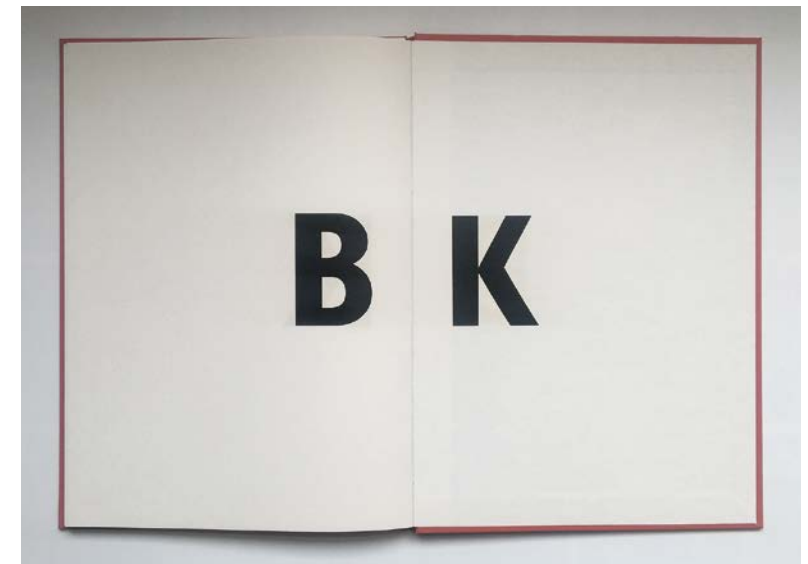
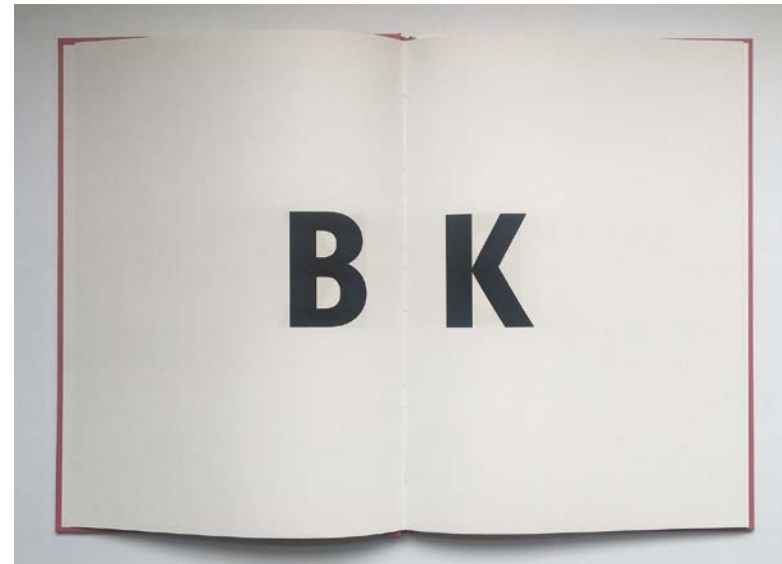
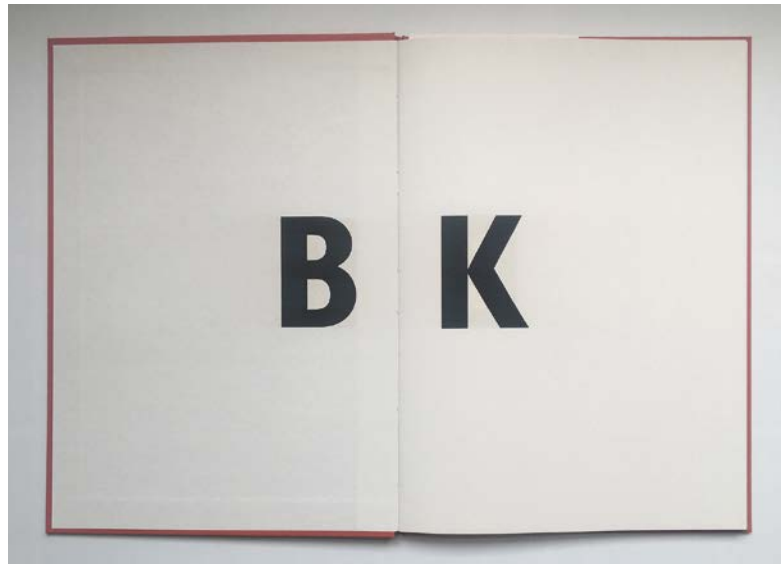


BKMK

60pp, 263 x 187, offset: B K printed throughout, paper-covered casebinding; bookmark, 263 x 91, letterpress: M K; Axminster, 1999.



Transcribed excerpt of a BBC radio programme about the early history of books and reading: "...there are so many things we take for granted about a book, things that help you find your way about, indices, page numbers, that sort of thing... this kind of apparatus that helps us find our way about a book is something that was developed during the course of the middle ages, in early medieval books you would find very little of this kind of thing, running headlines at the tops of the page... these tend to come in during the twelfth century for example, indexes, alphabetical indexes

these begin to be compiled in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, so it is only really by the end of the middle ages that the book begins to resemble something that we expect to find today, and even then the first pages of the book, of the modern book, where you expect to find details about when and where the book was published, that isn't present in the medieval book, or at least it is not present at the front of the medieval book, you may find right at the end what's called a colophon, where the scribe will say, I finished this book on such and such a day, in such and such a year, in this

or that place, but that's not always invariably present in a medieval book... doesn't this to you suggest a completely different psychology, as it were, for reading, that somehow before the period you mention, perhaps the twelfth or thirteenth centuries, the use of books is more contemplative and less purposeful, and that somehow the introduction of indices, all the things we take for granted, are to do with a very different attitude to what a book is for... oh yes, I would agree completely, reading took two forms in the middle ages, certainly within religious houses which is where you would find

most books and in the early middle ages in particular the most common form of reading was, as you say, contemplative reading, what was called *lectio divina* where you would have a book and you wouldn't read it quickly straight through from beginning to end, or you wouldn't look up a specific thing in it, rather, you would read a few sentences over and over again, writers about reading sometimes use the metaphor of eating, or chewing over words until you had completely absorbed them, or use them as a stepping stone to prayer and contemplation..."