook was not in most photographers' consciousness, yet. It wasn't until 1995 or so that making a book of my own even occurred to me.

Everything in my world was still analog, my first book too, the sequencing and design were cut and paste. By this time there was plenty of exploration with the book, but galleries were the main force for making a career. The speed at which my book, when printed, found its way in the world through the publisher's connections and word of mouth stunned me. In between the covers of the book were my sequenced images, defining a world I had experienced, dressed in a suit, and left open for a viewer to find their way through. It quickly became the primary way for me to present work to the listening world. Now the book as object was more ubiquitous and the possibilities of discovery evident. I have however always questioned the tendency the covers of the photobook have of closing in or keeping out what came before and what follows. My observation is the perceived end and beginning that a book defines, has led photographic artists to work in projects — to fill the pages — which is fairly unique in the arts. This is a backward tendency, to make work to put in a book, rather than to decide where the covers of a book belong in a career. The question then is, what is the description of the career of a photographic artist? Is it like Roni Horn, Gerhard Richter or Cecily Brown who center their works on a single but open, in all directions, inquiry? Or can we have many different unrelated inquiries, by the same artist? Do we have the same answer to these questions through all art media, photos, performance, paintings, multimedia, etc.?

Looking at a book is an intimate act for me. It can be less or more, but almost always more, intimate than viewing an exhibition. There is a disconnect, meaning when I am working on a book, I'm not thinking about how to exhibit and vice versa. The difference can maybe be described by the decisions for my first book, *In Your Dreams*, 1997. My prints for exhibition were printed on glossy paper for the best saturation and a bit of "super reality", beyond reality, feel. In the book we (it is always a collaboration with the publisher) weighed the options. A glossy paper seemed

horrendous. We settled on a matte paper, a type of gardapat with a slight pink tone. Then we used a glossy varnish over the image only, separating it from the paper. More tactile so allowing more intimacy than a coated, reflective paper would have. Exhibitions are active and three dimensional. The viewer will perceive the work at different sizes as they approach or walk away. Sequence can be attempted but there is no security in the direction a viewer might choose to walk and engage with the works. The work should be calling from all points in each space and experienced differently from a variety of distances.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

My desire for my books is that every material decision cater to the images. This is always a push-pull in relation to other's ideas (designers, publishers), limits of the medium (printing, costs) and, these days, availability of materials. Because materials are so different in different parts of the world (gardapat was unavailable in Hong Kong) I usually wait rather than decide to allow choices. I have general ideas for book size, paper type, but I am specific with image sequence and placement. Designers and publishers know these materials far better than I, so communication and openness are important to arrive at choices in line with both my ideas and production.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

I learned that my approach is more intuitive by attempting to teach sequencing and editing. It's tough to teach intuitive response. But intuitive thought includes the visual, conceptual and symbolic. This is in my head already subconsciously (lines of a poem, something someone said once, the power of red) and takes part in the decision. It changes too. There are times a conscious decision must be made to solve a problem. But sometimes not; the last thing I did one night before sleeping was to try and solve the final sequence of a book. I looked at all the possible images and nothing seemed right, so I went to bed. In the morning, between sleeping and waking, I sort of dreamt a sequence. I was awake enough to remember it and jumped up and laid it out. It became the final sequence of the book.

I don't try to produce meaning. This is an inquiry of necessity.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

Cooperation of all involved in the making of a book is vitally important. I have ideas about how I wish for a book to look, and I lean on the expertise of the publisher who knows the limits, and designers who know the materials. It is important that both understand the work and their sensitivity to it is there throughout. I've been quite lucky to find publishers that allow my sequence and structural design to be final and have not found fault with it. I've never been any good with type, fonts, text and leave this entirely to the designers.

At my beginnings and well into my career I worked with one publisher. As the photobook world expanded exponentially, I started experimenting, pushing the boundaries, and I worked with a few small publishers. This was also during the period when film was disappearing, and digital technology had not yet resolved continuous tones, so the book became more important to me as making prints was problematic. Staying with one publisher only might be a good idea for some, but my experience is that my range of ideas don't fit with one publishing house. Probably the worst thing for a publishing house to demand is the singular loyalty of an artist. I guess to make a point, I'd ask, is it possible to have one person fill all your needs in your life? We need friends, partners, business associates, etc.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

Book fairs definitely play a relevant role as a couple of the smaller publishers I've made books with have had no other distribution. And even if they do, the sheer numbers of people that come to these fairs to look for books has a great impact. The interaction, the meeting of other photographers and publishers, the parties... they bring our community together. There are people who gather at fairs I'd not see otherwise. It's a pleasure to reconnect, dream up plans and enjoy each other's company.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

I like to look outside my medium for inspiration. I'm inspired by paintings — Vuillard, Bonnard, Odilon Redon, Cecily Brown — poets, and nature. To look at photobooks for inspiration about photobooks winds one tightly inward into an ever-contracting whirl. To experience life, looking outward, rewards us with infinite choices and inspiration. That said I'm totally addicted to looking at photobooks for the experience of discovering the photographs inside.

Wouter Van de Voorde

1. How important is the photobook for you, personally, as a format? Has this importance changed over time throughout your career? How do you connect the photobook with other ways of presenting and showcasing your work?

The photobook is an essential part of my practice. Compared to showing work on the walls of a gallery, making books feels like a more wholesome process; I am not left with an empty feeling at the end of the ride; exhibiting often makes me feel like that. In the context of my practice, the photobook format feels like a protective blanket. There is an element of comfort in having a body of work contained in a book.

When I was putting together my first self-published monograph, *SAFE*, in 2019, I dreamt about a collection of silver prints being stored inside a safe cut out in volcanic rocks near a coastline. This image became a metaphor for how I see the photobook in the context of my practice.

I place a lot of value in preserving my work in the form of a book. It feels like putting little gems inside a time capsule or a treasure chest for safekeeping.

2. How do you respond to the material dimension of photobooks in your work? Do you usually have a clear idea of the materials you want to use, the paper, size, etc.?

I would lie if I said I have progressive ideas about dimensions and materials. I am always happy to be guided by the publishers with whom I collaborate. The primary papers I know are darkroom or fine-art print related. The book *Death is not here*, which I recently published with Void, measures exactly 8x10 inches; this is in correlation with the size of paper I usually print in the darkroom. Most of the images in the book are straight scans of silver prints, including the white border around the printed images. I like this consistency. The prints featured in *Death is not here* are covered in fixer stains, dust spots etc. With a background in painting and printmaking, I have embraced imperfections that sneak into the darkroom printing process; I like that the book accurately represents this process.

3. What is your approach to the process of sequencing and editing? Is it more intuitive, more visual, more conceptual, more symbolic? What types of meaning do you try to produce through editing in your works?

In my practice, I usually work on singular images. I often make images that can carry themselves without needing much context in the form of other images. I rarely ever do projects or shoot to a specific brief. When working with a publisher, designer and editor, I am conscious that these people, being in the creative industry, also have a voice that needs to be heard. I am happy to be led in the sequencing and editing in

recent and ongoing projects. The images I produce are already so intrinsically my babies, so I am happy to let go of a tight grip on the edit and the sequence without losing my voice.

In terms of meaning, it is all elementary and human; I am a 40-something cis male, married with two kids. I often think about my own mortality and my place in the world. A crucial part of my story is that 15 years ago, I moved from my home country of Belgium to Australia. This foundation is always the underlying story of a lot of my work. Throughout the years, I have developed a personal mythology rich with various symbols, often hermetic to the viewer's interpretation. I feel strongly about not imposing or indicating imposed meanings onto my work.

4. What is your relationship with publishers? Do you find it preferable to stick with one you know well, or to work with different publishers? How important is the cooperation of publishers and/or book designers?

I am happy to work with different publishers and designers, as I mentioned in my answer to question 3. Each publisher and designer brings another perspective to the table. In my practice, the element of play and experimentation is crucial. Consequently, there is room for different approaches in terms of photobooks. For example, I will now start work on a publication revolving around images I made of my son, which will require an entirely different approach than my recent Void publication. This book will have much more in common with a traditional family. The new book will emerge through lengthy discussions and considerations with this publisher; just like the variations in my practice, the books I produce will reflect this complexity in form and subject.

5. Do international photography and book fairs play a relevant role in your work? How do you relate to that personally?

I have no experience with fairs to this date.

6. What photobooks have inspired you? Do you have a personal canon?

A good friend in my city (Canberra, Australia) is an avid collector of photobooks. Over the years, he has shown me many outstanding works, many of which I forgot the title of. So, unfortunately, I don't have a personal canon or specific books that inspired me. I am incredibly stubborn in following my own path in my work and the books I produce. I don't go out of my way to deeply study books produced by others as I am afraid I'll see something so unique that it would stop me from ever picking up a camera again. Despite my recent publication with Void, a well-established publisher, I feel like an outsider to the game, and to some extent, I would like to hold that position.

A Questionnaire on the Photobook: Artists

© 2022 The authors

Licensed under the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International \(CC BY 4.0\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).