

BURNING MATTER

Burning Matter retraces the multiple uses of fire in the history of artists' bookmaking since the early 1960s, documenting how this dual element – recognized in the literature as both a destroyer and a symbol of knowledge – has been absorbed into the creative research of a number of artists working with printed matter: Ed Ruscha, Bruce Nauman, Roy Adzak, Jonathan Monk, Bernard Aubertin, Barbara Kruger, The Guerrilla Art Action Group, John Latham, John Riddell, François Dufrêne, Daisuke Yokota and Tiane Doan na Champassak. ***Burning Matter*** is the first show in a series of artist's book-related exhibitions curated by artist and collector Tiane Doan na Champassak and independent researcher Larisa Oancea.

When Prometheus crept into Hephaestus's workshop to steal a spark of fire in the dead of night, he had already been warned by Zeus that every gift to humanity brings a punishment: *this is how the Fates weave destiny*. The polarity of fire has been a recurrent topic both in ancient and modern culture: its capacity to burn and transform, destroy and regenerate, enlighten and conceal has followed the history of humanity since its dawn. When it comes to books, the most obvious reference is undoubtedly Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451*: here, fire represents equally the loss of freedom through destruction and the spread of knowledge in the face of censorship.

The relatively recent history of modern artists' books – whose beginnings are commonly associated with Dieter Roth and Ed Ruscha – has itself occasionally been punctuated by the presence of this element. *Various Small Fires and Milk* by Ed Ruscha is a self-published book printed originally in 1964, in a limited edition of 400: a conceptual exercise gathering fifteen black-and-white images of domestic flames – candles, stoves, cigarettes, matches, lighters, among others – followed by a tall glass of milk as a visual pun that soothes the heartburn. Four years later, in 1968 – a year of increasing opposition to the Vietnam War – Bruce Nauman ripped out and set fire to Ed Ruscha's iconic artist book. Nauman then photographed his pyrotechnic homage to form a new book – a publication in the form of a bound poster – titled *Burning Small Fires*.

Inspired by this performative activation of conceptual art, Tiane Doan na Champassak chooses to incinerate Daisuke Yokota's *Matter / Burn Out*, adding a new layer of interpretation to an editorial project that was already in itself performative. There is a quiescent correspondence between Ruscha-Nauman's and Yokota-Champassak's historical *momenta* as both reenactments are, in different degrees, sensitive and responsive to the upheavals of their time. Champassak's reenactment is a conceptual *mise en abyme* made visible through both a video art piece and a poster-format publication available in two versions: a limited edition of 275 copies and a special edition of 25 numbered copies, with an original burnt scrap from Yokota's book.

The igniting lineage Ruscha-Nauman-Yokota-Champassak is completed in the exhibition by a wide range of variations on the perilous proximity – often vandalistic or iconoclast – between fire and books. Barbara Kruger's *Matchbook*, John Riddell's *Smokes: A Novel Mystery*, The Guerrilla Art Action Group's *License to Burn Books*, François Dufrêne's *Poème éclaté*, among others, reiterate how fire has reshaped the history of art-related printed matter.

With an awareness of the troubled times we live in, ***Burning Matter*** subtly evokes the sense of ritual power that fire continues to have in the culture of protest, while underscoring its capacity to represent both an end and a new beginning.



Burning Matter, Venice, 2022
installation views



Burning Matter, Venice, 2022
installation views



Burning Matter, Venice, 2022
installation view during the opening night



Jonathan Monk

Small Fires Burning (after Ed Ruscha after Bruce Nauman after)
limited edition of 50 signed posters, 2002



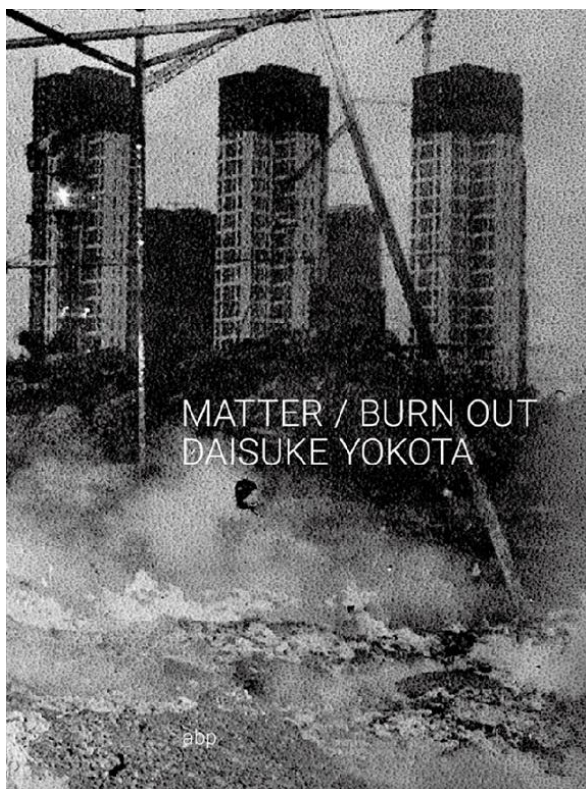
Ed Ruscha
Various Small Fires and Milk
self-published, 1964
1st edition, 400 copies



Ed Ruscha
Various Small Fires and Milk
self-published, 1970
2nd edition, 3000 copies



Bruce Nauman
Burning Small Fires
self-published, 1968
single edition of unknown size



Daisuke Yokota
Matter / Burn Out
 published by ArtBeat, 2016
 1st edition of 1000 copies

*Alongside the ashes and the burnt book spine of the same edition



Tiane Doan na Champassak
Burning Matter
single-channel video, 20'10", 2022
video stills



Tiane Doan na Champassak
Burning Matter
published by Siam's Guy Books, 2022
limited edition of 275 copies



Tiane Doan na Champassak
Burning Matter
published by Siam's Guy Books, 2022
special edition of 25 numbered copies, with an original burnt scrap



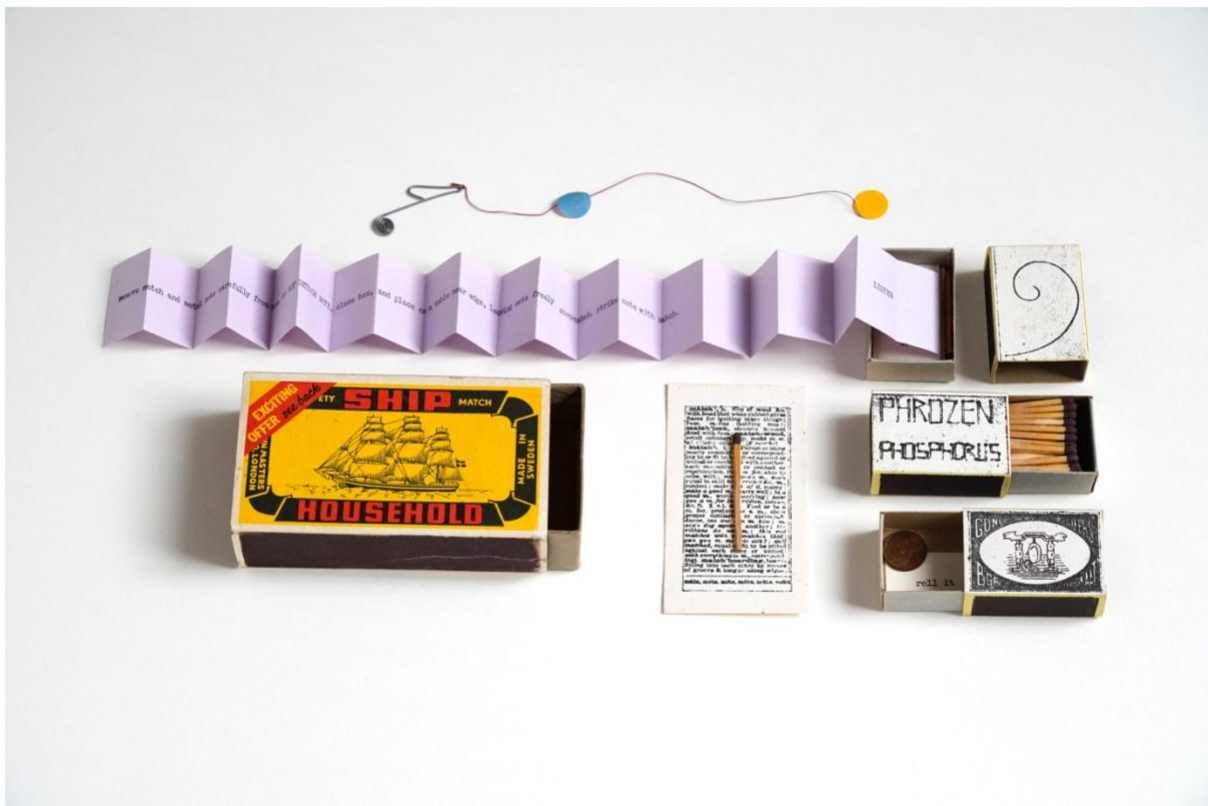
Tiane Doan na Champassak
Burning Matter
installation view with the unfolded poster



Barbara Kruger

Matchbook. We Have Received Orders Not To Move

photolithograph on a matchbox, published by the Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, 1986
each cover design printed in an edition of 1000



David Mayor

Untitled [matchbox]

Beau Geste Press, 1972



François Dufrêne
Poème éclaté
found paper firecracker, 1958
unique piece



John Latham
Untitled (Skoob)
 sculptural bookwork, 1959
 unique piece



John Riddell
Smokes: A Novel Mystery
 novel arranged as rolled papers in a package of cigarettes, 1996
 100 copies



Burning Matter, Venice, 2022
installation view



Harold Ancart
Tomorrow
 calendar for the year 3000
 published by Triangle Books, 2013



Roy Adzak
Fire-imprint
 published by Guy Schraenen, Antwerpen, 1975
 special edition of 20 copies (*hors commerce*)



Jonathan Monk
& Milk. Today is just a copy of yesterday
 Schlebrügge Editor, 2004
 edition of 800 copies



The Guerrilla Art Action Group

*License to burn books [issued by The Moral Majority], part of a 10-card set titled *This is to certify that* New York, 1981*

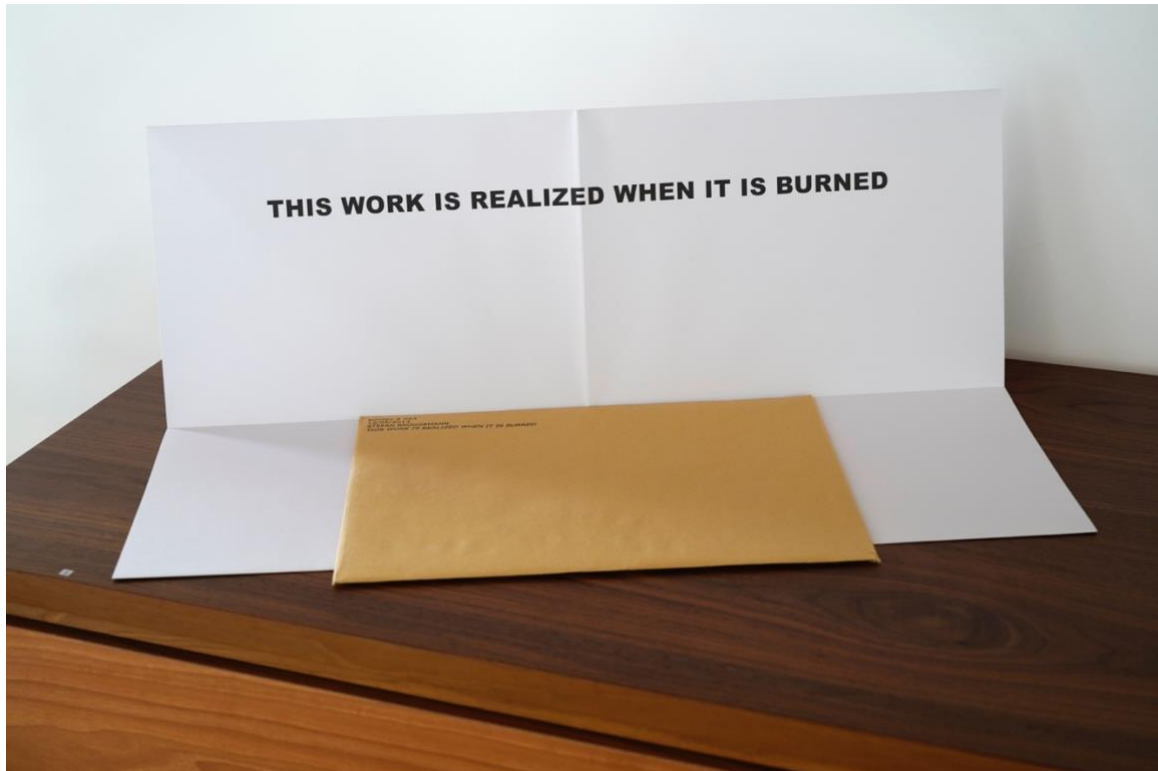


Anonymous Japanese card

Burn this / Do not burn this
Mail Art piece from Ken Friedman's collection
early 1970s



Tiane Doan na Champassak
Corpus
Fresson charcoal print on eighteenth-century paper
unique print, 2005



Stefan Brüggemann
This work is realized when it is burned
 published by Stefan Brüggemann & MOREpublishers, 2013
 edition of 100 copies



Endo Toshikatsu & Muraoka Saburo
Giappone. La Biennale di Venezia
 exhibition catalogue
 The Japan Foundation, 1990



Bernard Aubertin
Dessin de feu

burnt matches on paper
1970



Burning Matter, Venice, 2022

installation view



Ed Ruscha
Books by Edward Ruscha
exhibition poster
published by UC San Diego, University Art Gallery
1973

COMPLETE LIST OF WORKS

1. Jonathan Monk

Small Fires Burning (after Ed Ruscha after Bruce Nauman after)

limited edition of 50 signed posters, 2002

2. Tiane Doan na Champassak

Burning Matter

published by Siam's Guy Books, 2022

special edition of 25 numbered copies, with an original burnt scrap

3. Tiane Doan na Champassak

Burning Matter

published by Siam's Guy Books, 2022

limited edition of 275 copies

4. Endo Toshikatsu & Muraoka Saburo

Giappone. La Biennale di Venezia

exhibition catalogue

The Japan Foundation, 1990

5. Stefan Brüggemann

This work is realized when it is burned

published by Stefan Brüggemann &

MOREpublishers, 2013

edition of 100 copies

6. Tiane Doan na Champassak

Corpus

Fresson charcoal print on eighteenth-century paper

unique print, 2005

7. Barbara Kruger

Matchbook. We Have Received Orders Not To Move

photolithograph on a matchbox, published by the Hoffman Gallery, Chicago, 1986

each cover design printed in an edition of 1000

8. David Mayor

Untitled [matchbox]

Beau Geste Press, 1972

9. François Dufrêne

Poème éclaté

found paper firecracker, 1958

unique piece

10. John Riddell

Smokes: A Novel Mystery

novel arranged as rolled papers in a package of cigarettes, 1996

100 copies

11. John Latham

Untitled (Skoob)

sculptural bookwork, 1959

unique piece

12. Harold Ancart

Tomorrow

calendar for the year 3000

published by Triangle Books, 2013

13. Roy Adzak

Fire-imprint

published by Guy Schraenen, Antwerpen, 1975

special edition of 20 copies (*hors commerce*)

14. Bruce Nauman

Burning Small Fires

self-published, 1968

single edition of unknown size

15. Ed Ruscha

Various Small Fires and Milk

self-published, 1970

2nd edition, 3000 copies

16. Ed Ruscha

Various Small Fires and Milk

self-published, 1964

1st edition, 400 copies

17. Jonathan Monk

& Milk. Today is just a copy of yesterday

Schlebrügge Editor, 2004

edition of 800 copies

18. Tiane Doan na Champassak

Burning Matter

unfolded poster, Siam's Guy Books, 2022

19. Bernard Aubertin

Dessin de feu

burnt matches on paper

1970

20. Daisuke Yokota

Matter / Burn Out

published by ArtBeat, 2016

1st edition of 1000 copies

*Alongside the burnt book spine of the same edition

21. The Guerrilla Art Action Group

License to burn books [issued by The Moral

Majority], part of a 10-card set titled *This is to certify that*

New York, 1981

22. Anonymous Japanese card

Burn this / Do not burn this

Mail Art piece from Ken Friedman's collection

early 1970s

23. Tiane Doan na Champassak

Burning Matter

single-channel video, 20'10", 2022

24. Ed Ruscha

Books by Edward Ruscha

exhibition poster

published by UC San Diego, University Art Gallery

1973

HIDDEN TRACK // THE FIRE WITHIN

25. Pauline Hisbacq

Le feu

published by September Books, 2018

edition of 100 copies

26. Idan Hayosh and Corina Künzli

Fire Guys

published by Kodoli Press, 2011

edition of 500 copies

27. Günter Guben, Peter Schumann, Walter Hartmann, Catherine Werner etc.

Zerberus. Eine Zeitschrift Fuer: Graphik, Literatur und Erotica

published by Zerberus, 1970s

edition of 20 copies

28. Dietrich Albrecht, Hansjürgen Bulkowski, Klaus Groh, Tibor Gáyor, Dóra Maurer, David Mayor (eds.)

Teutonic Schmuck No. 7

published by Beau Geste Press, 1975

edition of 400 copies

29. Thomas Sauvin

Until Death Do Us Part

published by Jiazazhi Press, 2015

first edition of 1000 copies

30. Tim Coglan

Hell's Gates

published by Perimeter Editions, 2018

edition of 666 copies

31. Vaclav Pozarek

Lux

Gevaert Editions, 2016

edition of 200 copies

32. Wade Guyton

1 Month Ago

published by Karma, 2014

edition of 500 copies

33. Claudio Pogo

The Archives. 82 Perspectives of a Burning Police Car

published by Pogo Books, 2014

edition of 100 copies

BURNING MATTER
Studio 454, Venice
April 23 - November 27, 2022
curated by Tiane Doan Na Champassak and Larisa Oancea