

Lit-crit's knifeman

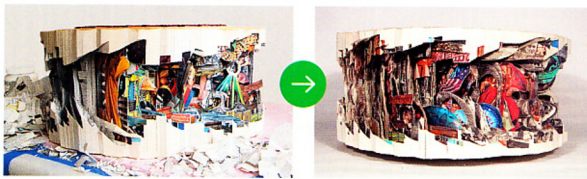
Brian Dettmer cuts up old reference books to create 3D artworks

In 2001, Brian Dettmer had a flash of inspiration. The young artist from Chicago was using leaves from a book to create a collage when he became curious about cutting into the book itself. He took a knife to it, carving holes and shapes indiscriminately. "Until one day I paused on an image I had come across and decided to keep it and slice round it," he says. "Another image appeared a few layers below and I decided to keep that as well."

Dettmer, 36, has been creating the 3D collages ever since, but now his oeuvre has taken a turn. He has begun altering the shape of the books' edges (*Physics, main pic, left*), and crafting multi-volume works (*below-left*). The process, though, has remained the same. First, the pages are sealed from the outside; then he works through them one layer at a time.

"I have no idea what will emerge," he says. "Digital media constantly morphs from form to form; it's liquid, not concrete. I like the idea of analogue media having the same potential." briandettmer.com CB

▶ ROUNDED READING



Wagnalls Wheel (left) uses a full set of Funk & Wagnalls encyclopaedias. Dettmer pulled the covers back and used rope to tie the volumes in a circle. The pages were sealed to create a solid object. Then he cut into the books from A to Z to reveal their contents and bring them into play with one another.

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