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Some Pretty Interesting Characters: Works from RAM's Collection, Chapter 2
Featuring **Snow White, Start Wars, and Super Heroes:**
Contemporary Pop-Up Books
June 22 – September 28, 2014

When people think of movable books and pop-up books, they usually think of books for children; however this was not always the case. In fact, movable books for adults were around for centuries before the techniques were used in children's books.

The first known movable part in a book was created by Benedictine monk **Matthew Paris** in 1240 in his *Chronica Majora*. He attached paper discs, called **volvelles**—paper constructions with rotating parts—onto some of the pages which were used by the monks to help calculate holy days. Throughout the centuries, volvelles have been used for such diverse purposes as teaching anatomy, making astronomical predictions, creating secret code, and telling fortunes. In 1564, *Cosmographia Petri Apiani*, a movable astrological book, was published. In the mid-1700s, English landscape designer **Capability Brown** made use of flaps to illustrate "before and after" views of his garden designs.

However, it was not until the late 1800s that these techniques were applied to books designed for entertainment, particularly for children. Pop up became an umbrella term for any movable book covering transformations, tunnel books, volvelles, flaps, pull-tabs, pop-outs, and pull-downs. **Ernest Nister** and **Lothar Meggendorfer** were leaders in the field whose books were popular in Germany and Britain at this time.

With the publication of the *Daily Express Children's Annual Number 1*, in 1929, pop-ups took a great leap forward with pictures that spring up in model form. This was produced by **Louis Giraud** and **Theodore Brown**. Giraud established his own publishing house, Strand Publications, which produced the groundbreaking series of Bookano books. The Bookano books are considered the first, true pop-up books for children because the pop-ups can be viewed from a full 360 degrees, not just the front side facing the viewer/reader.

In the United States, in the 1930s, **Harold Lentz** followed Giraud's lead with the production of the Blue Ribbon books in New York. He was the first publisher to use the term pop-up to describe their movable illustrations. The next advance in the field was made by the astoundingly prolific **Vojtěch Kubašta** working in Prague. He designed his first pop-up book, an edition of *Little Red Riding Hood*, in 1956 for the state-owned foreign trade corporation ARTIA which continued to publish his books throughout his career. Kubašta sold 35 million copies of his books and they have been translated into 24 different languages.

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Waldo Hunt founded two companies, Graphics International and Intervisual Books, which produced hundreds of pop-up books for children between the 1960s and 1990s. Although intended for US audiences, these books were hand assembled in areas with lower labor costs: initially in Japan and later in Singapore and Latin American countries such as Colombia and Mexico. Hunt's first pop-up book was *Bennett Cerf's Pop-Up Riddle Book*, published by Random House as a promotion for Maxwell House Coffee. It showcased the work of humorist **Bennett Cerf**, who was then president of Random House. Random House published a total of 30 more children's pop-up books, including books that featured Sesame Street characters.

This exhibition at RAM has been selected from a private collection of pop-up books. The show features examples that deal with storytelling and fairy tales as subject matter to align with the summer exhibitions at both RAM and Wustum. This collection, and the examples on loan here, primarily represent pop-up books published over the past 30-40 years by the major publishing houses and creators of movable books. The collection concentrates on books that expand dimensionally with pop-ups— it does not focus on lift-the-flap books or those that only have transformations. Thus, this display showcases images that are very dimensional and that utilize the pop-up elements to advance the telling of the story.

The books in the first floor Ruffo Gallery tend to feature darker tales of good vs. evil, super heroes, and classic stories such as *Dracula*, *Frankenstein*, and *The Pit and the Pendulum*. Many of our culture's classic tales of good vs. evil also incorporate a young hero/heroine who must surmount many obstacles in order to get to a safe place and grow up in the process, as in *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz* and the *Harry Potter* series. This case also includes examples of stories from popular culture, such as villains from popular Disney Studio's animated features and Tim Burton's *The Nightmare Before Christmas*. Both classic storytelling methods and more contemporary approaches such as graphic novels are included. This display includes two publishers' prototypes for books on the *X-Men* and **Star Wars**, in which one pop-up has been staged inside the printed book cover to provide potential book sellers with an idea of what the finished book will be like.

The display in the second floor Schumann Gallery features classic fairy tales for children, books devoted to Disney characters, and mythological subject matter. There are a wide range of scale and format types to be found in the books in this case. This includes a pop-up booklet attached to a long playing record for *The Sword in the Stone*, carousel books in small scale devoted to Disney characters, Beatrix Potter's *Peter Rabbit*, and Madeline, the French school girl. The *Kraken Attack!* and *Pirate Ship Pop-Up and Play Fun* books are larger scale examples of the carousel format that are only partially unfolded here because of space limitations. Two contemporary masters of this medium, **Matthew Reinhart** and **Robert Sabuda**, are also represented by a number of their extremely dimensional retellings of classic fairy tales in this display.

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Terms

Carousel books can be viewed in the round.

Paper Engineer is the person who designs the book's construction so that the pop-up image unfolds properly out of the book when it is opened and, as important, that the image folds back up between the two pages when that section of the book is closed. Many of these books have different authors, illustrators, and paper engineers, as this is frequently a collaborative art form.

Transformations show a scene made up of vertical slats. When a reader pulls a tab on the side, the slats slide under and over one another to "transform" the original image into a totally different scene.

Tunnel books consist of a set of pages bound with two folded concertina strips on each side and are viewed through a hole in the cover. Openings in each page allow the viewer to see through the entire book to the back, and images on each page work together to create a dimensional scene inside.

Volvelles are paper constructions with rotating parts.