The BONE FOLDER

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Melissa Jay Craig's That's Life, 2005

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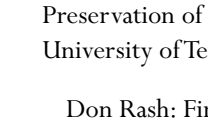


Disciplining a Craft

By Clifton Meador

From a talk originally delivered at the November 2006 Pyramid Atlantic Book Arts Conference

There is more interest in book arts now than ever before: dozens of colleges and art schools offer classes in book arts, and centers of book art have been created in nearly every large city in America. Opportunities for education in the book arts abound, and it seems as though something significant is changing in the way people talk about the book arts. A discipline is evolving, a conceptual framework for thinking about making books is emerging.

How are we building a discipline in book arts?

What does it mean for book arts to be a discipline?

It is not obvious what the term "book arts" means: it seems to describe crafts, but it is not self-evident which crafts. In order to understand what the term means, it seems reasonable to start by looking at where the book arts are transmitted, where people form their ideas about what they are doing as they are learning how to do it. There are two main arenas for the transmission of the book arts in America: one is the informal world of workshop instruction, usually (but not always) at nonprofit centers for book arts, and the other is formal academic study at a college, art school, or university. There have been book arts classes in the university much longer than there have been workshops that teach classes in the book arts. Porter Garnett's Laboratory Press at Carnegie Mellon was founded in 1923, for example. There are many other examples; for instance, 10 of the 12 residential colleges at Yale had letterpress shops for student use and Scripps college press has been around since the 1940s. While there have always been printers and handbinders teaching their crafts, the founding of the Center for Book Arts in New York in 1974 marks the beginning of the contemporary period of workshop-based book arts instruction.

Since institutions are the places that support and create disciplines, let's examine the institutions that teach book arts to better understand what people mean by the term "book arts." The two main arenas are quite different in their approaches to instruction: centers of book art have an interest in bringing in the greatest number of people to support their operations and therefore develop courses that are clear and attractive to a large number of people. Academic institutions do not have the same pressure to expand and develop audience and are subject to entirely different forces that shape programming. We might expect academic institutions to frame book arts quite differently.

First I will examine workshop instruction, and then academic institutions.

For this examination, I picked three places that are from geographically different areas of the country. I will look at their workshop offerings from fall of 2006, by title and course description. The purpose of this examination is to understand what most people mean when they use the term "book arts" and to understand the scope of activity.

The Center for Book Arts in New York was the first center of its kind and it is, without a doubt, one of the field-defining institutions. They teach hundreds of workshops a year and offer multiple levels and sections of workshops in letterpress printing, binding, paper decoration, printmaking, conservation, calligraphy, and workshops that deal in artists' book making. For the fall 2006 workshop schedule, they listed 56 different sections of binding classes, from bookbinding I to boxmaking along with classes dedicated to specific structures, like long-stitch binding classes, Coptic binding, and leather bound books. They offered 30 sections of printing classes, 22 of which were dedicated to letterpress and eight of which covered printmaking topics, like Japanese wood block printing. They taught six sections of paper decorating classes (suminagashi and marbling), six sections of calligraphy classes (copperplate script to handwriting for books), five sections of conservation classes (including a master class with Gary Frost), and seven classes that are hard to categorize, like Comic Book Weekend, Editioning Mail Art, or Make a Limited Edition Book in a Week, which was a printing class combined with binding.

The Minnesota Center for Book Arts is another large center for instruction in the book arts, which also provides studio space for artists, publishes a book every year and creates exhibition programming. During fall 2006 they taught eleven sections of binding classes, seven sections of letterpress classes, two printmaking classes, three sections of paper decorating classes, one papermaking class, a Japanese calligraphy class, and a book art sampler (three Wednesdays: an introduction to papermaking, printing, and binding). One of the interesting threads in the MCBA's fall schedule was a group of three classes dedicated to making jewelry from left-over bookbinding scraps. MCBA also offers classes designed particularly for teachers, usually held in the summer, which cover binding techniques for teachers, as well as classes on topics designed to help teachers introduce book arts into the classroom. MCBA clearly has primary and secondary education as part of its mission; they also regularly offer classes for families and even preschool children in book arts topics.

The San Francisco Center for the Book is a decade-old vibrant institution in the world of workshop instruction, teaching an ambitious workshop program and creating interesting exhibition

programming. During fall 2006 they offered 15 classes in printing, all with a letterpress emphasis, 11 classes in binding (one of which was a class in how to teach book arts to children) and another 10 classes in a category the center calls "related arts": they range from a paste-paper class to a class in writing for artists' books. The SFCB characterizes this third group of classes as the "creative heart of bookmaking, where concept, materials, form and content come together."

There are many other centers of book art instruction all over the country. Pyramid Atlantic is one of the few centers that offers classes in any depth in papermaking. The Columbia College Center for Book and Paper Arts, which is the host institution for the graduate program where I teach, also offers workshops in printing, binding, and papermaking. There are so many other great places: BookWorks in beautiful Asheville North Carolina, Garage Annex School, and Penland, are only a few. They all offer a range of classes, generally, though not always, with a technical orientation. All of the centers offer some non-technique-oriented instruction. The SFCB, for example, outlines a programmatic ambition to support artistic activity through the "related arts" series of workshops. But the focus in these centers, at least as defined by how much time is spent doing what, is on teaching craft.

Based on this not-very-rigorous survey of centers of book art instruction, I conclude that in the fall of 2006, at places that use the words "book arts" as part of the definition of what they do, binding is at the heart of book arts, closely followed by letterpress printing, based on numbers of classes. There seems to be a constellation of other crafts—paper decoration, papermaking, calligraphy, and printmaking—that are taught in the context of the book arts, but at a very low frequency. It seems important to point out that while the world of papermaking has an intimate relationship with the book arts, papermaking is a medium on its own terms. Papermaking supports other activities (sculpture, for example) and crosses into many other activities, but is not offered at book art centers with anywhere near the same frequency as binding or letterpress classes. Of the three centers we examined in detail, none of them offers extensive programming in papermaking. There are places that offer many classes in papermaking, but they tend to be specialized studios. The classes that all of these institutions offer are a carefully considered blend of what they can do, given the facilities they have, and what they think their communities will choose to support. It is important to reiterate that centers that teach workshops must offer classes that will fill and run: it is pointless to offer a seminar in narrative book theory if nobody will take it. When we talk about book arts, it is important to try to understand what those words mean to the people who take these workshops. This is clear: to a lot of people, "book arts" means the crafts of hand binding and letterpress printing.

The academic world of book arts is larger than you might expect. In nearly every art department there is some kind of activity involving books, usually as part of a printmaking program. Typically (or perhaps not untypically), artists' books are mentioned in an upper-level printmaking studio as a potential outcome of printmaking. There are not very many dedicated departments of book arts, but there are a surprising number of colleges that offer one, two or more courses in the book arts. I collected course descriptions from 23 colleges that teach more than one class in book arts, and I found a very different approach to teaching book arts from the way workshop approach the field. Instead of classes with techniques as their subjects, making it easy to count which crafts are taught as book arts, most classes at schools have a conceptual framing, a title that talks about the ideas in making books, rather than techniques in how to make books. This is indicative of something important, but for now let's try to use this information to understand what is included in the category "book arts." It seems reasonable to look at undergraduate introductory classes as the place in the academy where the field of activity would be delimited. In other words, intro classes ought to offer a definition of the book arts as a part of the activity of teaching students to make books. So, here are some phrases culled from course descriptions from introductory experiences in the book arts at nine schools, picked almost at random. Frequently, the first class (where there is more than one class) is a class called artists' books.

From Mills College

This is one of the few schools with a stand-alone undergraduate book arts focus. They offer a group of at least 15 classes in the book arts, a concentration in some depth:

Introduction to Book Arts

…an introduction to the techniques, structures, tools, materials and processes used in creating artists' books. Students will explore a broad range of studio practice, including letterpress printing, hand and computer typography, simple book structures, and basic relief printmaking as they examine the relationship of verbal, visual, and structural content in books.

From California College of the Arts:

Bookmaking

In this class, we will concentrate on recognizing the book within your own work and making it real in your chosen media. Basic book structures and letterpress printing from handset type will be introduced and more advanced instruction will be tailored to individual needs.

From the School of the Art Institute of Chicago:

Artists' Books

In this multi-level course we investigate the use of books in the context of studio practice. Bindings, such as pamphlet, side stitch, accordion, and codex forms and variations are introduced and practiced. Strategies for utilizing material and form in relation to content, and for articulating pagination, such as pacing, juxtaposition, and simultaneity, are addressed in individual projects.

From Wells College

Wells College, another of the few schools with a dedicated undergraduate book arts department, offers two introductory experiences:

Hand Bookbinding I

This course introduces students to traditional bookbinding techniques by familiarizing them with the tools, materials and techniques of the craft. Students are expected to produce a set of book models that are clean, structurally sound, and consistent with the class demonstration.

Letterpress: Introduction to Typography

Demonstrations, readings, and assignments on the mechanics of handsetting and printing from metal type. Traditional and artistically innovative approaches to using this medium will be covered. Each student will create her or his own individual projects: postcards, broadsides, book, etc.

From Wellesley College:

Book Arts Studio

In an interactive setting, students will gain hands-on experience in bookmaking, with an emphasis on the creative possibilities of ancient craft and contemporary art. In the Library's Book Arts Lab, students will learn to set type by hand and print on hand presses. Students will create limited edition broadsides and artists' books.

From the San Francisco Art Institute:

Artists' Books—Structures & Ideas

This class uses the form of the book as a source of inspiration and as a medium for expression, building upon many traditional bindings and newly created structures. Students will acquire technical skills and explore different media as they create a series of contemporary artists' books. For each book, emphasis will be placed on the interactions between words and images and on using materials and a binding that support the theme or meaning. Conceptual approaches, sequence, design, editioning, and experimental books will be discussed.

From the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston:

Artist's Books: An Introduction

An in-depth introduction to one-of-a-kind artists' books. This course is for artists of any discipline who want to work in the book format. Students learn many book structures, including portfolios pamphlets, multi-signature, concertinas, Coptic and clamshell boxes. We also explore a variety of image and text-making techniques. During open studio time students develop ideas and complete 'a book a week,' which may include edible books, altered books, books made of natural materials, visual books or books that tell stories.

From Middle Tennessee State University:

Book Arts

The Book Arts Program offers two classes in book arts (ART 3550 & ART 4110) and two classes in letterpress printing (ART 3770 & ART 4770). In Book Arts I and II students learn various book binding and book designing techniques and skills. The concept of the artist's book is explored and students are encouraged to work with both traditional and non-traditional book forms and materials. In Letterpress I students learn the basics of letterpress printing using raised metal type to form text and relief printing processes to create images

From Smith College:

The Book: Theory and Practice I

Investigates (1) the structure and history of the Latin alphabet, augmenting those studies with an emphasis on the practice of calligraphy, (2) a study of typography that includes the setting of type by hand and learning the rudiments of printing type, and (3) the study of digital typography.

Of these nine schools offering introductory experiences in book arts, eight schools promote the technique of binding as central to the practice, six of the nine schools use letterpress as the method of choice for creating text, six of the nine list artists' books either as the title of the class or as a potential outcome for the class. It is really fascinating to note that seven of the nine approaches frame book making as an expressive or artistic form and talk about conceptual issues in making books. The relationship of form to content seems to be at the heart of much of this activity; at these schools, the focus is on the book as a place to make art. Wells College uses

the terms "artistically innovative approaches" to letterpress printing, signaling an intention to use letterpress as a mode of art making. Smith College alone does not use any language explicitly talking about art or expression, but Smith also teaches a class called The Artist's Book in the 20th Century, so The Book: Theory and Practice (just look at the name!) is clearly taught in a historicized and theory-rich environment.

It is hard when reading these course descriptions not to conclude that book arts means something different in the academy than it does in the workshop world. The methods used in book arts seem to be the same in both worlds. Hand binding as a way to create book structures is a common technique in almost all introductory experiences in book arts closely followed by letterpress printing as a way of generating the text and images that are also at the heart of this activity. Seen from a purely technical standpoint, workshop instruction and academic instruction seem to be about the same activities. But the activities are framed differently: "recognizing the book within your own work" (from CCA), and "investigate the use of books in the context of studio practice" (from SAIC) sound very different from "course will familiarize students with the basic materials, techniques, and history of bookbinding, or "learn the basics of hand typesetting and letterpress printing. We will cover the essentials of good presswork, including inking, imposition and impression" (from the CBA). The difference, of course, is the context for these learning experiences. The context for the academic instruction of the book arts is an academic department, the intellectual nucleus of the academy.

It seems safe to conclude, based on this not-very-rigorous methodology, that the term "book arts" in the studio art programs (where most of the classes in book arts are taught), refers to creative, expressive activity that is part of a studio practice in art, which involves book structures (binding), image and text (probably made by printing letterpress), mostly in the service of making artists' books. The Wells program and the University of Alabama program seem to operate from slightly different definitions: both of these programs seem to conceptually frame book arts in the same way as in the world of workshop instruction. On the University of Alabama MFA in book arts web site the program overview states, "The general goal for the M.F.A. program is to develop professional *artisans* (my italics) who are technically proficient in the book arts and cognizant of the historical background in which these various crafts evolved and of the professional environment in which our graduates will work," which is a very different sense of the book arts from the idea of "recognizing the book within your work." This does not mean that these programs do not value artistic expression: on the contrary, as I will show, they both seem to foreground it. In the world of workshop instruction, classes are almost always driven by technique, but in the world of academic instruction, these activities are framed by disciplinary thinking.

What is this disciplinary thinking?

"Discipline," in this academic usage, means a field of study. It seems like we use the word interchangeably with the word "profession," but it isn't the same thing at all. Some disciplines do have a direct professional practice, and some do not. Medicine, law, and architecture all have licensing requirements, and the results of study in any of these disciplines have concrete implications in the way one performs the work of a doctor, a lawyer, or an architect. These disciplines support professions in an obvious way. History, English, and a host of other disciplines mostly support the profession of professor. The central qualification for a professor is a terminal degree in, ahem, one of the disciplines.

Clearly, one needs a discipline to be a professor.

Sometime in the nineteenth century, the idea of academic disciplines arose out of the increasing specialization of higher education: the classics curriculum of Greek and Latin—which had been the only curriculum in higher education outside medicine, theology, and law—was replaced by the need to educate people for increasingly complicated occupations. Right before the Civil War, land grant universities were created by Congress through a program of giving federal land to state legislatures with the charge to sell the land and use the proceeds to create institutions of higher education. These new institutions were given the charge to create universities "where the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life" (Morrill Act, signed into law in 1862 by Lincoln). This financial incentive to create institutions of higher education with the express purpose of providing vocational education, created new kinds of academic divisions: departments dedicated to formulating curricula for professional practice of what had formerly been occupations learned through apprenticeships. This should sound familiar: when occupations turn into professions, especially in the context of higher education, a great deal of thinking about what constitutes necessary knowledge and identifying basic principles goes into forming a curriculum. The discussion revolves around knowledge and ways of knowing, rather than around ways of doing. It is

this kind of thinking that creates the idea of a discipline: the transmission of skills is now based on abstract knowledge, since the teaching happens in a context removed from the actual practice of those skills. Thinking about doing creates a new awareness of that practice, and the focus of this new discipline becomes thinking, not doing. A farmer turns into an agronomist, a blacksmith turns into an engineer, and in the case most interesting to us, a painter turns into an artist. During the twentieth century, studio fine art became a discipline in American universities.*

So, in this context, an academic discipline is a branch of knowledge that is taught and researched at an institution of higher education. Markers for a discipline are an academic journal (peer-reviewed is considered most desirable), professional organizations, and discrete departments in academe, especially graduate programs in the field. The presence of all three of these cultural institutions certifies that there will be a developed body of thought about the endeavor, a conceptual framework for thinking about how and why practitioners adopt one way of doing things over another, and a philosophical framework for explaining the central issues of that occupation.

So, to get back to book arts, let's look at studio fine art, one of the two major sites of book arts education. There can be no doubt: studio art is firmly a discipline in the academy now. Using the marker test, we can see the College Art Association as the umbrella professional organization for college art professors. It publishes two journals, both of which are peer-reviewed. There are at least 250 NASAD-accredited undergraduate departments of art in America and something like a thousand colleges and universities that offer degrees with some concentration in art—out of perhaps 2,500 four-year public and private institutions in America. Clearly, studio art is firmly ensconced in the academy as a disciplinary kind of knowledge.

But the very idea of fine art as a discipline, i.e., a branch of knowledge rather than a craft of making, still seems like an odd construction, a kind of unintended consequence of putting studio fine art instruction into the context of the American university. Centuries of artists learning their craft through apprenticeship, a kind of learning where the how and why of doing are transmitted simply by imitation, have been replaced by studio art courses, that on the one hand frequently don't teach young artists how to do anything at all, but on the other hand excel at investigating the cultural role of art, at teaching artists to think critically about what they do, and at positioning what they do within a larger context.

My favorite undergraduate art professor (Dick Lebowitz, a photography professor at Rhode Island School of Design) came into my sophomore studio class, on the very first day in my major, and announced, "Technique is the only thing that can be taught, but I am not going to teach any technique in this class." We were all stunned, since what we wanted to know was how to create cool pictures, not to spend hours and hours looking at and talking about our work. But, in fact, all we did, for six hours every week, was look at our work and talk about it.

This was not a waste of time, by the way. I learned how to think about art, discipline-style by talking about it incessantly and I believe it helped me make better art.

And yet, there is still some kind of cognitive dissonance in the study of studio art as a discipline in the academy. Study can be as creative a practice as anything else, but there is a real difference between the mode of thinking in study and the mode of thinking in making art. Study is analytic, a taking apart, a dissection of an existing corpus of thought. Art making is synthetic, a putting together, the creation of a new corpus. This is too reductive, but in this overly-simplified dyad we can see the fundamental tension between art and the academy: the friction between doing and thinking. As a professor myself for nearly 15 years now, I am only too familiar with the problems untenured artist/professors in universities and colleges have in explaining how what they do has rigor, or seriousness of purpose. Merely making things seems like too much fun to many serious members of the professoriate.

Or, as one of my colleagues in another, non-art, discipline once said, "Art school seems like having dessert all the time." Sometime in mid-twentieth century America, the MFA became the terminal degree for studio art and thus, through some special logic, equivalent to a doctorate. An MFA, according to the CAA, is supposed to be disciplinary certification of professional ability: in this way of thinking, a person with an MFA is a professional, university-trained artist. An MFA in book arts, that rare and worthy achievement, certifies that someone is a professional book artist, I suppose.

So then why does that sound so odd? It is interesting to think about nondisciplinary approaches to any of the traditional professions: the power of certification is so powerful that phrases like "jailhouse lawyer," "shade tree architect," or "amateur surgeon" seem like a warning, like you would be crazy to trust those people with anything other than a damp paper bag. Contrast that with the term "outsider artist," and we begin to see some of the problems with art as a discipline. Outsider artist, more often than not, suggests someone with a fresh viewpoint, an authenticity of expression, that a university-trained artist clearly wouldn't

have. In fact, the term "university-trained artist" sounds like a negative value judgment: my own imagination paints a picture of the university-trained artist as someone comfortable with difficult literary theory, someone who makes work that would make an ordinary person feel alienated or uncomfortable, someone who would not be able to earn a living from the sale of their own work unless they succeeded in being certified by an unimpeachable authority like the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Obviously (at least to my own imagination) the work of a university-trained artist would be difficult in some way, sexually or politically challenging, certainly not merely pleasant or life-affirming. And all that coming from someone who likes difficult art and spends his time training future MFAs!

The notion of professionalism in the arts, particularly in the visual arts, is haunted by the persistent myth of the artist as a hero, the artist as a cultural outsider, the rebel who has special access to feelings and knowledge ordinary people cannot tap into. The idea that there could be a professionalization of a supernatural ability is patently absurd and is the source of the cognitive dissonance: if you have to be a weirdo to be an artist, then obviously training can't make you weird.

Or can it?

The problem is with the myth, though, not with teaching artists to think hard about what and how they do things. Moving book arts into the academy, shifting the emphasis from how to make things to asking why we make things the way we do, and questioning how they will be seen and used is a transformation that has already happened. And it has improved book arts: people are making better work as a direct result of this transformation.

What characterizes this emerging discipline of book arts?

When people receive their training, even in the supposedly simple case of learning a craft, it always includes so much more than just technical instruction. When we teach classes in letterpress printing, or hand binding, we are doing something much more than teaching people how to make things using commercially obsolete technology. An enormous range of values and assumptions is always transmitted in even the simplest technical instruction: values about what is appropriate to do or to use, what is proper or permitted in a particular mode of making. All these values, transmitted unconsciously or consciously through instruction, shape how we decide what to make and how we make it. In other words, teaching technique always includes a conceptual framework for activity.

So, how are we conceptually framing these activities?

Starting with the dumbest level: people make books in book art classes. Why do they make books? Here are some rationales: "They will be encouraged to use the book form to meet artistic goals" (Nova Scotia School of Art and Design); "Traditional and sculptural books provide exciting options for artistic expression." (MCAD); "Graduates leave with knowledge of the fluid integration of text, image, structure, materials and technique, able to use the book as a vehicle for personal expression." (OCAC). I think it is easy to see that the reason most schools offer classes in book arts is to include making books as a form of artistic expression. Most programs are teaching book arts in order to get people making books that are works of art. I think this means, gasp, they are really teaching artists' books.

Well, that's not a very controversial conclusion, is it, when most of the intro classes are called Artists' Books? The controversy might arise if someone asserted that book arts are about the idea of traditional book crafts being used to make traditional books, with no idea of expression as a part of that project. This would be an exaggerated crystal goblet idea, where the maker's duty is to transparently reveal the words of an author to a reader, in a dignified and appropriate context. But none of the academic programs we examined are actually saying that: they are all in basic agreement that the purpose of the book arts is to encourage artistic expression. For example, the University of Alabama MFA program, arguably the most craft-oriented degree granting program, states, "We are interested in developing craft skills based on historical principles and techniques, and the artistic expression that follows," a clear declaration of interest in expression as the final result, the object of study. So, the discipline of book arts focuses on making books as an artistic activity. The term "book arts" includes artists' books as part of the discipline: a central part, especially when the instruction happens in art departments, but not the only outcome from activity in the book arts. The outcome from study in the book arts might thus be characterized as learning to make books as vehicles for artistic expression.

When we teach people to make books that are expressive vehicles, how do we encourage this expression to be embodied in the object? "Students realize the potential of narrative, sequence, and pacing, together with the importance of combining word and image" (Purchase College's Art of the Book class); "Students explore the book as an art form that incorporates three-dimensional as well as two-dimensional structure, time and sequence, text and image." (University of the Arts MFA program description); "We go over simple bookbinding methods, including a session on paper mechanics (pop-up structures), but the emphasis will be on how the

format enhances the concept." (the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston); and "Students will explore a broad range of studio practice, including letterpress printing, hand and computer typography, simple book structures, and basic relief printmaking as they examine the relationship of verbal, visual, and structural content in books," (Mills College).

This points to one of the very central ideas of the discipline: that the book delivers a time-based experience created through interaction of the format (or structure) with text and imagery. A book articulates this time-based experience and projects a voice through use of a multitude of crafts and other disciplines: typography, book structures, image-generating media (which includes practically every artistic medium ever used), creative writing, papermaking, and, if you get right down to it, almost anything imaginable, including performance, video, and sculpture. This is starting to seem odd: This defines a discipline that seems at the very least intermedia and, at its most extreme, interdisciplinary. It also sounds strangely familiar: let's see: an activity that works with words and images to create communication, using a variety of media…

There is a tremendous overlap between the academic teaching of graphic design and the academic teaching of book arts: typography, page design, book design, issues with communication and semiotics, narrative, investigation of how ideas are invested into objects: these are all examples of issues common to both activities. The biggest difference, as far as I can see, and it is a complex one, is the issue of creative authorship. In artists' books, at least, authorship is a central issue. In book arts, not so much. For example, we might all agree that the Arion Press *Moby Dick* is an impressive achievement, a beautiful slab of a book, a noteworthy achievement in book arts, but I don't think anybody wants to call it an artists' book. And I think we would agree that substantial creativity went into making *Moby Dick*, but is it a unique work of art? I don't think so. By the way, that doesn't take anything away from it. Not everything has to be a work of art.

One of the things that always struck me, back when I taught graphic design, is how graphic design, unlike all the other areas in a traditional (whatever that means) art department, is not medium-based, but is a conceptual framework for activity. Basic graphic design is about form and communication, and it can be executed in a variety of media. Book arts, as a discipline, is also about form and communication. I am happy to see that some schools are creating centers where the issues common to book arts and graphic design are being explored by students. The Text and Image area of the School of the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and The Center for Word, Text, and Image of the San Francisco Art Institute, are dramatic examples of this, but there are many places where letterpress shops are kept as typographic labs for design students. I hope that as the discipline of book arts becomes more consolidated, the connection to the practice of graphic design also strengthens: books arts could be the research and development zone for graphic design, and if more places like these interdisciplinary centers are created, it will enrich and expand the study of the book arts.

Let me try a definition: Book arts is the study of making books as expressive artistic objects. This practice focuses on thinking about how books create meaning, how books function culturally, and how a book can be a unique experience in art.

That is my simple version of the discipline of book arts, but I am left with a great many other questions: why do the book arts, as a name for a practice, make such a fetish of the hand made? If the conceptual focus of the discipline is on the way a book creates a time-based experience, wouldn't that allow any methodology for making? Why privilege obsolete methods?

Why do we have such an emphasis on traditional techniques in book arts classes?

Here is a really interesting statement from the wonderful and rigorous UC Santa Barbara program (from the college web site): "Book arts reflects the understanding that as new technologies emerge, older technologies persist as art forms." Here is a quote from Inge Brugeman "The traditional and craft foundations give such a complex and important starting point for any contemporary artist book maker that I would hate to see us distance ourselves from them. I would like to see us continue to critically define the distinct areas that fall under the umbrella of artists' books (book art) and educate the larger art community to understand its different and unique facets." (a reply posted on the JAB Online website) I agree. One of the hallmarks of this discipline may be an understanding that the history of the craft traditions is important to understanding how meaning is created: in typography, for example, an understanding of the history of type is crucial to understanding how type creates a voice for text.

It is the growth of book arts instruction within art departments that is driving the creation of a conceptually defined discipline. Departments that are separate from art departments are free to teach however they want, as long as they have the support of their administration. Book arts instruction that occurs within a larger department are subject to the same standards and criteria as any other instruction within that department: in our case, the teaching of the book arts, when it happens within a studio art department, must

fit in with all the other art teaching. The hallmark of teaching art as a discipline is thinking about craft activities in terms that stress the conceptual rather than the technical aspects of the activity: In other words, the why and what for of making, rather than the how. And that explains the difference between the way workshop-oriented book arts are taught and the way book arts are taught in the academy.

So, finally, I want to be explicit here: I believe that the central practice in art is the making of things. Art is not philosophy, in fact it is a bad, sloppy place to do philosophy. Art making is always concerned with materiality is the service of expression. So, when I talk about a conceptual framework for teaching book arts, I am not trying to reject craft in anyway. Craft is a way to talk about how we interact with materiality, how we shape the things we use to embody whatever it is we are trying to express. People like to make things, and why not? The making of things is a delightful, playful, joyful part of being human.

The pleasure of making something, of making something well, is frequently a complete experience for some people. I do not want to take that joy away from anybody. But I think it is a problem when I assume that the joy I had in making something, the pleasure I took in creating a well-made object, should be enough for all the viewers of my work. It is not. There has to be some other aspect to a work to make it engage an audience, some kind of exchange of value to make it a worthwhile experience. I love to look at beautiful things, but when I read a great book, it isn't the type that takes me away.

The movement of studio art instruction into the academy has been accompanied by a shift in teaching priorities. A discipline is a conceptual framework, a way of framing activity, and art as taught in the academy has become about ideas. The model of what an artist does has shifted from the talented craftsperson, someone skilled at creating representation or form, to the notion that an artist manipulates ideas by creating form, and that the ideas are the juice behind the form. Book arts are becoming another part of the world of studio art, and young artists are making books as just another way to make art.

** I am heavily in debt to Howard Singerman's excellent book Art Subjects: Making Artists in the American University for my understanding of the development of art departments and the professionalization of art in the academy. I urge you, if you are interested in this at all, to read his lucid and interesting book.*

Clifton Meador is a photographer, writer, and designer who makes books. His recent books explore history and place through narrative and experimental design. He is the director of the Interdisciplinary Arts MFA in Book & Paper, at Columbia College Chicago.

Before coming to Columbia College Chicago in 2005, he was a professor of design at the State University of New York at New Paltz, where he co-founded an interdisciplinary design-photography MFA program, the Visual Research Laboratory. He has worked at several artists' book production facilities and was the director of Nexus Press 1984-88. He has been the recipient of several grants and fellowships, most notably as a two-time recipient of NYFA fellowships (1995 and 1999), and as a 2003 Fulbright Scholar to the Republic of Georgia. His work is in many major collections of book art, including the Museum of Modern Art in New York, the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, and the Yale Art of the Book collection. Mr. Meador holds an M.F.A. from the State University of New York, Purchase in the Art of the Book, and a B.F.A. from Rhode Island School of Design in Photography. He can be reached at <cmeador@colum.edu>

Teaching Book Culture

By N. Bradley Christie

"…I have swam through libraries….
Melville, Moby-Dick"

Herman Melville, we know, was a voracious reader who maintained a large personal library. So it should come as no surprise that when he came to classify whales in the "Cetology" chapter (32) of *Moby-Dick*, he did so in book terms. In fact, Melville's catalog of whales might well be used to introduce the unfamiliar to the basics of sizing books and their pages from folio to duodecimo, etc. Students consulting the Norton Critical Edition of *Moby-Dick* will find in the footnotes to Chapter 32 just that, a mini-lesson on textual bibliography. Melville himself even explained in a note why the second Book of whales is denominated *Octavo* instead of *Quarto*: "Because, while the whales of this order, though smaller than those of the former order, nevertheless retain a proportionate likeness to them in figure, yet the bookbinder's Quarto volume in its diminished form does not preserve the shape of the Folio volume, but the Octavo does" (Melville, *Moby-Dick*, 121, n. 7).

The Norton Critical *Moby-Dick* is generally regarded as definitive and its apparatus unparalleled. Yet in Book II (*Octavo*), Chapter III (*Narwhale*) of the "Cetology" chapter, a curious note appears. The narrator, Ishmael, is describing the narwhale's "peculiar horn," really just an extended tusk, similar to the blade of a swordfish, marlin, or bill-fish. Ishmael notes that no one knows for certain the purpose of the narwhale's horn: "—however that may be," he muses, "it would certainly be very convenient to him for a folder in reading pamphlets" (Melville, 122). The word "folder" of course occasions the footnote, which reads, "Usually the cover used when pamphlets are loose leaved, not stitched; here, a page turner" (Melville, 122, n. 6). A page turner? I think not. I think that Melville was just wily and witty enough to mean here a *bone folder*, perhaps the signature tool of the book artisan.

For one thing, bone folders come in all shapes and sizes to serve all sorts of purposes.Like many prized hand tools, bone folders tend to be modified with care to meet the exacting preferences of their artisan owners. That is, they can be unique, rather like the curious looking narwhale. For

centuries bone folders were made by hand, mostly from cattle or deer shanks; today many are manufactured from a range of polymers and synthetics, including Teflon. But in Melville's day of course many were made of whalebone or baleen, the bone-like material lining the mouths of certain lesser whales and used for making corset stays, rulers—and folders, among other items.[1]

As a bibliophile and mariner, Melville would have known that, and he would have delighted in the bookman's inside jest, depicting in his great book the lowly narwhale as something of a book fancier himself. In a course on American Romanticism last spring (2006), only one student had any idea what I was talking about when I pointed out this curiosity in *Moby-Dick*. She was the only one in that class who had also taken the Winter Term course I teach on book arts. After I asked her about footnote six on page 122 and jogged her memory about tools of the book maker's trade, we chuckled together as insiders may. The rest of this article describes why that student and I could enjoy together Melville's little joke, and perhaps why teaching book culture remains so important.

I teach this course, which I call simply *The Book*, in a three-and-a-half-week Winter Term scheduled between two traditional college semesters. The Winter Term consists of only eighteen class days, during which most classes meet for at least two and a half hours. The idea(l) is to combine "traditional and innovative approaches to learning", allowing for "concentrated study in one area….and…opportunities to develop creativity…" (Erskine College Winter Term Catalog, i). Exploring book culture and conducting hands-on projects in the book arts seems a natural fit for this kind of less than conventional academic term.

The course syllabus describes *The Book* as "a course on books as physical objects, as made things. Students learn about the history and variety of approaches to book-making, about the many parts and processes required to produce a book, and about some famous and especially beautiful examples of the book maker's art. The course includes a significant hands-on component, which gives students the basic supplies and skills necessary to make paper, to make minor repairs to damaged books, and to make several of their own handmade books" (Winter Term *Catalog*, 7). Students should know right up front that this is not a lecture course or another opportunity for passive learning.

I generally open the course by reading aloud from Annie Tremmel Wilcox's beautiful memoir, *A Degree of Mastery*, about her book arts apprenticeship under Bill Anthony at the University of Iowa Center for the Book: "*A Circumstantial Narrative of the Campaign in Russia*. This book has come downstairs to my workbench in Conservation from Special Collections because it needs treatment. It's not old—it was printed in 1817—and will be a good book for me to practice conservation techniques with. I pull out a treatment survey and report sheet and begin to fill it out" (Wilcox, *Degree of Mastery*, 3). I have asked students first just to listen for Wilcox's solid voice, not for mine. Upon a second reading, I ask them to freewrite about what they hear. Already some will be curious about the difference between Conservation and Special Collections departments. Many will note that 1817 seems pretty old to them. Some students pick up on the idea of practicing certain techniques and beginning with a written record. Good. I read on:

> This book's major problem is that it doesn't have any covers. All that remains attached to the text block is the original leather spine of the binding with its label. [*What's a text block?, many will ask in their freewriting*] The leather appears to be calf and has red rot, a condition of older leather that causes it to turn red and crumble at the slightest touch. As I examine it, the spine leaves smudges all over my hands. [*Yuck! or Gross!*] Since this is a tight-back book where the leather cover is glued directly to the back of the text block, I will probably not be able to save the spine piece. With luck, however, I will be able to remove and reuse the label. [*Cool, can she do that? How?*]

In the next four paragraphs, Wilcox describes opening the book for the first time, noticing its "faint musty smell" and the foxing on its pages. She mentions tears on many pages, especially along edges, and how her treatment options will only make the paper "softer and more vulnerable" (Wilcox, 4). She completes her survey sheet and takes a set of slides documenting the needs she has assessed. In pencil she letters the pages that aren't numbered. "Now I am ready to begin 'pulling' the text block—the process of taking it apart for treatment. I open a tool drawer and take out my lifting knife" (Wilcox, 5).

Usually that's all it takes. By the time I get to the end of this opening reading, if the class isn't also ready to take up old books and quirky hand tools and get to work, then I urge them to drop the course. (There's always a waiting list.) I then carefully place on the seminar table before them one of six volumes of *The Poetical Works of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* published in Boston by Houghton Mifflin in 1886. This book is in much better condition than Wilcox's copy of the *Circumstantial Narrative*, but it shares some of the common problems the students have already heard described: Especially if I handle the book with cotton gloves, they can see the smudging typical of older leather. Although this book has its original cover, when I open it gingerly, students can see that it is attached at the hinge only tenuously. They can see for themselves a badly torn onion skin page facing the traditional frontispiece portrait of Longfellow looking scholarly in middle age. Fortunately, I can't show them foxing on these pages, but I do invite students to breathe in that "faint musty smell older books often have" that Annie Tremmel Wilcox evidently finds pleasant, as many of us do.

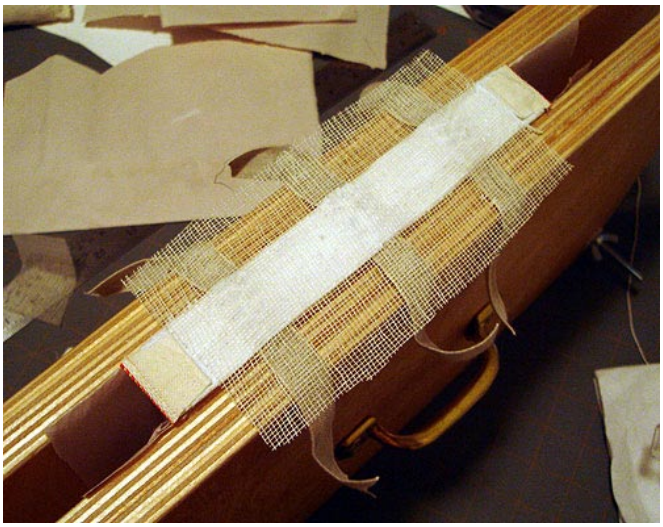
Wilcox had ended that first section of her memoir by opening a tool drawer and taking out her lifting knife. At this point, I do likewise, opening on the seminar table a large drop spine box in which I keep my own collection of bookbinding and repair tools. I begin, of course, with a bone folder, which I sometimes use as a lifting knife. (Maybe that's what they mean in the *Moby-Dick* footnote about the narwhale's tusk "folder," but I doubt it.) Students then receive their own bone folders, metal straightedges, synthetic fiber brushes, cutting mats, bottles of PVA, bulldog clamps, blunt-ended sewing needles, waxed linen thread, and sundry other items to start

their own tool kits. With other materials shared by the whole class, these are also the things they will need to complete nearly a dozen projects in book design, construction, and repair.

The first of those projects we do that first day in class. After an introductory mini-lecture on the beginnings of the book and some basic points about paper, the class makes scrolls. We talk about why scrolls date back nearly to the advent of writing, and how useful and versatile they are as a storage system. We then brainstorm collectively about how scrolls still might be used today. Students come up with some interesting ideas: using a scroll instead of a guest register at a graduation party or wedding, keeping a record of one's growing CD or DVD collection, or a visual record of one's tattoos. I keep in my office a handmade scroll containing the course syllabus for *The Book*. Depending on their respective purposes, students then select quality papers for their scrolls, checking the grain and determining how many sheets they will need to glue together. This is a very simple first project, but it entails several important basic concepts, among them paper selection and sizing, careful measurement and cutting, choice of material(s) and method for securing the scroll when it is rolled up, and initial work with PVA glue.

The scroll project generally brings us to the close of the first class session. At the end of the period, I give them a syllabus; their first assignment is to study it and to finish detailing their scrolls. I read to the class every day. By the end of the first week, they've heard the entire opening section of *A Degree of Mastery*, "Beginnings and Endings," and early parts of the second section on "Tools." Also that week in addition to scrolls, the class tries their collective hand at accordion fold books and pamphlet construction. Along the way, they've picked up information about how paper is made and the mechanics of moveable type.

That pattern of interspersing light lectures with reading aloud and supervising hands-on projects obtains for the rest of the short term, as the projects become steadily more demanding. In week two, for instance, students sew their first signatures and experiment with various stab binding techniques to produce an album or notebook. By week three they are working with multiple signatures and rudimentary casing in. For many this is the highlight of the course, taking turns with their own handiwork on a standing casing press. The culminating project is an eight-signature book sewn over tapes exposed at the spine. Students may then case this text (or not) as they wish, and their creativity always impresses me.



I have emphasized the experiential features of this introductory book arts course, but it includes other elements of note. Two textbooks are required, one a manual for the hands-on projects, and the other a more scholarly or literary work in the field. In the former category, among many good choices available, I have had the most success with Kathy Blake's *Handmade Books: A Step-by-Step Guide to Crafting Your Own Books*, and Shereen La Plantz's *Cover to Cover*. The strengths of this latter text are numerous. Like most instructional books of this stripe, *Cover to Cover* is itself a beautiful book, lavishly illustrated with dozens of examples of each technique presented. Hand drawn figures illustrating every step of a given technique are clear and easy to follow. And to exemplify finished products, La Plantz has selected an especially nice mix of "over the top," artsy handmade books-as-sculptures—pieces well beyond the abilities of a novice—with many examples of the more basic, including simple project models for nearly every design. Students see right away that they can make books like some of these, while at the same time perhaps aspiring to make a more complicated work of visual book art someday.

The main theme of *Cover to Cover* is that the basic techniques to make all kinds of books are essentially the same: "When an idea is a good one, keep making variations," La Plantz preaches (La Plantz, *Cover to Cover*, 26), "All [books of a certain type—all pamphlets or fold books, for example] use the same technique; only the format changes" (La Plantz, 29). The variations described and illustrated for each of seven basic structures presented in the text make *Cover to Cover* an excellent resource for the course designed to introduce models and then have students experiment with them.

Any course about book culture should probably also be in part a course about the love of reading books as well. To help address that aspect of the course, I have tried a couple of different approaches. I first had students read Umberto

Eco's fascinating novel about old books, *The Name of the Rose*. Unfortunately, even in an immersion-style setting where students (theoretically) concentrate on only this one inventive course they're taking, a book like *The Name of the Rose* proved too much. Too much arcane detail, too much Latin, too many pages. Students generally enjoyed the mystery at the heart of the novel—and they liked the fact that the mystery involved secret books—but, maybe not surprisingly, most preferred the movie version, in which the whole case is resolved in about two hours. I still like the idea of the class reading a best-selling book about book culture. I have toyed with the possibility of having them read Robert Hellenga's *The Sixteen Pleasures*, A. S. Byatt's *Possession* (which also made a good movie but is also too long), or one of the "Bookman" novels of John Dunning. Emphasizing other dimensions of bibliophilia or bibliomania, I myself devour the books of Nicholas Basbanes, but these works are, like *The Name of the Rose*, a bit too daunting for the Winter Term.

Instead, the book I like best for the course is another personal favorite, *A Passion for Books*, edited by Harold Rabinowitz and Rob Kaplan. The subtitle says it all about this gem of a compendium: "A Book Lover's Treasury of Stories, Essays, Humor, Lore, and Lists on Collecting, Reading, Borrowing, Lending, Caring for, and Appreciating Books." Students are to read and ponder this book at their leisure during the term. As with *Cover to Cover*, they should read the text from beginning to end, but both of these books encourage browsing through their contents, lingering at spots that capture a student's attention, and then moving on to other parts of interest. Occasionally I will demonstrate that point by taking a break from my in-class reading of Wilcox's book to read aloud favorite passages from *A Passion for Books*. The difficulty here is deciding which favorite to read: Eco and Basbanes both are here, as are Roger Rosenblatt, Robertson Davies, and A. Edwin Newton. I nearly always read from Anna Quindlen's "How Reading Changed My Life." And the many book lists are irresistible, among them "Ten Best-Selling Books Rejected by Publishers Twenty or More Times," "Ten Memorable Books that Never Existed," "Norman Mailer's Ten Favorite American Novels," and of course the infamous Modern Library list of "Top 100 English-Language Novels of the Twentieth-Century."

As they browse through this inspiring volume, students are to note their own favorites by keeping a reader-response journal. Their journal entries may take any form(s), as long as they strive for honesty and reflection. As they learn more about making books by hand, I encourage them to embellish their journals in any ways they like. By term's end they must bind their reading journals as a handmade book of their own design and construction. For students taking the course pass/fail, the journal is their only formal writing assignment. Those electing to take the course for a letter grade must also submit a 5-7-page paper, either a brief, researched exploration of some historical or technical topic of interest to them, or a more formal reflective essay in response to any aspect of bibliophilia like those addressed in *A Passion for Books*.

Parts of *A Passion for Books* concern book care, which relates directly to another of the course workshops. About mid-way through the term, I take the class to our campus library, where our cataloger and archivist graciously shows them some of the rarest treasures of our own collections. Then she escorts us to a large studio-like space where she has gathered a number of books so badly damaged or misused that they have been removed from circulation. She and I then introduce students to a handful of basic book problems and repair techniques.

We give each student a book in such poor condition that it likely cannot be salvaged: this becomes a "guinea pig" for their initial practice at doing what on the first day of class they heard Annie Tremmel Wilcox describe doing at the Center for the Book in Iowa. For at least a day, each student is to study that ruined book like Louis Agassiz's proverbial fish (or Ishmael's whale) and assess its needs on a check sheet much like Wilcox's treatment survey page. Over the next few days, using their own materials and others supplied by the library, students begin to make repairs.

They mend torn or dog-eared pages; they strengthen or restore bent corners on covers; they tip in loose pages or tighten loose cover hinges. The most common and most popular repair is to build new spines for books which may then return to the circulating stacks. In 2005 some two dozen books returned to circulation after these repairs. A former student now repairs volumes almost exclusively in her work-study time in the library; in 2006 that student trained a second library technician to make basic repairs like mending tears and replacing spines. As gratifying in a different way, each year several students ask if they may keep their "guinea pig," hoping to salvage it with enough proper care.

The first time I taught *The Book* course I had planned for an artisan to visit and conduct workshops with students on at least one of the basic projects. The particular craftsman, who agreed to do this, Jake Benson, is an excellent conservator, but his real genius is in marbling papers. By the time the course came around, this young man had suspended his book repair business to return to graduate school full time, but the effort to enlist experts, especially book artisans, is a feature I still hope to add to the course.

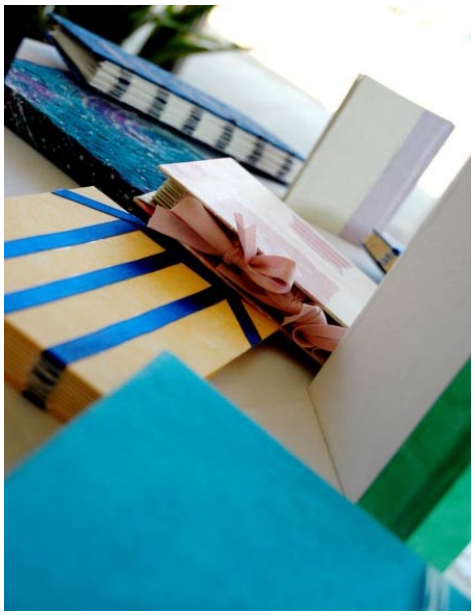
Similarly, though we have done it a couple of times, I would like to take better advantage of exhibits at nearby museums and libraries. For instance, the Robert C. Williams Paper Museum is located at the Georgia Institute of Technology, just over two hours distant from our campus. Even closer, in Greenville, SC, every couple of years one member of the art department at Furman University, herself a book artist, mounts a major book arts exhibit at the university art gallery. And most helpful is the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections at the University of South Carolina's Thomas Cooper Library. Here major items are always on display: in 2002 an exhibit on The English Bible, in 2003 the Ralph Waldo Emerson bicentenary exhibition from The Joel Myerson Collection of Early Nineteenth-Century American Literature; in 2005 highlights from an extensive collection of fine printing; and in 2006-07 Fredson Bowers, A Centenary Exhibition on the scholar who founded modern bibliography and textual editing. Like many major research facilities, the USC library has also opened a Digital Archives Center, which features a growing number of online databases of unique materials from special collections. The center's first project digitized fifty original leaves of medieval manuscripts. Recent additions to the online archives include a digital sheet music project and 151 pages of handpress printing and its antecedents.

Wonderful as such resources are—and they are wonderful—nothing adequately substitutes for the feel of working with these materials by hand: sewing one's own signatures, gluing one's own tapes, or covering one's own case; "weighing" papers between the fingers, holding them up to light to detect their chain lines or watermarks, and folding them along their grains. Over the years, project by project, one gravitates toward his favorite tools, and those tools come to reflect the book artist herself. Late in the first or early in the second week of *The Book* course, I read to the class this passage from *A Degree of Mastery*:

> Each apprentice worked to develop a personal set of tools. I had been building mine gradually since I first enrolled in Bill [Anthony]'s classes. I began with a single bone folder—a long, slender, flat piece of polished bone used primarily to sharpen creases when folding paper—that had been given to me by Kay Amert when I took her typography class....
>
> Kay's class gave me the opportunity to create my first book from beginning to end, composing the text, designing the page layout, setting the type, printing the folios, and binding the books....
>
> In one of the last demonstrations during that course, Kay had shown us how to do a simple full-cloth case binding. This was my first binding lesson. As her hands moved through the steps of the simple case construction, I was attracted to the tool she kept using to construct the cover....After she was finished, I picked it up. It was cool, but warmed immediately in my hands.
>
> "Where can I get one of these?" I asked her.
>
> "You can't buy them here in town," she replied. "Just keep this one," she said.
>
> It was the generous act of a good teacher. It was my first bookbinding tool and one of my most cherished. In fact, bone folders became my favorite tool. (Wilcox, 60-62)

Mine, too. And the favorite of many of my students. I'm guessing it also might have been a favorite of Herman Melville's, which may be why he referenced it in his greatest work. Melville never had a class like Bill Anthony's or Kay Amert's or mine. "But I have swam through libraries and sailed through oceans," he says through Ishmael. "I have had to do with whales with these visible hands; I am in earnest; and I will try. There are some preliminaries to settle" (Melville, 116). That's another passage I recite on the opening day of class. Sometimes I even put it on the front page of the syllabus. That, I tell students, is what they will do in the next few weeks, dealing with books (instead of whales) with their "visible hands." I let them know that I am earnest in the endeavor to guide them; I will try. We settle some preliminaries, and then together we dive in.

Selected Student Works



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<http://www.hollanders.com/supplies/bookbinding/images/bbrepairkit.jpg> [repair kit]

<http://www.cailun.info/index.php?/categories/3-Rants> [book casing]

Personal photographs [damaged book, repair tool kit]

Footnote

1 – "Library lore…states that the original bone folders were taken from the corset stays of early pupils of Melville Dewey at Columbia U. Hence, they are 'bone folders' because they were made from baleen, a cheap bone-like substance taken from the mouths of whales and used for corset stays, rulers and other functions, very prevalent during the 19th and early 20th centuries." From Robert L. Hadden, author of the Internet web site *netbib*, a German library site. This familiar anecdote about bone folders is cited from a page on "old days of libraries," accessed on August 8, 2006, at <http://www.netbib.de/art/hadden.htm>

N. Bradley Christie is Professor of English and Coordinator of the Theatre Program at Erskine College in Due West, SC. He teaches a first-year seminar on reading as a craft, and literature courses that highlight the importance of reading and book culture to the development of American literary history and culture. In the Winter Term described in this article, he alternates The Book course with a similar hands-on course in fly fishing and a study program in New York City, which includes excursions to libraries, book exhibits, and as many wonderful book stores as the class can stand. He can be reached at <nbc@erskine.edu>.

The Book Art of Melissa Jay Craig

By Jen Thomas

Melissa Jay Craig is a book artist whose work easily inhabits both the craft-based world of traditional book arts and the sculptural world of fine art. For reasons unknown to most working within the field of book arts, this feat seems difficult to achieve. Her freestanding book objects are easily at home nestled between other artist's books or displayed as purely sculptural objects on their own. Life-size book forms resembling trees rising up from the ground force viewers to challenge their idea of what a book should look like. Bark becomes spine. Lichens become pages. Trunk becomes book.

Anatomically Correct: Filtration, 2003, kozo, abaca, black cotton denim, packed sewing on dyed hemp cords, dyed raw silk endband. 18"H x 6"W x 6"D

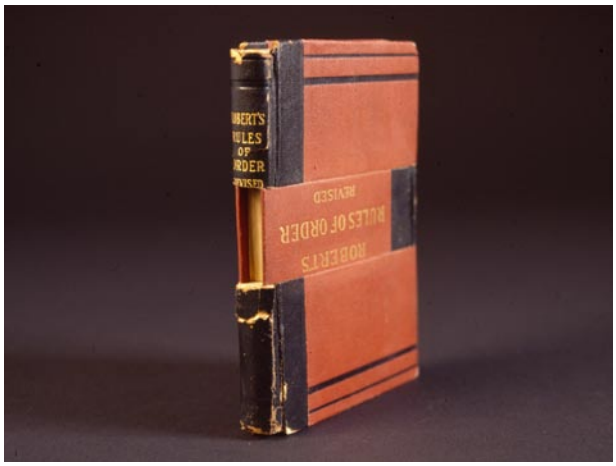
…A Memoir, 2004, kozo, abaca, acrylic stain, walnut dye. Sewn to flax-wrapped hemp cords. 72"H x 16"W x 28"D

Craig's work has slowly evolved into many different forms over the last 30 years. She began her career as a painter in Cleveland, Ohio after briefly attending Cooper School of Art in the seventies. Though she had developed a small collector base, Craig became disillusioned with painting, realizing that collectors looked straight through her painstaking work, choosing paintings simply because they matched their decor. She began to make assemblages in addition to the painting, and also to implement large-scale outdoor "non-commissioned public works" that were installed in the dead of night around the city of Cleveland, with a group of friends known as the Regional Art Terrorists.

In 1986, she moved to Chicago to study at the School of the Art Institute, where she discovered book arts almost by accident. One semester into her painting degree, Craig began experimenting with book art while looking for an affordable, more democratic way to make art that could easily be distributed to a wider audience. By working with the book form, she could also actively engage the viewer with words, images, and 3-dimensional forms.

Though initially drawn to the democratic and economic nature of the book form, Craig soon became completely absorbed in the expressive potential of the book. Its physical form and the processes needed to create it all fascinated her, but she was particularly enthralled by the potential of the book to communicate and express, as well as contain ideas. She translated themes from her paintings into traditional book forms and then began to experiment by altering existing books. This allowed her to play with words and the action

of reading. She soon left the painting department and never looked back.



Altered book, early 1990s

Craig then began to use the books themselves as objects or building blocks, creating installations with them to actively engage the viewer in the act of reading, as well as in the act of moving and absorbing visual information.

It was during this time at the Art Institute that she studied under Ray Martin and Joan Flasch, both of whom encouraged Craig to explore the creative potential within the book form. Soon her pieces evolved from traditional book structures into stylized book objects. She took these book objects a step further and created an installation titled *Library*. Without a universally accepted critical definition of book arts, Craig was free to let her ideas materialize without the limitations that painting had previously presented.

Library, 1991

Though Craig felt free to experiment with the book form, not all those working within the field of book arts recognized her work as artist's books. The critic Clive Philpott once derided Craig's work during his lecture at an artists' book event at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. Craig says, "I had some of my altered books there and he referred to them directly, saying, 'These are NOT books. They are fetishistic objects.' Knowing his particular bias, I felt honored to be included in his condemnation. I do make objects. Books are objects. What makes them fetishistic is their inherent resonance, the ability to communicate on a visceral, nonverbal level. So, like the issue of beauty, I can embrace that description; fetishistic objects carry an implicit communicative power. They can be read."

Maquette, 1990, found dictionary, scale model brick, flexible caulk, drawing.

In the years after leaving the Art Institute, Craig's book forms continued to shift and change, while still remaining "fetishistic objects" and retaining her unmistakable satirical voice. She moved away from installed work to focus on books constructed with found objects. Soon she found herself teaching book arts to a new generation of art students who had never before discovered the form that she had fallen in love with.

Though she had never intended to become a teacher when she began her Master's program at the Art Institute, in 1991 Barbara Lazarus Metz asked Craig to teach a bookbinding class at Artists' Book Works and she agreed. After that she was offered many more teaching opportunities and spent the mid-nineties running between classes at Loyola University, Gallery 37, School of the Art Institute, Artists' Book Works, and the Newberry Library, often all in a single week. She also traveled, teaching workshops at different locations around the country, and managed to continue free-lancing as a set builder for commercial photo and video productions.

Artists' Book Works was enveloped by Columbia College in 1994, becoming Columbia College Chicago's Center for Book and Paper Arts, and Craig continued to teach there. She then slowly relinquished all of her far-flung part-time teaching jobs to focus her energy into helping to grow this new Center, first as Exhibitions Coordinator, then part-time faculty, and finally as a full-time Artist-in-Residence, a position she still holds today.

Since joining the Center for Book and Paper, Melissa has created seven courses that are now included in the permanent college curriculum. Her classrooms have become communities in which students can continue to experiment with the book form without limitation and push boundaries in a supportive environment. Her students approach book arts from a variety of disciplines – papermaking, performance, video, sculpture, writing, printmaking, and fine binding – and Craig manages to encourage each of her students to create book and paper art that reflects their personal affinity for these unique and disparate backgrounds. Benjamin Chandler, a former student and educator himself, says, "She has the ability to go to the meaning and heart of what you want to say in your work and help you to say it better. She is enthusiastic about her students' work."This sentiment was echoed over and over by former students who offered "It is rare to find a teacher who has the degree of deeply heart felt dedication to the success and well being of her students", "Melissa is very generous with herself", and "I loved that she never projected her own agenda or issues onto me, and listened to me fully as my own person and artist." She has also been able to balance being an inspiring teacher and successful working artist simultaneously, a balance that many artist/educators find extremely difficult to achieve. In 2002, Melissa Jay Craig was awarded the Excellence in Teaching Award at Columbia College, an honor she received by being nominated by both students and fellow faculty.

Though she's been receiving kudos from former students and faculty for the last several years, Craig has said that it wasn't easy for her to find a home in academe.

Her artist's books were considered too sculptural and, well, too wacky for institutions looking for a fine binding instructor or an artist who focused exclusively on multiples.

"I'm difficult to pigeonhole. I'm not exclusively a sculptor, a bookbinder, a papermaker, a printmaker, an installation or collage or assemblage artist, yet I do all those things, without a set hierarchy. I use what I learned as a painter and a carpenter constantly as well, and periodically incorporate my drawing into my work, and I tend to think and solve problems with drawings rather than in words. Book artist is the most convenient term, but it's one that people like to argue with.

I came into the Interdisciplinary Arts Department's developing book arts MFA program at Columbia College in 1996, and this unique approach allowed me to embrace teaching as well."

Page spreads from Manifest, O, 2006, Kozo, abaca, translucent goatskin vellum, tie-dyed goatskin leather, bamboo, Walnut dye, acrylic stain, Prismcolor drawings. Sewn to hemp cords, dyed lined endbands, modified split-board binding. 18.5"H x 12.5"W x 5"D closed.

Several years ago, Craig's approach to book arts changed dramatically after learning that she was losing her hearing. She was shocked at the news and stopped making artwork in order to process it; she needed to mentally prepare herself for a future without sound. Audrey Niffenegger, in an act of faith, invited Craig to create a piece for an exhibition she was curating, on the basis of one of her sketches. Melissa revisited the altered book form, arranging them into the expanding rings of a large tree trunk named *DisAfter*. This was the beginning of a new phase of work in which her books took on more forms pulled straight from nature.

DisAfter, 1998, altered books, 68"diameter

When she finally returned to making art, she began to experiment with kozo, a papermaking fiber that she had never used before. Having no formal training in papermaking, Craig spent her first residency at the Ragdale Foundation the following year to experiment with kozo exclusively. She found that this quiet plant fiber could speak so loudly on its own, taking the place of words in her new pieces. Her new books took the form of trunks, empty shells of books with no pages, no words, to reflect her future world without sound.

Forgotten Knowledge, 1999, kozo, edition of 12.

As her hearing had slowly deteriorated, Craig had unconsciously learned to read lips to compensate for the lack of sound. "I didn't realize that's what I was doing; I read lips so well that I actually believed that I was hearing", she says. When she discovered the extent of her hearing loss, the sudden realization that she had learned a whole new form of reading began to heighten her awareness of other forms of reading. Her books then became more far more tactile, compelling viewers to absorb meaning through the smell or touch of plant fiber and the book's physical form, instead of the written word strung together in a standard narrative. Craig's physical limitation seemed to unleash creative possibilities in her new artist's books.

Craig's deteriorating hearing also piqued her interest in other forms of entropy occurring in nature. She began to collide the book form with decaying carriers of information found in the environment – seed pods, plants, desiccated tree trunks, and fungi. These often huge sculptural bookworks are at once compelling and repellant, urging viewers to touch, but warning them that nature is fragile and there could be bugs hiding in there! (At least that's what I always think when I contemplate pulling back one of her brightly colored kozo fungi pages.)

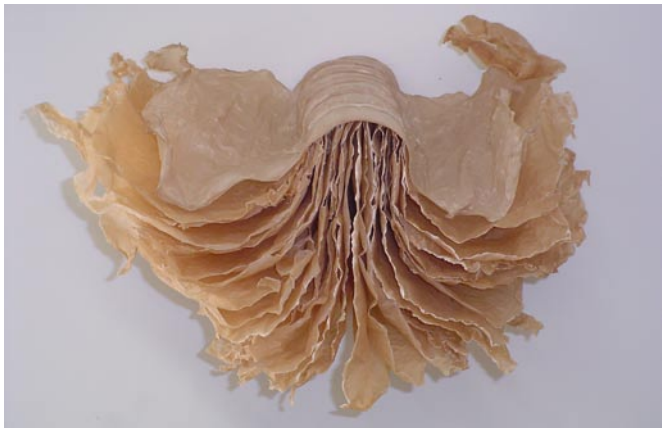
She continued to experiment with kozo, in addition to other plant fibers such as abaca and flax. Craig began molding these fibers onto forms and eventually added color to them with procion dyes. Her tree books grew a host of paper plant life bursting with the color of fungus. She was now thoroughly seduced by paper and eventually acquired her own beater, turning her basement into her own papermaking studio.

That's Life, 2005, kozo, abaca, walnut dye, procion dye, oak, poplar. Adhesive binding. 30"H x 34"W x 12"D

Craig brought her paper experimentations into the classroom at Columbia and designed a sculptural paper class. The woman who dropped out of papermaking class within the first week while at the Art Institute and waited ten years to try it again had now fully embraced the medium and was intent on sparking that same enthusiasm in her students. (After writing that sentence I'm reminded of my own grad school beginnings, eye-rolling at the thought of having to make my own paper. Now I work almost exclusively with handmade paper. Do all book artists go through this love/hate relationship with paper?) When I asked her the same question, Craig offered, "It is weird… the material just suited me so well that it *demanded* that I learn it, and it continues to demand that I keep expanding."

As Craig has expanded her work with paper, her artist's books have achieved a level of aesthetic beauty that she had almost deliberately avoided in making earlier pieces. Admittedly afraid of making "beautiful" work, Craig struggled with the new natural forms that her books were taking. She feared that viewers would only see the beauty and then move on without further exploring or engaging with her pieces. It is a struggle that most artists deal with – making work that is aesthetically pleasing, yet thought provoking at the same time. She says she has finally embraced making beautiful things, and lost the accompanying uncertainty about how they'll be perceived.

And for those who are reluctant to call her a book artist, Melissa leaves us this thought, "…Though my art is often called sculpture and often called book art; to me, it is simply my art. It is firmly based in the book, in my fascination with book structures, and in how books function for us; my work would not exist without my strong and multifaceted relationship to books and especially to reading. But in the end, I simply make things that I personally need to see existing in the world." Regardless of what kind of artist she is or isn't, I'm glad that her pieces exist in this world - whatever anyone chooses to call them.



Ganoderma Bibliatum (Specimen 9), 2007, abaca, adhesive binding, 13"H x 16"W x 11"D

Jen Thomas is a writer, printmaker, and book artist who lives and works in Chicago. When she's not constructing three-dimensional board games about renter's nightmares and painful weddings, she spends her time editioning etchings of trailer parks under her own imprint, Veronica Press. Her writing has appeared in Punk Planet, Afterimage, and Blister Packs - a Love Bunni Press anthology. She can be reached at <jen_thomas@mac.com>, or on the Web at <http://www.flickr.com/photos/jenthomas>

Solving the Production Puzzle: Jigs and Other Tips for Hand Binding Books in Multiples.

By Priscilla Spitler, Hands On Bookbinding

Priscilla Spitler inspecting 2005 edition of artist Jim Dine's book, Oceans, printed by the Tandem Press, University of Wisconsin in an edition of 37 books and boxes, including artist's proofs.

It has been both surprising and encouraging to witness the interest in production binding in recent years by the many requests I have had for workshops on the subject. Often it seems like a big hoax when I pull out some basic jig made from scrap binders' board, assembled with glue or double stick tape, and wrapped in clear plastic tape for ease in cleaning. It is the awe from students when I demonstrate its use that makes me feel like I just pulled a rabbit from a hat.

There is nothing new about using jigs for multiple or repetitive bookbinding operations. Nor is there anything unusual about what I have to share, except that these simple aides can make the job go faster, more efficiently and consistently. While I pull from scrap materials at hand in my rural studio, more ambitious jigs can be machined or created with further investigation and reuse of other products in the market. A trip down a home improvement center isle can yield endless possibilities for making jigs.

Most important in what I hope to extend by using a simple jig in a workshop is the spirit behind finding an appropriate solution that will make the job easy and even fun. Originally a printmaker in the 1970s first interested in editioning prints, it was natural that edition bookbinding appealed to me when I became a bookbinder in the 1980s. But it is not just the jigs or set ups that make a job flow, it is a game plan, a numbers game, even the simple joy of watching one pile of undone work grow into the pile of done ones.

As a student at the London College of Printing (1980-1981), my main tutors Alfred Brazier and John Mitchell taught us to work on multiple single item jobs at once, a good habit. As one book was pressing, we were taught to be busy with a step on another, always multitasking. My real exposure to production work came from the eight years I trained staff at the original BookLab, Inc., in Austin, Texas, to work in the house style preferred by chief owner, Craig Jensen, whom I dub the master of jigs. At BookLab we were constantly challenged to come up with efficient means for speeding up the job while maintaining quality craftsmanship.

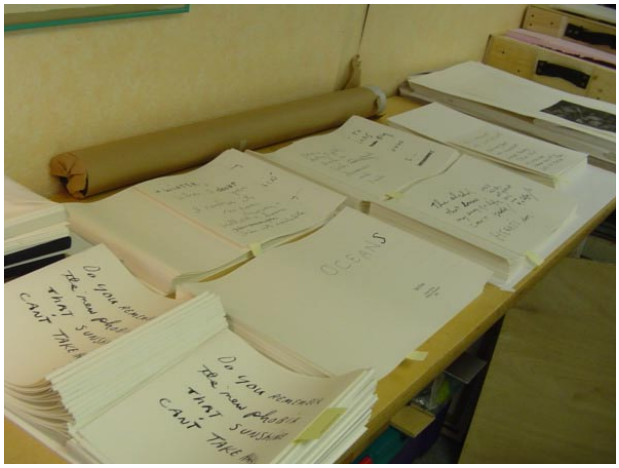
Down to Business

How does a hand binder with an art degree somehow make a living at edition binding? It is not just the jigs; it is the planning and the on-the-job experience with both the successful and sometimes the not so successful jobs. I do not profess to be the expert. I have no business degree. The tips I share in this article come purely from my own experience and from discussions with other binders who do edition work. In particular, my suggestions for coming up with a shop rate are intended to open a dialogue on the topic.

As part of my workshop series on edition binding, I created an outline breaking down the process from the beginning to the finish of an edition job with a prospective client. Many of these steps can be made applicable for individuals who wish to hand bind their own book editions. The content of the original outline has been adapted for this article.

Specifications and Design

Initially, each book edition has a set of given specifications to gather before estimating the cost for both the materials and the labor involved in binding it. First, obtain all the details about the job from your client, whether they may be a publisher, printer or an artist, photographer.



The Dine text arrived crated. Each full spread required scoring and hinging to create a folded edge at the fore-edge, which the artist requested.

Specifics should include the actual size and format of the folded sections for the book, the number of sections (signatures) to sew, the quantity of books to be bound, and the basic materials desired for its binding (cloth or leather, for example). It is important to know from the onset whether there is a deadline like a book signing or an exhibit already scheduled for this edition. Make a bid checklist.

> *Tip: In a "hand" shop, you may want to set a limit to the size editions you may take on, in quantity and also format. Be realistic about your limitations. Too often, I have seen artists or photographers go for large quantity editions (don't be fooled, 100 books is large for a hand bound edition). It could take years for a deluxe edition to sell and the client (or you!) may loose interest in it and move on to new work before it has sold out. For this reason, avoid breaking up the binding of an edition job (or set an agreed schedule for binding it), or else you could end up warehousing materials and unfinished projects.*

Selection of Binding Structure & Design

Choose or direct your client toward an appropriate binding structure and to suitable materials for the specified job. When working with a client for the first time, expect to invest some time educating them as far as structure, materials, grain direction, printing specifications, etc., to make sure your job as binder goes more smoothly. It will also save them money in terms of your labor. However, do not give them too many options or else there may be confusion or complicated choices.

After this initial period of exchange, the design process eases as a working relationship is established. It will be a worthwhile investment in the long run because, if happy, the client will return for future or regular work that bypasses this learning curve.

Creative Challenge

Each job has a different set of problems to solve, some normal with simple solutions and others more complex requiring special treatment. Within reason, be open to the creative challenge the client may present. Flexibility towards artistic demands can lead to new discoveries and use of materials that you may apply to future work in your studio. You may resist them at first, but the key here is to know where to draw the line or to know what your limitations are. Searching for a design solution for a specific job may also cause interaction and consultation with other binding colleagues, so everyone learns.

Finally, if dealing with an institutional client, the most creative challenge may simply be dealing with the constraints within their system such as to how to get a deposit for the job before you start. You are not in the business of financing them during production, so often, once a bid is accepted, you can get around this problem by invoicing the job in two parts, the first one for the deposit.

Job Bid

It is necessary to estimate as accurately as possible the total cost to produce job, both in labor and materials.

Labor

Once the structure and materials have been selected, break down all steps for the labor involved in binding the edition. Estimate the time for completing each step, down to the second. It helps to begin with a single book or unit of the edition and the steps involved in binding it (understanding that later, time will be saved by batching each operation or step together when in production).

Times assigned to each of the steps can be determined by past job experience, from daily work sheets or from keeping a job diary listing the operation and quantity done in a set time. Or, there may be a bit of guesswork, assigning time to a specific task without real hands on tests. You could use a stopwatch and go through the motions. Don't forget setups or other movements when estimating time and average them. Sometimes, estimating time is a bit of trial and error.

Once times are assigned to each task or step, total up the time estimated for binding per unit or individual binding and multiply that figure times your shop rate, which has been broken down to the minute. Then, multiply the unit labor cost times the number of books to be bound for the total labor for an edition.

Materials

Make a separate list of all materials required for the job and calculate the quantity needed to order, including their cost and shipping. Some binderies add an extra 10-15% when estimating cost of materials. Plan to order a little extra material and paper in case of flaws, for prototypes or errors, especially if stamping titles or engravings on cases is part of the job. After figuring the total materials cost, divide that total by the edition number to get a unit material cost. Add that figure to the unit labor estimate for the total per book.

Estimate or add on any extra expense of possible subcontracted work, the engravings for stamping titles or any unique add-ons for the particular job. You may not be able to determine these costs during the initial bid process, so it is best to list these items separately.

About Shop Rates

If you intend to bill for this kind of work, it is important to establish a shop rate or hourly rate. How might one do this? You could consult with other binders to get a general feel for the "going rate". But, some binders may not be so forthcoming with what they charge on an hourly basis, especially if they are competing for the same job.

Other factors such as experience should be considered, but a good guide is to first look at your overhead. One formula might be to total the rent or cost of workspace, the utilities, general shop insurance, etc., for the month and divide that figure by 30 to get a daily rate. Break the daily rate down by the hour and then by the minute. A fellow colleague divides her month by 20 since that is the actual time she works in her bindery. It would also be more accurate to divide the daily overhead by the actual hours of operation.

To this hourly overhead figure, add what you need to charge to cover your own pay or any help you may have, and even health insurance broken down to an hourly figure. This will give you a real look at what you need to charge. Finally, add more for a buffer or profit margin, if possible. For example, you may aim to earn three times the cost of labor if you have employees. Balance the total hourly figure you have established against what you feel is the going rate, or that you feel you can charge for the job. Adjustments may need to be made.

Shop rates may vary. A binder in New York City may have to charge more than one living in another, more rural part of the country. Unfortunately, edition work is competitive. Clients are looking for the best quote because they are usually selling the book or binding afterwards (though some opt for quality over the best rate if they appreciate your work). Once a quote has been made, it must be honored because the client/publisher has already done advance work to sell the edition at a set price.

With custom or individual work, single item jobs, it is most often bid on an hourly basis and it should be understood that it might cost more at the end of the job. With conservation work, treatment reports and estimates are given and they are almost always done on an hourly basis ---- usually at a higher rate than production work, which is a fact. This might be explained by the extra training to do such work, special equipment needed, or the high insurance costs to cover valuable works in a shop. It is also true that an institution or collector with a rare or personal artifact is usually more willing to spend more for single item conservation work.

Prepare a formal bid

Give a full description of the proposed job including the structure selected, the materials, and all details such as text trims, rounding and backing, stamping, etc. It is not necessary to reveal your time estimates or hourly rate, unless the job is being billed on an hourly basis. Clearly state whether the bid includes all or some of the materials and what they are (not necessarily how much they cost). List the unit price per book or box edition (or set) and then the total for the entire edition.

> *Tip: In case the client opts to cut down the edition number after your bid is submitted, state in the initial bid that any changes may mean a unit cost increase and that a new or adjusted bid may need to be submitted. For example, while the labor may remain the same, the material costs and shipping per unit increase because you have to buy them by full sheets, by the yard, or by the full skin of leather.*

Be clear about what is not included in the estimated bid or quote, such as the shipping expense and that it is to be added to final bill; or, any extras not yet determined such as stamping dies or subcontracted work. State your terms, such as when and how much deposit is required and when the balance is due.

It is a good idea to include an approximate date the job will be completed once it is scheduled and is in house. It is also wise to state how long the bid is good for, or to place an expiration date on it. Unfortunately, from my own experience, there has been the rare occasion when I have placed a bid, received the deposit and even purchased materials for a job, and then the job comes to a halt and sits, month after month, due to a printing or design problem. In this case, keep in touch with the client for updates and if they are extended, resubmit bid with new labor costs if changed.

You may want to sign your bid before submitting it to your client for approval. Today, however, most of this process is done by email, so the paper copy may be a thing of the past. I email bids and follow up with a signed paper copy in the mail. You might require the client to sign a copy as a contract, particularly on a large edition. But, generally, the receipt of a deposit is an accepted bid and agreement. It is also understood, with edition work that once you receive a deposit that you must honor your estimate and keep to that bid. Keep the bid sheet handy in a file or on the computer in order to reference during production for details and time awareness.

Materials are ordered once the deposit is received. The ordering of materials is critical to the timing of the project. Always keep informed with the client about the printing schedule or progress if waiting for text.

> *Tip: Consider charging a fee for bids up front and then crediting the cost from the final bill once the job is done. If you choose to do this, the client should understand this from the beginning. The fee may cover some of the time invested in preparing the bid in case it is not accepted. It could also eliminate those potential clients who are not really serious about their projects.*

Prototype

Make a prototype or "spec" binding from either a dummy provided by client, such as blanks of actual paper to be used; or, by working on one set of text sheets from the edition. If a prototype is requested for client approval, it should be returned for reference during production. Charge for the prototype if the work is extensive or additional ones are requested with changes (on hourly basis).

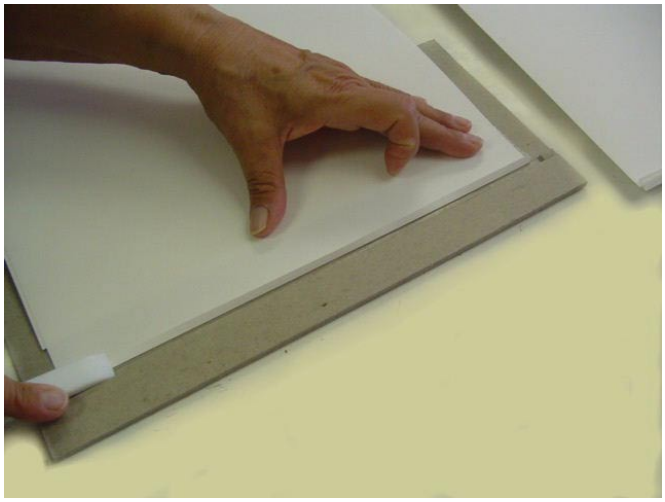
> *Tip: During the bidding process, a separate estimate for a prototype might be included at a different rate than the production rate (it will no doubt take longer). The bid should be adjusted if extra steps and/or materials are added after initial dummy.*

A prototype may not be necessary with repeat clients now more familiar with the process, their structures and with your work. However, the first spec binding develops awareness of all steps involved in the specific job. Often just sewing and preparing one of the text blocks in the edition, then making the case but not gluing it to the text, is all that is needed to gather the cuts or measurements needed. This binding also helps to plan the job during production and to decide when a jig might speed up operations.

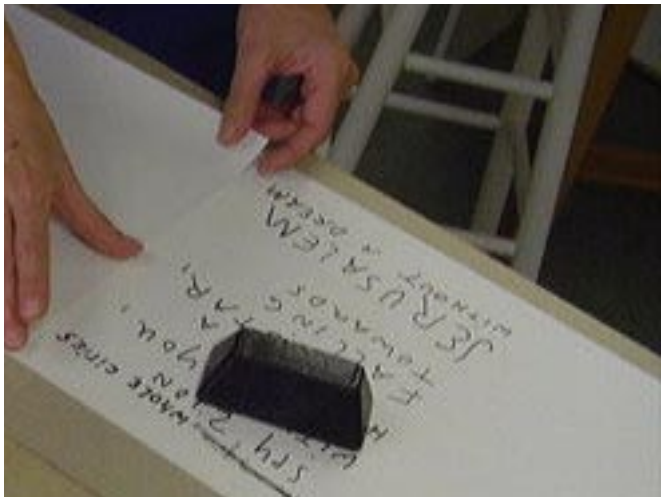
Prepare a cut sheet. The spec binding establishes final size specifications and measurements for cutting materials. If done first, it also determines the exact quantity of materials to order, if not yet calculated during the bidding process.

Production

Organization & Scheduling. Preparation of job components begins with the unpacking and inspection of text sheets and materials from the printer or artist client. Prepare set ups or jigs for certain operations, and a job folder with clear specifications, particularly if you are working with others in the bindery.



Scoring the Dine text for hinging two full spreads into sections for sewing.



Another simple jig helped align the two page spreads. Hinges were alternated from spine to fore-edge to distribute the swell.

The order of all steps is planned from folding and collation of signatures (usually done by the printer, but not always), sewing, making cases and casing-in, to finishing and shipping. Tasks are assigned if working with staff. Once working

from prototype specs and a cut sheet, some steps are done in sequence and others can be done simultaneously. It is important to carry the whole edition through each stage or step if possible, for better efficiency, to avoid multiple set ups, and to gain speed on repetitious jobs.

Teamwork helps to overcome any dread of repetitious steps by setting group goals and for pacing each other. Teamwork helps maintain steady flow of production and transition of steps. If working alone, however, one can set personal goals by the hour, or on a daily/weekly basis.

Cutting Materials

Cut materials for the entire edition, plus extras in case of loss in production. Examine cut specs in advance for the most economic cuts in use of both time and materials. If the largest cuts are made first from the full size board, for example, then you can make better use of scraps or off cuts for smaller parts. Templates can be used for rough cutting cloth and leather. If possible and when you have control, guillotine the paper, rough-cut sheets of cloth or even board (though board may dull guillotine blades quickly).

Assembly & Construction

Prepare jigs when needed for speed and consistency. The time invested in the construction of the jig should merit the time saved in production. For a few items or single items jobs, making a jig may be too time consuming to prove useful. Set up workspace for most efficient movement.

Craig Jensen's set up for stamping case spines consistently at his BookLab II bindery.

Finishing (Stamping & Labeling)

Edition cases should be completed and dried before setting up for stamping spine or board titles, engravings or for stamped recesses on the hot stamping machine. Advance planning is required when cases need to be stamped before casing in. Obtain artwork for title or design from the client well in advance, or direct them to order it themselves from a supplier (like Owosso) and have them drop shipped to your bindery. Order the engraving as soon as possible to avoid delay. Allow time for stamping samples for foil color choice, if client requests it.

A special trim pad was needed to compensate for the swell at both the spine and fore-edge while trimming the head and tail of the book.

Profile of Jim Dine's Oceans shows trimmed edge.

Post Production

Inspection

Cleaning, inspecting and wrapping books or boxes can be time consuming and can easily eat up any profit saved in production if you are not careful. Determine key details to look for to pass inspection. You may consider adding this operation into the bidding process as part of the job. Here's where an extra copy during production can cover a possible reject. Develop awareness during production to keep clean work and clean work surfaces to avoid time spent cleaning the edition at the end of the job.

Packaging & Shipping

Size, weight and insurance value of each item may dictate the means of shipping and the quantity of containers/boxes needed to ship a finished job. Consult with client first about their choice --- they will be paying for it in your final billing. Order all packing materials and any special box sizes ahead to avoid delays. Follow shipper's guidelines for weight and size limitations. It is wise to break up the edition into manageable weights to avoid damage if dropped in transit. If the client declines insurance for some reason or under insures, at least cover cost of binding and material costs for your protection.

Shipping expense is added to the final job billing and it is determined by the shipper's charge, insurance and the cost of all packing materials. Your bindery may set a rate for packing fee, which will probably differ from shop rate for binding the job.

Priscilla finishes Bob Baris' Press on Scroll Road 2006 book edition.

Evaluation

Assessment of Finished Edition

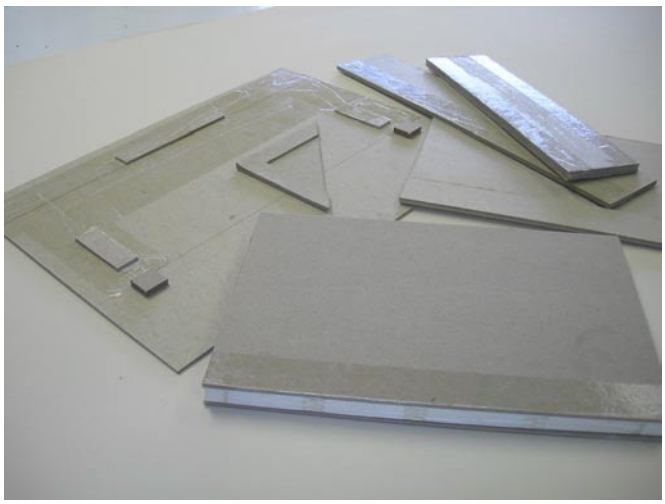
Was the job bid in line with actual production? Your time sheet or daily notebook can be reviewed. It is always a good idea to keep one even if the times are quickly jotted down on a note pad. Time recording develops awareness over time and assists in future bids, as you now know how long it takes for a certain task.

There are more questions you may ask yourself at the completion of binding an edition. Was the combination of materials and the structure successful? Did new innovations occur that could be applied to jobs in future? Or, were there problems to avoid in future? Were you pleased with the product? But, ultimately, was the client pleased?

Photograph a sample of the binding for your records. Some publishers or other clients offer a copy to the binder, while some binders request a copy of the edition, stated in the initial bid or contract. Don't assume that you will receive a copy; it should be discussed from the beginning.

Keep a file on the job, including communications, bids, and even cut sheets for reference. If the client is happy with your work, they will probably return for a future job and these records are useful for comparison. The next job may be the same format and type of materials, so you have just gained time by having the information on hand, with some modifications in new material costs.

A Sampling of Jigs



An assortment of jigs made from binders' board.

Jigs speed up the job and insure accuracy when a binding operation is to be repeated consistently. They can be very simple and may even become general tools used in the workshop, such as joint jigs for making case covers or punching jigs for hand-sewn editions. Or, the jig can be specific to an edition when the structure, design or materials require special handling.

Jigs can be made easily and inexpensively with binders' board. They can be cut, laminated, and covered with clear packing tape in order to clean and to keep edges sharp while

in use. If a jig becomes a standard shop tool, it may be worth the extra expense to make the jig in wood or to have it machined in metal.

While some jigs can serve multiple functions, most of the jigs presented here are oriented to the case binding structure, flat or rounded, since this binding style is most frequently used in edition work. Simple jigs should have simple names, and it is my hope that the name assigned to each one is self-explanatory.

Joint Jigs

Hand held joint jigs are basic tools for the workshop for creating even and consistent joints between the case spine and boards when assembling cases. Simply laminate various pieces of binders' board until the desired joint width or thickness is achieved. For easy handling, cut the board pieces to 3" x 12" before laminating. Production of large books or boxes may require longer jigs. It is helpful to have sets of joint jigs in a range of joint widths from 3mm to 9mm (1/8" to 5/16"). Clamshell box cases may only require 3mm, 4mm or 5mm joints, depending on the material used and board thickness. Bookcases need larger joints if pressed between brass edge boards, with joints made from 6mm to 9mm, with 8mm being the average.

Parallel Jigs

These jigs are useful for scoring (creasing, not cutting) off-center folds such as hinges for photo albums, turn-ins for paper cases, as well as for scoring leather on 1/4 case covers to indicate placement of side covering material.

1) For general scoring: Make the jig board length longer than object to be scored for ease in running a bonefolder tip along a metal ruler. Cut a 5/8" strip of board equal to jig length to make a "stop" for the object. Adhere strip to edge of the jig baseboard. Draw a pencil line parallel to the 5/8" stop strip, to the distance of the width of score desired. Make two secondary stops by laminating 5/8" square pieces of board. Attach these to the jig board edges, just inside the drawn parallel line. Protect the jig by neatly placing clear tape along the area where the scoring will occur. Note: If the score is smaller than 5/8 inch, cut the secondary stops to the width of the score such as 3/16 inch and place it up to the edge of the main stop strip.

Most right-handed binders orient the jig with the long, main stop to the right so the left hand can hold the ruler over the object (jig can be flipped around if left handed). To use, position object against stop and place metal ruler over the object, against the outer stops. Score along ruler with a point of the bonefolder. Afterwards, lift scored area underneath with folder and work against the ruler.

For paper cases or dust jackets, repeat the above steps but move outer stops further left to the width of the cover. If the case paper is cut accurately with the spine width considered, it is possible to score on side and then flip it around and score the other side. The spine is created by the space between the scores.

2) Scoring 1/4 leather case: Make the jig base length one inch longer than the book case board to make the jig easier to work with. The width of the jig base is critical and should be cut to the same width of the case board. Then cut a board strip to the length of the jig base length, but to the same width of the amount of leather desired on the case cover such as one inch. Adhere the strip to the base edge to create a stop.

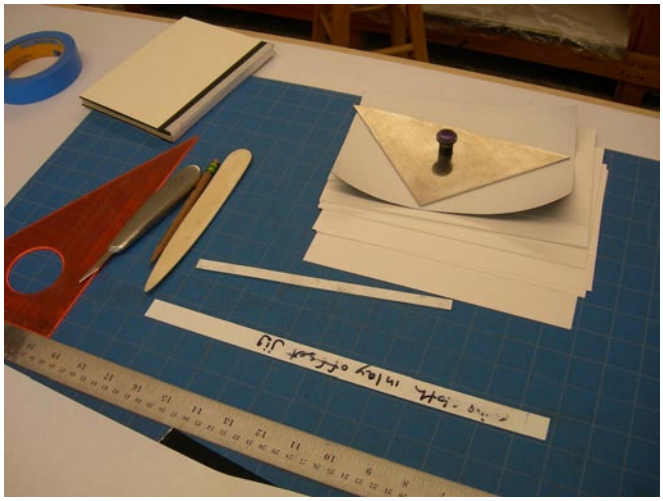
A parallel jig was used to score the leather before applying decorative paper to the case. If paper is placed carefully, the score line can look like it was blind tooled.

To use, place the jig face down and butt the stop against assembled leather case fore-edge (covered on spine only,

boards still uncovered). It should overlap the leather by at least 1/16 inch at the opposite edge. Score the leather to desired depth with a bonefolder. Excess leather can be beveled off with a knife at the scored edge, allowing the side covering to butt against the scored line. The remaining scored edge leaves a dark line that looks blind tooled.

Right Angle Jig

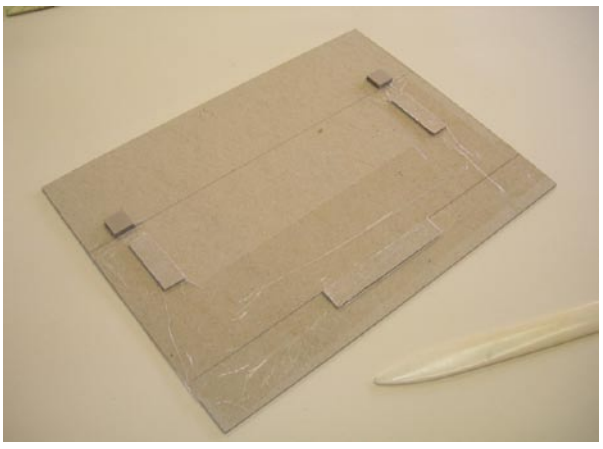
This all-purpose jig is useful for different set ups, especially if combined with secondary jigs for specific jobs. It can assist in the alignment of separate objects for off center tipping by simply marking position on the jig.



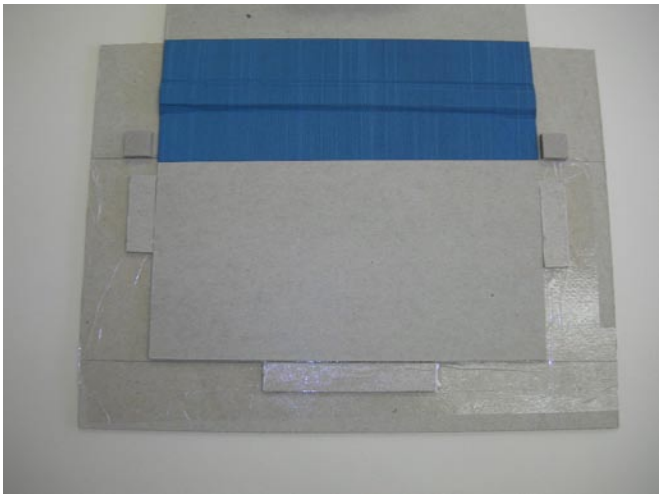
Craig Jensen's right angle jig set up using shop tools secured to a cutting mat. A similar set up can be made with binders' board.

To use for tipping photos or plates on flat sheets, cut a secondary right angle jig of card stock to the margin widths required for positioning of plate or label. Place the sheet into original right angle jig and then apply the second jig over it. Set tipped plate against the secondary jig. The secondary jig can be covered with clear tape to keep edge clean.

Three-sided Jig



One of the most popular at workshops, this jig is designed for attaching side covering material on a 1/4 case binding where the side material is to overlap the spine material. It is not necessary to trim spine material when using this jig because, if made properly, the jig will insure even placement of the side covering material.

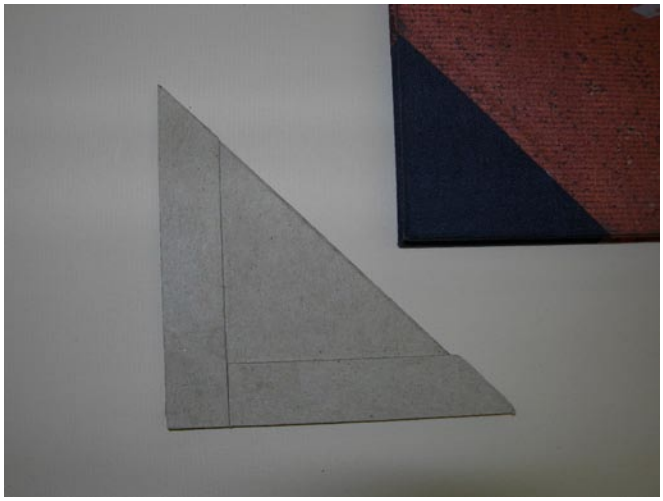


Cut jig base larger than the book case board to allow for stops on three sides and an area to secure the jig to bench when in use. Draw a parallel pencil line at least one inch from bottom edge of the board for placement of the first stop, a small 5/8" strip of board. Set fore-edge of assembled case (cloth on spine, sides not covered) against this stop, and then comfortably attach 5/8 side strips (stops) against the head and tail of case board with adhesive or double-stick tape. Cutting the stop strips equal to turn-in widths (5/8") will help with consistent placement of side material for uniform turn-ins.

Make two double laminated 5/8" square stops. Draw a parallel line from bottom stop edge to the designated position where cover material should overlap case cloth. Attach stops above line on each side, slightly outside the case sides. Once the uncovered case is positioned in the jig, the glued side

material is butted against these back stops and rubbed down along the spine overlap. Remove the case from the jig, turn over, cut corners and finish turn-ins. Place the case back in the jig to cover the other side.

Corner Jigs

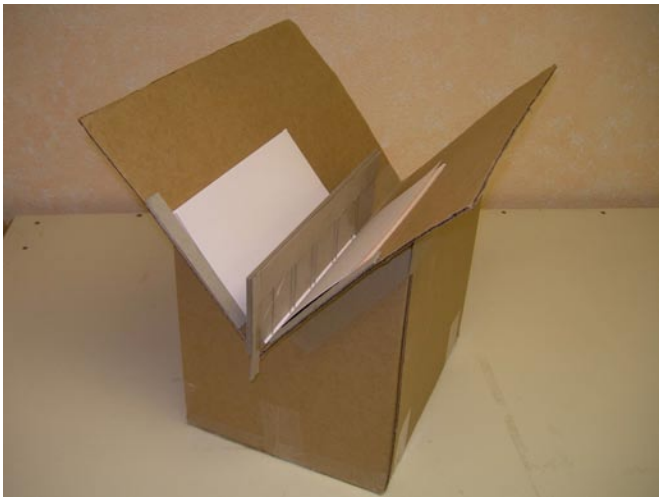


These jigs are used to attach corner material in the correct position for 1/2 case binding. They can also be used for scoring leather corners to indicate trim edge on front cover. Cut a squared board to a 45-degree triangle, equal to the size of cloth or leather corners, including the turn-ins. Two stops are cut to the turn-in width and glued at right angle edge of corner piece, then trim flush at angled edge.

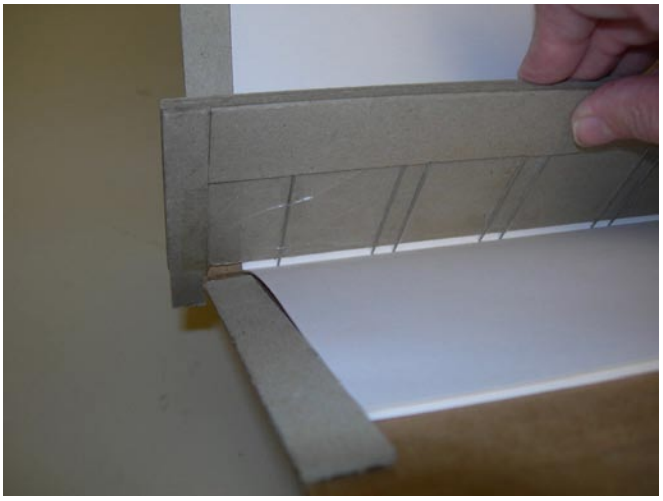
To attach cloth or leather corners to the case board, place the corner jig underneath the case with stops face up. The glued covering material can be lined up to the square of the jig. Remove jig, cut corners and turn in material. It is not necessary to trim out these corners once on the board unless a beveled edge on leather is desired. Otherwise, an overlapped edge is created when the side material is applied. Another jig could also be made of litho tin with stops attached with double-stick tape for direct trimming of covered corner (see litho tins).

Punching Jig

This jig made from a cardboard box is inexpensive to construct while time saving when there are many sections to be sewn for a book edition. It is made in two parts: the box for sections and the handle jig with needles attached for punching.



Find a box in proportion to sections to be punched. Cut a "V" shape (no wider than an 80 degree angle) on two opposite sides of the box. Cut a separate sheet of cardboard larger than an open text section. The board should extend beyond the box edge for easy attachment with paper tape (preferred though harder to find these days). Lightly score and fold in half, then place it into the "V" cuts. The scored center can be reinforced with paper tape and then punched with an awl (if necessary) to correspond with punching holes on hand jig. Place stops at one end of box to line sections up consistently.



The hand jig for punching is made of laminated board for strength, with the last laminate being shorter in width to act as a stop for the needles. An extending board strip or stop is applied at one end to align the hand jig with the box edge. Metal pieces can be set behind the needles for reinforcement. Score a slight recess where needles are to be positioned, making sure needles extend out only about 5/16" for strength.

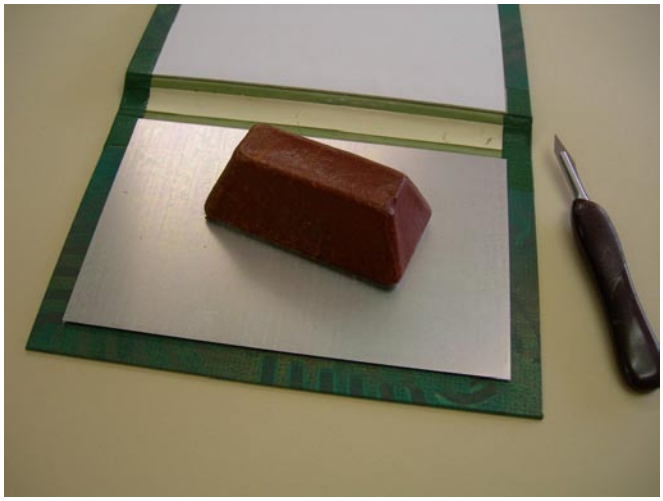
To use, set the open section in the box groove with its head against the stop. Punch with the hand jig, with its long stop secured against the edge of the box "V" fold. Note: The first

kettle hole (needle) on the hand jig should be placed from the long stop edge to the desired distance to be punched in the text fold, PLUS the width of the stops on the box edge in order to end up in the correct spot. Think about this when making setting needles in the hand jig.

Tins for Jigs or Templates

Litho tins are great for making jigs that require trimming or templates for trimming out shapes. Pick up used tins at most commercial print shops that still do offset printing. They are usually oversized, but can easily be cut down on a board shear or by scoring with a utility knife against a metal ruler.

It is only necessary to score the metal and then bend it until it breaks apart. For detailed cuts, use needle-nose pliers to work the scored area until it snaps off. Beware of the sharp edges; the tins can cut when freshly trimmed. Sand or file the edge while using a facemask to prevent breathing in any metal particles.



Trimming out template for case fills (good for leather cases). Cut a piece of tin as a guide for trimming uneven case turn-ins. This eliminates the traditional use of marking up with dividers. Line the tin up to the inside case board at the spine edge. Secure with a lightweight. If the case is set on a board while trimming, it is possible to spin the case around as the turn-ins is trimmed around the tin. Remove excess turn-ins and drop in fills cut slightly smaller than the template size.

These are just a few examples of possible jigs that can be constructed to assist in the production of book editions. Making the right jig can be a challenge for the edition binder to provide a creative solution to a specific problem, particularly when working with unusual materials or other constraints caused by a particular binding structure or design. Most important, the jig speeds up production. Whether you are an individual working on small editions or you work in a large production shop, the jig can be an essential tool for edition bookbinding.

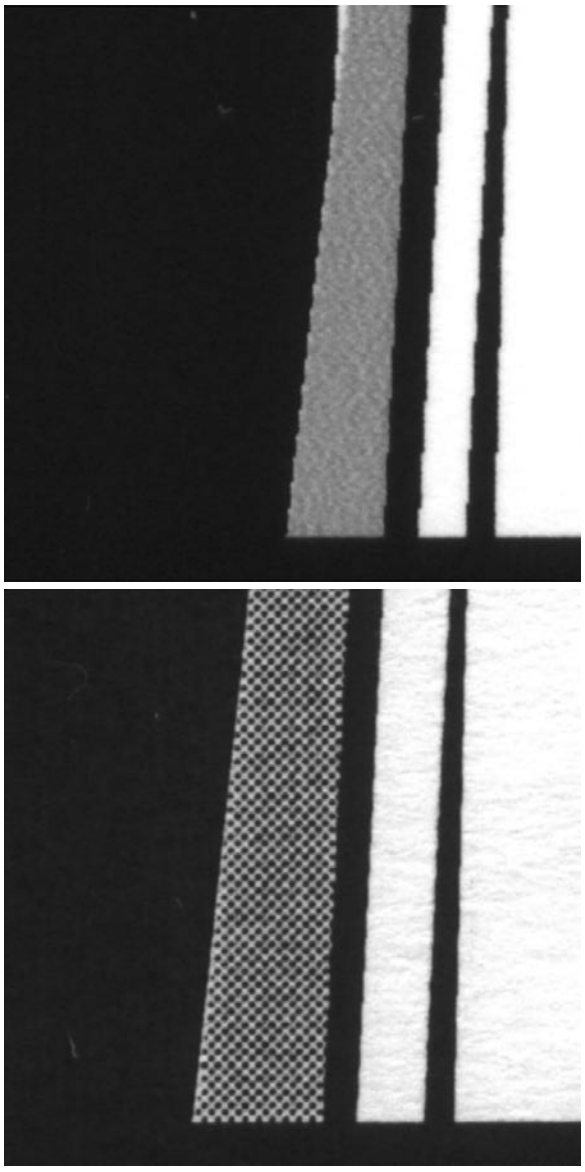
Marbled papers on books shown are by Pam Smith of Marblesmith Papers.

Priscilla Spitler has operated Hands On Bookbinding in Texas since 1995, following eight years of edition binding with Craig Jensen, first at his Jensen Bindery and later BookLab, Inc. After 20 years in Texas, this summer of 2007, Priscilla plans to move her bindery to the city of Truth or Consequences, in southern New Mexico. She is online at <http://priscilla.bookways.com/> and can be reached at <prispit@sbcglobal.net>.

Beautiful Books Digitally

By Jamie Runnells

Digitally produced books don't seem to be taken as seriously as books produced by traditional techniques. While there are as many reasons for this bias as there are book artists, one clear reason is that digitally produced work often results in poor image/type quality (unintentional bitmapping, pixilation, line or moiré patterns, and jaggies.



The first image shows a print with jaggies, which are jagged edges on type or vector images. With jaggies, your artwork or type looks fine on screen but prints jaggy. The likely cause is that your printer does not have a postscript driver. You can download postscript software from your printer's manufacturer, usually for free. The second image shows the same print without jaggies, the file is the same but was printed on a different printer.

The result of technically flawed digital work is that the content and binding of the piece are overshadowed and the viewer focuses only on its poor craftsmanship. Certainly not all digitally created books are poorly crafted, but those pieces that are don't add credibility to the medium. This article delineates some common technical flaws in digitally created/printed books and offers some remedies.

Input:

Scanning

When working with scanned images -- either photos, artwork, textures -- there are some basics to keep in mind to get the best results.

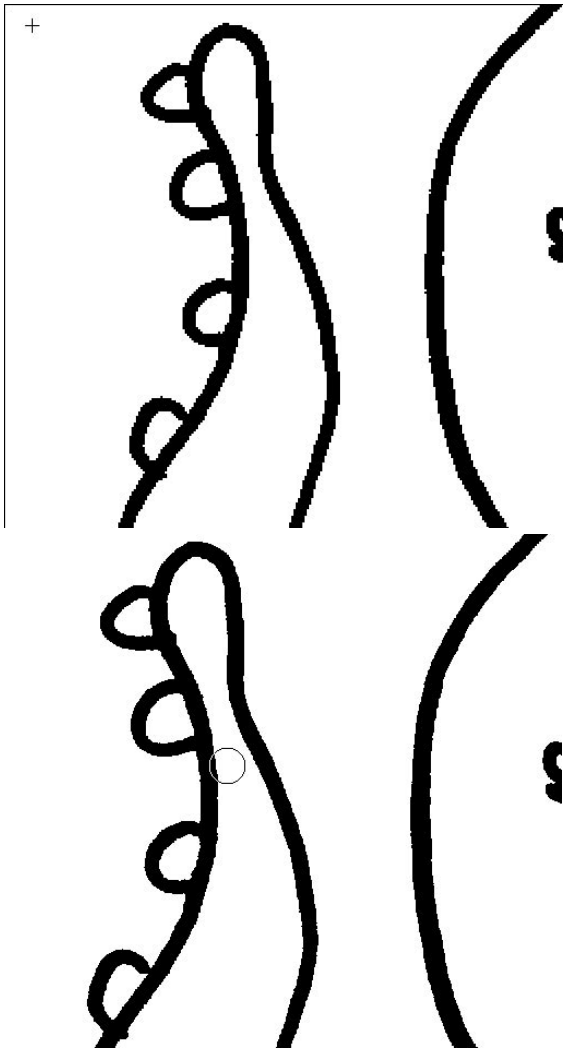
Resolution (dpi=dots per inch):

Keeping the end use in mind will help determine the best resolution for your image. The following questions will help provide some guidelines when determining the best resolution for your scan:

First, what will be the images' final size? If you are increasing the image you will have to scan at a higher resolution. Second, is the image line art or grayscale/color? Line art needs a higher resolution than grayscale or color artwork. Finally, what kind of paper will it be printed on? Coated paper needs a higher resolution image, while an uncoated paper will tolerate and actually works best with a lower resolution image.

These images show the same image scanned at 240 and 800 dpi respectively. There is no noticeable difference in the print quality.

Generally, if you are not enlarging artwork, 300 dpi is fine for grayscale or color images. Remember that the higher the resolution of an image, the bigger the file, and a large file can slow down the computer and printer unnecessarily. Scan at a higher resolution in case you decide later to enlarge the image size. The resolution can always be scaled down, but it cannot be increased without making the image smaller or loosing image quality. Line art should always be scanned at a higher resolution (600-1000 dpi) to keep it crisp.



The first image shows a line art image that was scanned at 240 dpi and the second image shows the same image scanned at 800 dpi.

There are several ways to calculate the necessary settings for enlarging an original image for output. You can use a proportion wheel, your stellar math skills, or a free software program called Scancalc, <http://www.stonetablesoftware.com/scancalc>, to determine the percentage of increase in size from your original image size to your desired image size. If the final enlarged image's resolution is to be 300 dpi then multiply 300 (dpi) by the percentage of increase to determine the resolution needed for your initial scan. For example, if the original image is 1 x 1 at 300 dpi and the final image is to be 2 x 2 at 300 dpi, then scan the 1 x 1 image at a minimum of 600 dpi to keep the image from appearing pixilated after enlargement. After scanning the image can be resized in Photoshop to be 2 x 2 (larger size) and 300 dpi (fewer pixels). You are essentially trading size for resolution.

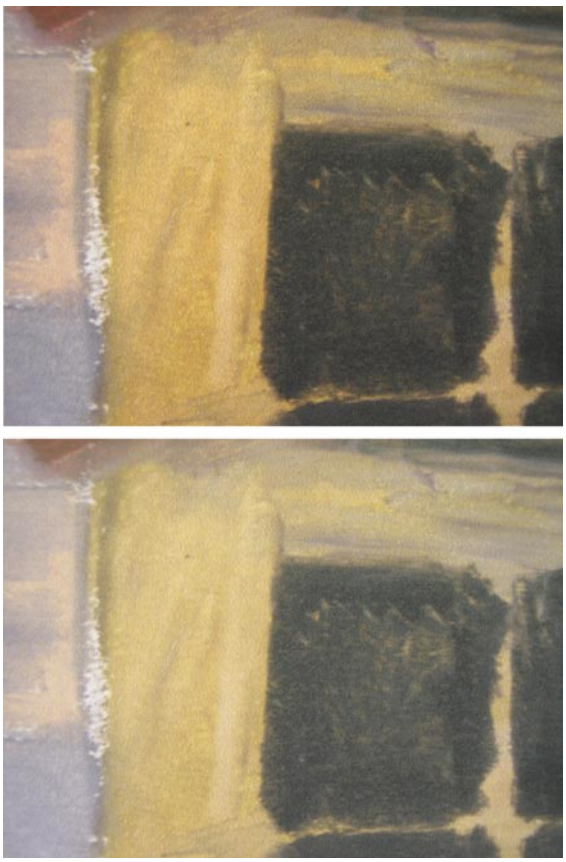
Input from Digital Cameras

For best results the camera should be set to the highest quality image option available from your camera. Just like scanning, you want to end up with an image around 300 dpi. Many digital cameras shoot images files at 72 dpi but the images are extremely large in size. In this case, you can reduce size while increasing dpi (refer to the formula above).

Tips

Don't use page layout programs to resize your images. Use Photoshop to get the image size and cropping before working with Quark, InDesign or Illustrator. It is very easy to distort images when rescaling. It also slows down these programs when printing.

When working with color images, convert them to the CMYK color mode in Photoshop since inkjet prints CMYK not RGB .

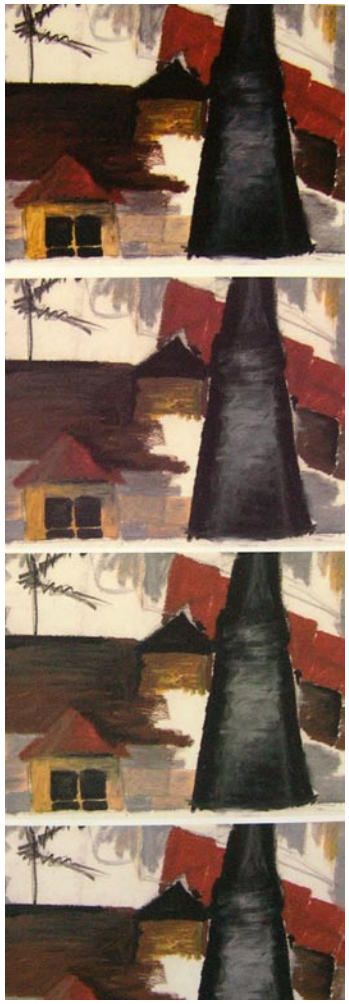


Remember that printers create images using a series of tiny dots. To produce a light color or a tint of a color for a large solid-color area, the printer has to space the dots out and they are more noticeable than a medium or dark value color. However, the bleed that uncoated paper has can sometimes eliminate the dot effect.

Output:

Using an Inkjet Printer

(I use an Epson 1280 and Epson 2200) Choose the right print setting for your paper -- you may have to experiment. Most inkjet printers list commercial inkjet paper as a media option, so select the correct paper type and the adjustments are made for you. Using uncoated/non-inkjet papers will probably require multiple runs at different paper type/quality settings to determine the best results



This image shows the same image printed on the same piece of paper—the paper was run through the printer four times—for each image a different paper setting was chosen. Note the difference in colors and values for each print.

Coated vs. Uncoated

Coated papers are easy to use. They print color fairly accurately and can hold a crisp image and small detailed type. They come in a variety of textures and finishes. There are a few problems with using coated papers in book arts: coated paper is more likely to "crack" along fold lines [Runnells-Image9.tif]; many styles of coated papers have the company's name on the back side of the sheet, or are only printable on one side, and there aren't many color options (white vs. bright white).

Tips for using coated papers

Always choose the right paper option in your printer output options window. If you are using a paper that your printer doesn't list in its print dialog window, follow the instruction sheet that came with the paper. It will generally give a list of comparable choices.

Uncoated paper is fun. You can experiment with color and texture, which is great for book arts. However, uncoated papers will bleed slightly and dull the colors a bit. This can be a desirable effect or you can plan around it and choose brighter colors and choose different images or type.

Tips for using uncoated paper:

When using an uncoated paper, under the printer output options for "paper," select "plain paper," but click the "quality" option rather than the "speed" option. This gives a bit more ink coverage than the "speed" option and should eliminate gaps or lines

These following two images show the difference between the speed and quality options, respectively.

To compensate for the bleed that occurs in uncoated papers avoid condensed typefaces, typefaces with small counters, or type with small hairlines/details. Small type itself can be a problem as well (depending on the typeface and paper, you may not be able to go smaller than 8pt). Also avoid reversing type on a dark area especially if it is a small size or a thin typeface.

This image shows small type that was printed on Canson Mi-Teintes—an uncoated paper. It is easy to see here how type printed on an uncoated paper loses its crisp, clean edges

Preferred Papers

Canson Mi-Teintes is my favorite. I've found that printing on the textured side, rather than the smooth, holds ink better/there is less bleed. The paper comes in many colors as well. *Rives BFK* and *Mowhawk Superfine* are also nice all-purpose papers. *Curious Touch* is a really fun paper that feels like suede. Visit http://www.curiouscollection.com, or call 1-800-779-0872 for samples. *Epson Matte Heavyweight* (some sizes are only coated on one side) is another favorite of mine although some versions of this paper have the Epson logo on the back of each sheet.

Most anything works - just experiment! Paper companies are more than happy to send you samples. I especially like French Paper Company <http://www.mrfrench.com>, and Fox River Paper, <http://www.foxriverpaper.com>

Digital Printing Resources

Calumet Photographic: 800-225-8638, <http://www.calumetphoto.com>. Archival inks and inkjet papers.

Dharma Trading Company, <http://www.dharmatrading.com>. Coated inkjet fabric, product to coat fabric or other substrates for inkjet use, product information.

Digital Art Supplies: 800-542-5227, <http://www.digitalartsupplies.com>. Archival inks, inkjet papers.

Dolphin Papers, 800-346-2770. Good prices on fine art uncoated and inkjet papers. Large sheets must be cut or torn to size. $50 minimum order.

Epson Online Store, <http://www.epson.com/cgi-bin/Store/index.jsp?ref=haa>, <http://www.epson.com>. Paper, inks, printers, drivers, support, and product help

Freestyle, 800 292-6137, <http://www.freestylecamera.com>. Archival inks and coated inkjet papers.

Inkjet Art Solutions, <http://www.inkjetart.com>. Archival inks, inkjet papers, information and links to other resources. Affordable custom profiles

Inkjet Mall, <http://www.inkjetmall.com>. Archival inks, inkjet papers, digital printing workshops, information and links to other resources

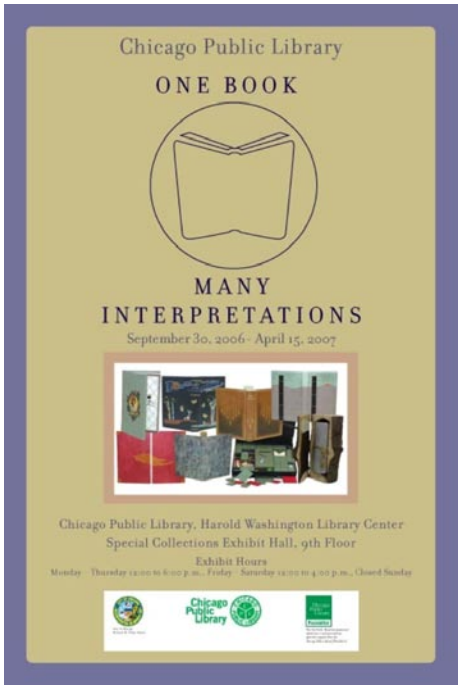
Media Street, <http://www.mediastreet.com>. Archival inks, inkjet papers, continuous ink flow systems

Wilhelm Imaging Research, <http://www.wilhelm-research.com>. Longevity test results on various ink/paper combinations.

Jamie Runnells is an Assistant Professor of Graphic Design at Mississippi State University. Her books have been shown in national and international juried exhibitions. Her freelance design work has been honored with numerous ADDY awards, and in PRINT magazine's 2006 Regional Design Annual. She is online at <http://www.caad.msstate.edu/jrunnells> and <http://boopies.wordpress.com>, and can be reached via email at <jr216@ra.msstate.edu>.

One Book, Many Interpretations: The Making of the Exhibition

By Lesa Dowd



In September 2005, shortly after starting as Special Collections Conservator for the Chicago Public Library, I found myself in a brainstorming session for upcoming exhibitions. A few years prior to my arrival at CPL, I had approached the Library about the possibility of a bookbinding exhibition corresponding to their acclaimed *One Book, One Chicago* (OBOC) program. Although at that time the possibility did not pan out, I now had the unique inside opportunity to present the exhibition idea again. This time it was the five-year anniversary of *One Book, One Chicago*. I brought samples of bookbinding and book art to give an idea of what we might expect as entries. Fortunately, everyone immediately agreed that a juried bookbinding exhibition with prizes was a great way to celebrate the program's anniversary. The hard part was about to begin!

During the course of five years, Chicago Public Library had selected ten classic titles – one for each spring and fall. The program which was inaugurated with *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee, included *Night* by Elie Wiesel, *My Ántonia* by Willa Cather, *A Raisin in the Sun* by Lorraine Hansberry, *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien, *The Coast of Chicago* by Stuart Dybek, *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez, *The Ox-Bow Incident* by Walter Van Tilburg Clark, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. We had hoped to have each title represented by multiple books created by bookbinders and book artists…a tricky proposition. How do you make sure everyone doesn't bind *To Kill a Mockingbird* (for example)?

Another special surprise came my way- the Fall 2006 OBOC selection would be announced in the fall of the exhibition opening. The book's title (*Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri) had not yet been determined at this stage and additionally is kept top secret until its announcement by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley. I would be the lucky binder who would get to bind the unnamed selection- but I wouldn't know the title until just over a month before its announcement. Yikes! That's a very small amount of time to work on a fine binding.

The "Call for Entries" was our first communication with the future participants. It was important to design something catchy and inviting for the potential entrants. A system of ranking the books needed to be included so that books could be assigned based on the binders' preferences and how soon the "Intent to Enter" was received. The Chicago Public Library Foundation supported the exhibition from its inception and generously provided monetary prizes for the top binding for each title (ten in total), a full-color catalog and a gala reception in the Harold Washington Library Center's ninth-floor Winter Garden.

Call for Entries

The jurors, Paul Gehl, Audrey Niffenegger, and Norma Rubovits were selected for their expertise, differing viewpoints and their appreciation for bookbinding and the book as art. Norma is a well-known paper marbler and bookbinder, Audrey is a printmaker, book artist and best-selling author, and Paul is Custodian of the John M. Wing Foundation on the History of Printing at the Newberry Library. The jurors already knew one another and respected each other's viewpoints and opinions.

As the due date for the exhibition neared, the entries started trickling, then rushing, in. It was very exciting for us

to get the daily mail deliveries and open and document each entry. The jury date required a great deal of organization so that the jurors could focus on the work without other considerations. The books were laid out according to title with all evidence of binder identification removed. The jurors met early to go over general guidelines (the goal being a diverse show of well-crafted work). Each juror then worked the room independently to judge each piece submitted, completing the first round of judging before lunch. The jurors suggested that while they ate lunch, my colleagues and I tally their votes and remove all of the bindings that received unanimous "no" votes and set aside those bindings that received unanimous "yes" votes. Much to their surprise (and ours!) there were no pieces that received unanimous votes, positive or negative. This meant that the afternoon promised to be full of discussion among the jurors. Playing the silent role of recorder, I watched and listened as the more than eighty entries were eventually reduced to the forty-seven best entries for exhibition.

Set-up of Jury Room before the arrival of Jurors

One Book, One Chicago is an exciting program with many associated reading groups and events for each campaign. We included an historical component of the exhibition to complement the bookbindings in the show. For each selection, we included the juried bindings and ephemera that characterized each campaign. The ephemera included resource guides and promotional bookmarks, photographs of author visits, special readings by theater troupes in Chicago, and autographed memorabilia.

The next challenge was to make the exhibition hall look as magical as the books that would be showcased within. Paint colors for walls and pedestals were selected (with complementary colors used in all OBMI publicity). A 3-D exhibit hall model was used to determine the number and layout of the pedestals. Quotes from readers who participated in the *One Book, One Chicago* discussion groups were lettered onto the walls. *One Book, Many Interpretations* is a celebration of *One Book, One Chicago* and the intention was to reflect not only what the books meant to the binders, but to the citizens of Chicago who participated in the reading groups. Text panels were created that introduced the exhibition visitor to the background of each OBOC selection and detailed a few of the special programs held in conjunction with each campaign.

Views of Exhibition Hall

Concurrent to the exhibit hall preparation was the creation of the catalog. Each book was photographed upon its arrival at the Chicago Public Library. The photographs of the juried works were submitted to our graphic designer to layout the catalog. In addition to the photographs, the catalog was to include information from the text panels. The proofing process for the catalog, labels, and text panels went on for what, at times, seemed forever- causing some of my colleagues to affectionately dub the exhibition's title, *One Book, Many Revisions.* The objective was to have the catalog printed and ready for the opening night reception. Ultimately, we attained this goal!

The exhibition was mounted two weeks prior to opening, which allowed for not only a sigh of relief but two weeks to fuss with the lighting, tweak the layout in the cases, and give special previews for staff members and VIPs. The opening reception in the Winter Garden was wondrous, with more than two hundred visitors in attendance! The exhibition hall was abuzz with conversation about the bindings in the show, meetings of old and new friends, and remembrances of reading the classic OBOC selections. The reception included a brief awards ceremony to honor the ten binders who won first place for each selection. Immediately after the awards, attendees rushed back into the exhibition hall to see and further discuss the bindings!

Scenes from the Reception

The show's opening did not signal the end of planning by any means. Since the night of the opening, I have had the opportunity to give numerous tours and to focus on related programming to support the exhibition, hoping to expose even more people to the world of bookbinding and the book arts. As the OBMI show nears its close on April 22, 2007, I am thrilled that it has been extremely well-received—not only by the bookbinding community, but by the general public as well. At this point of reflection, I can share a few lessons I learned as well as some interesting statistics:

Lessons Learned (and Reiterated)

1. I learned that the most successful exhibition marries the goals of the exhibition to the goals of the institution.

2. There is no substitute for solid organization and planning. Creating a timeline at the outset is critical and, if followed, will result in a successful exhibition.

3. Encouragement and frequent communication with entrants can increase the percentage participation from 60 % (average participation based on survey of other open-call exhibition curators) to over 80%, as we were fortunate enough to receive.

4. Always, always, always say "Thank you!"

5. Related programming plays a critical role and provides exciting opportunities to awaken the general public's appreciation of the wonders of bookbinding and the book arts.

Some Interesting Exhibition Statistics

1. The highest ranked selection (first choice) among "Intents to Enter" was *In the Time of the Butterflies*.

2. The lowest ranked selection (last choice) among "Intents to Enter" was *Pride and Prejudice*.

3. Titles receiving the most submitted entries: *To Kill a Mockingbird*, *My Ántonia*, and *In the Time of the Butterflies*.

4. Thirty percent of the binders in the show were from the Chicago area.

5. Juried selections represented twenty-three states and the UK.

6. Although binding interpretations varied from traditional fine binding to artist books, more than 75 % of the bindings in the show represented traditional binding.

Free Public Programs Associated with the One Book, Many Interpretations exhibition

Bookbinding for Kids class: "Pop-Up Books"

A book appraisal program

Books on Film Series: book-related and bookbinding-related movies

Two Conservation Lab Tours

Fore-edge Painting Lecture with Martin Frost

Bookbinding for Kids Class: "Flag Books"

Exhibition Dates

The dates for the *One Book, Many Interpretations* exhibition are September 29, 2006- April 22, 2007. The bindings in the exhibition can be viewed from the online web catalog: <http://www.chipublib.org/003cpl/oboc/obmi/ombi.htm>

Acknowledgements:

A number of people are responsible for making OBMI possible. They include:

Exhibit Team:

Lesa Dowd, Conservator, Special Collections and Preservation Division

Constance J. Gordon, Librarian II, Special Collections and Preservation Division

Elizabeth Holland, Museum Specialist, Special Collections and Preservation Division

Glenn Humphreys, Librarian IV, Special Collections and Preservation Division

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Margaret Killackey, Press Secretary, Chicago Public Library

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Lorna Donley, Archival Specialist, Special Collections and Preservation Division

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Kimberly Stovall, Clerk II, Special Collections and Preservation Division

Morag Walsh, Senior Archival Specialist, Special Collections and Preservation Division

Sarah Welshman, Librarian I, Special Collections and Preservation Division

Wallace Wilson, Library Page, Special Collections and Preservation Division

Teresa Yoder, Archival Specialist, Special Collections and Preservation Division

The opening reception, catalog production and binding prizes for *One Book, Many Interpretations* were generously funded by the Chicago Public Library Foundation.]

Lesa Dowd is the Conservator of the Special Collections and Preservation Division of the Chicago Public Library and curator of the recent One Book, Many Interpretations Exhibition. She taught chemistry for nearly ten years before beginning her career in conservation at Northwestern University Library in Evanston. Lesa has studied both English and French-style fine bookbinding. Outside of her daily job of conservation, she practices the art of fine binding and actively participates in bookbinding exhibitions. Lesa is the recent past president of the Chicago Hand Bookbinders and is active in the Guild of Book Workers, currently serving as the Midwest Chapter's Program Chair. She can be reached at <ldowd@chipublib.org>.

Do you have an exhibition review you would like to share? If so, please contact the editors at <bonefolder@philobiblon.com>.

A Review of the Guild of Book Workers 100th Anniversary Exhibition and Exhibition Catalog

By Craig Jensen

The Guild of Book Workers was founded in 1906 and so with this exhibition and catalog the Guild celebrates its 100th anniversary. The exhibition opened on September 20, 2006 at the Grolier Club of New York and coincided with the 2006 Standards of Excellence Centennial Celebration also held in New York City. The exhibition is broken into two sections, the Retrospective Member's Exhibition curated by Peter Verheyen, Exhibitions Chair for the Guild of Book Workers and the Member's Exhibition juried by Karen Hanmer, Richard Minsky and Don Rash. The catalog includes remarks by outgoing Guild President Betsy Palmer Eldridge, an introduction by Exhibitions Chair Peter Verheyen, statements by the three jurors, complete descriptions and color pictures of all items in both the retrospective and juried exhibitions, and brief biographies of all the exhibitors. The catalog was designed by Julie Leonard and Sara Sauers of Iowa City, IA.

Retrospective Member's Exhibition

The earliest pieces in the Retrospective Member's Exhibition are the binding on Henri Francois Joseph Régnier's, *Les Reconcontres de Monsieur de Bréot*, 1919, by Belle McMurtry Young, a charter member of the Guild of Book Workers, and Peter Franck's binding of the undated *Le Mystère Laïc*, by Jean Cocteau. Both books inspire a reverence and awe. They are dated, even antique, yet they also seem to still be alive and vital as if they are harbingers of the modern bookmaking era. Standing in contrast is the most recent work in the retrospective, Tim Ely's *Coil*, which seems to point us somewhere deep into the future. In between there is a generous sampling of bindings many of which stand as archetypes to the current generation of book workers.

Peter Franck's Le Mystère Laïc

As I viewed the exhibition at the Grolier Club and, later upon closer study, the catalog, I was amazed to discover how many of the books in the Retrospective Member's Exhibit I have actually been fortunate enough to handle and study up close. I was also surprised at how many of the books have had a powerful and formative effect upon my career. I watched my mentor, Don Etherington, work through the entire process from conceptual design to execution of his design binding for the 1936 first edition *Ulysses* by James Joyce when I was a book conservator at The University of Texas, Harry Ransom Center. That book and Don's process seem to have trapped me somewhere between a desire to be a design binder and a fear of becoming one. David Bourbeau's edition binding of Edgar Alan Poe's *The Raven* illustrated by Alan James Robinson was the first book that made me think that I'd like to be a limited edition binder rather than a book conservator, which in 1984 became the case. I have always been drawn to the work of binders who use typographic elements to affect their designs and the Deborah Evetts binding of Eric Gill's *The Four Gospels* stands a monument to this noble style.

Jan Sobota's Kde Bydlí Cas (Where Time Lives)

Other books in the retrospective exhibition brought some questions to mind. How many binders have left the boundaries of the square or rectangle behind after viewing Don Glaister's binding of *Utah Reader* by Mark Beard, published by Vincent FitzGerald or Jan Sobota's sculptural binding of *Kde Bydlí Cas* (*Where Time Lives*)? And how many artists' bookmakers have been influenced by Hedi Kyle's "Flag Book", never again to see the book as a set of sequential pages? There are no doubt countless modern binders who have seen the historical models of Gary Frost and Pamela Spitzmeuller as not just learning tools but pathways to modern creative bookmaking. Priscilla Spitler's marriage of traditional English style fine binding and her creative and innovative decoration techniques as demonstrated in her, *By Air*, as well as her ongoing dedication to teaching the craft

is having far reaching effects on the future of fine binding. And doesn't it seem odd, 31 years after the fact, as fine binder, rabble rouser and jack-of-all trades Richard Minsky points out in his juror's statement, that his pheasant feather bedecked binding of Jacob H. Studer's *The Birds of North America* should have caused so much controversy resulting in the binding being withdrawn and later reinstated in the 1975 Guild exhibition at Yale only now to seem so conservative and even traditional? Since 1975 I daresay that countless "non-traditional" materials have been introduced into books and their bindings.

Some Anecdotal Observations

Within the two exhibition sections several interesting tidbits caught my eye and fancy. There are two husband and wife exhibitors in both the retrospective and juried exhibitions: Don Etherington and Monique Lallier and Don Glaister and Susanne Moore. There is a father and son both represented in the juried exhibition: James Brockman and Stuart Brockman. I personally haven't ever seen a modern fine binding done in the Islamic Codex style and there are two in the juried section: *L'Atlantide*, by Pierre Benoit, 2002 bound by Richard Baker and *Narrative of Iman's Discourse with Students on Religious Subjects*, Anonymous, Ca. 1789 bound by Signa Houghteling. There are two chained bindings in the juried section: Karen Jutzi's *Reliquiae* and Jarmila Jelena Sobotova's binding of *The Hound of Baskervilles*, by A. Conan Doyle, 1902.

Melinda Padgett's Death Comes for the Archbishop

Juried Member's Exhibition

First off, commiserations to jurors Don Rash, Richard Minsky and Karen Hanmer who had the daunting task of selecting sixty pieces for inclusion in the 100th Anniversary Exhibition from 171 submissions. As juror for the Guild's *In Flight* exhibition in 2003 I know how difficult this can be. Among a large group of submissions there are the obvious pieces that all jurors agree should be in the show but as the number of selections for inclusion gets closer to the limit the jurors know they must reject pieces that could easily be included if there was more room or if there had been fewer submissions.

Second and most important, kudos to the membership of the Guild—171 submissions is a tribute to the strength of the Guild and state of the art and craft of bookmaking in the early years of the 21st century and the beginning of the second century of the Guild of Book Workers. (A note to Guild members whose submissions were not included in the show, don't be discouraged, your time will come.)

The work in the juried section shows the Guild of today to be rich with tradition and rife with experimental and new ideas. Look at the bindings of James and Stuart Brockman, Don Etherington, Monique Lallier, Gabrielle Fox and Maria Sol Rebora and it is clear that the modern fine binding is alive and well. I was specially taken by Melinda Padgett's design binding for *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, by Willa Cather. Her strong powerful presentation, incorporating elements of Southwestern American Indian design adapted from Acoma pottery on the front and back boards effectively overpowers the bible-like spine visually representing the futility of the books characters attempt to impose their beliefs on a different but rich and deeply spiritual culture.

Guild members continue to mine historical binding structure and cover design for ideas, understanding and inspiration as evidenced by Anna Embree's *Byzantine Binding Model*, and Chela Metzger's *Bird Book*. Madelyn Garrett's embroidered binding on *The Art of the Book*, The Studio, Ltd., 1914, is a tour-de-force of patience and dexterity and a wonderfully modern joining of historic panel design and embroidered covering. Pamela Spitzmeuller, as usual, marries whimsy with thoughtful meditation on historical structure, techniques and methodology. Pamela's *Signed, Sealed and Delivered*, takes binders' long established reputation for parsimony by putting every scrap of material to good use to new heights.

Pamela Spitzmueller's Signed, Sealed and Delivered

Don Glaister's Brooklyn Bridge: A Love Song

What happens when a design binder and book conservator, after spending a good portion of their careers working on commission and providing services to others, decides to make their own art? Look at Don Glaister's *Brooklyn Bridge: A Love Song*, 2002. *Brooklyn Bridge* is a quarter leather book with pages made of "sanded aluminum with acrylic paint, wire, aluminum tape, laminated polyester film and sand." The text of the book, a poem, by Don, is screen printed onto the pages and there are nine studies of the bridge also painted onto the pages by Don. The edition of 60 copies is already out of print and the book is now selling on the used market for many thousands of dollars more than the publication price. Next look at Laura Wait's *X, letter of danger, sex and the unknown, Vol. 1, 2006*. The pages of Laura's *X* are "created using layers of collographs printed in Akua Color, paste painting with stencils, and handwriting using a ruling pen and traditional pointed pen." The binding is brown leather with gold and color tooling. Both of these artists' bookmakers display unique artistic vision as well as masterful craft ability and execution.

Guild book workers are also not afraid to take on difficult issues. Melissa Jay Craig with her *Manifest, O*, "presents the experience of losing one's hearing in visual terms. The pages are handmade of semi-translucent abaca; 'printed' as the sheets were formed, with holes in place of letterforms; the words have all dropped from the pages." Melissa's description, more than most of the books in the show, made me want to pick her book up and touch and turn the pages. I also wanted to pickup and read Ashlee Weitlauf's *T is for Torture* that deals with a subject certainly no one wants to think about but still haunts us all. Fortunately it can be viewed online at <http://www.pellmellpress.com>.

Ashlee Weitlauf's T is for Torture

Yes, but is it a book? The more we ask that question, the more Guild members seem willing to push the boundaries of our traditional understanding and whether we are delighted or annoyed, they make us think. Peggy Johnston seems to be channeling Tim Ely with her *Starship Log and Pod*, but she left all the traditional materials behind making her Coptic bound book out of heat warped polyester and sewing it together with fishing line. But forget the extraterrestrials, Claire Jeanine Satin attributes her conceptual approach to her association with John Cage (a terrestrial with lots of extra qualities) in her *Pentiment: Seno Book For Joseph and Amelia Satin (Gregg "M")*, made with acetate, metallic overprinting, monofilament thread and glass beads. And pushing hardest of all on the boundaries may be Tennille Shuster's *Crown of Thorns*, 2005, "pages … roughly trimmed and bound in piano hinge format, using acrylic stained dowel rods. A crown of thorns was attached with hemp cord and the structure is then displayed on an antique wig stand."

Tennille Shuster's Crown of Thorns

I could go on but in the interest of time and space I will stop here. The Guild of Book Workers 100th Anniversary Exhibition is a triumph. It documents a legacy of love for the book, aspiration to high art and craft and a desire to perpetuate one of the great inventions of humanity, the book.

As of this writing the bound exhibition catalog is sold out but there may still be copies available through book dealers or binding suppliers. Unbound copies of the exhibition catalog are available from the Guild of Book Workers website. <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/gbw/gallery/100anniversary/catalog/index.shtml>.

Remainder of Exhibition Schedule

The Juried Member's Exhibition is still scheduled to travel to the following sites:

Branford P. Millar Library, Portland State University
Portland, Oregon
April 9-May 20, 2007

The Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University
Dallas, Texas
June 18-September 14, 2007

Dartmouth College Library
Hanover, New Hampshire
October 8-November 30, 2007

The complete Retropective and Juried Member's Exhibtions can be viewed online at <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/gbw/gallery/100anniversary/index.shtml>

Craig Jensen began his career as a library conservator, interning at the Library of Congress, Restoration Office, under Peter Waters, Don Etherington and Tom Albro. He was a book conservator at Brigham Young University in Utah and at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, at The University of Texas at Austin. In 1984, he founded Jensen Bindery. He was a founding partner and president BookLab, Inc. from 1988-98. He now operates BookLab II in San Marcos TX with business partner, Gary McLerran. He can be reached on the Web at <http://booklab.bookways.com/> and via email at <craig@bookways.com>.

No Longer Innocent: Book Art In America, 1960-1980.

A review by Melissa Jay Craig

"In the 1970s, book art leapt to life in America. Terms were argued over. Organizations were started. Book structures were rediscovered or revised. And printing technologies were stretched to produce unrecognizable effects. Possibilities expanded in that period regarding who could make a book, how a book's contents could disport across a page, and how a book's materials and form could welcome or repulse a reader. The potential for expression seemed unlimited."
- Betty Bright

I began to make book art just a few years after the time period addressed in Betty Bright's erudite *No Longer Innocent: Book Art In America, 1960-1980*. I inherited the expansive view of the previous decade that she describes so well; I saw the book arts as being tremendously exhilarating, limitless and vast. As I became aware of the dissonance surrounding the field, from the transgressed-upon outrage of many very fine bookbinders to the multiple strident claims of exclusive domain, my enthusiasm dimmed. I slid into a love-hate relationship with book art, from which I've never quite emerged. However, during my 17 years as a teacher, I've tried to pass to my students that original sense of breathless possibility, by striving to present an unbiased, inclusive view. This has required the distribution of mountains of photocopied writings each semester; there has never been a single book that I've felt able to use as a comprehensive reference, though a few have come close. Betty Bright has written the first.

In her introduction, Bright states that, "I am able to let the differences as much as the likenesses inform and illuminate the story of the book's continuing appeal to artists".

This she does, and admirably. She also seeks to address a very important aspect of the field, an "amnesia" which "has produced an increasing number of artists' books…whose content or strategies were long ago exhausted." Her wide-ranging history succeeds in this goal as well, and it is another reason her book is invaluable.

Working chronologically, with concise, informative, and highly readable prose, she tracks the progress and lineage of fine press books, deluxe books, multiple bookworks, and sculptural bookworks, including altered books and performance and installation bookworks. Her coverage is not limited to the two decades or the continent that the title suggests; she begins with the Kelmscott Chaucer, William Blake, Aubrey Beardsley, the Russian Constructivists, and of course, Duchamp. Periodically, European and British books make appearances. But Betty Bright doesn't simply focus on descriptions of the books and their underlying conceptual framework; she situates their history by examining all the attendant circumstances surrounding their development: the adoption and availability of printing methods including photocopiers and photo-based processes; she looks at artists as publishers, at influential exhibitions, publications, and conferences, and at the development of book arts centers and distributors, and she covers collectors, both public and private. She even takes a concurrent and informative look at what was happening in the mainstream publishing trade. It's a comprehensive, meticulously researched history, not only in the context of taking an inclusive view of what was produced, but of how it was produced and through what means, and of how and where the book works met their readers.

And, from Marinetti's challenge to Mallarmé in 1913 to several views still hotly debated, she also notes the ensuing flurries of reviews, criticism, dialogue and territorial claims; many written by preeminent critics and curators, but just as often, by artists actively involved in the field.

While Bright aptly shows us the significance of the attendant discourse, she allows the writers to expound on their theories and reveal their positioning agendas in their own words, and then gently brings us back to the authenticity of the times. Of one particularly voluble critic, she writes, "From today's perspective, Clive Philpott's inexhaustible proselytizing achieves its own heroic stature. It would be

incorrect, however, to characterize the period as viewed through his aesthetic, which so resolutely separated different kinds of artists' books. As has been noted, exhibitions at Center for Book Arts and other organizations displayed multiple bookworks alongside sculptural bookworks, fine press, and deluxe books."

I have my own agenda in praising *No Longer Innocent*. It takes an involved historian and curator such as Betty Bright to remind us that this "zone" book artists inhabit is a single country, though it contains a wildly varied topography and distinctive zipcodes within its borders. Her book finally captures the wide range of approaches that, happening simultaneously, fueled the energetic explosion of the book arts in this country.

In short, she shows us what actually happened.

It is to be hoped that what Richard Minsky predicts for *No Longer Innocent* will come true: that it will become the standard reference work in the field, and that future histories of later periods will seek to follow Betty Bright's long overdue example.

I still firmly believe that the future of the field is contingent on its continued diversity. To paraphrase Betty Bright, the field is a "realistic if motley" entirety, and artists still produce work that is to be "paged through, circled around, and perhaps gaped at". Inheriting an awareness of a truthful, encompassing overview will help keep artists and students alike from being falsely educated away from their individual passions, and allow enthusiastic, informed explorations to continue on, well into the second century of artists' books; or even into their own millennium.

Buy this book.

Melissa Jay Craig, Chicago

For more information on Melissa Jay Craig, read the article on her work in this issue of The Bonefolder. She can be reached at <craigmjay@sbcglobal.net> and online at <http://web.mac.com/melissajaycraig>..

Advertise in the Bonefolder

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In order to make the *Bonefolder* freely available, we will offer advertising space for sale at competitive rates. These rates include publication of your advertisement in both numbers of a given volume.

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THE BONEFOLDER

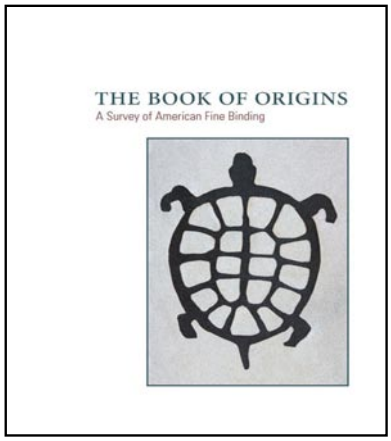
BIND-O-RAMA 2007

The 2007 Bonefolder Bind-O-Rama will be a set book exhibition featuring the catalog to the Guild of Book Workers' 100th anniversary exhibition.

The catalog's 110 pages depict 120 works, 58 in the retrospective and 62 in the juried exhibition. All are in color with full descriptions. Also included are binders' biographies, making this a must have for any binder or book artist's research collection.

Entry deadline
September 30, 2007

The catalog is available in sheets from the Guild of Book Workers for $32 that includes s/h in the US.
For full details on entering and ordering go to
<http://www.philobiblon.com/bindorama07>



THE BOOK OF ORIGINS: A SURVEY OF AMERICAN FINE BINDING

This traveling exhibition features contemporary fine bindings by ten American binders. The group includes established masters as well as gifted emerging artists. Two works are presented by each binder; their binding in response to the set *Book of Origins* text, and an additional example of their work.

Full Color Catalog Now Available

The 32 page, full color catalog was designed by Julia Leonard, designer of the Guild of Book Workers 100th Anniversary Exhibition catalog. It depicts all 20 works, plus descriptions and biographical statements by each binder.

Pre-payment of $15 plus $4 per order for priority mail postage is required. Make checks payable to Karen Hanmer.

Send orders to:
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Glenview, IL 60025

Or via PayPal, payment to karen@karenhanmer.com

The entire exhibition and travel schedule is online at
http://library.syr.edu/digital/exhibits/b/bookoforigins/

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Instructor Don Etherington

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May 28 – June1
Instructor Monique Lallier

Advanced French Technique Binding
June 4 – 15
Instructor Monique Lallier

ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN CAMPUS

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September 17 – 21
Instructor Monique Lallier

Intermediate French Technique Binding
September 24 – October 5
Instructor Monique Lallier

Book Conservation:
Forwarding & Covering of Textblocks
October 22 – November 2
Instructor Don Etherington

Submission Guidelines

The *Bonefolder* welcomes submissions of articles for publication. Articles should relate to the fields of bookbinding, book arts, decorative techniques, education, exhibition reviews, tips & tricks, or book reviews. Articles that have not be published elsewhere will be given first consideration.

The language of the *Bonefolder* is English, though it may be possible to work with authors in the translation of non-English articles.

Because the *Bonefolder* is published electronically we are able to reach a worldwide audience at minimal cost. Issues will be released as PDF files which can be opened with Adobe Acrobat Reader.

Submitting your text:

Only completed articles should be submitted to the editorial review board. This includes proof-reading. Please indicate position of graphics in text by placing the filename of the image in brackets, i.e. [AuthorLastname-Image1.tif].

Articles may be included either as plain text in email letters, or as word processor files attached to email letters. Microsoft Word or WordPerfect are the preferred file formats. Formatting should be very basic with italics, bold, and other formatting used sparingly. Please do not use any "tables." Font should be either Arial or Times Roman. Images can be included in the JPG or TIF formats. Images should be sized to 1024 x 768 pixels if taken with a digital camera. If scanned or created digitally, save at 400 dpi. Line art should be saved as bitonal, b/w images as 8 bit (256 shades of grey), and color as 24 bit. DO NOT embed images in body of text, but save separately and attach.

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The article (if not sent in email message body):

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References:

* Any references should be included in ( ) following the text they refer to. If links are included, you must include the full URL, including "http://" enclosed in "<>".

Examples:

Middleton, Bernard C. (1996). A History of English Craft Bookbinding, New Castle, DE: Oak Knoll Press.

Etherington, Don and Matt Roberts (1982). Bookbinding and the Conservation of Books: A dictionary of descriptive terminology. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office. <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/don/don.html>

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