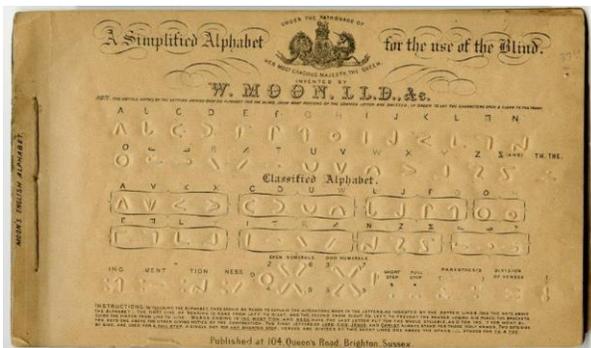


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## **BOOK ART AT THE LIBRARY COMPANY**

### ***The Moon Reader* and Magical Miniatures on Display**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania—August 13, 2014—This summer the Library Company is hosting two exquisite exhibitions of book art. Teresa Jaynes's new work *The Moon Reader* will be on display from September 4 to October 10; "Small Wonders" a collection of whimsical miniature books created by the members of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers is on exhibit through September.



#### ***The Moon Reader***

The Visual Culture Program (VCP at LCP) will host an installation of the first new work by Teresa Jaynes since her directorship of the acclaimed print festival Philagrafika 2010. *The Moon Reader*, created with the assistance of Katherine Allen, is a multimedia installation that invites participants to learn to read Moon, a raised-letter writing system for the blind invented by blind educator William Moon in 1845.

*The Reader* is based on two handmade books. The first is set in Moon type and has embossed illustrations. The second book, a translation of the first, is printed in both braille and large type. The texts and an accompanying audio recording are designed to be read against one another to enable readers of varying visual ability to decipher Moon. Modeled after Victorian primers, the books are based on research in the Library Company's Michael Zinman Collection of Printing for the Blind.

Beginning with an exercise to learn Moon, readers deepen their involvement with the writing system through a series of lessons inspired by history, music, and science textbooks in the Zinman Collection. The experience—touching, deciphering, translating and finally comprehending—is intended to be a serene act of discovery. *The Moon Reader* seeks to challenge participants' ideas about visual culture, in ways that elicit curiosity, humor, and empathy and expand their understandings of historical and contemporary connotations of sight. A touch screen with access to the *Moon Reader* Facebook page and blog enable visitors to further interact with the project.

William Moon lost his sight at 21. He became a teacher at a school for blind boys in Brighton, East Sussex, Great Britain. Finding that his pupils had difficulty learning the existing embossed dot codes in use at the time, in 1845 he devised a new reading code, "Moon Type," based on a simplified Roman alphabet. Moon's system used just nine basic marks that were turned at various angles to produce the 26 letters of the alphabet. The text was meant to be read from left to right,

then back from right to left on the next line, so that the finger never had to leave the page. It was an excellent method for people who had lost their vision after already having experienced the Roman alphabet, as the marks bear a resemblance to the letters they represent. Although braille has since replaced Moon type in popularity, Moon is still used in some parts of Great Britain today.

The Visual Culture Program's collaboration with Jaynes will continue through the fall on development of a main-gallery exhibition also based on her work with our historic material printed for the blind. Provisionally entitled "Talking to the Fingers in the Language of the Eyes," the exhibition will combine historic collections with new work and multimedia experiences designed to challenge the privileged status of sight. "Talking," which is being funded by a major grant from the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, is scheduled to open in February 2016.

On September 23, 2014, to celebrate this collaboration, the Library Company will host a conversation with project advisors from the blind community who will discuss changing relations between sighted and visually impaired people over the centuries. A three-set, limited edition, *The Moon Reader* will also be on display at the Magill Library at Haverford College and the Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. *The Moon Reader* was made possible by an Independence Foundation Artist Fellowship in conjunction with the Library Company of Philadelphia.



### **Small Wonders**

Currently on display at the Library Company are 29 marvelous miniature books created by the members of the Delaware Valley Chapter of the Guild of Book Workers. Created in response to a challenge from the Guild to make books meeting the US definition of a miniature book—a book which measures less than three inches in each height, width, and thickness—the collection was initially exhibited at the Clarence Ward Art Library at Oberlin College.

The exhibition includes a wide variety of binding structures and unusual materials. There are accordion books, a Coptic binding, pop-up books, tiny fine bindings, and an illuminated manuscript that is a little over one half inch tall. One set of paper-covered nesting book boxes is made to resemble Russian dolls. Cover materials include papier-mâché and mother-of-pearl, as well as fake fur and googly eyes. One book in the collection is made from hotel soaps, toilet paper and dental floss and one contains toe and fingernail clippings. The playful and amazing miniatures, alike only in their shared smallness, are a tour-de-force of the book workers' arts.

The Guild of Book Workers was founded in 1906 "to establish and maintain a feeling of kinship and mutual interest among workers in the several hand book crafts" and continues to promote interest in and awareness of the book and paper arts by maintaining high standards of workmanship, hosting educational opportunities, and sponsoring exhibits. Current President of the Delaware Valley Chapter—one of ten chapters in the US—is Library Company Conservation

Chief Jennifer Rosner. The diverse membership includes book artists, book conservators, fine binders, calligraphers, librarians, paper marblers, teachers, photographers, printmakers, and graphic designers.

The Library Company of Philadelphia

The Library Company of Philadelphia is an independent research library specializing in American history and culture from the 17th through the 19th centuries. Founded in 1731 by Benjamin Franklin, the Library Company is America's oldest cultural institution and served as the Library of Congress from the Revolutionary War to 1800. The Library Company was the largest public library in America until the Civil War and includes the extensive personal libraries of such prominent early American bibliophiles such as James Logan. Open to the public free of charge, the Library Company houses an extensive collection of rare books, manuscripts, broadsides, ephemera, prints, photographs, and works of art, and the second largest holding of early American imprints. Particular strengths of the collection include economic history, women's history, African American history, history of medicine, history of philanthropy, and visual culture. To find out more, please visit [www.librarycompany.org](http://www.librarycompany.org)

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