Reviews: Design Language

Art Quilt magazine
February 1999

What a delightful find! This small hand sized book explodes with a thoughtful contemplation of design principles capable of energizing anyone who posses a thread of creativity and who strives to improve his or her artistic work.

Tim McCreight creates jewelry as his personal from of art and is perhaps best known for his excellent instructional books on jewelry making. His natural teacher's knack for explaining difficult techniques carries over to his design book. Design can be a difficult subject to grasp, shrouded in ostentatiousness and "art speak". As in his other books McCreight strips away all pretensions and presents the material in an easy-to-digest manner.

In his introduction McCreight describes design as "a private, idiosyncratic affair" which is "never truly meaningful until it has been creatively put to use". He presents reflections on the principles of design by exploring their terminology. Each of the 100 keywords is examined using it's dictionary definition and etymology, a quote from a visual or verbal artist, and then references to related terms- you can easily move around the book, following your interests, not a predetermined path, as the terms are arranged alphabetically in a non-hierarchical manner. Definitions are brief and purposefully subjective - the reader brings content to the reading via his or her own interpretations and thereby customizes the lesson to personal at-the-moment needs. Repeated readings reveal different meanings as the readers outlook changes.

While no pictures accompany the text, McCreight encourages us to use it with the pictures we select ourselves and to use the book as an art tool- "make notes in the margins, add to the lists and bend a few pages". Pick a term to start on your own personal journey of exploration in design and see where it leads you. Your art will be improved by it, and you'll enjoy the journey of self-discovery much more than any class you'll ever take.

Alice Korach
Bead & Button Magazine
April, 1999

You will either love this little book (7 1/4 x 3 3/4in./18.4 x 9.5 cm) or you'll say "Alice must have flipped." DESIGN LANGUAGE is an alphabetical listing of 100 key words used by artists and designers to communicate about creativity and design. They include,"anticipation," "balance," "craft," "harmony," "intuition,""time," and 94 others. The design of the book is itself part of the dialog or meditation that can and should evolve from a leisurely and repeated reading of it. It is beautiful, thought-provoking, irritating, and eye opening, just as is the text.

Each key word is approached in terms of it's dictionary definition, it's derivation, Tim's feelings and thoughts about it, a provacative quotation from literature, philosphy, or art, and a see also list that takes you wandering among other key words. Albert Einstein is quoted on the subject of Economy:"Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler." This book could be the backbone of an artist's study group or of an individual's lifelong quest to become a better artist, observer, or human being. Every time you read it, you will find something different, and you will understand something new.