

collector's edition

Transforming the magazine into an art object has long been an aspiration for writers and designers alike, but despite much novelty packaging, few publications achieve the apotheosis. *Esopus*, a biannual journal created by editor Tod Lippy, is the rare exception. *Esopus* operates in part as a portable gallery—each of its four issues has showcased original artworks produced on an exquisite selection of paper stocks and in a variety of formats. The featured projects have included a 3-D

sculpture, elaborate fold-outs, and poster-size pullouts.

Lippy art-directs and designs the entire magazine, contending with logistical puzzles alien to the average publisher. A pop-up house by artist William Christenberry in the second issue entailed recruiting a Hutterite community to manufacture the piece; for a Jenny Holzer project using photochromatic ink, the silk-screener ran more than 30 tests to ensure that the ink would function cor-

rectly. “The real challenge is making things affordable, and making them work,” says Lippy. “You never know if it’s going to be a bust.” Lippy speaks of the artists’ works inside the magazine as “little multiples”; *Esopus* itself—a melding of art, ethnography, and journalism—expands the definition of what a magazine can be. CAITLIN DOVER

RESOURCES

ESOPUS esopusmag.com
WESTCAN PRINTING GROUP westcanpg.com

WINNIPEG WAYS AND MEANS

The extraordinary print quality of *Esopus* is the work of Lippy’s printer, Westcan Printing Group, which also produces *The Believer* and *The Paris Review*. The company is based in Winnipeg, where Lippy has also found silk-screeners, die-cutters, and the like.

COMING ATTRACTIONS

In the forthcoming issue of *Esopus*, a tribute to the film *Fantasia* uses successive sheets of translucent pages to recreate layered drawings as they would have appeared on an animator’s light box.

PRESS GENTLY

A poster by the artist Ati Maier was printed on a paper approximating a tissue-like medium. The material’s fragility meant that the press had to be run with deliberation. “We had to treat it like some precious little baby,” says Lippy.

WE’LL CALL YOU

For a feature showing a series of 1930s-era rejection letters, Lippy printed a two-sided sheet that mimics an aged piece of loose-leaf paper.

HISTORY REPEATS

The fourth issue features a detachable facsimile of a metal American Legion license plate. Lippy experimented with different perforation placements to make sure that, if anyone bent the piece by mistake, it wouldn’t immediately detach.



HEADS OF STATE

A fold-out poster of carved presidents’ heads—from George Washington to George H. W. Bush—necessitated a change of printer, as Lippy’s regular outfit didn’t have a big enough press. To Lippy’s chagrin, this also meant printing with a generic 133-line screen rather than the 200-line screen he normally uses. “I would have liked it to be finer,” he says.