

## SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS is an exhibition of works of art that correspond Artist with the books they love. I chose the title, Special Collections, after the designated room at many libraries where the rare and prized documents are held. The idea for this show came to me after a series of experiences prompted me to make a cover of one of my favorite books. There was no reason for me to do this. I was not asked to. I was not getting paid. I just wanted to do it. From the outside, it seemed pointless and then increasingly impractical as I spent hundreds of dollars working it out. I ended up making many prints and drawings trying to resolve the completion of a single cover, and that led to more, as I eventually envisioned a set of four different covers. I wanted to complete one for each of the four books which make up the Bandini Quartet by John Fante. I had such a great experience it led me to organize this show. I am grateful to the Artist that agreed to participate. Their exciting work makes this exhibition resonate in ways I could not have anticipated and made this show a privilege to organize. I apologize to the many artist I would like to have included but could not. I am bound by practical limits and the work to include fifty artist pushed the boundaries of what is possible.

I have always found top ten lists and desert Island picks, to be compelling. These lists of "favorites " seem a friendly window into the sensibility of whomever asked. It has prompted me to watch movies, read books, and listen to songs I was previously unaware of. For this show, I asked fifty artist to choose a favorite book and make a cover for it. I now have a top fifty list of books to consider and enjoy.

While I asked these artist to create covers for their favorite books - this is not a show about book covers. That is to say, ...this is not a book cover show - an exhibition of great designs that serve as clever apparitions to lure you into purchasing a book. That work is done by experts and whole departments of successful publishing houses. The aim of this show is , instead, to explore the connection between an artist and a book and the interior dialogue of which the cover is a result. I would like to consider the cover as something that originates in the intersection between the artist and the book, with the cover being the bridge between the two and representing a kind of collaboration between artist and author. I do not want to think of the cover as a disembodied relic separate from the book. Instead, I would like to think of the artist and the book creating an interior dialogue , specific to that artist and that author and the created cover representing a new link between the two. I would like to consider all three : Artist , Book and Cover as one unified work of art. It was vital to my idea for this show that the books be a part of the work as I wanted to maintain that three-way intersection and the unity expressed in that new manifestation. In the case where it was impossible to obtain the book ( ex. out of print ) the results were just as personal, expressive and compelling. What was important to me is that the works in this exhibition are the result of an interior connection established long before this show and that in the recollection and consideration of that connection an additional dimension of that relationship is realized. I asked myself, How cool would it be to have a favorite Book of Matisse, or Diebenkorn, or Morandi with an original cover created by them? That would, I imagine, be amazing. It would be something special.

Danny Shain

Please join us to explore and celebrate the works in SPECIAL COLLECTIONS at 515, Saturday April 6, from 7 - 9 pm and again April 27, from 7 - 9 pm.

515

In the Bendix Building

1206 Maple Ave. #515 Los Angeles, CA. 90015