

Making Murakami

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The limited edition of Haruki Murakami's *1Q84* is inspired by the tradition of the artists' book or *livre d'artiste*. Artists' books can take many forms – an artist might create a book as an artwork in and of itself (like Louise Bourgeois and her beautiful hand-sewn cloth books: <http://bit.ly/csw2FY>) or they may use the book as a canvas as Joan Miro so wonderfully did (<http://bit.ly/tbEfnh>) or, a more contemporary technique is to re-use books to create completely new artworks as seen in the papercut installations of Danish artist Peter Callesen (<http://bit.ly/qtrAFT>). But whatever the form, three things remain common to artists' books: they are predominantly hand-produced, are limited to a set number of copies and they naturally blur the line between books and art.

There was never any question that the artist in this project was Haruki Murakami so our challenge was simply to find a way to express the essence of his story visually. We started by imagining the three volumes as a blank canvas (left) and then looked to the text to draw out the key elements of the narrative and imagine how these might be used to turn this 'canvas' into an original artwork. We were particularly interested in the idea of interweaving narratives and obscured realities and this reminded us of the work of Bridget Riley and her op art contemporaries. What Riley does in her artwork is not dissimilar to what Haruki Murakami does with language: creates complexity and sometimes confusion from a perfectly constructed simplicity.



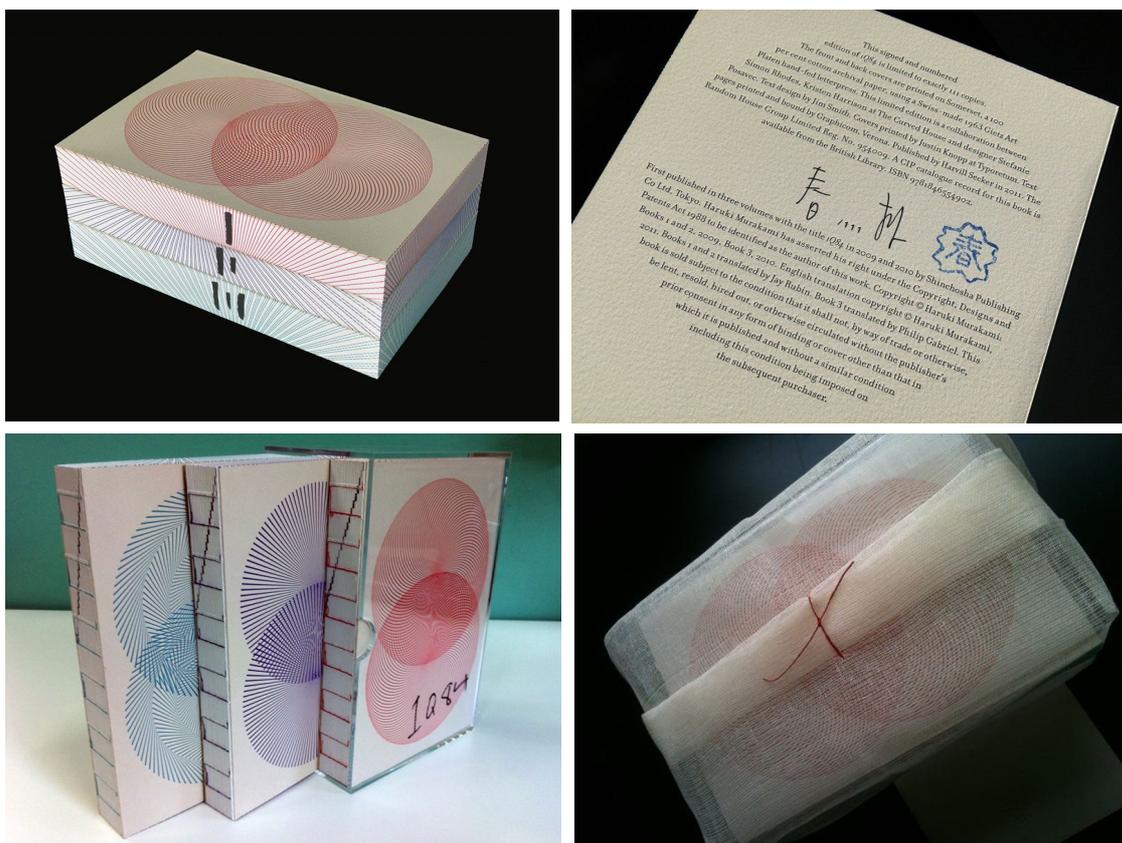
The project's designer, Stefanie Posavec, started to develop visuals along these lines and introduced the theme of the two moons, which of course inhabit the sky in the world known as 1Q84. The result was three beautiful cover designs – one for each book in the three-volume set:



As the work developed we incorporated features into every part of the object, ensuring that all our decisions reflected the original concept. From the cover designs depicting the two moons and the intertwining of realities, to the colours that echo the change of seasons, to the exposed stitching and the section markers on the spines used to represent the stairs that Aomame, the book's protagonist, descends when she enters the parallel reality – every detail has been considered.

The making of the books was predominantly manual with the front and back covers of each book printed by hand (by letterpress artist Justin Knopp) then bound onto the book blocks. The three edges of each book were hand-coloured before the books were placed into a slipcase, numbered and finally wrapped and sewn into a cloth covering. They are accompanied by a numbered certificate of authenticity carrying the Harvill Secker limited edition seal. The author has signed every set by hand and each time with a slight variation on where the signature is situated or what pen has been used.

As a result of this multi-layered process of hand production, every single one of the 111 sets has its own unique characteristics. No two sets are the same, making this a truly special limited edition artist's book.



Edition information: This signed and numbered edition of 1Q84 is limited to exactly 111 copies. The front and back covers are printed on Somerset, a 10 per cent cotton archival paper, using a Swiss-made 1963 Gietz Art Platen hand-fed letterpress. This limited edition is a collaboration between Simon Rhodes, Kristen Harrison at The Curved House and designer Stefanie Posavec. Text design by Jim Smith. Covers printed by Justin Knopp at Typoretum in Great Britain. Text pages printed and bound by Graphicom, Verona. Published by Harvill Secker in 2011. Random House Group Limited Reg. No. 954009. A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library. ISBN 9781846554902.