

# John Yau & Norbert Prangenberg: *A Child's Vi[r]gil*

**A** *Child's Vi[r]gil* marks the first collaboration between sculptor and painter Norbert Prangenberg and poet, art critic, and essayist John Yau; the project is the result of a global exchange of ideas and information, as concepts, drafts, and mock-ups circulated between Prangenberg and art advisor Bernd Schellhorn in Germany, Yau in New York City, and Donald Farnsworth's team of printers and designers at Magnolia Editions in Oakland, California between 2008 and early 2010.

Prangenberg and Yau first met in 1996, nine years after Yau had first written about the artist's paintings and drawings in 1987. This meeting marked the beginning of their friendship. In 2007, Prangenberg suggested a collaboration inspired by Virgil's *Aeneid*; for the next two years, the pair exchanged ideas about the possible directions of such a collaboration, culminating in August 2009, when Yau travelled to Berlin to meet with Prangenberg and Schellhorn. Prangenberg showed the poet a series of delicate and colorful watercolor paintings; an inspired Yau returned to New York and wrote the eponymous poem in response. He then contacted Farnsworth, who began to develop a portfolio design that would complement the lyricism of the works contained within.

*A Child's Vi[r]gil* was designed and assembled at Magnolia Editions and combines hand-crafted elements from top figures in their respective fields. Each art page in the edition was individually hand painted in watercolor and signed in pencil by Prangenberg in his Brunnen studio on Japanese handmade paper



*A Child's Vi[r]gil*, 2010 - Artist's book with portfolio  
12 x 16.25 x 2.3 in. (open: 12 x 25.25 x 2.3 in)  
Edition of 24

imported by Hiromi Paper in Santa Monica, California. The folio pages were printed letterpress by Jonathan Gerkin using a Hacker test press at Peter Koch Printers in Berkeley, California. The portfolio was designed by Farnsworth and Andrew Rottner and fabricated by hand from Chromo book cloth by Rottner, with an interior of blue, yellow, and brilliant red book cloth selected to harmonize with Prangenberg's paintings. The clamshell cover was printed in color by Tallulah Terryll using a UV-cured acrylic printer at Magnolia Editions.

The creative accomplishments of both Yau and Prangenberg have received critical acclaim for the way they deftly involve the visual and tactile senses, and this collaboration confirms their mutual affinity for a powerful visual experience. The intensity of color and form in both Prangenberg's previous work on various substrates (from ceramics to wood, metal, cardboard, and canvas) and in Yau's celebrated poems and stories combine in *A Child's Vi[r]gil* to produce a unique set of sensations for the eyes and the mind. Prangenberg's watercolors on gauzy Japanese kozo paper engage the vivid, dreamlike imagery of six verses by Yau, crisply printed via letterpress on a durable cotton rag paper, to great effect. It is as if the color and movement of the poems have been refracted through a prism; the paintings hover above Yau's Olympian world of idols, idylls, treasure, and talismans in a full-spectrum rainbow of miniature fireworks.

*A Child's Vi[r]gil* is published by Magnolia Editions in a limited edition of 24 numbered copies, four artist's proofs, and four printer's proofs. For pricing and availability please contact [info@magnoliaeditions.com](mailto:info@magnoliaeditions.com) or (510) 834-2527. ■



Detail of the first two pages from *A Child's Vi[r]gil*. Each art page in the edition was hand painted in watercolor by Norbert Prangenberg on Japanese kozo paper; John Yau's poem was printed letterpress at Peter Koch Printers in Berkeley, California.