
Klaus Scherübel

Mallarmé, Le Livre - compilation

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About *Mallarmé, Le Livre* by Klaus Scherübel

“In 1897 the French poet and philosopher Stéphane Mallarmé (1842-1898) wrote a powerful poem entitled ‘Un Coup de dés jamais n’abolira le hasard’; equally remarkable is the fact that for more than thirty years Mallarmé worked constantly on the concept of ‘Le Livre’. Although it was never published, he regarded ‘Le Livre’ as the sum of all books, a Magnum Opus that was completely free of its author’s subjectivity. As a concept ‘Le Livre’ was built up like a cosmic architecture by way of texts. The result was an extremely flexible structure that comprised nothing less than ‘all existing relationships between everything that already exists’. This ‘pure’ book which Mallarmé wanted to publish in an edition of exactly 480,000 copies, was never realised and got no further than a conceptualisation and detailed analysis of the materials to be used and guidelines for its possible presentation. Nevertheless, in Mallarmé’s eyes ‘Le Livre’ was anything but a failure. Indeed it represented the “true cult of the modern age, (...), which happened purely on its own”.

The Austrian artist Klaus Scherübel made a layered and in-depth study of Mallarmé’s utopian dream. In the exhibition, “Mallarmé, Het Boek” at S.M.A.K., and which for the occasion serves as a ‘conceptual reading room’, Scherübel presents himself as the publisher and guardian of Mallarmé’s controversial and quasi forgotten 19th-century, nonexistent literary masterpiece. It is translated into photos, text material, video and so on. Here the creation of a ‘possible cover’ is striking in view of the status of the work – namely, that although ‘Het Boek’ is something that cannot be realised at the same time it represents the ‘conceptual basic line of thought’ that has been achieved. The “Mallarmé, Het Boek” exhibition serves as a platform for the publication of the first Dutch-language version of ‘Het Boek’. “Mallarmé, Het Boek” is published by MFC-Michèle Didier, Brussels. At the same time, there will be a publication of a compilation of existing versions in German (Walther König, Cologne, 2001), English (Printed Matter, New York, 2004) and French (Optica and MUDAM, Montreal / Luxembourg, 2005).



Specifications

- Each book is 24 × 15.8 × 3.6 cm
- Jacket printed
- Polystyrene and blister

Production

- Limited edition of 24 copies

Produced and published by

- Walther König, 2001, German version
- Printed Matter, 2004, English version
- Optica and MUDAM, 2005, French version
- MFC-Michèle Didier, 2009, Deutch version

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