



Brighton

'U'K

25th December 2018

Dear Louis and other members of ABC Artists' Books Cooperative (last time I looked that was Eric, Fred, Oliver, Mishka, Jonathan, EJ, Heidi, David, Travis Shaffer, Paul, Wil, Duncan, Rahel and Hermann).

I write to you humbly, in the light of my Facebook post <https://bit.ly/2EMBosM> of 4th May 2017, in which I resigned from the group. Three reasons were given for leaving, appropriately listed a, b and c. I now wish to apply to re-join based on my understanding of the direction you have taken and secondly, having considered the logic again, I have come to regret my decision. I would completely understand of course if you decided not to accept the request so I wait in hope. Below is an annotated version of the original notification I posted in 2017, followed by further reasons for my being reaccepted into the fold:

Hi all

I have decided I should leave ABC. It has been very good to know you all and no doubt friendships will continue but:

a) I don't fully appreciate the fascination with paper and paper books, though I am aware of the importance of book fairs historically as an efficient means of dissemination and communication. I will probably continue to produce the odd physical book but it has never been a major interest of mine.

b) I don't object to getting paid, I accept the inevitability of buying and selling, but the transactional side of things and the art market bores me. I know that there are practical reasons for engaging with the market, and occasionally I do, but to be frank I'd rather not. I know that book fairs and the like, are about much more than the transactions and physical exchanges which take place but there are other forums for talking to people.

c) Some of ABC's activities amount to institutional critique and my sense is that much of what can be done on that front has been done. In fact I am content to accept the existence of art's institutional frameworks but equally, may simply ignore them. The critical techniques employed by art against itself, for a century or so, can be directed also at aspects of the world at large.

Micheál O'Connell aka Mocksim

Commented [MO1]: My tone was a little blasé. I should not have been so informal. I live in Europe after all, not the United States. The use of 'Hi' gives the impression of flippancy when in fact it was a privilege to have been asked to join ABC in the first place.

Commented [MO2]: I realise that friendships are not really what ABC is about, though that might well be an outcome in some cases. The whole idea is about forwarding certain interests and recognising that everyone benefits from the cooperative philosophy. Unity is strength brothers and sisters! Friendships in most cases did not continue because they were not friendships in the first place. In other cases genuine bonds had been formed and links were maintained.

Commented [MO3]: I do appreciate still the benefits off 300dpi. That can matter when you want to scrutinise an image or text at close proximity. The sheer quality is superior to most screens: although Kindle claim 300ppi.

Commented [MO4]: It seems to me now that ABC have become interested in this fact of the initial rationale for artist and photographer run book fairs. It was less about fetishizing paper but to with convenience and importantly cutting out the middle-person and the need to be sycophantic to institutions, publishers and distribution networks.

Commented [MO5]: I have a few books in mind, in process, in progress, right now in fact. I think they'd be right up ABC's tree.

Commented [MO6]: I am sure it bores many of you too but capitalism is what we've got (for now) and historically Stalinist modes of exchange are hardly something to laud.

Commented [MO7]: Here I was attempting to sound like Melville's Bartleby with his frequent use of "I'd prefer not to." That was pretentious.

Commented [MO8]: True enough but opportunities to actually meet face to face with others, and with physical things to exchange, are much fewer than in the past, so there's some value in the events.

Commented [MO9]: Well, really this remit will never disappear. In fact yesterday's provocation is today's institution. The book fairs themselves, arguably, are instrumentalised versions of their former selves or perhaps examples of what the Situationists referred to as 'recuperation.' ABC has been aware of this, and hence ABCeum etc.

Commented [MO10]: This is true. A person can be part of something, engage properly with it, and antagonistic to it simultaneously. In fact, this paradox, is fundamental to conducting oneself in many realms. I am, for example, a member of something called The London Group along with the likes of Frank Bowling RA and Dame Paula Rego. My appropriationist (theft) approach is hardly in tune with the activities of most other members but, nevertheless, I have been made welcome, been given a platform to pursue my particular interests.

Commented [MO11]: I do enjoy a bit of this but not to the extent of activism. Activism is too serious a matter for gameplay.