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### Chanel: Livre D'Artistes

The design object/design I chose for this essay was the book design done by dutch graphic designer Irma Boom. The work I am discussing today is "Chanel: Livre d'Artistes" known as the Chanel No 5 book. Irma Boom is well known for her bookmaking and her book design. Boom studied graphic design at the AKI School of Fine Art in Enscheden and then worked at the Dutch Government Publishing and Printing Office in the Hague for a year before she founded her own firm, Irma Boom

Office in Amsterdam in 1991.

According to Cooper Hewitt, Boom had designed over 250 books, 50 of which are in the permanent collection of The Museum of Modern Art

(Hewitt). According to readymag

Boom comes up with a book design based on her thoughts on the content of a book. It "is her aim to enhance the reader's understanding while at the same time creating an object of beauty, with quality and permanence"(readymag). In another interview, she goes into depth on her way of designing and her thoughts on her career.



She went on to talk about the difference between making books about architecture and making books on other topics. To her Typography is the center of both: she says “you can also look at typography as architecture; you can create a space on a page; that is where you can find a similarity with architecture, although the architecture is much complex, there are many decisions you have to make”(Architectural Review). She also speaks on the decrease or changes in book



production. To Boom, the book is not disappearing but rather growing in popularity. She states “I can tell you this is not true. I really believe in the necessity and the relevance of the book.

For example, when the Sheila Hicks

book came out she was in her seventies

and had been in the art world for 50 or 60 years. She had always had a website, you could see her work everywhere on the internet, but her work was not valuable before the book. Suddenly her career took off. The book did that, nothing else. That is the power of what the book can do: a book is a tool” (Architectural Review). She lastly sparks on the future of books and how with the advances in technology the book will become more important because there will always be a need for information. Chanel: Livre D’Artistes or Chanel No '5 Book designed by Irma Book is a great study to design. The book cover is blank with no design on it, just white space, which I think is a look into what the inside of the book is like.

The book is monochromatic white, throughout the entire book. The text and images are not printed but embossed into the pages. In an Interview for the Louisiana Chanel, she talks about the process of creating this book. According to Boom she was given free rein and decided

through this book to pay tribute to Coco Chanel and the scent that is Chanel No '5. She came up with the idea when she went to the Chanel rose picking for the perfume. She came up with the idea to create a white book, “an invisible book, something that is present, but is not really there”; “a book that has no smell but you can smell Chanel No’5”. She was inspired by Coco Chanel, who according to her “ released up from the corsets, and was an avant-garde lady”. She wanted to create the illusion of Chanel No’5, without it being there. To me the design is ingenious, all the text and images are white and are embossed into the pages. Also to preserve the embossing “the pages were not cut and the book is softbound and is not squeezed”(prien). I also loved the idea due to the fact that you cannot view the book online; due to the fact, everything is white and embossed and not printed. This creates a timeless piece that can only be viewed in person and is not transferable to today's technology.

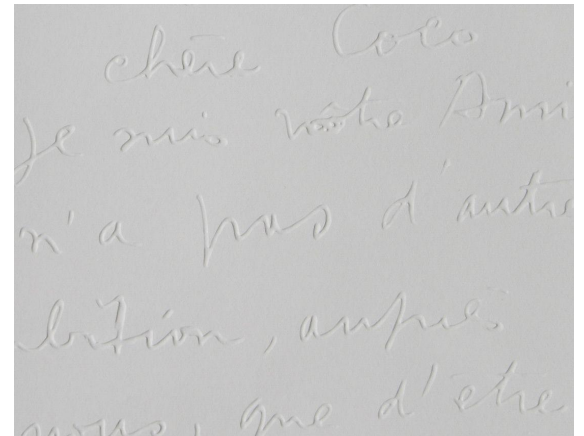
Irma Boom creates timeless pieces that are not conventional and unheard of. She had another piece where the book is made completely of postcard, and another made with just textiles. Boom, despite creating unique designs , does not consider her designs as art. Despite seeing all the unique and amazing works of design I would consider her works as art. Irma Boom



always emphasizes the transcendence of books. In an article by the New York Times, she emphasizes the importance of books. She states “ Information is edited and put in a specific sequence, printed and bound; The result of this effort is the freezing of

time and information”(Barone). This thought is an opposition to one of the readings that spoke on the importance of books. El Lissitzky in “Our Book” speaks on the evolution of the book and looks forward to the changes that technology will have on books. Irma Boom however believes that books will stay a stagnant aspect of receiving information. In the article as well, Boom speaks on the importance of places to view art and the declining factor of design. She says that in museums, auctions and antiquarian bookstores, there are discoveries to be made in design. She often finds unexpected design innovations to bring back to life; She states “ Sometimes you think you invented something, but it's already been

done”(Barone). This could relate to the Gropius text , on the education of art. Gropius spoke on how the academy only prepares us for the business world and teaches us the basics; however, it cannot help us learn to create pieces of art. This I believe could be the view of the Constructivists but also the view of the Futurists. The Constructivists viewed



themselves as the blueprint , they thought that people would build off their work and look towards the past for inspiration. Similarly Boom looks towards the past for inspiration for designs and past methods of creating books. Like the Futurist Book had a positive look for the future , however she had looked at museums and other institutions as an inspiration and a place that slowed down time. She also saw a positive future for the book, and shares the opinion of Eli Litzsky: The book will continually stay stable in society due to the wealth of information it contains.

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