

Show and Tell: Artists' Illustrated Letters

Grey Art Gallery & Study Center, New York University

New York, NY, 1988

In 1988, Walker was Gallery Manager at the Grey Art Gallery, and designed a particularly challenging exhibition involving the installation of letters—delicate objects with content on both sides and often to the edges of the paper. How to secure the “object” without intruding presented particular challenges.

Walker’s design for the exhibition involved creating various L, T, or X-shaped bases with bent UV filtering plexiglas sleeves that protruded out from the base. These created a free-floating structure that could safely hold the encapsulated letter. The encapsulation sleeve was designed to go down into the wooden base, where it was secured to the plexiglas sleeve, and to the base, allowing the letters to be securely viewed without any mounts or other visual intrusions.

Multi-page letters could be arranged side-by-side or on two rows through the encapsulation process, and this would allow them to then float together inside the same plexiglas sleeve. A few of the letters required custom mounts, and could not be flattened to fit in the sleeve. Custom plexiglas supports were developed to support the letter vertically inside a plexiglas box, keeping the letter on the same visual plane as the other letters.

The various shaped bases described above enabled the curator to create various groupings—or isolation—of individual artists, and the text panels that protruded out under the plexiglas sleeve allowed the curator generous space to tell the story.

