



A Moveable Feast

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Pat Triggs looks at **pop-ups**.

What do you know about James Roger Diaz and Tor Lokvig? Not much? Well, look carefully and you'll see their names on dozens of new titles currently finding their way into bookshops: Jail Pienkowski's **Haunted House** and Robert Crowther's **Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Counting Book**, for two. Jim Diaz and Tor Lokvig are Paper Engineers and they work for Intervisual Communications Incorporated (ICI), the American Company that almost single-handed is responsible for all those 'pop-ups' which are 'popping-up' from so many publishers.

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You can't do a course in Paper Engineering (yet) - you learn the art by doing it - and there are only a handful of them in the world. But they have an interesting ancestry. Today's mini-flood of moveable books is a revival. The first mechanical books appeared in the 1850's and from then until the first World War they enjoyed enormous popularity. Dean and Son and Raphael Tuck and Son in this country were the pioneers; but it was two German artists, Ernest Nister and Lothar Meggendorfer who made the last twenty years of the nineteenth century the golden age of moveables. From the start the books had had pull tabs, fold-out three dimensional scenes and panoramas but Meggendorfer's scrupulous attention to drawing, colour and printing as well as his inventiveness - one pull of a tab and two or three characters would be set moving - made his inventions special.

Two of his most famous books **The Doll's House** and **The International Circus** are not so much pop-ups as fold-outs. **The Doll's House** opens up into a four feet long series of three dimensional scenes, including a shop, a living room and a kitchen. **The International Circus** opens into a semi-circle - half a circus ring with six acts including acrobats, clowns and horses: Miss Clara Springel, apparently suspended in mid air, flies towards a hoop held aloft by a clown with a world-weary expression. Each character, whether spectator or circus performer, wears a different expression. It's a masterpiece indeed and a first edition is in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Meggendorfer had a great sense of humour, one glance at the circus orchestra's faces shows that: the cymbal player has his jaw tied up for toothache, the cellist is gazing at his music as if he can't believe what he sees, the second violin is obviously thinking about something else. He also loved children and knew what would make them laugh. **Trick or Treat** is full of 'transformations': teacher is writing on the blackboard and behind him his pupils are fighting, playing games, falling about. One pull of the tab, teacher has turned round and rows of boys are dutifully writing in silence.

These books were bought by parents as entertainment for the whole family. Many still exist, well preserved, for they were clearly not subject to much unsupervised child use, rather put on a top shelf and taken out on Sundays. With the first World War and economic difficulties, pop-ups disappeared.

There were some cheap comic book creations (Pinnocchio, Tarzan) in the 1930's, but with one exception no moveable books of any quality were produced anywhere in the world until the nineteen fifties. The exception was **The Magic Boat** which appeared in the twenties. It's interesting not only because of the mechanics but because it's obviously intended

that the child reader should join in and learn through playing. Different scenes appear through the windows of the house as you pull the tab through Morning, Afternoon, Evening and Night; you can make six different stories by making different sets of words appear in the holes; a card with cut-out squares placed over a page at different angles makes different 'sets' appear. The creator of this imaginative book was Tom Seidman-Freud. She was actually Martha Seidman-Freud, niece of Sigmund, but she liked the idea of using a man's name.

There is a direct link between all these books and those like **Haunted House**, in the form of Wally Hunt, white-haired, slow-talking, fast-thinking Californian, now just turned sixty. Twenty years ago he was just beginning to collect antique books. At the same time he was looking to get out of advertising into the international market. Why not produce pop-ups? Various projects (including involvement with the Roger Schlesinger pop-ups which appeared here in the mid-sixties) led to him starting up his own company again in 1973. That company, Intervisual Communications Incorporated, now produces 70% of all the 'quality moveables' (Wally Hunt's phrase) in the world and deals with over one hundred publishers. Their books have appeared in 17 languages in 37 countries. We asked Wally Hunt how it was done.

'There are two ways. We can conceive a book, produce it and sell it to publishers world-wide. Or a publisher will come to us and we work with them. The artist and our paper engineers work together. ICI is responsible from finished artwork to the point of publication. We're actually packagers.' They also help to set up international co-editions - that means, for instance, that an American publisher and a British publisher will both publish the book. The result is that the price of books can be kept down because so many are produced.

What is a paper engineer? 'He's an artist who can work with paper sculpture but make it fold. He makes it work mechanically, work economically and work a thousand times. There are only a few people in the world who can do this. Each one has to learn it from a master. Twenty years ago one genius, Ib Pennick, really advanced the state of the art.' Tor Lokvig, who worked on **Haunted House**, started with ICI when he was seventeen and learned his craft from Pennick, who is now freelance. The paper engineer and the artist have to work closely together. 'There has to be a great deal of give and take - very often the artist wants the Taj Mahal, we have to have something that is practical to produce.'

Production is the final stage. The secret says Wally Hunt is 'sophisticated technology in conjunction with low cost labour.' He found that combination in Singapore and Colombia. If you look at a pop-up book, you can bet it was produced in Cali, Colombia. The pages of the books are printed on 'million dollar presses', die cut and assembled by hand- only the cover is machine made. This process involves teams of women folding, inserting tabs into slits, connecting pivots, and making the all-important glue points *exactly* in place. Wearing white smocks and gloves they sit at long tables arranged row on row. Each girl works on two or four pages, learning the moves for that process. In Colombia there are about 1,000 workers, all on piece work. A first production run of a book may be 150,000 copies. The whole process from concept to shipment takes about twelve months.

Some of the books produced have been reproductions of the classics by Megendorfer and Nister (see list). Kestrel's **The Doll's House** has sold 70,000 copies. Coming this month from Benn is **Trick or Treat** and also **The Magic Boat**. Susan Benn found a copy of it in an attic and showed it to Wally Hunt. He was delighted to see it (the plates from the original were destroyed during the war) and to be involved in giving it back to children.

Increasingly current picture book artists are being drawn to pop-ups. This year we have had Eric Carle's **The Honeybee and the Robber**, a book with a story and lots of information (like **The Hungry Caterpillar**) as well as ingenious mechanics - the bear going cross-eyed while trying to knock the bee off his nose convulses most children.

What's it like being involved in producing a pop-up? We talked to Jan Pienkowski and Robert Crowther.

Jan Pienkowski had a huge success with **Haunted House**. Since then he's done **Dinner Time**, and **Robot**, which is due out this autumn. Unlike most artists he has been to Los Angeles to work with the paper engineers and to Colombia to see the production process. Wally Hunt found him 'marvellous. He has an extraordinary creative sense of dimension. He

not only did the artwork but came up with some very imaginative mechanics.- For Jan his visits are simple necessity. 'Communication is the big problem- telex, phone, letter. It's so much simpler across a table. He'll go to Colombia again for **Robot**. 'Its a very anxious-making stage. When we go, we've got a hand-made dummy and it works. But it's been made with loving care and that prototype has to be broken down into various jobs that 100 girls can do on an assembly line.' Often it has to be re-thought on the spot, minor modifications have to be made for practical reasons. Someone says, 'How about if we do it like this.' Jan likes to be there when the decisions are made.

'It's more like putting on a show than anything else. I'm the director, the producer is the publishers - they say, "You can't do that, it's too expensive." The actors are the paper engineers. I ask them to do something and they say, -'I can't do that, but I can do this.'? Going to Colombia is like going on tour. The stage is six inches shorter, you can't fly the scenery, the lights are different. You have to adapt!'

Robert Crowther became a paper engineer in 1973, ahead of the trend, when he made **The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book** as part of the graphic design course at the Royal College of Art. He decided to do a moveable book for practical reasons. 'I thought if I animate the animals they won't notice that the drawings aren't so good.' He learned how to do it by trial and error and looking down the back of Roger Schlesinger pop-ups. He was limited by the shapes of the letters as to how much he could hide behind them: and the letters also restricted which animals he could use -- 'It pretty well had to be N for newt.' He tried to get the movement as near as possible to the natural movement of the animals - a koala comes down from the tree branch which is the outward stroke of the K: a mouse scuttles across behind the legs of the M.

Several publishers were 'interested' but nothing happened so he put it away. Several years later he sent it to Kaye Webb as an example of his graphics, hoping to get a commission for some book jackets. To his surprise Kestrel wanted to do the book. Intervisual Communications were set up and it was now economically possible. To date it has sold over 200,000 copies and Robert has just 'converted' it into Italian and German.

This March **The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Counting Book** was published. ?Part of me thinks it's not as good as the alphabet book. That was more about layout and design; this relies more on illustration, and there are only twelve changes to surprise people instead of twenty-six. Still it's growing on me.? He likes surprising people and working things out for himself. He sent of the roughs with his ideas for the counting book to ICI. Then a series of white card dummies flew back and forth across the Atlantic. He didn't go to Los Angeles or meet Jim Diaz. ?They know so much. When I work it's like rediscovering the wheel. I'm still learning. But I like to do my own mechanics.?

At the moment he's working on a 'red hot idea' for a book which should, with luck, be out in 1982. He enjoys the subtleties and the precision of paper engineering, but he's not a team man like Jan Pienkowski. You feel he'd really like to hand assemble every book himself. He also fears the pop-up bubble will burst if there are too many books. Wally Hunt doesn't agree. 'There will always be a market for classic books. We've created another form of book. With more co-ordination between the creative artist and the mechanics, we can get more than just novelty. The sky's the limit.'

Jan Pienkowski is working on **Robot** with Jim Diaz, ICI's leading paper engineer, whom he describes as 'brilliant'. 'Working with plastic and paper we're on the threshold of a revolution in terms of dimension. But we're nudging the limits in terms of what you can cram into two pages. They are working on even bigger paper sculpture figures than the bathroom monster in **Haunted House** and that had antennae a foot long. They've got delayed action movements, sequences. You pull a tab and different things happen. Jim Diaz is not deterred by thoughts of limits. Says Jan, 'If you've got an idea for a mechanic where a mouse runs in and a woman jumps on a chair, Jim will come and make the chair break as well.'

The Doll's House

Lothar Meggendorfer, Kestrel, 0 7226 5534 7, £3.95

A Day in the Zoo

Anon, Kestrel, 0 7226 5706 4. £4.25

The International Circus

Lothar Meggendorfer, Kestrel, 0 7226 5647 5, £3.95

Trick or Treat

Lothar Meggendorfer, Benn, 0 510 00110 6, £3.50

The Magic Boat

Tom Seidman-Freud, Benn, 0 510 00104 1, £3.50

The Honeybee and the Robber

Eric Carle, Julia MacRae, 0 86203 013 7, £4.50

The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Alphabet Book

Robert Crowther, Kestrel, 0 7226 5314 X, £4.50

The Most Amazing Hide-and-Seek Counting Book

Robert Crowther, Kestrel, 0 7226 5598 3, £4.50

Dinner Time

Jan Pienkowski. Gallery Five, 0 95072 140 9, £2.95

Haunted House

Jan Pienkowski, Heinemann, 0 434 95635 X, £4.95

Robot

Jan Pienkowski, Heinemann, 0 434 95643 0, £5.95 approx. (in September).

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