

17- JOHN COOPER CLARKE SONGBOOK



## 17-JOHN COOPER CLARKE SONGBOOK

Most of the work shown here results from a designer and an artist (or writer, whatever) collaborating to producing a new piece of work, rather than merely documenting an existing one. Contrary to the general (and generally accepted) situation of a designer working at least one step removed as a detached form-giver (to borrow from the Dutch), these works push for a resolution which neither designer nor artist could have achieved alone, something greater than the sum of their constituent parts.

Here are the cover and two spreads of what is essentially a book of lyrics by post-punk poet John Cooper Clarke. Cartoonish abstract character portraits were a recurring motif in the work of Barney Bubbles, and the one of Cooper Clarke here typically captures multiple facets of his style and character: contrary, electric, day-glo, pop and punk. Inside, Bubbles took every page of Coopers and Clarkes in the phone book, crossed them all out and used them as a background wallpaper on which to compose a series of formal collages incorporating fragments of angular poetry and judicious photography. This freeform invention is carried over onto the phone book's advertising pages, subverted by Bubbles into a series of cryptic announcements.

– “Never Mind the Bollocks (After Jamie Reid),” Stuart Bailey, Dot Dot Dot #11, 2005

Barney Bubbles & John Cooper Clarke,  
John Cooper Clarke songbook, 1979,  
37.5 x 30 cm