

BIOGRAPHY¹
COMPANION²

*Anthology*³

BOOK⁴

READER⁵



CATALOGUE⁷

COMPENDIUM⁸

BOOKWORKS⁹

*(Terms & Conditions)*¹⁰

TRUE BELIEF¹¹

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Terms & Conditions

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Contents

4

Curious Orange

Text: Adam Cruickshank
(on the work of Rachel Schenberg)

18

Adjustable trestles

Text: Francis Plagne
(on the work of Spiros Panigirakis)

28

Meet the Russian

Text: Terri Bird
(on the work of Adam Cruickshank)

42

(if)

Text: Lizzie Boon
(on the work of Xavier Antin)

52

cc: mug

Text: Rachel Schenberg
(on the work of Ian Milliss)

(On the work of Ian Milliss)

cc:
mu
g

Rachel Schenberg

Double letters

I know Ian Milliss through his name. Conceptual dematerialisation moving tables letters unions disappearance, plenty written. A history like us. Ian used to make work for living rooms reliving envelopes into the houses of people he was close to. He'd send a letter to a friend suggesting they move a piece of furniture this way or that. This art.

In his name he has three of one letter and two sets of double letters. iii, ll, ss.

Some of the letters are now in Museum archives. Note the framing—they're not under the category: art □, but filed under: correspondence—><—. These living-room-letter-works are framed as an exchange.

For the Museum here, Ian shifts his work from the living room to his kitchen table.

@Breakfast

My grandmother says to eat breakfast yourself, share lunch and give dinner to your enemies. But breakfast makes me nervous, for no real reason. Maybe it's a little



like eating to the sound of your own chew. Or, like eating to an applause (encore! encore!), in anticipation of the next thing (bring on lunch).

But for Ian, it seems he's in company with breakfast. @Breakfast he has with him his Union mug.

Double letters ii

In Adam Cruickshank's *Terms & Conditions*, Ian exhibits his Union mug in two ways. There are two images—a pair—printed on the same piece of paper. There's the archival image (right), and an image of the mug at his home with Wendy's breakfast (left).

For the latter, we can see Ian use the mug in his eating room. He's letting us know about it. He's introducing us to the mug (HI MEET MILLISS' MISSOS MUG. SHAKE HANDS WITH IT), but only a copy of it (OH NO BUT I CAN'T). The mug's not here at the Museum, we cannot touch it. For an image of a mug, a mug cannot be touched.

If the mug's not here, it's like a cc indicating there are duplicates? Most commonly, carbon copies are used as signage, formally demonstrating the distribution of a letter to any secondary recipients. At a glance it's a note sent to the periphery of the addressee/s, not the main grantee. cc's are the extra eyes. Cappuccino.

So we see the under-copy of Ian's Union mug—not the top sheet—where the cc:mug is the near counterpart of the original. The image is the mug flattened, to show it in action, bound to the site of his house. The mug is empty-full, but flat.

All this to say, that Ian's work is a printed image of his mug in two ways. Let there be no mystery about it.

The image of the mug and the image on the mug

On the mug there's an image of two hands shaking. Sliding in left of the handle. What's its significance, the handshake? Seems rooted in Union theory. Ian says of this, "the shaking hands image is a traditional trade Union trope, usually both hands male."¹ And i notice, usually both hands right. Under the nose. Same goes with a mug's

holding.

Right
hand
side

handle, indicating the image on the mug is there to face the right-handed sipper. In facing each other (Ian and the mug) there is an exchange. Meanwhile, does anything do on the mug's back? Like the Staffordshire Earthenware figurines used on mantelpieces. Only being to sit on shelves. We saw them in Bendigo, they're flat, the figurines, only their fronts decorated, backsides bare.



Federated Miscellaneous Workers' Union of Australia banner (wikipedia).

Mug as message

A message on a mug is like capitalising the REST OF THIS TEXT. IT'S LOUD FOR YOU IT GIVES A TINY YELL.

A HANDSHAKE

WHY ENGAGE IN A SHAKING-OF-HANDS? THE SHAKE over other forms of contact—the kiss or the “touching of eyes that open a book?”² The gesture of the handshake, is a gesture of ritual, a culturally limited “ritual gesture”.³

The handshake sits somewhere between a measuring device, ‘caress’ and a ‘blow’. In measuring an empty hand one can exchange the shared knowledge that the corresponding right hand (and in hoping that it is mirrored) is not equipped with weapon. Dislodged. Mutual. Let’s shake on it

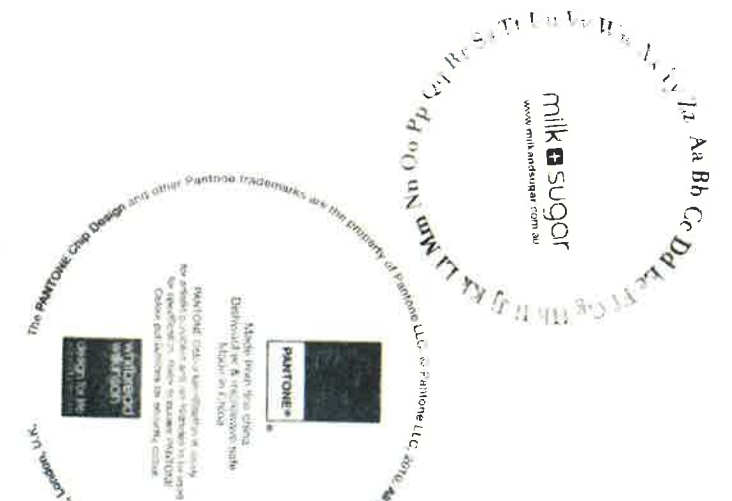
“ ”

“ ”

squeeze n’ cuppin in a slap.



MADE IN CHINA



essentials
Popelain
and
Columbian Silk





—><—

For Geoffrey Bennington, a handshake can also be seen as a two-sided gift, as the French verb might tell us, *se donner*, to exchange or to give a shake.⁴ And rightfully so, the gift, because after the exchange of a handshake, how much of person a is left on person b, and how much of person b is left on person a? We can embody another in an exchange.

And in Walter Sorell's *The Story of the Human Hand* he says the shake is there to make physical judgment. There is no "psychological meaning" to the handshake, just the physical touch to sense the texture of another's "dryness, moisture, temperature or pressure," which he describes as causing definite feelings for—or against—person a or person b.⁵

You're right, and then turn left

So it's uniform the handshake everyone's wearing it, left right and centre. But seems there's a precedence for the right hand. Unless of course, one's right hand is wet from the toilet, hand occupied holding the hand of another, a drink a tissue a leg...

But why right? Walter Sorrell tells us there's acceptance of right-swaying people and plants, where "the right has all the attributes of realism, worldliness,

and of the more pleasant notions, whatever their origins may be.”⁶

Plants, they twist and climb towards the right. Though there are also some that swivel and grow anti-clockwise. “Left-handed” plants.⁷

There’s another story where Alexander the Great finds a country with all left-handed ‘shakers. These residents had been thinking it more honourable than the right—with the left hand being closer to the heart.⁸ Interesting this gesture in relating it from one’s body to its outside. For a person is a body and a body is the host of her hands. And I will say this, The Hand—I’m beginning to think of you as an extra window to the world.

As Michel de Montaigne does. “Behold the hands, how they promise, configure, appeal, menace, pray, supplicate, refuse, beckon, interrogate, admire, confess, cringe, instruct, command, mock and what not besides, with a variation and multiplication of variation which makes the tongue envious...”⁹

Touching not really so

Coming back to the image of the mug, even if the mug were here, we wouldn’t really be able to ‘touch’ it anyway. Because as Karen Barad explains,

You may think you are touching a coffee mug when you are about to raise it to your mouth, but your hand is not actually touching the mug... what you are actually sensing, physicists tell us, is the electromagnetic repulsion between the electrons of the atoms that make up your fingers and those that make up the mug. Electrons being the negatively charged particles. The closer they move towards each other the higher the repulsive forces.¹⁰

Is holding a mug the fingers sliding through the handle, cradling the warmth of its contents like intimacy, the act of shaking hands, “(an) exchange of warmth, a feeling of pressure, of presence, a proximity of otherness that brings the other nearly as close as ourself.”¹¹

In thinking about how the two might be in parallel and hold each other, hinge, there’s something in its framing: holding a mug in one’s right hand—><—and a right-handed handshake. How the two might be a currency constituted through exchange. Shaken.

A handshake into the handle of a mug, that’s company
I imagine Ian shaking hands with his Union mug. The exchange. He’s got company @Breakfast.

Things're fitting into each other we sometimes don't
need to decide what pulls into what. Like that joke we
heard someone say, what did zero say to eight?

NICE BELT

0—><—8:

the two are clinched, equated.

Because it's all about how you frame it: the coffee in the
mug, the mug on the table, the mug in the hand, right
hand in handle, takes a sip. Good day.

Notes

1. Ian Milliss, "Correspondence with Author," 2019
2. Geoffrey Bennington, "Handshake," *Derrida Today* 1, no. 2 (November 2008): 175
3. Ibid
4. Ibid
5. Walter Sorell, *The Story of the Human Hand*. (London, UK: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1968), 134
6. Ibid., 114
7. Ibid., 119
8. Ibid., 116
9. Sorell, *The Story of the Human Hand*, xvii
10. Karen Barad, "On Touching - The Inhuman That Therefore I Am," *Differences* 23, no. 3 (2012): 3
11. Ibid., 1



¹PLAK

²OPTIMA

³*Brush Script*

⁴A V E N I R

⁵**GOTHIC 13**



⁷*CENTURY*

⁸DIN CONDENSED

⁹CAPONI SLAB

¹⁰*Janson Text*

¹¹TRITONE (BETA)

¹²Helvetica Neue

¹³**PLANTIN BOLD CONDENSED**