

PROSPECTUS

An artist book

SCENES FROM THE CUTTING-ROOM FLOOR

Screenplays by

WILLIAM BENTLEY

Artworks by

JOHN BALDESSARI

Published by

THE ARION PRESS

San Francisco

This is a highly unusual book. Normally, illustrated books are illustrated by an artist after the fact, the fact being a pre-existing literary work by an author who may be a contemporary but also might be long gone. In this case, the artist came first and the author came second. So the literary work illustrates the artworks.

I invited the artist John Baldessari to prepare a set of images that could be placed before the writer William Bentley as inspirations for a literary work. Baldessari is a world-renowned Los Angeles artist known for reworking existing photographs to his artistic ends. He has a fondness for publicity stills from old movies. These shots, often for B-Movies, are cropped by Baldessari with the faces of the actors obliterated by discs that may be white, black, or in color. I suggested to him that we instead remove the faces with die-cut circles through which the reader sees words in type on the following page. The three of us, Baldessari, Bentley, and I, along with our editor Diana Ketcham, met for lunch in Venice, California, on Saturday, March 21, 2015. Baldessari took off with this idea and soon sent us more than twenty photographs he chose from his extensive collection of stills. These were turned over to Bentley and he set to writing scenes to accompany twenty of the shots.

It was Bentley who proposed the title for the book: *Scenes from the Cutting-Room Floor*. Because the photographs varied from Westerns to thrillers to comedies and musicals, there was the challenge of creating a story line that would link them all.

At first, Bentley was stumped and feared he was succumbing to classic writer's block. After too many mornings spent staring at the blank piece of paper tucked into his typewriter carriage, he wrote to me:

“Usually, when presented with a thorny creative problem, I've found that a long walk produces the best solution. My home is in the Hollywood Hills across from the

Hollywood Bowl, where the streets are a living history unto themselves. This time they opened a portal to the town's celluloid past that yielded the answer to my dilemma. What if I wrote a scene accompanying each photograph that wasn't in the movie at all? The scenes could be read as rejects, the ribbons of film that ended up on the cutting-room floor. I ran home, phoned Hoyem, and he enthusiastically agreed.

“The photograph comes at the beginning, in the middle, or at the end of the scene—whatever best serves the narrative. I imagine you will find some scenes humorous, thrilling, frivolous, gruesome, or just off the wall. They are all depictions of wherever my imagination took me. They were written in the traditional screenplay format—one page equaling about one minute of screen time. Thus, this book will take as long to read as it would to watch on the screen. Try to see each scene unfold as the screenwriter does, in your mind's eye.”

In Arion Press's vast library of Monotype matrices are eight different fonts of typewriter types, used by printers in the days before photocopy machines and digital types in order to reproduce the look of a typewritten document. To emulate the script that Bentley wrote in a word-processing program for screenwriters, which produces a manuscript that looks for all the world like a traditional typed script, we chose Remington Bold in eleven point for this book. We followed the conventions of Hollywood script-writers as to indentations, capitalization, and stage directions. A smaller size of Reproducing Bold in eight point is used for the captions at the bottoms of the pages facing the illustrations and for other subsidiary material.

The script is printed by letterpress on a pale icy blue paper and the illustrations on white paper. The photographs are printed in five different colors of ink that repeat four times in the sequence of the twenty images. The paper is Classic Crest. The format of the pages is standard typewriter paper, 8-1/2 by 11 inches. There are 216 pages.

The book is bound in a ring binder, just like a script's presentation. On the cover is a color photograph by Lucy Gray of the artist and author in front of a famous entrance to Paramount Pictures in Hollywood. It appears as if our writer is pretending to have his picture taken with a life-size cardboard cutout of the star artist, posed like a tourist or an Oscar-winner outside the studio. The binders are covered in a kind of leatherette material, and of course were made by hand in our bookbindery. The photograph of the artist and author is inset in a recessed panel. The titling and an unspooling strip of movie film, drawn by our associate Jeff Raymond, are stamped in white foil on the cover.

John Baldessari made 39 photo-collages and a suite of five lithographs for the Arion Press edition of *The Life and Times of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman* by Laurence Sterne in 1988. To learn more about the artist, visit youtube.com and see “A Brief History of John Baldesarri”, a documentary film narrated by the musician, singer, and actor Tom Waits, who, like Baldessari, was born in National City, California.

Bill Bentley is a highly accomplished screenwriter for motion pictures and television. In one of the more hilarious scenes he wrote for this book, Bentley has the two of us as characters pitching ideas to a studio mogul, who dismisses them all.

He and John Baldessari were game to participate in this radical departure from standard book publishing, and I am deeply grateful to them both for being so adventuresome. As Bentley says, “We created scenes that never got made. We hope that you, when reading this book, will wish that some of them had been.”

A glossary of screenplay terms follows the introduction and precedes the

screenplay scenes.

The edition is limited to 300 numbered copies for sale at \$700 and 26 lettered copies for complimentary distribution to participants in the project. A portion of the edition is reserved for Arion Press subscribers, individuals and institutions committed to purchasing the annual series at a 30% discount.

Andrew Hoyem, *publisher*

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