



*Dwelling in the Margins: Art Publishing in Aotearoa*

edited by Katie Kerr

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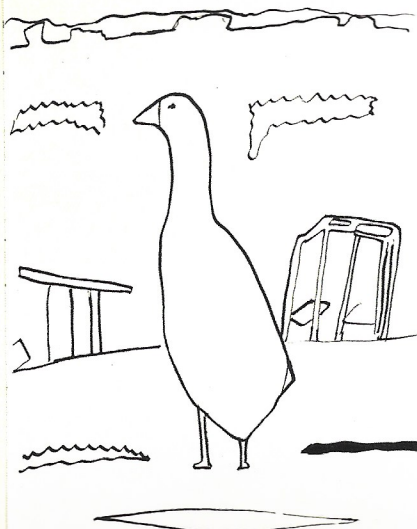
DON ABBOTT

True believers in the digital revolution will find *Dwelling in the Margins: Art Publishing in Aotearoa* an unwelcome aberration. Here is proof—an

attractive, thumbable, hand-sized package with a perky yellow cover—that the old world order is not going anywhere soon. Inside is a range of voices—the volume is home to 30 contributors—which give expression to many aspects of art publishing, from many perspectives. This is mind-opening publishing at its best.

Louise Menzies provides historical context, with an artwork-as-research

Five were taken  
when we were out  
& six flew away.  
This one can fly  
but she doesn't want to go.  
So she stands  
quite still  
& dreams about



piece that uncovers correspondence surrounding Joanna Margaret Paul's 1979 book for children, *The Lone Goose*. Menzies was in Dunedin on a Hodgkins residency and requested the book from the Hocken Library, and, in a happy mishap, received these letters instead. The trail of correspondence works better on these pages than they do on the walls of the Pah Homestead, where they were shown in Menzies' recent exhibition *In an orange my mother was eating*—they form a narrative that is innately a page-turner, one that focuses on the book's distribution and reception, and the difficulties inherent in both.

What follows is a series of chapters from which emerge the many stories, adventures and fortunes of publishing arts-related material in New Zealand. Most contributors come from a real-world situation, so theoretical, philosophical and political considerations are tempered by lived experience. Sarah Maxey is a graphic designer who retells her professional misadventures with humour and insight, and for whom the reader can cheer as her best work—read most satisfying—appears in short-run volumes of poetry. Gabi Lardies runs the Pipi Press and, by completing an extraordinarily complex and convoluted print run, embraced her inner and outer freak. Success stories abound: the creators of *Femisphere*, *ATE Journal* and Vapour Momenta Books write succinct and enthralling chapters of how they did it, while curators and artists discuss careers and lockdown struggles.

There are also quirky contributions that might induce a reassessment of both art and publishing: Katie Kerr investigates the legacy of community cookbooks, often made as fundraising efforts by rural organisations such as the Country Women's Institute; Matt Luke conflates book and record (remember flexi discs?) publishing; and Dominic Hoey and Samuel Walsh surely relish the reproduction of their Messenger conversation as they seek a name for their new press (they finally chose Dead Bird Books). *Dwelling in the Margins* may prove that hard-copy publishing is valid and essential; it is also the result of the impressive (and reassuring) individual and collective can-do attitude that is prevalent amongst all generations of art publishers in Aotearoa.

(above) Remote Photobooks at the LA Art book fair 2017

(left) Pages from Joanna Margaret Paul's *The Lone Goose* 1979  
Published by John McIndoe