

C & C Press Artists' Book: *Making Medicine* Poem by Luis J. Rodriguez

Making Medicine, a poem by Luis J. Rodriguez, calls for a positive shift in the way individuals interact with each other. It also highlights the importance of our need to be more attentive to the preservation of our coexistence with other life forms on Earth. In *Making Medicine*, Rodriguez's signature becomes the book's imagery. This idea aligns conceptually with the message of the interrelatedness of nature and the fragile balance of our ecosystem.

Every creature has its unique signature, which is how it manifests itself in the world, i.e. the snail's trail. Each of these signatures is as inconsistent and unique to the moment as it is when a human picks up a pen and signs his or her signature. Through awareness, the subtle differences inherent within each new signature are discernible. Despite its inconsistencies, mankind's stroke of pen offers legal and irrepensible power to dominate. Rodriguez's poem voices that other organisms are too often treated as inferior, expendable, and extraneous. They will be judged not by the color of their skin, but by their genetic make-up. In *Making Medicine*, the signature as imagery is symbolic of man's disconnection with nature and heightens awareness of our position as dominator.

We chose the true accordion structure for *Making Medicine* because we feel it aligns conceptually with the subject matter of Luis's poem. The true accordion is a form that can be read as a series of individual pages, but can also be read as one long and continuous page. This dynamic is analogous to the subject matter addressed in *Making Medicine*: every organism on earth is an individual, and yet life is completely interconnected and interdependent.

We feel that the box structure that houses *Making Medicine* is in conceptual harmony with the book's subject matter because of both the physical and visual transformation of the printed title, which is seen on the tray inlays. After opening the box structure, the reader is confronted with the title of the book on the left hand side. Using black ink on white paper, the title is created by debossing the space around the text into the tray inlay so that the text becomes negative space. The result is a raised white text surrounded by black space. Once the book is lifted out of the right side of the box, the viewer is confronted once again with the title. However, a complete transformation has occurred. This title was created with a reverse debossing, transforming the text into a positive space. This renders the space around the text white and the text itself black, which sinks into the inlay. The visual transformation of the title from dark to light represents the poem's ability to transport the viewer toward a greater awareness, "showing the light", metaphorically speaking. Also, the visual transformation of the text from negative space to positive space represents the positive influence that this poem can have on the reader. The physical aspect of the text projecting toward the reader demonstrates the idea that the text is conceptually reaching out to the reader. The physical transformation from projecting toward to being impressed into *impresses* the idea that the issues of the poem are being *impressed* into the psyche of the mind. This impression causes a distinct transformation within the mind of the reader. For all of these reasons the box structure that houses *Making Medicine* is another aspect of the book's design that we feel integrates harmoniously with the book's overall concept.

Making Medicine is a true accordion style binding and contains 'original' Luis J. Rodriguez images (signatures) printed letterpress using photopolymer plates made at the press. The text block is protected in a hardbound case, which has debossed imagery on the front and back cover panels. The handmade paper end sheets were created by C & C Press. The book is printed letterpress on Rives Heavyweight using handset 11 point American Garamond.

Book Size: 7" x 11.25" x 1" Box Size: 7.75" x 11.75" x 1.75"
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