



Like the surviving bisque “dolls” of the late 1800s, these “toys” are more like precious artwork (both, fragile sculptures), than kid-proof and friendly items. Both are mostly collected by adults. Hmmm. Well, as far as integrity in product design for its intended purposes, it’s hats off to chewable board books for toddlers and my Raggedy Ann doll of soft cotton and button eyes that I sewed back on, and on, again.

I have an exquisitely beautiful bisque “doll”, sculpture, really, but the only reason I have it is because no little girl played with it, for long anyway. A sad paradox.

Pop-ups, also, are more a work of art than a children’s book in the same sense, and many of them a magnum opus—very, very precious. But I’m glad for their existence, and for their evolving to such extraordinary examples of concept, design and paper engineering. So, my next way of thinking about ABC3D’s afterlife is to consider its legacy. There is no doubt that many a mind-blowing present day pop-up book used Bataille’s 2008 cutting edge pop-up techniques as a springboard for further amazing paper-defying feats of engineering and design. She paved the way for them to build better and more spectacular ones, to take on the challenge of her “can you top this?” amazing little book.

My next “Afterlives” direction is a 180 degree turn back in time. Before writing the first pet book blog, I did some reading on pop-up book history and I was amazed to discover that they precede printing itself! Originally, pop-up books were made for adults: scientists, philosophers, and not-surprisingly, magicians. The history of these brilliantly engineered paper-sculpture artifacts is long.

Around 1300, Catalan-speaking occultist, writer, and philosopher Ramon Llull, created his “logic machine,” composed of rotating circles of paper that answered philosophical questions on good and evil. Some say that Llull’s work, which was called a Lullian Circle, was a precursor of computation theory, although his works were used only to “prove” Christian doctrine.

