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BERN PORTER: A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SAMPLING

By RENEE B. SIMON

KENNETH BEAUDOIN, in an introductory note to his unique book *Eye Poems*, writes of selecting a publisher for his experimental work. "Of course," he says, "there is only one publisher in America who would even consider such a manuscript. So it is inevitable that I should send my *Eye Poems* to Bern Porter who too is interested in dynamic, beautiful print, and beautiful books."

Bern Porter has been publishing books since 1929 — always seeking out the young, the experimental artist, those whose work would never be considered by the firmly established publishing companies. His aim has been to encourage and foster those who would push beyond the limits of mediocrity in writing and publishing.

He became Henry Miller's second American publisher following publication by New Directions. But his book lists were seldom famous, more often the unheard-of.

With no comprehensive bibliography yet printed of Bern Porter's publishing, book designing, illustrating and writing, it is important that such a work be offered; not only as a compendium of the scientific and artistic production of this one man, but as a picture of the vanguard in this generation's art and writing. Many of his authors, unknown when they started with him, have since gained eminence in the literary world.

According to Porter, high publication costs of recent years have forced him to hand-make many of his publications with the result that many titles run less than ten each and in many cases the Special Collections library in the University of California, Los Angeles, has the only copy in existence. The inaccessibility of these works increases the value of annotating them in a bibliography.

This paper, however, is only a sampling of Porter imprints. It includes very few of Porter's writing which he himself published. At a later date a thorough bibliography of all works he has written, illustrated, edited and published will complete this first listing.

All entries have been personally examined. The bibliography is limited to Porter imprints in the UCLA Special Collections

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library, the most complete collection of Porter's works. I have examined boxes 1-5 of the 42 boxes of his material, much of which is yet uncataloged, and all the work that the library has cataloged. This sampling of 48 items has been reviewed by Porter and his corrections and additions gratefully acknowledged and incorporated.

Whenever the annotations refer to the library's copy, it means the UCLA Special Collections library.

The entries have been made according to the Peyton Hurt style manual and the technique is generally that set forth in the Library of Congress *Bibliographical Procedures and Style*.

The entries are arranged chronologically by publication date with an alphabetical arrangement by author within each year.

Bernard Porter, himself both artist and scientist, has devoted years to explaining his concepts of the union of science and art.

As a physicist, he worked on the initial atomic bomb project but in 1945 resigned. He chose instead to devote himself to non-commercial publishing, to write, to pursue his ideas of the expression of science through art forms and art through science and to explore every avenue of communicating these views including his own 15-minute radio program. Both his Schillerhaus and Contemporary Art Galleries in Sausalito gave many Bay Area artists an opportunity to show their work just as his publishing venture gave writers, especially poets, the opportunity to test their ideas in print.

Bernard Porter is a man of vast creative talents. In this brief sampling of his imprints, much that he has done has gone unnoted. The entries however, represent the kind of creative endeavors he felt it important to encourage and reflect, to that extent, the man.

WORKS PUBLISHED BY BERN PORTER

1944

Flores, Angel. *Franz Kafka; a Chronology and Bibliography*. Houlton, Me., Bern Porter [1944] 19 p., 600 numbered copies.

On verso of title page of this paper-bound pamphlet is: "This is copy #575." The author's preface states this work includes "references collected in the course of years of tracking down everything by or about Kafka in every language."

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Miller, Henry. *Murder the Murderer*. Berkeley, Calif., [Bern Porter] 1944. 70 p., 1,000 copies.

Porter, whose name does not appear in the book, published the work in Miller's name while Porter served at Engineering Materials Laboratory, Univ. of Calif., Berkeley. On title page: "An excursus on war from 'The Air-Conditioned Nightmare' by Henry Miller." The Preface is an excerpt from Miller's article "Black and White," *Crisis*, (1924).

Miller, Henry. *The Plight of the Creative Artist in the United States of America*. Berkeley, Calif., Bern Porter, 1944. 34 p., 3 illus., 1 part., 950 numbered copies.

Autographed and numbered in pencil by the publisher, "copy #77, Houlton, Maine."

Includes a self-portrait by Miller at age 53. A plea that society grant the creative artist the freedom to be heard. Publisher's addenda requests funds to create a writers' foundation to give "financial and moral succor" to unknown geniuses.

Miller, Henry. *What Are You Going to do about Alf?* Amer. ed., Berkeley, Calif., Bern Porter, 1944. 24 p., 738 copies.

This first American edition contains forewords from two previous European editions, the first published in Paris, 1935. Fourteen words are censored by hand. Porter writes, "I was forced either to burn the entire 738 copies or cover 14 individual words by hand, two days after publication."

A plea for funds for a starving, creative artist. Miller's first self-illustrated book, it includes a frontispiece drawing, "Alf in Abiza."

1945

Miller, Henry. *Echolalia; Reproductions of Water Colors by Henry Miller*. [2d ed.] Berkeley, Calif. Bern Porter, 1945. [12] plates, 1,000 folios.

Although published in Berkeley an overrun of 1,000 copies was made with the Poetry London imprint and shipped by boat freight. Eleven black and white reproductions and portrait of Miller; the text is a brief statement that perhaps through art he may accomplish more acceptably what he has tried to say through his writings.

Miller, Henry. *Miscellanea*. Berkeley, Calif., Bern Porter, 1945. 54 p. illus., 500 numbered copies.

Each of the 500 copies, uniquely, has an original holograph by Miller. Two copies, the library's #s 273 and 281, each have a separately dated post card from Miller to Bern Porter from Big Sur. Contents: eight articles by Miller.

Miller, Henry. *Money and How It Gets That Way*. Amer. [2d] ed. Illustrated by Jack Wright. Berkeley, Calif., Bern Porter, 1945.

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The first edition was published in Paris, 1938. According to the author, this was written in answer to questions posed to him by Ezra Pound about money, what makes it, and how it gets that way. The short treatise discusses a philosophy of the use of money and its history written during the world depression.

Miller, Henry. *Semblance of a Devoted Past*. Berkeley, Calif., Bern Porter, 1945 [c1944] 64 p., 9 illus., 561 copies.

The colophon states 1,100 copies printed, however the publisher later noted that war conditions reduced this actually to only 561 copies in the first edition. Contents: Nine collotype reproductions of Miller's watercolors and selected fragments of letters to Emil Schnellock, life-long friend of Henry Miller.

Tyler, Parker. *The Granite Butterfly*. [A Poem] [Berkeley, Calif.] Bern Porter, 1945. 60 p., 502 copies.

Of the 502 copies printed, 494 are numbered. Copy #223 is in the library. This book, designed by the author, is a poem in nine cantos. According to the publisher it is an entirely new treatment of the Oedipus theme.

1946

Lamantia, Philip. *Erotic Poems*. Introduction by Kenneth Rexroth. Limited ed. [Berkeley, Calif.] Bern Porter, 1946. 42 p.

Twenty-nine numbered poems in this collection. The author's poetry has been characterized as work of great drive and intense passion.

Patchen, Kenneth. *Panels for the Walls of Heaven*. [Berkeley, Calif.?] Bern Porter, 1946. 67 p., illus., 6 copies.

Forty-four illustrated panels bound with blank cardboard covers. Pages 3-10 have been removed; pages 11-14 appear twice. The publisher has written, on the first leaf, "#6 of 6 such copies."

Wolf, Leonard. *Hamadryad Hunted*. [Poems] Designed by Ben Kennedy. [Berkeley, Calif., Bern Porter, 1946] 36 p.

Cover photograph by Bern Porter. Cover blurb: "Roumanian poet . . . treats the themes he knows best. Biblical myth, social conflict, and Ruthenian folk song equally occupy him, along with rich overtones of personal lyric."

1947

Cameron, William Ross. *David Copperfield in Copperplate*. Berkeley, Calif., B. Porter, 1947. [96] p., illus.

The work contains 46 illustrations for the Dickens novel and short interpretive passages taken from the original text. According to the publisher's note collectors of Dickensiana will find in these illustrations a fresh interpretation of David Copperfield.

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Duncan, Robert. *Heavenly City, Earthly City*. With drawings by Mary Fabilli. [Berkeley, Calif., Bern Porter] 1947. 33 p., illus.

A collection of verse divided into three parts: I. Treesbank poems II. Berkeley poems III. Heavenly City, Earthly City.

Schevill, James. *Tensions*. [Poems] Designed by Ben Kennedy. [San Francisco? Bern Porter, 1947] 37 p.

According to the publisher, 2d ed. copies of this work, are really unsold 1st eds. with a new title page. Several of these 22 poems appeared in different form in *Arizona Quarterly*, *Experiment*, *Pacific*, and *Poetry*.

Swetznoff, Hyman. *Ins/Outs*. [Poems] James Schevill, ed. Berkeley, Calif., Bern Porter, 1947. 18 p.

A collection of verse in three parts: I. Poems to paintings by Paul Klee II. Untitled III. His cycle of lunatic i.

1949

Sawyer, Kenneth and Frank Lobdell. *Poems and Drawings*. Designed by Ben Kennedy. [Sausalito, Calif.? Bern Porter, 1949] 16 p., 500 copies.

The work includes 7 poems by Sawyer and 5 drawings by Lobdell.

1950

Magner, Gene. *Trial of the Masks*. [Verse.] [Sausalito, Calif., Bern Porter, 1950?] 80 p., 250 numbered copies.

All copies of this work of modernistic verse forms have been signed by the author.

1951

Bowden, Harry. *8 Photos*. Agana, Guam, Bern Porter [1951] [8] plates.

This is a portfolio of eight mounted black and white photographic scenes of San Francisco. The photographer's name is printed in red on the verso of each photograph.

Maclaine, Christopher. *The Crazy Bird*. [Poem] Drawings by Anne-Ebers. [San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1951. 17 p., 100 copies.

Published as a paper-bound pamphlet, this poem first appeared in sections in *Glass Hill*, *Inferno*, and *Berkeley*. According to the author, certain passages must be screamed, rather than read. In what is probably an error, one library copy reads, "of one hundred copies printed this is No. 368."

Schevill, James. *The American Fantasies*. [Poems. Agana, Guam, Bern Porter, 1951] 34 p., illus.

The book was designed and illustrated by the publisher. The poems intend to show the relationship between the artist and

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society, and the conflicts created by that society's growth from its agricultural emphasis to a highly industrial state, according to the preface.

1953

Schevill, James. *High Sinners, Low Angels*. [A play. Agana, Guam] Bern Porter Books, [c1953] 71 p., 1 fold-out illus.

The author describes his play as a stylized musical comedy to be performed with a small cast, a few dancers and a chamber orchestra of 10-12 pieces. The Library's copy contains the author's autograph.

1954

Bowden, Harry. *Benjamino Bufano*. [Photographs. San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1954. [7] plates.

Six mounted photographs of Bufano's work and a portrait of the subject in his studio constitute this Bufano Album in portfolio with tie strings. Bufano is the sculptor who designed the buffalo found on the U. S. nickel.

Mullican, Lee. *The Gain of Aft*. Sausalito, Calif., Bern Porter, 1954. 8 p., illus., 25 numbered copies.

According to Porter he only acted as distributor for this work, and the following, "after author's friends quit." Both works were originally published and paid for by the authors.

The title of this paper-bound pamphlet of poetry and line drawings, according to the work, refers to the idea that the "gain of afternoon forms a line that moves across the face of time inactive." The library has copy #8.

Stern, Gerd. *First Poems and Others*. [Sausalito, Calif., Bern Porter Books, 1954] c1952. 30 p., illus.

The introduction, in holographic facsimile by the author, describes all art as an expression of spiritual freedom—a unique transmutation of the universe through the artist's representations.

1955

Beaudoin, Kenneth Lawrence. *Eye Poems*. [San Francisco? Bern Porter, 1955] [13] p., illus.

Poems composed using a collage of words, phrases and illustrations cut from newspaper and magazine advertisements. The author claims only Porter would publish such a work. This is the author's way of showing his distress that advertisements get more dynamic printing than poetry.

Bowden, Harry. *Around Richardson Bay (Before mid-century)*. [Photographs. San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1955. [6] plates.

This portfolio with tie strings contains six mounted black and white photographs of scenes in the area of Richardson Bay.

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- Bowden, Harry. *The Grabhorn Press, San Francisco, 1955*. [Photographs] San Francisco, Bern Porter, 1955. [7] plates.
The title page of this portfolio has been hand written by the publisher. The contents include a Grabhorn Press specimen page and six mounted black and white photographs of the shop and Grabhorn family. Subjects identified on verso of each photograph.
- Bowden, Harry. *Maybeck, 1955*. [Photographs. San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1955. [6] plates.
The title of each mounted photograph is pencilled on verso. Besides a portrait of the architect, B. R. Maybeck, the portfolio includes photographs of his works including the San Francisco Palace of Fine Arts and a Maybeck designed house.
- Bowden, Harry. *Otis Oldfield in his Studio, 1955*. [Photographs. San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1955. [5] plates.
In portfolio with tie strings are five mounted black and white photographs of Oldfield and his work.
- Bowden, Harry. *Recent Work*. [Photographs. San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1955. [6] plates.
Six mounted black and white photographic scenes of San Francisco in portfolio with tie strings.
- Bowden, Harry. *Robinson Jeffers*. [Photographs. San Francisco, Bern Porter, 1955] [4] plates.
The four plates in this portfolio include a portrait of the poet.
- Cunningham, Imogen. *Three Photos by the Photographer, Three Photos of the Photographer by H. Bowden*. [San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1955. [6] plates.
The title page is hand printed by the publisher. The photographs by Cunningham are identified on the verso of each as (1) Alfred Steiglitz, 1934, (2) Barbara Cannon (Mrs. David M. Myers) 1953, (3) Leaves, 1948.
- Rexroth, Kenneth. *A Bestiary for my Daughters Mary and Katharine*. [San Francisco? Bern Porter, 1955] 24 leaves, illus.
These are unbound leaves in a cloth-covered folder. Pasted to the cover is a paper slip on which has been hand-written the cover title: *A Bestiary for Daughters*. In facsimile holograph are short philosophical poems, each concerning a different animal, and illustrated with a line drawing.
- Schevill, James. *The Right to Greet*. [Poems. Limited ed. San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1955. 62 p.
Designed by the publisher. The last page lists publications "aiding Bern Porter in the promotion of this volume and seeking subscriber support."
- Smith, Hassel. *Constructions*. Photos by H. Bowden. San Francisco, Bern Porter, 1955. [5] plates.

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In this portfolio with tie strings are five mounted black and white photographs of the sculpture of Hassel Smith.

1956

Artaud, Antonin. *To Have Done with the Judgment of God*. Guy Wernham translation. [Illustrated by the publisher. San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1956. 24 p., 4 illus.

Occasional penned corrections of the text appear in the margins. The work is described as words for radio dated Nov. 28, 1947 and includes four pen and ink drawings by the publisher.

Beaudoin, Kenneth Lawrence. *C-Sharp Major*. With illustrations by William Faulkner. [Limited ed. San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1956. 60 p., illus.

The work appears as a bound volume of galley proofs, with corrections and printer's notes, pasted on the pages. Publisher's note claims the printer, Erewhon Press, Louisville, Kentucky, never completed the order and that "the only copy existing or to exist is this one made up of proof sheets bearing my and his corrections." These are 15 vignettes about G.I.'s.

Beaudoin, Kenneth Lawrence. *On Hot Summer Afternoons and Other Poems*. Designed by the publisher. [San Diego, Bern Porter, 1956] [12] p.

This paper-bound pamphlet contains 10 poems in the first section and six nocturnes in the section entitled, "Other Poems."

[Bowden, Harry] *Aldous Huxley*. [Photographs. San Francisco, Bern Porter] 1956. [4] plates.

This portfolio contains four mounted black and white photographs; one is of Huxley, the others of his studio and home. Includes a typed letter from the publisher setting up the appointment for the photographic visit and a scrawled confirmation signed by Huxley.

Bowden, Harry. *Gerald Heard, MCMLVI*. [San Francisco, Bern Porter, 1956] [4] plates.

In addition to the four mounted black and white photographs, the portfolio contains a letter from Heard's secretary confirming the appointment with Bowden. A second letter is included from the publisher to Upton Sinclair asking for an appointment for a photographic visit, Sinclair's response and comment by the publisher that the project was finally abandoned.

Bowden, Harry. *Kenneth Rexroth*. [Photographs] San Francisco, Bern Porter, 1956. [6] plates.

The portfolio contains six black and white mounted photographs including a portrait of Rexroth. Pasted in the folio is a copy of the Scarecrow poem and illustration from Rexroth's *A Bestiary for Daughters*.

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Harmon, James. *Iu Praise of Eponymous Iahu*. Drawings by Ronald Bladen. Foreword by Guy Wernham. [San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1956. [16] p., 4 illus., 15 numbered copies.

The publisher has signed the copy at #1 of 15 copies. Some of the poems were written in a conscientious objector's camp, according to the foreword.

Picasso, Pablo. *Poems*. Translators: Richard Bowman [and] Charles Guenther. Illustrations [by] Bern Porter. [San Francisco] Bern Porter, 1956.

This work includes four poems dated 1935, and a bibliography of twelve works of poetry by Picasso written between 1935 and 1956.

1957

Schevill, James. *The Bloody Tenet, a Play*. [Belfast, Me., Bern Porter] c1957. p. 341-410.

This copy has been removed from a larger collection indicated by the headline: Religious Drama I on verso of every leaf. The excised play has been enclosed in paper covers. It has a title page.

1960

Schevill, James. *Selected Poems, 1945-1959*. [Burnie, Tasmania] Bern Porter Books, 1960. [35] p.

This paper-bound work consists of two sections, Part I is selected poems from other books. Part II is new poems written largely between 1956-59 and never published in book form before. The library's copy contains a signed inscription from Bern Porter to UCLA.

1962

Copley, Al. *You Don't Say*. [Waldwick, N. J., Bern Porter] 1962. [100] leaves.

Identified on the work as Diter Rot lay-out plus binding strips. The 100 strips, 9½" x 1½", held together with a nut and bolt. On either side of each strip, a design appears in black and white, reversed to appear white on black on the verso.

The strips, on their bolt, are mounted in and removable from a decorated box. The work is autographed by both the author and publisher.

1965

Beaudoin, Kenneth Lawrence. *A Book of the Hours; Poems — 1965*. Memphis, Tenn., [Bern Porter] 1965. 28 p., port., 400 numbered copies.

The work was published and paid for by the author. Bern Porter acted as distributor.

The library has copy #105 which includes a reproduction of an oil portrait of the author and also the author's signature.