



UOA D32

ART AND DESIGN:
HISTORY, THEORY AND PRACTICE



RESEARCHER

Lucy Roscoe

OUTPUT TITLE

The Book Tree Press

OUTPUT TYPE

Artefacts: Illustrated Books

DATE

2017 – 2020

FIG. 1

Lucy Roscoe, *100 Days Project Scotland*, 2019. A collection of 100 experimental books made daily between May and September 2019. Displayed at the exhibition '100 Days Project Scotland Exhibition', September 2019. Photo Lucy Roscoe.



01 / STATEMENT

The output is a collection of fifteen creative book works which explore how the formal and sculptural properties of the book can be used to communicate narrative. The research is an iterative, cumulative, practice-based approach to making books, where repetition leads to extended insights.

Illustrated books currently sit within several fields including fine art, illustration, and design. Roscoe's research invests the spaces between these fields to interrogate the way the physical book acts as a form of visual communication through materials, binding, shape, and audience interaction.

Individual books from the output have been selected for inclusion in *The Liverpool & Knowsley Book Art Exhibition*, Kirby Gallery, Knowsley (2019) and *ICON 10 Gallery Show, Red Bull House of Art*, Detroit (2018). The entire collection has been selected annually, in different iterations, for exhibition at *Artists' BookMarket* at The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh (2016–2020). Roscoe has also disseminated the research through talks, workshops, and publications (see Appendix, page 32).

FIG. 2

Lucy Roscoe, *We Made a Garden*.
Digital print, unlimited edition,
10.5 x 14.8cm, 8 pages, 2018.
Photo Lucy Roscoe.



02 / RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

A collection of fifteen books produced since 2017 is the outcome of an iterative, cumulative, and experimental practice-based research process that innovates the book format as a mode of visual communication.

Through practice-based investigation, the research explores how illustrated narrative approaches can extend beyond content into the sculptural properties of the book, including its binding, shape, and the gestures of engagement invited by its physical form. The research occupies the interstices between established genres such as artists' books and illustrated books, and interrogates interrelations between contemporary fine art, design, and craft.

Roscoe's practice-based research is embedded with contextual research into the pop-up book collection at the National Library of Scotland, the artists' book collection at the Edinburgh College of Art Library, and a broader review of mainstream and independent publishing that has enabled her to situate her research within a historically-situated, expanded field of illustrated books.

The concept for each book emerges through observations of everyday experience. During the design process, this concept is explored and refined through mock-ups of different book forms. Progression and movement through the book is considered, in part with respect to how the audience will navigate form and content. Each book is a reflective iteration of the previous books in the series.

The Series (FIGS 3–17 from top left opposite)
Skerryvore. Screenprint on paper, edition of 35, 10.5 x 14.8cm, 16 pages, 2017.

Parkour. Risograph print, edition of 50, 10.5 x 14.8cm, 8 pages, 2018.

We Made a Garden. Digital print, unlimited edition, 10.5 x 14.8cm, 8 pages, 2018.

Cityscape. Digital print, unlimited edition, 14.8 x 21cm, 10 pages, 2018.

The Monster. Digital print on paper, edition of 2, 24 x 21 x 1cm, 14 pages, 2018.

How to Live 30 feet in the Air. Digital print on paper, edition of 50, 10.5 x 14.8cm, 12 pages, 2019.

Guide to Bothying. Digital print on paper, edition of 75, 7.5 x 14cm, 24 pages, 2019.

House. Digital print, edition of 75, 15 x 15cm, 16 pages, 2019.

100 Days Project Scotland. Set of 100 experimental books made daily between May and September, mixed media, 2019.

Little Shop of Memory. Digital print on paper, unlimited edition, 10 x 10 x 1.5cm, 10 pages, 2019.

Tuesday Night Swimming. Digital print on paper, unlimited edition, 8 x 8cm, 8 pages, 2019.

Commuting. Intaglio print, pencil, paper and wire, 15 x 15 x 5cm, 2019.

The School Run. Intaglio print, pencil, paper and wire, 15 x 15 x 5cm, 2019.

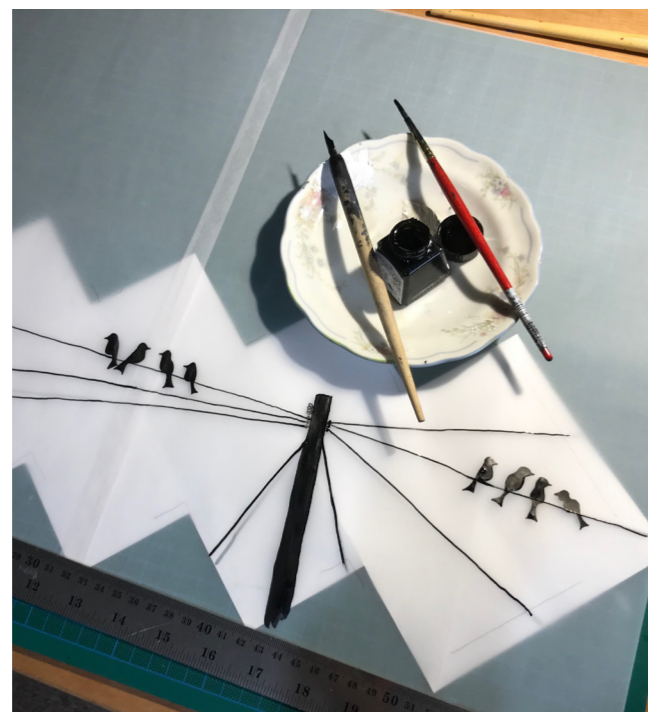
A Snail Ate All my Plants. Screen print, edition of 30, 10 x 12cm, 6 pages, 2020.

Birds on a Wire. Screenprint, edition of 30, 10 pages, 2020.



FIGS. 3–17
 Photos Lucy Roscoe.

03 / ORIGINALITY



FIGS. 18–19
Bookmaking materials and making
screen printing positives for *Birds
on a Wire*. Photos Lucy Roscoe.

The field of sculptural illustrated books currently falls into several overlapping genres. Comics, picture books, illustrated fiction and pop-up books are usually grouped within illustration and considered part of visual communication, within the broader context of design.

Illustrated sculptural books can, alternatively, fall into the category of artists' books, within the field of fine art. Fine bindings, and bookbinding itself, are considered to lie within the field of craft. The categorisation generally relates to the identity of maker (that is, whether they work as an artist or an illustrator) and also how the work is presented to audiences (that is, whether they are presented as unique items in an exhibition, or sold within a retail context such as a shop or fair). Through innovating techniques and modes of production and dissemination, Roscoe's work confuses these categories and their borders, inviting new ways of experiencing illustrated books.

The research extends public perceptions of the illustrated book by producing and presenting books in many familiar and unfamiliar forms (such as concertina style books and pop-up books). Low tech bookbinding and printmaking techniques enable the rapid production of many different kinds of book. They also challenge accepted printing methods associated with publication in the fields described above.

The research invests the spaces between existing fields and genres to explore the book form itself as a storytelling device, questioning the identification of the book as container, as object, as illustration, and as dynamic experience.

Insofar as the books are made to engage an audience in their narratives, the research takes place both in/as the bookmaking process, and through audience response and interaction. Observations of how the books are experienced are fed into the production of subsequent books.

The research is a continual investigative process that invests repetition and iteration to resolve methods and refine its rules through making.

In the '100 Days Scotland Project' (FIG 1), Roscoe made approximately one book a day over a period of 100 days. This fixed and limited duration meant that the books were quickly made with available materials to hand, using subjects taken from the day itself. Whilst not all were successful or interesting, the result was a body of work that demonstrated an expansion of bookbinding skills, and presented a range of quickly explored ideas to be developed into more resolved books, such as *A Snail Ate All my Plants* (FIG 16) and *Birds on a Wire* (FIG 17).

Through its sculptural manifestations, the research challenges the definition of a book and its boundaries. For example, in *Commuting* (FIG 20) and *The School Run* (FIG 21), the artefacts are made from pages which are permanently glued together, meaning they cannot be turned through and can only be viewed in one way, rendering the work closer to a sculpture.

Some of the books in the output are unique. In other cases, an edition is made. This variance is part of Roscoe's exploration of how books can be published and presented to different publics. Usually, an individual book is shown in an exhibition, whilst editions are sold across many retail outlets. Edition size usually dictates price (smaller editions or unique books are usually more expensive to buy) and the rarer the book, the more limited is public access. For example *Commuting* and *The School Run* are both unique sculptures, meaning they are required to be shown within an exhibition only, and protected from handling. The research extends accepted understanding of these types of distinctions by presenting low-cost, less valuable, editioned books in exhibitions alongside more vulnerable books. For example, *We Made a Garden* (FIG 2) was shown in a gallery exhibition, despite being designed as a free giveaway. Similarly, both kinds of book are shown together at book fairs.



FIG. 20
Lucy Roscoe, *Commuting*.
Intaglio print, pencil, paper and wire, 15 x 15 x 5cm, 2019. Photo Lucy Roscoe.



FIG. 21
Lucy Roscoe *The School Run*.
Intaglio print, pencil, paper and wire, 15 x 15 x 5cm, 2019. Photo Lucy Roscoe.



FIG. 22
Lucy Roscoe, front cover of *Tuesday Night Swimming*. Digital print on paper, unlimited edition, 8 x 8cm, equivalent of 8 pages, 2019. Photo Lucy Roscoe.



FIG. 23-24
Lucy Roscoe, images of the concertina form of *Tuesday Night Swimming*. Photos Lucy Roscoe.

04 / RIGOUR

Roscoe's research is broad in scope, experimenting with a wide range of visual languages. This research was triggered by an interest in process-led craft that can combine drawing, printmaking and bookbinding.

The design process used research through drawing to understand subject matter and process the visualisation of ideas. An approximate layout of each book, followed by further resolved dummy books, including production information such as measurements and colour choices, resulted in the final book.

The making of each book also involved experimentation with image making, using a variety of visual language including drawing and low-tech printmaking, taking an existing process such as screen printing and using it in less familiar ways. Contextual research explored the historical collection of pop-up books at the National Library of Scotland (NLS). This included tracing a spectrum between the earliest examples of mainstream illustrated pop-up books, such as German illustrator Lothar Meggendorfer's book *International Circus* (1887), which were designed for families, and more recent artists' books that explore the pop-up book form and are designed for collectors, such as *Bluebeard's Castle* by Ronald King and Roy Fisher (1972), and which tell stories in abstract ways. In such examples, the theatrical potential of the book form is used to surprise the reader, transport them elsewhere, and create a sense of drama and playfulness.

Roscoe's book *The Monster* (FIGS. 25–26) was created in response to the 200-year anniversary of the publication of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818). The work responds to the theatricality of the pop-up books in the NLS collections, particularly the carousel form. Roscoe divided the text into 'scenes' or 'sets' in which the action takes place, illustrating parts of the narrative as layered sets that may be found on the stage, yet using the traditional carousel form of a pop-up book. The result is an event that exists in time; the performance aspect creates parallels with film or animation more than a static artefact.

Further contextual research at the ECA Artists' Book Collection explored how different forms can be used to manipulate the reader into certain understandings.

For example, in John Burnside and David Faithfull's artists' book, *Jura* (2008), the simple concertina or accordion form is used effectively to communicate the idea of a landscape or journey. In artist books by Julie Johnston, text and torn edges are used to walk the reader through a concept by providing instructions such as 'open slowly'. The effect is a sense of control or manipulation of the way the reader engages with the material.



FIG. 25–26
Lucy Roscoe, *The Monster*.
Digital print on paper, edition
of 2, 24 x 21 x 1cm, 14 pages, 2019.
Photos Lucy Roscoe.

Roscoe's research into sculptural books within illustration revealed insights into the way the book form is manipulated in pop-up books, flap books, and board books using cut outs. In *Press Here* (2011) by Hervé Tullet, a standard picture book format is used, however the narrative requires the reader to turn, tap and shake the book in order to create the next artwork. Although the images are static and pre-printed, the audience is swept up in the fiction through physical engagement and gesture.

Roscoe put these insights to work in her book, *Little Shop of Memory* (FIGS 27–30). Here, the form of the book takes on the idea of packaging: the illustrations are 'unwrapped' from within. The pages within the book cannot all be viewed all at once: they must be turned through sequentially. This act is what makes it a book, rather than a painting or a sculpture.

Little Shop of Memory was a visual response to the experience of spending four mornings with the 'Making Memories' group of the 'Living Memory Association', a reminiscence project in Edinburgh. During bookbinding workshops, participants discussed their relationship to the objects surrounding them, which included common toys and household objects from the past. *Little Shop of Memory* is a set of illustrations of those objects, drawn from observation, collated as in a shop or a home, bound in a box form reminiscent of packaging.

Cityscape (FIGS 31–32) introduces theatrical elements of pop up, whilst holding on to the concertina form. The methodology for this book involved creating a set of illustrations first, exploring a particular place and how imagery could be created using collage. A concertina form suited a journey around this city, yet the blocks created by the collage lean themselves to pop out sections.

Many of the narratives are non-linear; for example *House* (FIGS 33–38) is a collection of visual puns which build up a picture of our understandings of how we live. In these cases, the title serves as a unifying concept for multiple registers of meaning.

Skerryvore (FIGS 39–45) was inspired by a visit to a small museum telling the story of the epic feat of building the Skerryvore lighthouse off the coast of Tiree in the Hebrides. The book explores how screen printing can be used to create imagery, making experimental marks and watery washes which could be applied to the screen to then print from. The colour palette was taken from the island of Tiree, particularly the pale yellow and blues. The book form is unintrusive, a simple folded form, however includes a loose cut out of the lighthouse, cut from the rejected prints in order to extend the use of printed marks, and resulting in each book being slightly different.

FIGS. 27–30

Lucy Roscoe, *Little Shop of Memory*.
Digital print on paper, unlimited
edition, 10 x 10 x 1.5cm, equivalent
of 10 pages, 2019. Photos Lucy
Roscoe.



FIG. 31
Lucy Roscoe, *Cityscape* cover.
Digital print on paper, unlimited
edition, 14.8 x 21cm, 10 pages,
2018. Photo Lucy Roscoe.

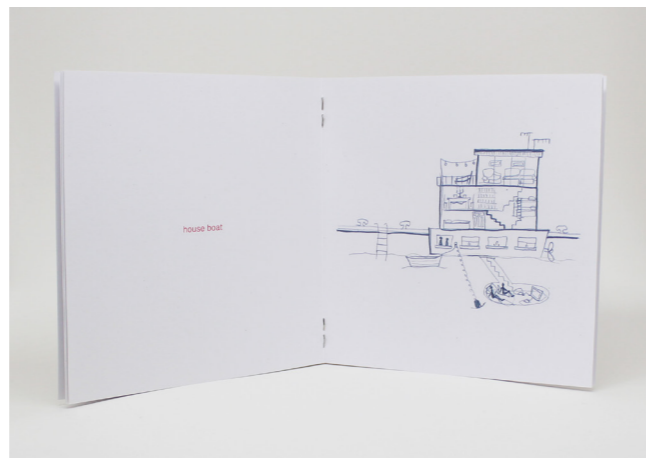


FIG. 32
Lucy Roscoe, *Cityscape* internal
pages/concertina form. Photos
Lucy Roscoe.



FIGS. 33-38

Lucy Roscoe, *House*, insert cover and internal pages. Digital print, edition of 75, 15 x 15cm, 16 pages, 2019. Photos Lucy Roscoe.



FIGS. 39-45

Lucy Roscoe, *Skerryvore*, insert cover, internal pages. Screenprint on paper, edition of 35, 10.5 x 14.8cm, 16 pages, 2017. Photos Lucy Roscoe.

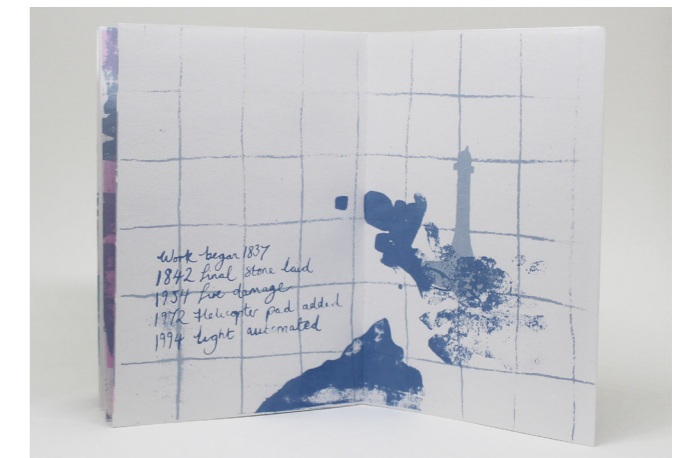




FIG. 46
Lucy Roscoe, *Guide to Bothying*.
Digital print on paper, edition of
75, 7.5 x 14cm, 24 pages, 2019.
Photo Lucy Roscoe.

Each book emerges from found, borrowed, and invented narratives that deal with everyday observations. This subject matter was the starting point for many of the books that Roscoe researched - which dealt with changing everyday experiences, such as adapting to having a child, wellbeing, or the idea of home.

In *Guide to Bothying* (FIG 46) a concertina form is used in two ways. In one direction, a set of rules or guidelines on 'bothying' are illustrated. These rules explore a certain kind of 'home', as described by Geoff Allen in *The Bothy Bible: The Complete Guide to Scotland's Bothies and How to Reach Them* (2017). On the reverse, a highland landscape of mountains stretches out dramatically, making use of the full length of the book and zigzagging, as do mountains and valleys in reality.

In the book, *How to Live 30 Feet in the Air*, (FIGS 47-50) visual language refers to the broader illustrative discipline of wordless comics. The story was 'found', and explores the subject of 'home' using a true story of a man who moved back to his childhood home and built a treehouse to live in. The climax in Roscoe's book comes from the slow-paced documentation of a treehouse being built and becoming a home. The reader is not clear on what is happening until the big picture is revealed at the end.

In *A Snail Ate All my Plants* (FIGS 51-53), the simple concertina form was used to describe a journey and also reveal a concept. The book must be read gradually in order to be understood: 'A snail' (calm and pleasant colours) 'ate all' (lettering darker and larger) 'my plants' (angry large lettering). Throughout the book, the snail moves around the page. A technique of painting onto the screen before printing had the effect of increasing the aggression of the imagery.

In *Parkour* (FIGS 54-58), a standard flutter book form is used, where a book is made from a single sheet of paper with no glue or binding. The imagery builds playfully on the page - geometric shapes gradually form into more complex shapes, then buildings, then a city. The figures play in the landscape throughout.

In *Tuesday Night Swimming* (FIGS 59-61), the title transports the reader to a context that feels familiar. Through its 'orchid' form, the book then explodes theatrically as the reader opens it. The disjunct between the title and the experience of 'reading' is crucial to the book's effects. Presented with a choice of viewing either small chunks/individual pages or stretching out the whole image, each reader will engage in a different way.

FIGS. 47-50

Lucy Roscoe, *How to Live 30 Feet in the Air*. Digital print on paper, edition of 50, 10.5 x 14.8cm, 12 pages, 2019. Photos Lucy Roscoe.





FIGS. 51–53
Lucy Roscoe, *A Snail Ate All my Plants*. Screen print, edition of 30, 10 x 12cm, 6 pages, 2020. Photos Lucy Roscoe.



FIG. 54
Lucy Roscoe, *Parkour*. Risograph print, edition of 50, 10.5 x 14.8cm, 8 pages, 2018. Photos Lucy Roscoe.



FIGS. 55–58
Lucy Roscoe, *Parkour*, insert cover and internal pages. Risograph print, edition of 50, 10.5 x 14.8cm, 8 pages, 2018. Photos Lucy Roscoe.



FIGS. 59-61
Lucy Roscoe, *Tuesday Night Swimming*. Digital print on paper, unlimited edition, 8 x 8cm, equivalent of 8 pages, 2019. Photos Lucy Roscoe.

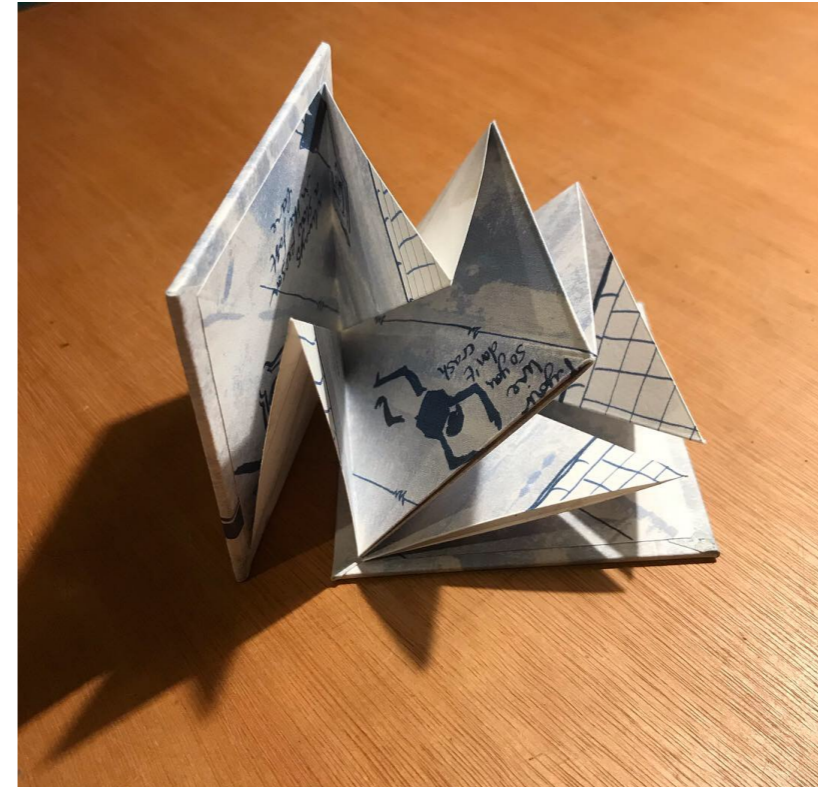


FIG. 62

Lucy Roscoe, *The Bookbug Picture Book Prize*. Digital print on paper, 14 x 14 x 14cm, 2019. Client: Scottish Book Trust. Photo Lucy Roscoe.



05 / SIGNIFICANCE

The research contributes to the fields of illustration and artists' books, building on existing understanding by offering new ways to express ideas at the interstices of these fields.

Through multiple modes of dissemination, and the range of the outputs themselves, the reach of the research extends to academic communities, teaching and learning, industry, school and community groups, and the general public.

The output models a method of self-directed research as a means of leading to commissioned work. For instance, in 2019, Scottish Book Trust commissioned Roscoe to produce two book sculpture trophies for the *Scottish Teenage Book Prize* and *The Bookbug Picture Book Prize*.

The output has reached audiences as individual books and as a collection through exhibitions, creative publishing fairs and events, seminars and workshops.

It has been competitively selected for a number of exhibitions and fairs (see Appendix, page 32).

Further dissemination of the output has been achieved through workshops with a variety of groups (see Appendix, page 32).

06 / APPENDIX

Publications

Roscoe, L. (2019) 'A thing to hold: the visual language of the book form', *Journal of Illustration*, volume 6 Number 1, 77–98.

This peer-reviewed journal paper considers the book form as an ornamental object, examining examples drawn from artists' books, pop-up books and mainstream publishing. The article considers the appeal of a book to various senses and reflects on the relationship between physical form and ebooks.

Roscoe, L. (2019) 'The Book Tree Press – an accidental imprint', *The Blue Notebook – Journal of Artists' Books*, Volume 14 Number 1, Autumn – Winter 2019, 40–47.

This peer-reviewed article reflects on ten years of practice-based investigation into the book form, considering the place of the work within the field of illustration and the relationship between studio and teaching practice.

Exhibitions

Artists' Bookmarket, The Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh annually between 2016 – 2020 (27–28 February 2016; 25–26 February 2017; 17–18 February 2018; 9–10 February 2019; 7–8 March 2020)

We Made a Garden selected for inclusion in the *ICON 10 Gallery Show*, Red Bull House of Art, Detroit (13 July 2018).

The Monster commissioned by and shown at *The Liverpool & Knowsley Book Art Exhibition: Frankenstein* (2018). Kirby Gallery, Knowsley (17 September 2018 – 26 January 2019).

100 Days Project Scotland Group Exhibition, Edinburgh College of Art, Edinburgh (25–29 September 2019).

Workshops

Tesco Bank Art Competition for Schools Pop-up theatre workshops based on paintings in the collection, National Galleries for Scotland, c.200 participants, June 2018.

Making Memories Group Roscoe delivered an artist's talk and three workshops at the Living Memory Association reminiscence project, funded by Craft Scotland, 10 participants (September – October 2018). Work produced by participants was shown in an exhibition at The Little Shop of Memory, Ocean Terminal, Leith, January 2019.

Creative Book Works CPD workshop with schoolteachers, Craft Scotland, 4 participants, November 2018.

Pop-ups for Kids' Workshop *Artists' Bookmarket*, Fruitmarket Gallery, 6 participants, February 2019.

Spaceships to a New World Primary school transition workshops, Superpower Agency and Craft Scotland, c.100 participants, March 2019.

Make Your Own Book Workshop *Craft Scotland Summer Show*, August 2019.

West Lothian Council Dementia Workshops Book art and printmaking, West Lothian Council and National Museums of Scotland, 10 participants, October 2019.

Pop-up Crime Scene Workshop Firhill High School, a project with National Library of Scotland and The Art Fund, c.50 participants, October 2019.

Pop-ups for Adults Workshop *Artists' Bookmarket*, Fruitmarket Gallery, 6 participants, February 2020.



FIG. 63
Artists' Bookmarket, Fruitmarket Gallery, Edinburgh, February 2018. Photo Lucy Roscoe.



FIG. 64
Art and Creative Writing Workshop at Firhill High School, with National Library of Scotland and The Art Fund, 2019. Photo Lucy Roscoe.



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