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C & C Press Prospectus: RITES RITUALS RUMINATIONS –
FACES THAT SPEAK
Photography By Stephen Verona
Artists' Book & 'Scanotypes' by C & C Press

Stephen Verona's photographic series in the book, RITES RITUALS RUMINATIONS–FACES THAT SPEAK, draws focus to human subjects and creates appealing narratives through clever and calculated juxtaposition of the human figure. Using Stephen Verona's photographic paintings, or 'vistas', as subject matter, we sought a way to enhance these photographs within the context of an artists' book through the use of typography, structure and design format.

We printed scanned images of our wood type and framed them with book cloth to use as the cover-panel text. We termed these wood type images, 'Scanotypes'. These images both visually and conceptually substantiate Verona's photographs in several ways:

Wood type is regarded as uniquely expressionistic. When wood type is used for traditional printing, it is known for producing printed letterforms full of character and personality. Verona captures a parallel depth of character and personality with his photographs of juxtaposed people. For this reason, Verona's subject matter is enhanced by our 'Scanotypes.'

Secondly, the 'Scanotype' features wooden typefaces in a humanistic portrait-like, framed setting. The 'humanism of type' is a current topic that has been discussed amongst printers and bookmakers for generations. And rightfully so, considering that the body of type has a face, two shoulders, a beard, a foot, can speak, and in this case, SHOUT. We feel that our 'Scanotypes' express most lucidly the humanism of wood type, by guiding the reader's attention to the body of the type, as opposed to type's productive result: the printed page. This 'humanistic' quality of wood type operates in cohesive harmony with the human condition highlighted in Verona's photographs.

Thirdly, a piece of wood type wears and exhibits its history on its body, in the form of colored ink, breaks, cracks and wear. This colorful 'attire' of wood type, highlighted in the 'Scanotypes', aligns conceptually with the history that is told through the sometimes colorful, sometimes worn wardrobes of Verona's subjects.

In RRR-FTS, the subjects were photographed over a 35-year period, and are now recreated using modern digital capabilities. This action addresses their lives by bringing their history into a present day setting: the digital landscape. With our design, we chose to echo this relationship by combining contemporary photography with the history of the book. We decided to repeat the title of the book on each page to reflect ancient origins of the unbound book. Our choice to number the pages, 'NO. 1', 'NO. 2'..., enabling the reader to experience the unbound pages in proper sequence, further reflects ancient origins of the unbound book. Lastly, the idea of an unbound sequence of pages refers directly to the origins of this form: the tablet.

- Matt Cohen and Sher Zabaszkiewicz, C & C Press 2008

All of us are connected emotionally. This had become very clear to me during the study of people, my life's work. As an artist, I wanted to expand on this idea. I wanted to create a new way of looking at this connection and portray it photographically.

I studied Edward Muybridge's work of capturing motion, and decided to experiment using the influence of Muybridge and the contemporary vision of Hockney's images of reversed perspective. Concepts traveled through my mind. All photographs have a focal point. What if the focal point were to vacillate?

I started by placing my French 'boule' players together. These characters have always fascinated me. I decided to appose old images with new. My photographs spanned over 35 years, yet nothing had changed, not even the clothing. The more I put these photos into a single landscape, the more I became intrigued. The focal point disappeared, activating the composition.

I moved on to other subjects from around the globe: monks in Bhutan and Thailand, Brides in Moscow, Matadors in Spain, repressed women in Cairo, Masai mothers holding their young in Kenya. Almost everyone in the Shanghai streets, from the 1960's to the 1970's, was dressed in a blue Mao outfit. When I put them together, the scenes from the past became contemporary. What I had done previously as a painter on canvas, I was now doing photographically. The result is what you see before you – my vision of 'photographic paintings.'

This was when I knew I had accomplished my goal – to tell a story in a visually unique way, not unlike short sound bites from a newscast or quick cuts in a music video – a snippet here and a snippet there, eventually the entire story becoming clear.

- Stephen Verona, 2008

We would like to especially acknowledge David Diringer, whose book entitled, *The Book Before Printing*, has been vital to our understanding of the origins of the book as structure.

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