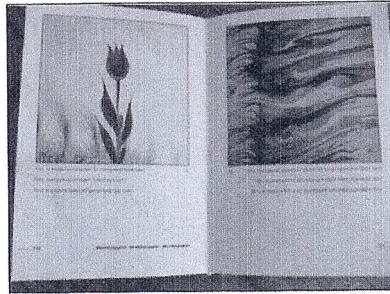


DECORATED PAPER – A GUIDE BOOK

Henck Porck, Julia Rinck, Frieder Schmidt, Ida Schrijer – Edited by Susanne Krause – Bundpapierverlag – Hamburg 2009. Hard back. 219p.



In its introduction the ambit of this book is clearly established, setting itself the task of including the most important decorated papers and crucially enabling them to be both recognised and given a 'correct designation'. There being no standard technical vocabulary for decorated paper this book does not seek to provide one, and neither does it look to provide a history and use of decorated papers.

The editor offers as a definition of decorated paper that given by August Weichelt early in the 20th Century, as being a 'paper which, having been made by and delivered from the paper factory as a raw material, has been beautified or refined in special machines or by hand through dying, brushing or other methods'. This would exclude both tinted and mottled paper – to which additives are made during the paper making process itself. Susanne Krause counsels that analysis of papers and the treatment given to them can require very careful physical examination, not least because a sheet may have undergone several processes or combinations of them.

A short guide follows as to how to use the book – suggesting possible defining characteristics – aimed towards tracing the sample. The range of papers included is restricted to Western ones, but includes, Agate, Bahti, Paste, Marbled. Embossed, Dribbled, Stencilled, Sprinkled and Flock examples.

Sample identification is intentionally directed towards visual features. The text is concise, and provided in German, English and Dutch. Reproductions are large, coloured, naturally, well produced and plentiful; 114 plates in all in a page layout that is clean and uncluttered, aiding a quick narrowing of possibilities.

While dedicated works exist, in the case of Marbled and Paste papers, for example, it is not straightforward to check the variety of techniques employed in using colour in printed papers. Here off-set, block printed, silk screen, rotary printed and other similarly produced papers can be compared and contrasted. The Guide Book is not restricted to hand-made papers, it should be remembered.

In addition to being used as an identification tool in the case of a paper found within a bound book, the Guide Book can also function as a source book for design work suggesting ideas of techniques to be tried to create particular effects for a new work. What it does indisputably confirm is the almost limitless variety and fascination to be found in coloured and textured paper. The book unquestionably fills a gap in the reference shelf of the enquiring bookbinder and designer, and will be widely appreciated within the world of books.

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The continuing lack of a universal language in the realm of paper, as in other areas, is a restricting factor. However, Susanne Krause refers in her Introduction to work which is ongoing in Leipzig through annual meetings with the aim of producing an English language Thesaurus ['Decorated and Decorative Paper Terms'] which, when completed will be a considerable advance. In the meantime, the Guide Book has been successfully used to catalogue the collection of some 14,800 samples at the Deutches Museum, Munich, which can be acknowledged as no small achievement.

Alan Isaac

Currently there is no UK distributor for this book. If sufficient members are interested in obtaining a copy I would be willing to get copies from the publisher and send them on at cost – approximately £73 for the book + carriage of £3. My contact details, if you are interested, are – Tel-01865 516449 or alan.isaac@tiscali.co.uk – or by post to 15, Polstead Road, Oxford, OX2 6TW. Please do not send any money, until requested!