

The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release
May 1994

FACT SHEET

EXHIBITION **A CENTURY OF ARTISTS BOOKS**

DATES October 23, 1994 - January 24, 1995

ORGANIZATION Riva Castleman, Chief Curator, Department of Prints and Illustrated Books, The Museum of Modern Art

SPONSORSHIP This exhibition is supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

CONTENT The printed book has intrigued and inspired generations of artists. Beginning with Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec's innovative *Yvette Guilbert* and Paul Gauguin's manuscript and prints for his planned book *Noa Noa*, both of 1894, this wide-ranging survey consists of 140 titles, illustrated or created by artists during the past hundred years. These include famous volumes by Marc Chagall, Henri Matisse, and Pablo Picasso from the first half of the twentieth century; avant-garde experiments from World War I through the 1960s by artists from Sonia Delaunay-Terk and Kasimir Malevich to Robert Rauschenberg and Edward Ruscha; and recent books by contemporary artists such as Louise Bourgeois, Francesco Clemente, Anselm Kiefer, and Barbara Kruger.

The exhibition reveals the scope of work artists have dedicated both to enhancing texts with their images -- working with the writings of authors as diverse as Aesop and Ludwig Wittgenstein, Stéphane Mallarmé and Stephen King, Samuel Beckett and Arthur Miller -- and to the book form itself. Examples from the Museum's incomparable collection of illustrated books are augmented by loans, including additional copies, numerous drawings, maquettes, and a selection of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century illustrated books, offered as historical models. In order to show the importance of their sequential organization, videotapes of several complete books are part of the installation.

Organized thematically, **A CENTURY OF ARTISTS BOOKS** offers a comprehensive overview of the art of this century. The exhibition contains groupings that focus on the accomplishments of specific book publishers, such as Ambroise Vollard and Albert Skira, and, more recently, Tatyana Grosman, and others that concentrate on the

- more -

predominant subject matter of artists books -- fables, conflicts, and classical tales. The different ways artists relate to written texts are explored in groupings of works by artists with authors and artists as authors. It examines the constraints imposed by physical materials and processes of bookmaking; and recent dramatic changes in assumptions about the book as a site of artistic creativity.

PUBLICATION

A Century of Artists Books, by Riva Castleman. 264 pages. 224 illustrations, 76 in color. Published by The Museum of Modern Art.

No. 25

For further information, contact Rynn Williams, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 212/708-9750