

THE BOOK ART OF  
RICHARD MINSKY



**A History of Egyptian Mummies**

by Thomas J. Pettigrew. Longman, London, 1834

Bound by Minsky 1973. Linen, turquoise. 12 x 9

Collection of Barbara and Donald Bady, New York

RICHARD MINSKY  
MY LIFE IN BOOK ART

This is a PDF Preview of  
selected pages from  
the final draft

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**The Crisis of Democracy**

by Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki for the Trilateral Commission.

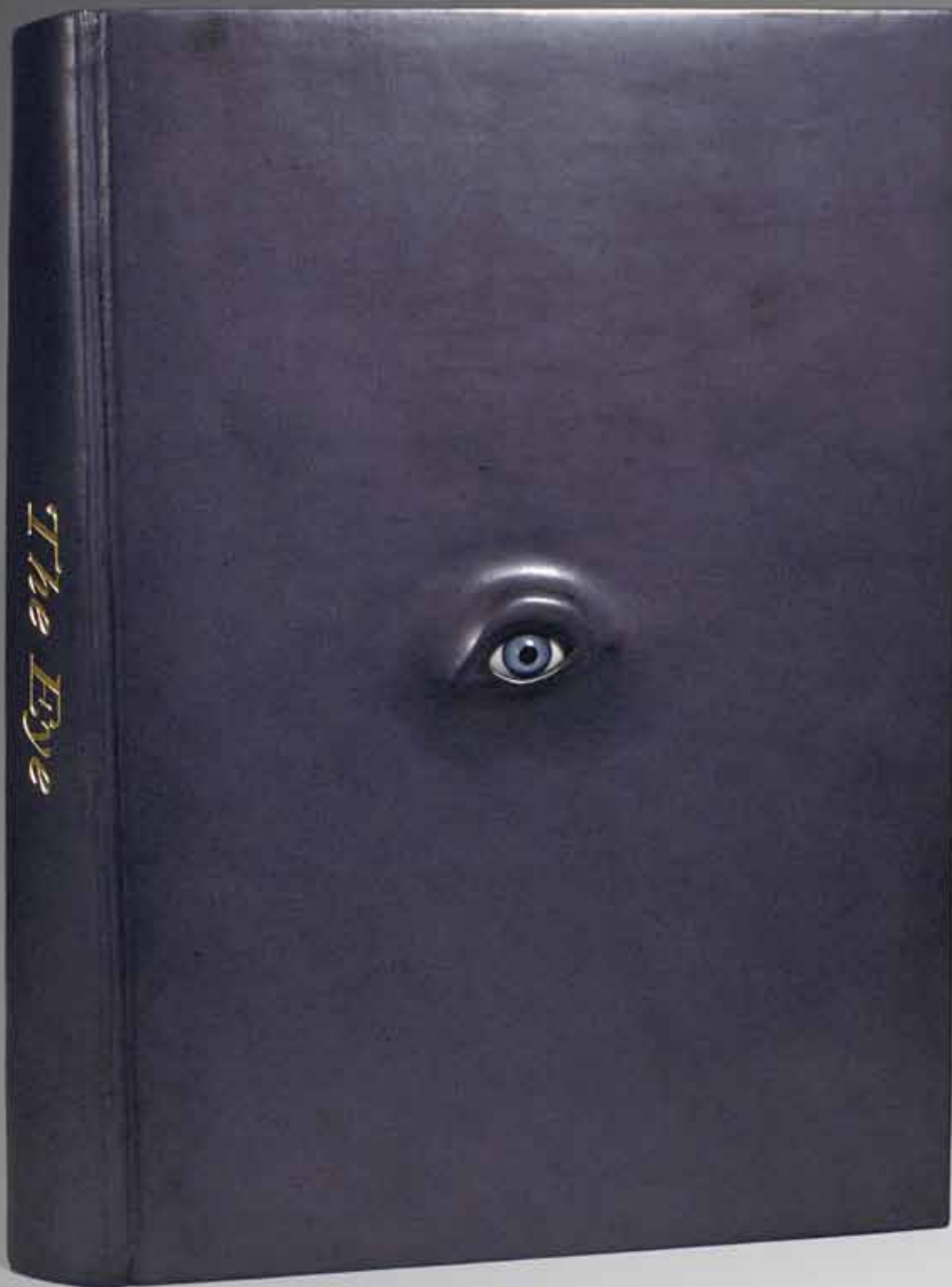
New York University Press, 1975.

Binding by Minsky, 1980. 8¾ x 6 x 11

Sheep, gold, barbed wire.

Photo: installation at the Allan Stone Gallery, New York, May, 1981.

Collection of the Haas Family Arts Library, Yale University



**The Eye**  
by Roanna Martin-Trigona. Tod Volpe, New York, 1994.  
Designed, printed and bound by Minsky, 1994.  
Calf with inset artificial eye, title stamped in 23K gold.

The story of Salvador Dali's painting "The Eye," which was the basis of the dream sequence in Alfred Hitchcock's movie, "Spell-bound." Printed inkjet on Dieu Donn  handmade paper, mounted movie stills, other historical photos and ephemera.



**The Right to Bear Arms**

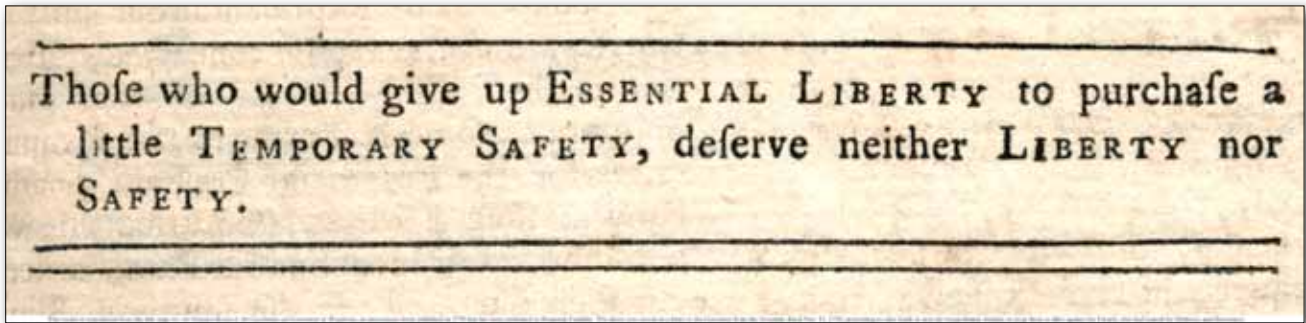
*The Second Amendment*

1996-98. 45 x 45 x 11

Seven books on American gun culture [see p. 65] in goatskin bindings stamped with gold quotes from each book. Above the books is a Norinco MAK-90 Sporter, a semiautomatic version of the AK-47 assault rifle. Also in the case are 1,000 rounds of ammunition, two five-round hunting clips, a loaded 40-round “banana” magazine, and a loaded 75-round drum magazine.

The endpapers of each book are targets made of images representing the subject of that volume, printed inkjet on Rives BFK or handmade paper. The targets were shot with the MAK-90, an Enfield 2A-1, and a Ruger 10-22, at distances of 50 feet to 100 yards. Two of the books are shot through the covers.

# The Bill of Rights Ten Volume Set



## Essential Liberty

Inkjet On Paper. 13 X 40

Motto from the title page of *An Historical Review of the Constitution and Government of Pennsylvania*, an anonymous book published in 1759, attributed to Benjamin Franklin and Richard Jackson. A 40" wide print is in the Bill of Rights limited edition set, inkjet on paper .

## September 11, 2001

I WAS WORKING ON *The Bill of Rights* in my studio at 15 Bleecker Street, expecting my assistant, a young French woman who had studied bookbinding at the Ecole Estienne in Paris, when my neighbor John walked in. "Come out here, Richard, you've got to see this." We walked down the street toward the corner of Lafayette. It was a beautiful September day with a bright blue sky. "I was just sitting in the NOHO Star having breakfast," he continued, "when I saw a plane fly overhead, way too low. I ran outside, and it flew straight into the World Trade Center." By that time we were at the corner, looking at the sight of flames and smoke coming from a gaping hole in the top of one tower. "That was no accident," said John, "I watched it fly straight and under control."

People were walking by on their way to work, some coming out of the subway, and few even looked up and noticed what was going on. Maybe two or three minutes had passed since the plane hit. Clearly the world had just changed. This was not the first terrorist attack at the WTC, but it was a new paradigm.

I went back to the studio. My assistant arrived. She had to walk past that corner, with its clear view. "Did you see it?" I asked. "See what?" she replied. I said "Come with me. You are going to see something you will never want to see again." "You are scaring me," she said. "You should be scared." We walked to the corner, where a larger crowd was now looking up.

We returned to the studio. I turned on the TV. They were calling it an accident, then the second plane hit. We got back to work. It seemed the only reasonable response to terrorism. We were in the new normal.

The bridges and tunnels were closed. The National Guard would not let me north of 14th street. It was three days before I could get home to Barbara and Samantha, who was now four years old. Although the phone lines stopped working minutes after the event, I was able to keep in touch by e-mail.

September 19 the first version of the USA PATRIOT Act was introduced to Congress, and with some adjustments it became law on October 26, despite objections to its assaults on civil liberties. It was convenient for the administration that such a complex piece of legislation just happened to be handy a few days after the September 11 attack.

Suddenly there was a lot of interest in *The Bill of Rights*. The exhibition reception on May 2 was packed. *The New York Times* review ran across six columns. Requests to show the set came from colleges and art centers, and it became a focus of commentary. I posted a page of Bill of Rights teaching aids at [minsky.com](http://minsky.com), with projects and assignments from elementary school through college.

Seeing responses to this artwork blogged by 11th grade students in an American History class was among life's most rewarding moments.



## The Eighth Amendment

*Excessive bail shall not be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.*



**Forlorn Hope: The Prison Reform Movement**  
by Larry E. Sullivan. Richard Minsky, New York, 2002.  
Inkjet on canvas chained to a miniature jail cell of painted wood.



**Sappho's Leap: A Novel**

by Erica Jong. Norton, 2003.

Binding by Minsky, 2003. 12 x 7

Bound as a scroll. Papyrus endpaper printed inkjet with reproduction of Sappho text from early scroll fragment. Wood endcaps with oil base stain, 23K gold leaf, polyurethane and lacquer. Inset brass bushing for cedar scroll handle, which is contained in scroll center under removable endcap. Wood base with stain, polyurethane and lacquer. Scroll cover is lacquered inkjet adapted from Greek Krater image of Alcaeus and Sappho.

Collection of Erica Jong and Ken Burrows, New York





**The Hamptons**

by Susan P. Meisel and Ellen Harris.

Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2000.

Binding by Minsky, 2000. 10½ x 10

Acrylic, sand and shells from the Hamptons.

Collection of Susan P. Meisel



**Chateau Guest Book**

1994. 20 x 16

Blank book of various vintage handmade papers and sheepskin parchment. Green Hewit calf with inlaid panels of lacquered acrylic, gold leaf, and white gold leaf on Rives BFK. Lost wax cast 24K gold plated hardware includes central medallion filled with couleurs vitrail, bosses and clasps with heraldic emblems, and strapwork corners. Private Collection, Normandy, France





**Dante's Inferno**

by Tom Phillips. The Talfourd Press, London, 1980.  
Binding by Minsky, 1986. 3 volumes, each 16 x 12  
Calf dyed by the artist, blind tooled. Bronze bosses  
and centerpieces cast from Ashanti gold weights in  
Tom Phillips' collection. Brass clasps engraved with  
the Florentine lily and hands drawn by Tom Phillips.  
Private Collection, New York

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