

ARTIST STATEMENT

Don Mabie AKA Chuck Stake

I began making Artist Trading Cards (ATC) in May 1997 and since then I have made in excess of 10,000 cards and I have traded most of them. The concept of ATCs was developed by my friend m. vãnçi stirnemann an artist from Zürich, Switzerland. I was in Zürich on May 31, 1997 when the first ATC Trading Session took place and I participated in that session and traded my first cards. Subsequently I organized the first ATC Trading Session (TS) in Canada at The New Gallery in Calgary on September 27, 1997.

ATCs became the primary focus of my art practise for about a decade after the initial TS in Calgary and I have organized numerous ATC workshops, hundreds of Trading Sessions, regional and international touring exhibitions and I produced endless promotional material to get the concept of ATCs accepted. The idea took a couple of years to get established but after about five years ATCs took off and become very popular with thousands of traders worldwide. To date there have been more than 20 books published on ATCs and numerous magazine and newspaper articles and thousands and thousands of TS around the world that continue to this day.

When I was in Zürich in May 1997 and started producing my first cards I was very turned on by the idea. I liked the size, 2.5 x 3.5 inch (64 x 89 mm), the same size as traditional hockey cards, and the freedom that working that size allowed. And when I attended the first TS I was blown away by the energy and excitement of the traders and the creativity of the cards offered for trade. There were some 20 people at the first TS and they were both artists and non-artists. Since that first TS an important aspect of ATCs is that artists and non-artists and people of all ages and abilities participate freely in the activity. ATCs are made to be traded and the social aspect of ATCs was very clear to vãnçi from the beginning and has remained a crucial aspect of ATC activity. I liked the idea that ATCs allowed for an exchange of art by circumventing the gallery system and provided numerous opportunities to exhibition one's art as there are many international exhibitions followed by TS. ATCs are never sold only traded.

While they are made to be traded since I began making and trading cards I have always saved sets for my archive to keep track of what I have produced over the years. I have generated a wide variety of cards in a variety of media but for this show I am primarily showing drawings and because of the theme of this exhibition they are drawings that employ text. I have been using words/text as the primary subject matter in my art for 50 years, since 1969.

Also just to be clear ATCs may be 2-D or 3-D and created in any media — the variety of cards I have seen and traded for over the years is remarkable.

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