

Ambient light from a video installation by Canadian artist Mark Lewis flickers across the books' spines and jackets.

"Books allow us to emerge into another world," said Andrew Piper, professor at McGill University and author of *Dreaming in Books*. To liberate beautiful books from their shelves and exercise your imagination, try jury-rigging a book rail—inspired by bygone plate rails used to display fancy chinaware—for mini-exhibitions of art and design book covers and interior spreads. Or follow the lead of American artist Nina Katchadourian, who creates a "portrait" of a particular book collection, revealing its focus, idiosyncrasies and inconsistencies. She stacks volumes so that the words on the spines, when read sequentially, say something provocative or poetic. If you want a work of art constructed from your own collection, call Toronto-based, Milan-trained artist Bruno Billio. A con-

summate stacker of antique and vintage books, he creates architectonic interior design elements with them, such as plinths, pillars or risers for antique furniture.

Another way to indulge this passion is to acquire art themed around "the book." Paul Béliveau, a Quebec City artist, paints mostly imagined books grouped horizontally or vertically, vivid in contrasting colour, pattern or typography. In a deeply moving extended homage to the book as artifact, fetish, repository of memory, and knowledge and cultural marker, Toronto artist Roula Partheniou paints totally faithful reproductions of books using acrylic on canvas. She sells them individually as stackable works, and has even used an antique bookcase to display them.

"Books transcend time. Just seeing the shape of the book makes you happy," says Robertson. He is dead right about that. □



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: *PRIMITIVE ART*, 2001, BY NINA KATCHADOURIAN; *VANTAS 10.12.20*, 2010, BY PAUL BÉLIVEAU; *NOTHING TO INFINITY*, 2008, BY ROULA PARTHENIOU; A 2010 BRUNO BILLIO INSTALLATION AT THE GLADSTONE HOTEL IN TORONTO



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