

Judith Barry
For when all that was read was ...
so as not to be unknown (2012)



Introduction

For when all that was read was ... so as not to be unknown is Judith Barry's guidebook to the "Brain" section at dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel, Germany. Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, artistic director of d(13), thematized this rotunda space as the international exhibition's through-line: a curated "paradox, a space of many secrets, a space of violence, and a space of potential healing." The guidebook, which uses its unique paper architecture to remap the associative histories and labyrinthine nature of the "Brain," takes the form of a series of pages, an artist's book, and also a sculpture. Contained yet expansive, it is printed as a poster but may, alternatively, be folded into a legible, three-dimensional object; exhibition materials are presented in a non-hierarchical, non-linear array, as if to suspend its contents in a recursive space.

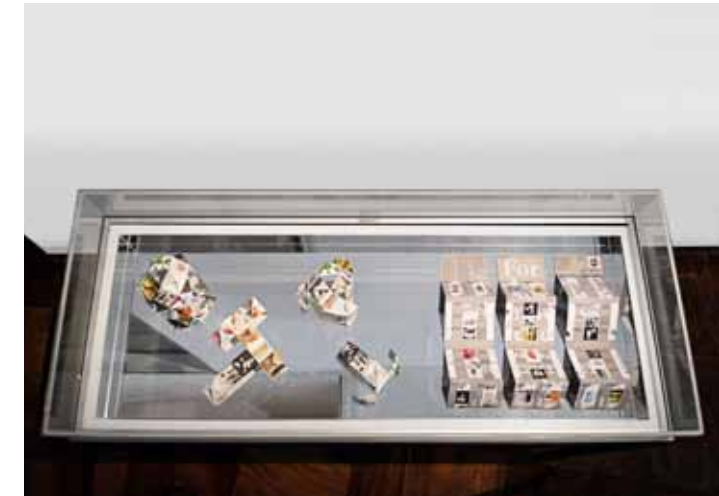
Memory and history – their alignments, evasions, exchanges and tenuous distinctions – are persistent themes in Judith Barry's multidisciplinary art practice. Beginning with language-based performances in the late 1970s and 80s, and continuing through installations, exhibition designs, and graphic interventions, Barry has explored these issues in a variety of modes and contexts. She transformed the 1991 Carnegie International exhibition into *Ars Memoriae Carnegiensis*, inviting viewers to create an imaginary museum using ancient mnemonic techniques of the "memory theater." Other previous works include the fabrication of a miniature book that draws parallels between genre painting and 19th century pseudoscience, as well as the development of an interactive computer game that attempts to predict how visitors to a digital museum might produce new forms of art experiences.

For when all that was read was ... so as not to be unknown derives from an extended investigation of



the material text: its historical development from early seals and emblems, to the codex as a contemporary system for storing knowledge. In its sculptural, three-dimensional form, Barry's guidebook performs the function of a book. Acting as a cache of information, the folded architecture conceals poster texts within an interior space, presenting only the imagery of the "Brain": a multi-layered, modular cover.

Installation at dOCUMENTA (13)



Judith Barry in Mousse

When Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev described her concept for "Brain" it immediately triggered an intense visual image. It was as though I had been dropped into an infinite space where all the elements she was describing in "Brain" were suspended in an array. When I moved through the space of the array, it seemed endless and went on forever, and yet all of the objects seemed to be in extreme close-up. And I seemed to be in a place where time, too, was suspended, yet visible, in the space around each object. When I came close to one of the objects, I would suddenly be pulled into its orbit as its many histories came at me from a variety of different trajectories, each made visible as it unfolded ... Albert Einstein's quip that "Time exists so everything doesn't happen all at once" is a reminder that all artifacts embody their different and competing histories ...

What would happen if all time-embodied elements and their histories were suddenly available to us in all of their variety? And what if we could hold each of them discretely in our mind?

Bruno Latour remarks that "matter is as it is thought by the mind" and hence is constantly changing in significance, and, therefore, "The way we know (about objects) has been confused with the thing we know (about objects)" is important here. While Latour does not comment on whether it is possible to ever completely unlearn the things we know about an object, his statement is suggestive ...

What is "Brain" if not a readymade of a different order? Rather than reprising this in art historical terms, here are a few alternative pathways through the operational space of this Guidebook.

Hayden White's work on assemblage as an archaeology of the readymade solely as a material object, rather than as a discursive one, which is then



productive of ways to make "a new thing by putting together congeries of older ones."

Ana Bezić's notion that assemblage in archaeology must be considered as the result of assembling people and things as objects and processes traced through continual interactions as unique events in time, rather than being defined as 'in stasis' – as classifications of inert artifacts.

Michel de Certeau's concept of "heterologies" as a method for exploring the collision of human/spatial operations as ruptures within prevailing institutional constraints.

Carlo Ginzburg's use of anomalies, rather than norms, for his investigations of what he terms "microhistory" alongside the value he assigns to the role of clues and speculative logic.

Kaja Silverman's discussion of analogy and her exploration of how it might be productive of a different understanding of representation whereby similarity is not seen as sameness, and difference does not automatically translate into opposition.

Excerpt from special issue on DOCUMENTA (13), MOUSSE No. 34, Milan, Summer 2012



Selected Press

[...] Barry really made two guides. The first one featured reproductions of art works, including Miller's photographs. Then the Lee Miller estate protested the use of her images, so Barry remade it by making her own versions of ALL of the images, not just those by Miller, often using watercolors. This was the guide available to the public. It unfolds into a poster, then refolds into an asymmetrical polyhedron. It is designed in such a way that there are phrases that are only legible when the guide is in its polyhedron form. [...]

— Claire Barliant on whatsthiscatsstory.tumblr.com

[...] the evidentiary claims of the "brain" were all indirect portraits of trauma. Offsetting this were ruminative models and sleight-of-hand simulacra of natural forms, including different stone replica sculptures by artists Giuseppe Penone and Sam Durant, and hypothetical, pithy models of brain patterns and non-Euclidean mental space, by artists Judith Barry and Gianfranco Baruchello, respectively. [...]

— Fionn Meade in *SPIKE Art Quarterly*

[...] Traditionsgemäß ist das Fridericianum die zentrale vermittelnde Schaltstelle, von der aus die ersten Verbindungslinien gezogen werden. Documenta-Leiterin Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev bezeichnet es als "The Brain". Judith Barry hat dazu ein Art Miniaturbuch geschaffen, das verschlungen in die Ausstellung hinein, aber auch durch sie hindurch führt. [...]

— Roland Schöny in *artmagazine – Ihre online Kunstzeitung*

Bibliography

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de Abreu Pinto, Tiago. "Documenta 13." *Das Artes (Brazil)*. August 2012.

"Documenta 13: Das 'Brain'." *Kunstforum. Bd. 217*, August – September 2012.

Fritsch, Werner. "Der Nebel lichtet sich." *Hessische/Niedersächsische Allgemeine*. June 2012.

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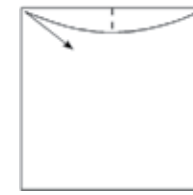
Installation at P!, New York



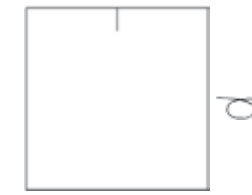
Assembly instructions

To assemble, see video: vimeo.com/44122954

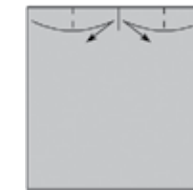
Module A (6 pieces)



1
Make a tiny crease to mark the centre of the top edge.



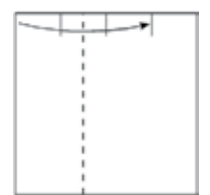
2
Turn over sideways.



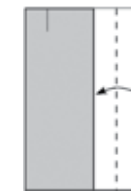
3
Make two further tiny creases to mark the quarter points.



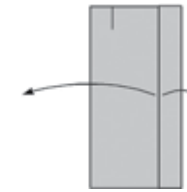
4
Turn over sideways.



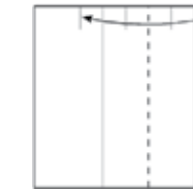
5
Fold the left edge inwards to the three quarter point.



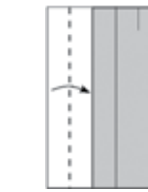
6
Fold the right edge inwards like this.



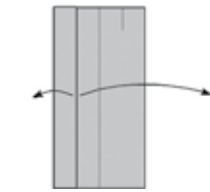
7
Open out the folds made in steps 5 and 6.



8
Fold the right edge inwards to the three quarter point.



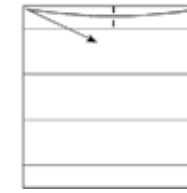
9
Fold the left edge inwards like this.



10
Open out the folds made in steps 8 and 9.



11
Rotate your paper ninety degrees so that the vertical creases become horizontal.



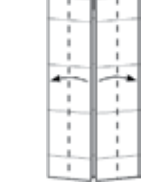
12
Make a tiny crease to mark the centre of the top edge.



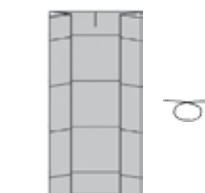
13
Turn over sideways.



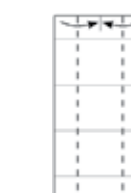
14
Fold both outside edges into the centre.



15
Fold both front flaps in half outwards.



16
Turn over sideways.



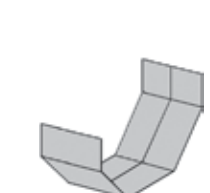
17
Fold both outside edges into the centre.



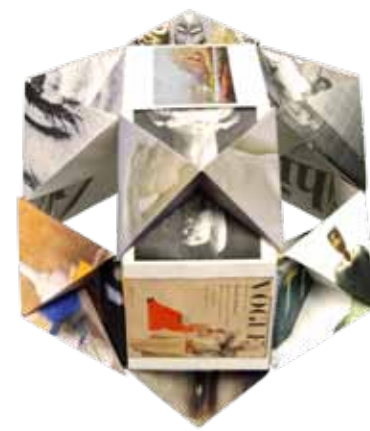
18
Flatten the folds making sure that the edges of the layers do not overlap each other in the centre.

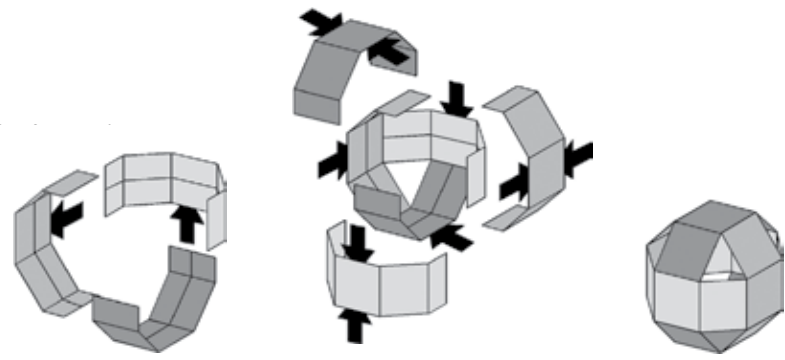


19
Remake these folds through all the layers.



20
You will need six of these.



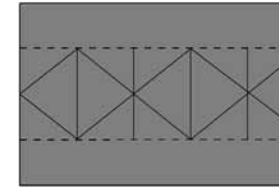


21 Three go together like this.

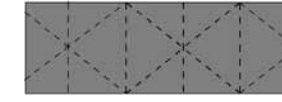
22 The three remaining are added like this...

23 ...to complete the underlying rhombicuboctahedral structure.

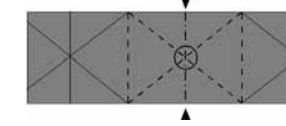
Module C (2 pieces)



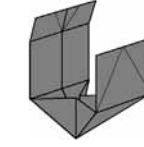
34 This is the template for a Module C. Fold both long edges backwards along the dashed fold lines (watch the printed dots).



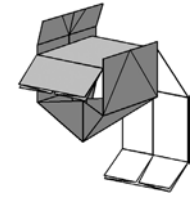
35 Fold backwards through all layers along all the remaining dashed fold lines.



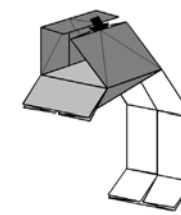
36 Collapse into the shape shown in the next picture. You will need to reverse the direction of the fold you have made along the upright dashed and dotted line in order to achieve this.



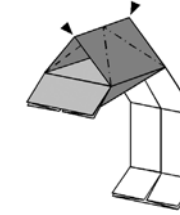
37 This is the result. You will need two of these.



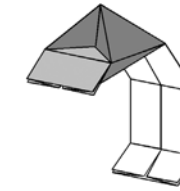
38 Begin attaching the bracelet to a basic module by arranging them like this.



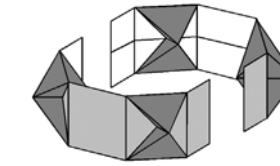
39 Tuck the short flap of the bracelet inside the layers of the longer flap.



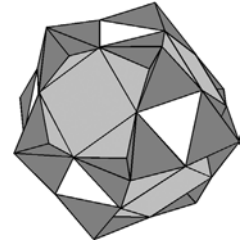
40 Turn both top corners inside out to lock the bracelet in place.



41 This is what the result should look like.

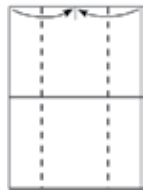


42 Here are two basic Modules A with Module C added.



43 This is the finished design.

Module B (10 pieces)



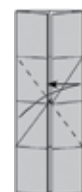
24 Fold both outside edges into the centre.



25 Fold both the top and bottom edges into the centre, then unfold.



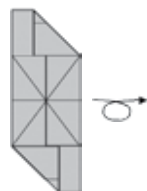
26 Fold the central section of the paper in half diagonally like this, then unfold.



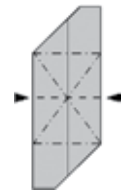
27 Repeat fold 26 in the opposite direction.



28 Fold the top right and bottom left corners inwards using the horizontal creases made in step 25 as guides.



29 Turn over sideways.



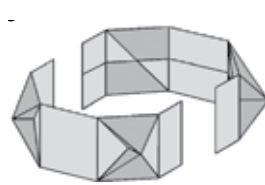
30 Collapse the module into the shape shown in picture 31 using the existing creases.



31 You will need ten of these Module B.



32 Attach two B modules to each A module, making sure that the arms of the B modules go underneath all the layers at the centre of the A modules.



33 Make six compound modules like this and put them together in the way shown in pictures 21 and 22.

Credits

Judith Barry

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Offset printed lithograph

23 ½ × 31 ½ in. (poster),

5 × 5 × 5 in. (polyhedron)

Edition of 200

Produced with Project Projects

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on the occasion of dOCUMENTA (13)

Thanks to Dave Mitchell

Courtesy the artist and P!

P!

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