

Keith Smith
Book by Book
November 18 – January 5, 2012



Bruce Silverstein is pleased to present *Book by Book*, the gallery's first solo exhibition by the artist Keith Smith. Smith has been creating books as works of art since the 1960s, yet he has rarely shown his work to the public over the past twenty-five years.

The 30 books selected for this exhibition, made between 1967-2011, reveal Smith's unfailing interest in experimenting with new materials and processes. He designs books that allow the viewer to experience and question the structure and nature of the book

itself—his works are often radical departures from traditional books—made of string or covered in fabric, they unfold, light-up, do not open, are unbound, or punched full of holes. Each piece is an opportunity for the viewer to expand his or her own expectations for a book and physically engage with the imagery or text.

For Smith, his work is a form of creative articulation whereby the act of making the book—the binding, printing method, page materials and textures that comprise the form, content and structure of the book are chosen to most adequately express the artist's original inspiration or personal challenge.

While a single book might be guided by one idea or one particular interest, when the viewer examines the artist's complete body of work—currently over 280 books—images of certain people and places reappear, and Smith's voice begins to emerge. His works address the recurring themes of love and desire and reveal the artist's efforts to reckon with his sexual identity.

Keith was educated at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Institute of Design at the Illinois Institute of Technology. He has taught at the Visual Studies Workshop, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the University of Illinois. He is a recipient of two Guggenheim Fellowships, and a National Endowment of the Arts grant and a Pollock/Krasner Foundation grant.

His work is in the collections of the Art Institute of Chicago; Center of Creative Photography, University of Arizona; Fogg Art Museum, Harvard University; International Museum of Photography at the George Eastman House; Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Museum of Modern Art, New York; The Getty Museum, Los Angeles; and the Victoria and Albert Museum, London among others.

He has authored nine books on bookmaking, among them; *200 Books, An Annotated Bibliography*, published by Keith Smith BOOKS, First Edition, May 2000; *Books without Paste or Glue, Non-Adhesive Binding* Volume I, The Sigma Foundation, Inc., 1991; and *Structure of the Visual Book*, First Edition, The Sigma Foundation, 1984