

# A Leporello for Mosul

## Background (146 words)

I am an art writer and maker. I teach in the Schools of Art and Design at Bath Spa University. Since 2011, I have been exploring the library of Swiss artist Roman Signer, scanning out-of-copyright images from his books and transforming them using Photoshop and traditional collage.

The *lepirello*, a paper concertina, is the earliest form of the book. During 2020's lockdown I reworked my files to form a giant collage: a 26-panel 'lepirello' measuring 1.8m x 23.5m. This was posted to St Gallen, Signer's home town, for reassembly and exhibition at St Gallen's Vadiana (Cantonal library) this August.

Brightly coloured and full of visual games that contrast collage's materiality with Photoshop's depthlessness, the *lepirello* reflects Signer's kaleidoscopic interests – in particular his fascination with the natural world. It is organised around the titles of a C19th popular science encyclopaedia that he owns: the *Library of Marvels*.

## Proposal (249 words)

I would like to make a limited-edition work that will raise funds for Book Aid International's campaign to restock the University Library of Mosul, destroyed by ISIS in 2015. UNESCO describes this as "one of the most devastating acts of destruction of library collections in human history". Further details are here: <https://bookaid.org/mosul/>.

Until 2020 BIA's campaign was supported by various UK University libraries: on designated days all library fines paid were diverted to it. Following the COVID-19 lockdown most universities have instituted fines amnesties. This funding source has disappeared.

By combining digital files and analogue collage, I propose to reproduce the giant folding screen in miniature as an actual, paper, *lepirello*, and generate a full colour, limited edition artist's book. Each copy would be accompanied by existing print materials: a 34-page booklet (German or English) and the Vadiana exhibition's A2 colour poster.

The opportunity to print up to 15 square metres on high-quality Hahnemuhle paper should allow for an edition of 16 (page size 12 x 24 cms). I look forward to working with Omnicolour on its production – your guidance and expertise will be invaluable.

Roman Signer and BIA have both confirmed provisional support for this proposal. Edition marketing would be conducted in collaboration with Signer's team and Book Aid International's fundraisers. Potential purchasers include collectors of Signer's work, and libraries and museums with special collections in Switzerland, the UK and elsewhere.

100% of post-production profits will be donated to BIA's campaign.

The giant 'le porello', *Library of Marvels*, on display at the Vadiana, August 2020















The remains of the library of Mosul following its destruction in 2015 (photo c/o BIA)

