

A◉GA Eye on Design

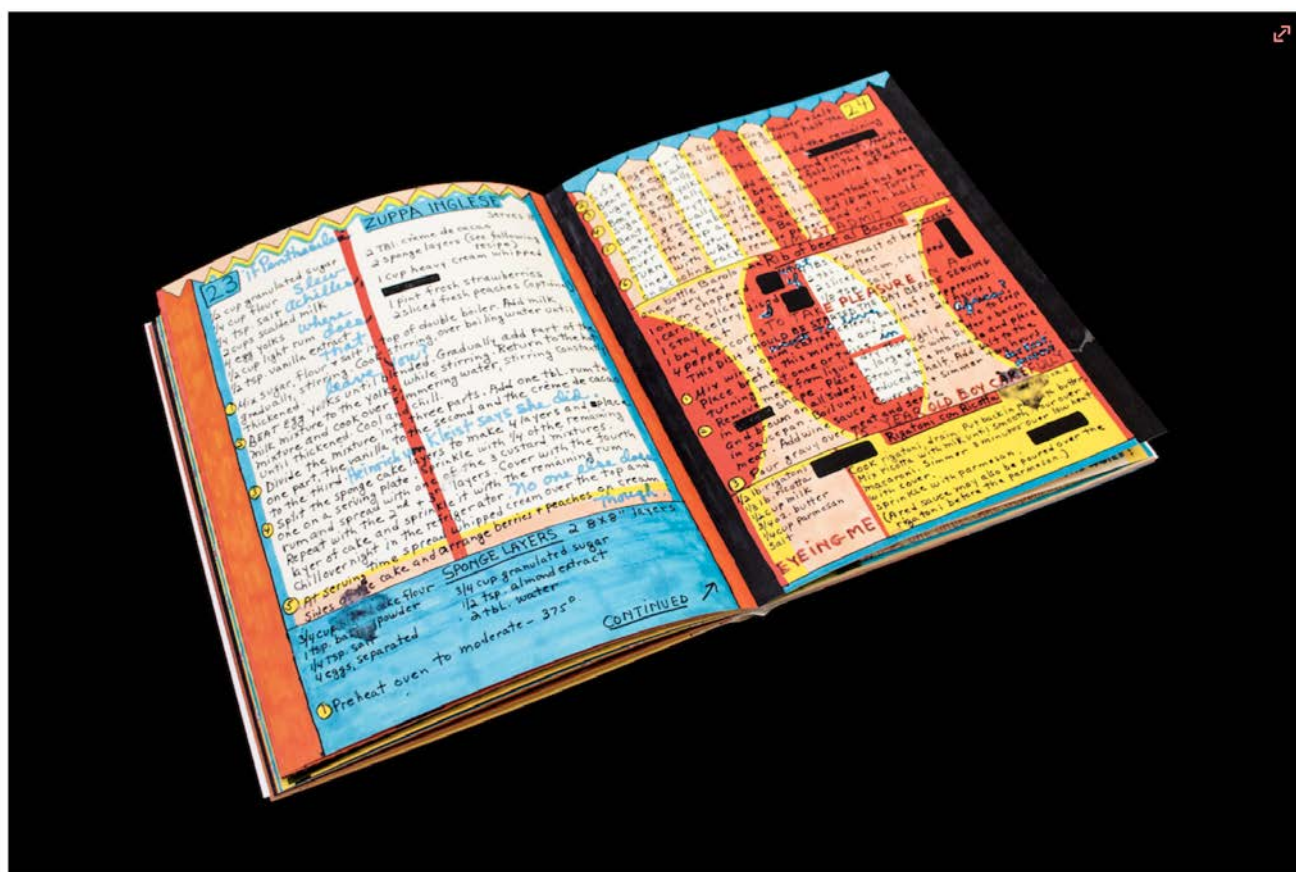
DESIGN + ART

Designing a Cookbook That's as Much About Life, Love, and Sex as Food

"At least one can turn pain to color"

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01 A Cookbook, Dorothy Janonne. Photo JRP | Ringier

Cooking offers an opportunity to let the mind drift and unpack the day's events. And while cooking in the company of a loved one, one part of your brain focuses on making sure the onions don't burn while another part is keeping up with the conversation. While traditional cookbooks record the preparation process, they don't recount the thoughts that form while making a dish. But for artist Dorothy Iannone, one state of mind doesn't exist without the other, and her cookbook features personal sentences interspersed between recipes, each word in her densely packed pages glowing in bright felt-tip pen.

The American artist created her cookbook in 1969 while in a relationship with the Swiss artist Dieter Roth; a new facsimile of the original version of *A Cookbook* is newly available from JRP Editions. Throughout its pages, self-reflexive sentences add spice to recipes. For example, alongside a list of ingredients for gazpacho, Iannone remarks that "at least one can turn pain to color." In between instructions for sauce Madeira and chicken liver pâté, the question, "How come almost no one admires me for my no-marriage stance?" curls across the page. And later, beside a recipe for minute butter, Iannone notes that "It depresses a philanderer to hear how much your wife enjoys you in bed." Wit and wordplay abound. At the top of a recipe for baked red snapper with grapefruit, Iannone asks, "Do you like my red snapper?"

Most of the text gestures to Iannone's experience living with Roth: the very first page sets up her alternating irritation and admiration for her partner, as well as her love of cooking for him. Iannone left her husband for Roth in 1967; they while both on a trip to Iceland he became her muse, and she created several works inspired by their intense relationship. In another of her illustrated books, entitled *An Icelandic Saga*, Iannone tells the tale of how she met Roth and embarked on the “journey which seems to have made all other journeys possible.”

In *A Cookbook*, internal musings on love and daily life mix together, framing the activity of cooking as a space for both eroticism and personal introspection. When she created the book, Iannone had already begun incorporating text into her paintings and cutouts, and the work is an extension of her interest in how words can form a portrait of their maker. Rows of sentences, the looping squiggles of her handwriting, and colorful boxes provide rich graphic intrigue. Text becomes illustrative, as with in Iannone's art, where flat, two-dimensional spaces are often packed with ornament, detail, and words.

“Dorothy's spirit is like this: green and yellow” Iannone writes beside a recipe for lentil soup: the cookbook is a self-portrait of a woman wearing many hats, as musings on art making, domesticity, food preparation, love, life, and sex intermingle. 🗨