



## Lance Wyman

The Logbooks  
1972 ——— Present

This exhibition is curated by Pam Bowman and Matthew Edgar. It developed from conversations with Tony Brook, Adrian Shaughnessy and Lance Wyman. We are delighted to bring this collection to Sheffield and would like to thank Unit Editions for their support and allowing us freedom to work with their published material and to Steven Heller for his thoughtful introduction 'The Confidant'.

Thank you also to dust for their work on the exhibition identity and to our technical team for producing and hanging the exhibition.



# The Confidant

By Steven Heller

Sketchbooks, journals, and diaries are the artist and designer's most loyal confidant, the keeper of secrets, serendipitous discoveries, subliminal musings and spontaneous ideas. The riches they can hold is inestimable, not as an end but a means to an end. They are part of a magical creative process that no one but their owners have the right to see — yet they can nonetheless be invaluable to others.

Throughout history, these sketchbooks, journals and diaries have been so jam packed with insights and revelations that it would be stingy of the artists and designers not to share with others. Privacy is a treasured, inviolable right, but since artists and designers are also teachers, there is no better way to demonstrate the creative experience than to show others what was never meant to be shown — such as the inner workings, failures, false starts, inspiring references, etcetera — all the stuff that makes art and design happen.

After all, the journal-diary has long been an integral part of serious literature dating back to Samuel Pepys — and an entertaining one at that. The artists' corollary is the sketchbook — think Vincent Van Gogh's mad musings that reveal the genesis of his radical style. And when considered as an incubator (a measure of achievement too), a sketchbook reveals intricate ways the visionary mind functions (or fails to, as the case may be).

Having edited four large anthologies of staggering sketchbook spreads and pages by, respectively, designers-illustrators, type designers-letterers, information graphic designers-data visualizers and cartoon-comics artists, I was struck by how down-right a mass of individual sketches can be — and surprised by how artful many of them are. A sketch can be a simple scratch or doodle, but often a beautiful sketch is a near perfect prototype of a finished piece.

I've seen artists' and designers' books that reveal how various thumbnails evolve into a single final, and scores of books that show a designer's indecision through two or more alternatives. In terms of these peoples' overall reputations, the completed works are the most consequential. Yet the efforts that bolster the rendered finals are often as essential in the appreciation of the collected artistic works.

All this may sound like academic justification for such a utilitarian object as a sketchbook, which clearly needs no justification because, after all, art and design does not emerge fully realized and precise from the human brain tissue. Refinement is key to successful design, and that sometimes results in a multitude of options and alternatives, which go to fill sketchbooks galore. While in the short-run roughs and comps may be destined for the trash, over the long haul there is immeasurable value because the aesthetic and conceptual process is the essence of art.

There are few more authoritative or honest ways of showing and no better ways of understanding where ideas or style derives than paging through these one-of-a-kind tomes. A place where art and design is finished and perfected is nice, but the means to that end is worth twice or thrice the value.