

# *THE* **BUNDFOLDER**

*an e-journal for the book binder and book artist*



Read on to learn more about this mysterious work.

Volume 5, Number 2, Spring 2009

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## Biblio Bullrushes, Biblio Briarpatch: The Search for Carl Maria Seyppel

(A 10-Reel, In-Progress Documentary)

By Tom Trusky

1 CHARLENE

Charlene Matthews thrust a dusty brown cardboard box into my hands and lifted its lid. Black Letter text and an image of a vessel—full-sail—flashed by to reveal inside, on a bed of white tissue paper, a battered book with a sandy, seaweed- and seashell-strewn cover (and was that a lady-bug, puttering across it?). I looked up, smiling weakly at the Los Angeles bookmaker, as if I had just been handed a “cute” miniature book and was expected to “ooh!”

Maybe it was the ladybug?

Or the fear that rainbows and unicorns were inside, lunging around the text block?

Matthews had been dazzling us and doubling us over with laughter as she yanked my partner Enver and myself on a whirlwind tour through her Melrose Avenue bindery one March Monday morning. We’d learned of her fascination with mules, seen her haunting Mohave pinhole pictures (and the cartons she’d recycled into cameras), as well as some of the long stitch bound books she’d had in regional and national exhibitions—all the above accompanied by non-stop, witty, provocative narration. Until the Seyppel in the dusty brown cardboard box.



Fig. 1: Enver Sulejman and Charlene Matthews, *The Bindery*, Los Angeles.

“Whaddya think of it?” she asked, cocking her head and placing her hands, arms akimbo, on her hips.

I lifted *Christoph Columbus Logbuch* from its nestle, then hesitated. Obviously, someone had forgotten an *er* and apparently had mixed Wop with Kraut. “Why’s she waited until the end of our jaunt to wow us with an artifacty book in German?” I wondered.

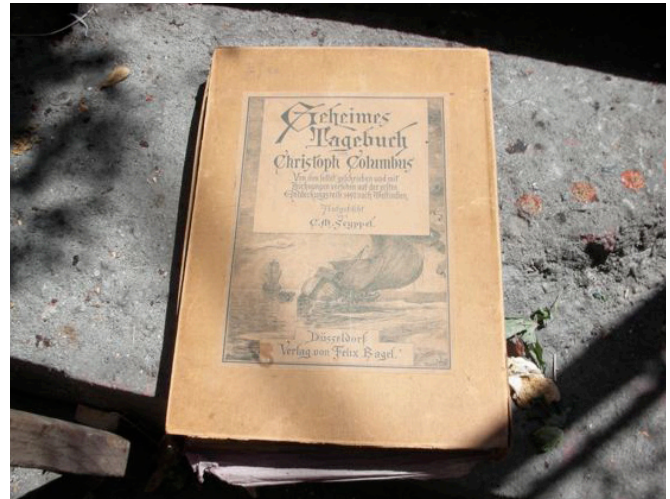


Fig. 2-4: *Christoph Columbus Logbuch* box, cover, cover detail. Book dimensions: 11 3/8” x 8” x 1” (irregular). For text block images, see Figs. 29-30. Photos by Charlene Matthews.

The English edition of this volume is *My secreta log boke*.... See my annotated bibliographic entry for this quite different version in "Reel 10" at the conclusion of this essay.

Perhaps it was my hesitation that gave my dismay away. I was debating how to explain to our red-headed Biblio Bwana that I had a somewhat extensive collection of sandpaper books, a handful of books and catalogues boasting shells, and one (fragile) book with seaweed boards. Simply: at this stage in my artists' book mania, literal, artifact-littered books seldom fascinated me.

"It's from the 1880s," Matthews explained.

I again glanced up at Matthews, then turned to begin silently thumbing through what appeared to be calligraphed, aquamarine-stained (seawater-damaged?!) pages.

## 2. PREENING

On the flight back to Boise I'd played back mental book tapes: Carrion, Lyons, Smith, Phillipot, Drucker, Klima, Bright—landing gate. My *In-Flight History of Artists' Books* opened with a segment on Blake in England, segued across the Channel in the Nineteen 'Teens-and-Twenties to brilliant but seldom seen and (unless one read Kremlin) seldom-er understood Russian artists' books (Lissitsky and Mayakovsky's deservedly well-known *For the Voice* excepted). There were cameos of visual novels done in the Twenties and Thirties, and soundbites from a scattering of avant garde Europeans then and thereafter doing what they always did and do. But the hey-day of artists' books (not livres d'artistes) in my mind and the popular mind began about above Modesto with the American Ed Ruscha in the 1960s, continued over Nevada, concluding some forty years later, just past Mountain Home, Idaho. On the tapes I reviewed, however, from "Urizen" to "Soviet Union" (1794-1940), I heard not even a whisper of "Carl Maria Seyppel," author of the Columbus book that had so stricken me in L.A.

Back at home and in my campus office I went through my notes, files and bookshelves. Commencing in 1990 I'd spent a year and half studying artists' book collections and compiling annotated bibliographies at a number of American libraries, museums, presses, book stores and archives, including Printed Matter, Franklin Furnace, Museum of Modern Art, Center for Book Arts, Visual Studies Workshop, Yale's Sterling Library, National Museum of Women in the Arts, Nexus Press. But I found nothing on Seyppel in my materials from these troves.

And pardon me, if I've not inflicted my definition of what an artists' book is (although I confess lately I've favored the term "bookwork," the reasons for which are another essay). Such works are not coffee table sorts with four-color

plates of Picasso tipped in. That's just an art book. Nor is it a conventional book by Picasso—even with his art in it. That's just a book by an artist. An artists' book challenges our definition of what a book is or may be. Its maker may be aware of the history of books and may be deliberately expanding, focusing, or forgetting it—or may just be futzing around. Frequently form and function fuse in a bookwork. Whatever it is, a bookwork maker need not be an artist: the author could be plumber, professor, or pediatrician producing anything but a pedestrian book. Please note I favor the singular maker, solitary visionary or futzer. Yes, there are collaborative artists' books—in a sense, of course, all books are collaborations—but I savor the sort whose stew has been prepared primarily according to one cook's recipe.

My point is that my ignorance—and the world's seeming ignorance—of Charlene's German *buch werker* thrilled me!

It's been my good fortune to have assisted in bringing to the public the lives and works of two noteworthy but little-known artists: Canadian-born silent film pioneer Nell Shipman (1892-1970), and Outsider, possibly autistic, Idaho artist/bookmaker James Charles Castle (1899-1977).



Fig 5: Nell Shipman as Faith Diggs in *The Grub-Stake* (1922).

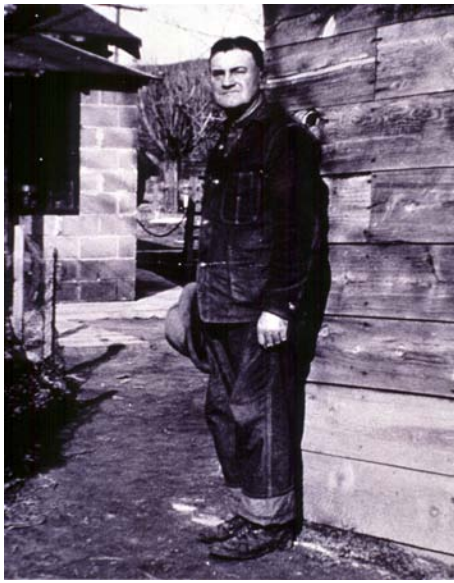


Fig 6: James Castle (Boise, Idaho, circa 1950; photo by Robert Beach)

I'm preening here, but preen is not the point. The point is: what's a guy to do when he discovers a remarkable artist the world's ignored, overlooked, or forgotten?

Third time's a charm.

Hello, Carl.

### 3. SCALPEL, FORCEPS, BACKHOE, WINCH

Or is it Karl?

The excuse I'm going to offer at the conclusion of this article for its shortcomings is that this retrieval and restoration of Seyppel is a work-in-progress by an in-progress researcher. Perhaps all research is never-ending; however, the fact is I'm an ill-equipped Seyppel scholar. I don't speak, read, or write German, a deficiency that would at least tase a wiser person about to embark on a study of an obscure German artist/bookmaker. Nor am I even moderately informed about German history, society and culture. Googling provides a potentially damning comparison:

#### *The Late Mr. Corwin and His Library*

*Correspondence of The Journal*  
New York  
November 12, 1856

*Mr. [E. B.] Corwin, with his great love for books, and surrounded as he was by such numbers, was not a scholar, in the true sense of the word, nor was he a diligent reader; and I doubt whether he ever read through an ordinary historical volume. His love for*

*books consisted of collecting choice and unique editions of certain authors, without regard to their literary merit; large paper copies; books uniquely or elegantly bound; illustrated books, etc. Then books with quaint titles had an attraction for Mr. Corwin, and I think I never saw such a strange collection of titles before brought together. D'Israeli, who has a chapter on the titles of books in his Curiosities of Literature, would have found a rich mine in this library for another chapter. With these peculiar tastes, Mr. Corwin made Bibliography a study, and nothing afforded him more delight than to pore over his Dibdin's, Brunet, Ternaux, Rich, Lowndes, and other leading works on the subject. Of book catalogues, too, he made a study, and often sent to London for the catalogues of choice libraries which had been sold at auction, marked with prices and names of buyers. This knowledge rendered him familiar with rare editions of books, and their value, and often enabled him to secure such books at low prices. Hence, too, the large number of rare and curious books, in every department of literature, and in all languages, in his collection. Mr. Corwin was not familiar with any foreign language, yet collected alike in all; and many editions of the same author, in foreign languages, are found in his collection, each having some peculiarity as to notes, illustrations, elegance of typography or binding. It might, therefore, be said of him, as was remarked of an eminent English book collector, who made a point to collect every edition of Horace:*

*"Horace he has by various hands,  
But not one Horace that he understands."*

Anticipating such comparisons, I adopted the tactic of humbly admitting ignorance but meekly denying stupidity. My reasoning was simple: I believed the computer and the kindness of strangers would compensate for my deficiencies, and early returns would have led anyone to believe likewise, much as America's Democrats were buoyed by Al Gore's popular vote victory a few wars, floods, and economic collapses ago.

I began by methodically plotting an exquisite compensatory campaign. Using Google, other search engines, and appealing to appropriate on-line groups and listservs, I mounted a months-long, multi-pronged Biblio Blitzkrieg, conducting 50-60 screenpage searches for author listings, library holdings, auction records, bookseller inventories, publisher catalogues, and images of the author and his works.



Fig. 7: Carl Maria Seyppel (b. 1847-d. 1913). (From Carl Maria Seyppels altägyptische Trilogie. Köln: Rheinland-Verlag in Kommission bei R. Habelt, 1982).

I have been unable to locate any photographs of Seyppel who was educated in Germany, traveled to Holland and England as young man, married (wife Helene), had one son (Walter) and daughter (Anna), and was a popular teacher and professional artist.

Photo by Carrie Quinney, Photo Services, Boise State University, hereinafter "(CQ)."

There were the usual pockets of resistance to my campaign. Such as, for instance, learning Carl was sometimes Karl, which meant I often had to search twice for one Seyppel, doubling my work. Why the artist had two possible first names is still unclear. Some German biographies and one early and influential review in *The Pall Mall Gazette* list him as "Karl," while other early reviews and notices get it right, as do all title pages of his works, where he is presented as "C. M. Seyppel." Thus armed, I shared my observation with Library of Congress which at that time employed both names, inconsistently. Forgetting what goeth before a fall, I was quick to inform colleagues, close friends, associates, enemies, strangers in the Student Union, when LOC corrected its listings, opting for Carl.

Who wasn't invincible, especially after learning:

A number of Seyppel's works had been translated from Hitler's tongue into English! This meant I might author an article championing the bookmaker by focusing on those with words I could read.

A plea to the Society for the History of Authorship, Reading, and Publishing (SHARP) list elicited a number of helpful responses, most notably from Jo-Anne Hogan with some database outfit named ProQuest. Hogan made a cursory, complimentary search for Seyppel and provided me with scores of turn-of-the-last-century articles, reviews, and catalogue listings in well-known unto totally obscure (and all now defunct) journals, magazines and newspapers.

Comparison shopping for Seyppel-in-English on the web began, despite my expectations, delightfully. Nearing retirement, I've concluded one thing I don't need in my foxing years is more things; my library has long been a clutter reminiscent of E. B. Corwin's. A second conclusion at which I've arrived is that a soon-to-be pensioner should be, as a British friend once phrased it, "mean with their money." But search "book sellers," "rare book sellers," "antiquarian books"—before you know it, you're happily mired in MXBF, AbeBooks, choosebooks, AddALL, alibris, antiQbooks, or ABAA, ILAB-LILA, etc., etc., comparing prices, hauling credit cards out of the wallet or clicking on PayPal. Best: some book sellers will send works on spec, which was the case with Seyppel's *Sharp, sharper, sharpest*. It arrived for my consideration from a helpful bookseller in San Diego and, as a result, became my first Seyppel.



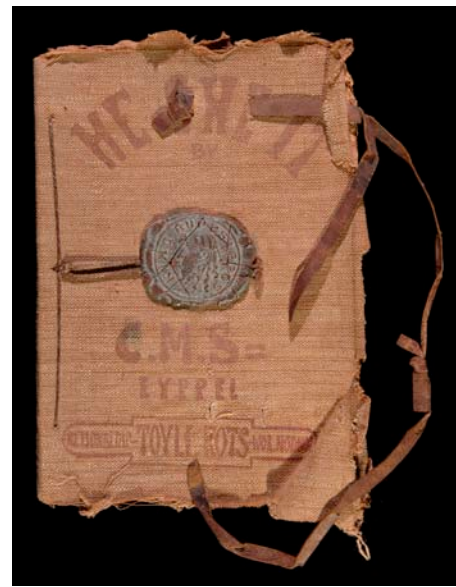
Fig. 8: *Sharp, sharper, sharpest*, Seyppel's first "Egyptian" book (in his Egyptian trilogy). (CQ)



Fig. 9: Sharp, sharper, sharpest, Seyppel's first "Egyptian" book (in his Egyptian trilogy) was, curiously, his second "Egyptian" book translated into English. To describe the lithographed works, critics adopted two terms coined by the bookmaker: "Aegyptische Humoreske" and "Mumiendruck." While the first term needs no translation, the latter term means "mummy print" and refers to paper carefully and deliberately stressed to age it with faux foxing, water stains, mildewing, worm holes, and chipped or broken edges. Seyppel did not, however, create the tale told in Sharp...; he adapts a bizarre and bloody story found in Herodotus. (For blood, see Figs 33-34.) My copy of the work (shown) is complete—but its binding has almost completely disintegrated and most pages are loose. Dimensions: 10 3/4" x 8" x 3/4" (irregular). Inside front cover and title page. (CQ)

The German edition of Sharp... may well have been one of the titles Reinhard Grüner refers to in "...A Dim Reflection of Art' Memories of a (West) German Collector." The only modern writer to acknowledge Seyppel's contribution to book arts, Grüner asserts, "Carl Maria Seyppel destroyed the opinion on what a book should be like as early as the 1880s." <[http://www.buchkunst.info/pdf/dim\\_reflection\\_of\\_art.pdf](http://www.buchkunst.info/pdf/dim_reflection_of_art.pdf)>

If not available on spec, I learned other booksellers and auction sites will provide photographs or scans of a work. Thank you, New Zealand book clearing house, for convincing me to purchase a second Seyppel book translated into English.



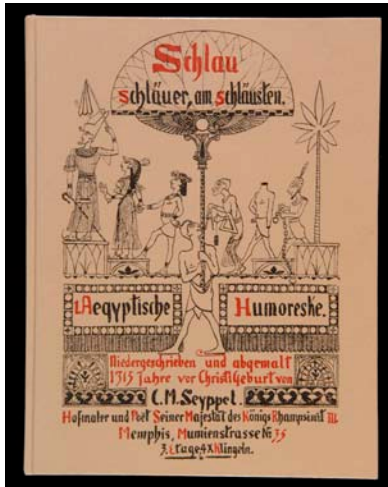
Figs. 10-11: He, she, it (aka Er-sie-es), the first in Seyppel's Egyptian trilogy, was his second work translated into English; however, its completely fictional narrative picks up where Seyppel's first translated work (Sharp...) concludes. Dimensions: 10 3/4" x 8" x 3/4" (irregular). Front cover, inside front cover and title page. (CQ)

German and English/American editions of Seyppel's "Egyptian" works were bound in sackcloth, a burlap-like fabric said to have originated in Mesopotamia about 5,000BCE. The sackcloth back covers of all of Seyppel's "Egyptian" works are similarly plain (see Fig. 18). The fabric apparently appealed to Seyppel (and his public), for he also uses it to cover at least two other volumes, Mein Buch and My Book, discussed later in this article.

All "Egyptian" titles are closed with leather straps and a wax seal; "Mein/Book"—clearly more precious to its owner, as it would contain personal, private writing—is encased in spiked metal straps, then padlocked for secure closure.

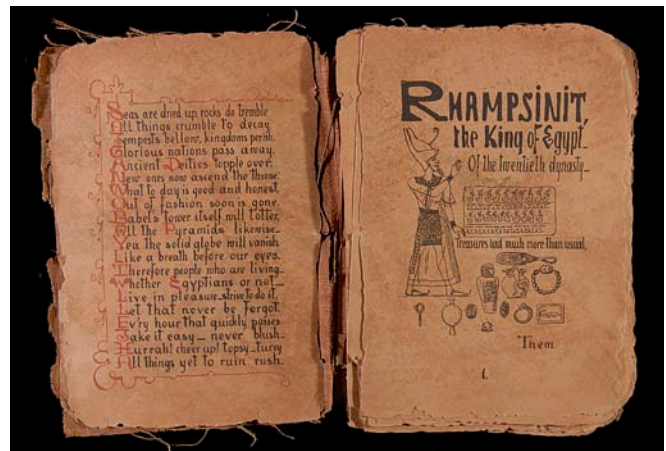
Surfing for Seyppel also revealed at least two reproductions of original Seyppels had been published. Although in German—and available from German and French book sellers—these versions were considerably cheaper than the originals offered by booksellers around the globe. Click on shopping cart. After all, a trustworthy, monolingual researcher might study layout and design of the originals and compare them, when possible, with later English editions, hoping readers would not notice only English text—not German—was being discussed in relation to book illustrations, sequencing, and over-all book layout and design.

8



Figs. 12-14: Covers of three later versions of Seyppel's Egyptian Humoreske volumes published (l-r) in 1931 (image courtesy of Scholes Library, NYS College of Ceramics at Alfred University), 1974 and (bottom image) 1982. Dimensions (1974 Sharp...): 7 3/4" x 5" x 1/4"; (1982 trilogy): 10 3/8" x 8" x 1/2." (CQ)

A more detailed discussion and images of the 1931 American edition follows (see especially Figs. 31-36). Differing dimensions, papers, inks, quality of image reproduction, printing processes, and lack of artifacts in the two most recent versions have produced conventional trade books, not artists' books.



Figs. 15-17: Comparisons of Sharp... spreads from 1885 English (top), 1974 German/Swiss-printed (center), and 1982 German (bottom) editions. This spread in the 1931 American edition—not shown—closely resembles the 1885 English publication. (CQ)

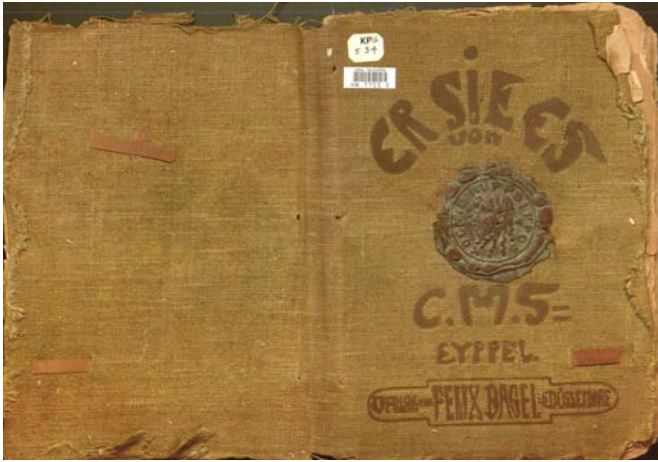
While my university (Boise State) had an Inter-Library Loan department when I arrived in 1970, the arrival of the computer in this department might be compared to the replacement of Liquid Paper with a tap of the DELETE button on your keyboard. Seldom, now, do I consult the massive, bound green volumes of the National Union Catalogue lodged dustless and uncomfortable in a corner of our university library's "Microform Department." Nor do I



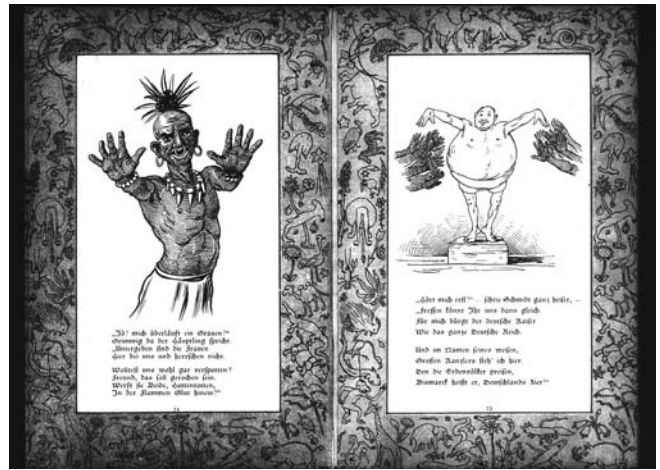
file a paper ILL plea, then wait weeks or months to see if a US mail or telephone call request has been honored. Instead, I access WorldCat on-line for the holdings of other libraries, then cut and paste my findings in an on-line form that I submit to ILL electronically.

My request for Seyppel books were speedily processed, though with mixed results (note Figs 18-25). Meanwhile, copies of virtually all the ProQuest articles and reviews arrived within one to two weeks after I requested them.

Figs. 18-25: Images of requests honored via inter-library loan (after my disastrous visit to the Library of Congress, detailed later in this article):



Figs 18-19: Er-sie-es on disk from Harvard University libraries. The verso illustration depicts the Pharaoh revelling in parenting; the recto, however, shows us what happens when our faithful scribe nods over his manuscript....



Figs. 20-21: Schmidt und Smith in Afrika Hottentottisches Blaubuch from Northwestern University's microfilm copy. Compare the verso b&w image in Fig. 20 with the same image scanned and in color in Fig. 23. (For additional commentary on Seyppel's "Blue Books" see bibliography.)

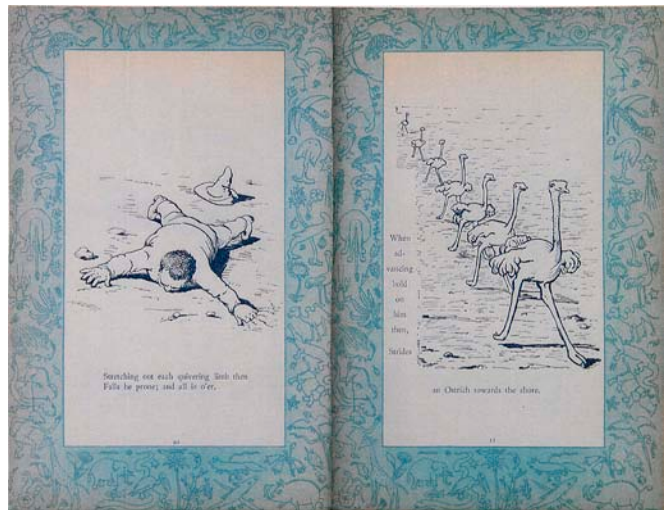


Fig. 22: Smith and Schmidt in Africa Hottentot blue-book color scanned/printed by Bangor Public Library. (CQ)

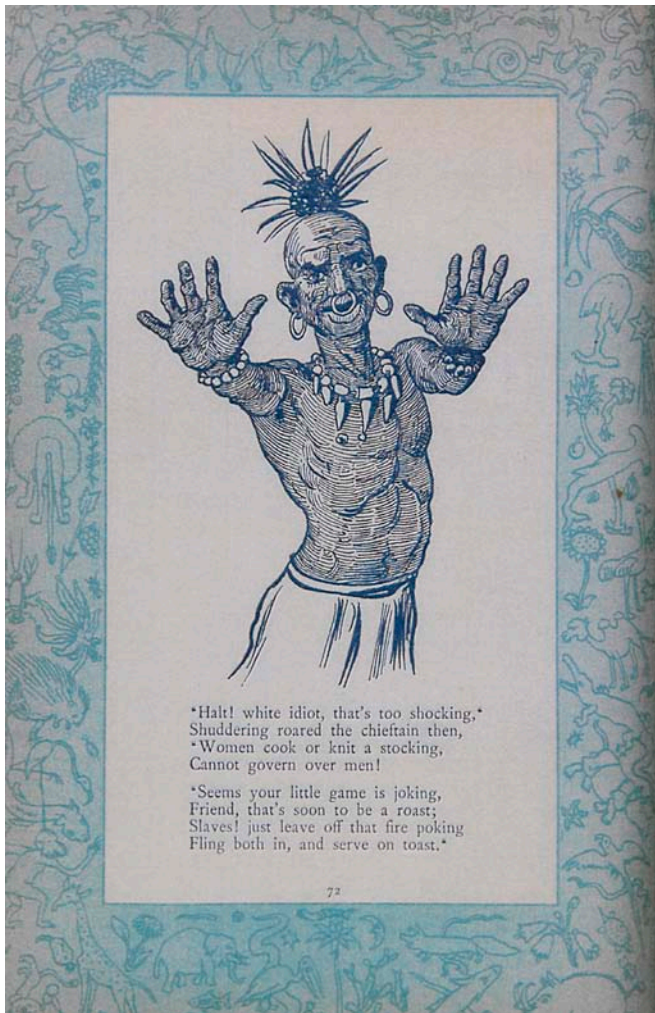
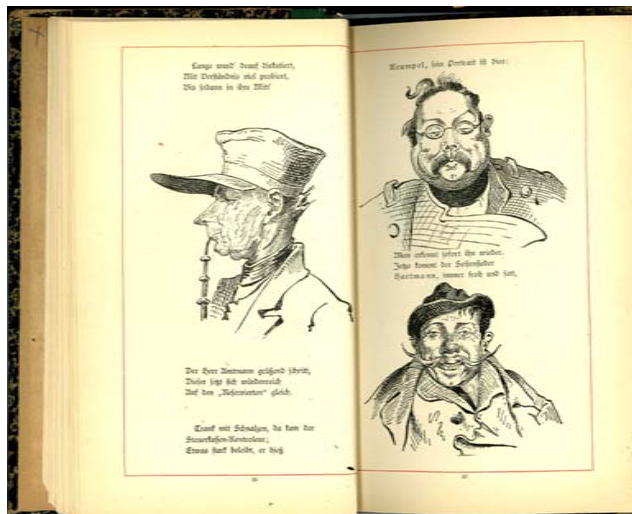
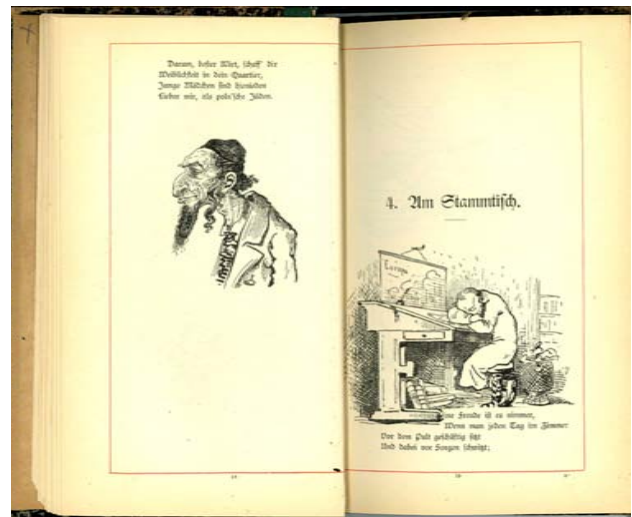


Fig. 23: Smith and Schmidt in Africa Hottentot blue-book color scanned/printed by Bangor Public Library. (CQ)

Seyppele seems to satirize all parties in this volume: stereotypical expansionist European colonialists (English and German) as well as indigenous peoples, cannibals set on consigning to their stewpot plump colonials.



Figs. 24-25: My scans of Columbia University library's copy—the only actual book sent via inter-library loan—of *Kneip-episteln* ([Section] 11...). Despite my careful handling, some pages in this brittle volume broke loose. (I have confessed to Columbia.) This book appears to be a compendium of portraits and commentary about residents of a German neighborhood, including a Jew (verso, Fig. 24). This character's comment has been translated:

Therefore, best(est?) innkeeper (host), bring  
 women (feminity) into your inn,  
 Young girls are in this world  
 much preferred over Polish jews.

#### 4. IF MUSIC BE THE FOOD...

Columbus never faced the cyber Sirens I encountered in my journey, however. Nor had I beeswax handy to counter the blandishments of enticing booksellers. Late in March I discovered in an Indiana store (with "Trading Post" in its moniker) selling (for a relative song...) Seyppele's *My Book*.



a copy I'd found for sale in America, three times as cheap as a continental copy I'd spied on-line. The house? Beyond repute. Unable to attend the auction in London? No problem. The house would provide a stand-in. Mine? A seemingly charming, totally honest woman with a Polish last name. How convenient.



Figs. 26-28: American edition of *My Book*: cover, spread with publisher listing and portion of an opening poem by Bodenstedt (translated by E. Hugh Jones), and one “vignette” by Seyppel. Vignettes adorn otherwise blank pages throughout the book. My copy is missing the padlock and key which kept contents from prying eyes. Dimensions: 10 3/4” x 8 1/2” x 2” (irregular). (CQ)

Figs. 29-30: Selected pages from *Christoph Columbus... William Richard Cutter, writing in American Biography (American Historical Society, 1918), praises this work. Cutter, referring to a copy in Madrid, believed it to be an authentic copy of Columbus's lost diary. Viva Mumiendruck! Even today, some library cataloguers suggest a publication date of “1493” for what may be Seyppel's magnum opus. (CQ)*

Then, at my screen one evening in the cruelest month, I stumbled into an auction house offering a copy of Charlene's German book for what to my ears was more opera than song. Minimum bid: £600. This price was twice as cheap as

I rationalized my bidding on a book in German by telling myself I could always turn to translate.google or Ask.com. For a few weeks this consoled me. One day, however, when shopping for *He, she, it*, I decided to compare bibliographic and descriptive entries of copies of the German original for sale. Here's a listing from one German bookseller:

SEYPPEL, C.M. *Er, Sie, Es. Ilte aegyptische Humoreske. Nach der Natur abgemalt und niedergeschrieben 1302 Jahre vor Christi Geburt.* [Ausgegrabenes Buch]. Düsseldorf, Felix Bagel, o. J. (1883). *Leinen mit ein Siegel. 42 S. (Mumiendruck)*

Presto Google [Translate this page]:

SEYPPEL, CM Er, you Es.. *Ilte aegyptische Humoreske. After the abgemalt nature and laid down 1302 years before Christ's birth.* [Ausgegrabenes book]. Dusseldorf, Felix bagel, or J. (1883). *Linen with a seal. 42 P. (mummy's pressure).*

Providentially, other booksellers, cognizant that Corwins still stalk the earth, offer descriptions in English of the German volume. Here's William Dailey Rare Books, Ltd.:

SEYPPEL, C.M. *ER SIE ES. Ilte Aegyptische Humoreske. Nach der Natur abgemalt und niedergeschrieben 1302 Jahre vor Christi Geburt durch C.M. Seyppel, Hofmaler und Poët der seligen Majestät König Rhampsinit III. Memphis: Pÿrimidenstrasse No. 36. (Düsseldorf: Felix Bagel), [1883]. 8vo, 42 (red & black printing on rag-based papyrus-like paper with faux-aged effect), elaborately illustrated throughout. Orig. ancient-style sackcloth binding, printed & mounted with clay medallion (imitative of ancient jewelry), leather straps affixed. Leather straps broken, otherwise a very well-preserved copy of a delicate piece of handiwork. 4-page introduction printed on vellum laid in.*

*Beautiful edition of this amazing piece of craftsmanship, an alleged original Egyptian papyrus dug up outside the Temple of Gizeh during the British-Arab war. Carefully printed with a patented process, the "manuscript" farcically depicts a struggle for power after the demise of Rhampsinit III. The brilliant Karl [!] Maria Seyppel (b. 1847) created several works of this sort, but they are rare and infrequently found well-preserved.*

Not all works by Seyppel are available, however, from booksellers with listings in English; nor are biographical commentaries or critical estimations. Consider <http://www.sdv.fr/pages/adamantine/maj.html>:

*Carl Maria Seyppel, disciple de Wilhelm Busch, qui produisit dans les années 1880 dans le style pseudo-égyptien, donnant une de ces étonnantes formes mixtes dont les Allemands semblent avoir le secret.*

Google-translated, the French becomes:

*Carl Maria Seyppel, disciple of Wilhelm Busch, which produced in the years 1880 in the style pseudo-Egyptian, giving one of these astonishing mixed forms whose Germans seem to have the secrecy.*

## 5. THE SHAPIRA SCANDAL

Although I'd been unable to obtain much information regarding sales in England and America of Seyppel's *He, she, it* (1884), *Sharp, sharper, sharpest* (1885, 1931) and *My Book* (1887, 1905), translations and multiple editions seemed to suggest commercial success—although one German source seemed to hint Seyppel suffered losses on his expensive-to-produce "Egyptian" books. Still, reviews of Seyppel's titles in English are almost uniformly raves; typical might be this mention of *He, she, it* in *The Literary World*; a *Monthly Review of Current Literature*:

*This delicious bit of lithographed satire on the passion for old manuscripts in general and Egyptological "finds" in particular is the design of C. M. Seyppel, a German artist, and a product of a Dusseldorf workshop. It ought to be shown to the reader, instead of being left to a mere description, which at the best must be quite inadequate. Imagine then a dirty looking sackcloth covered book, 9 inches wide, 12 tall, and one half an inch thick, stitched with rough twine, the ends of which are sealed with an ugly and ancient looking seal of blue wax, with the edges of the cover ragged and frayed, and tied with leathern strings. Inside are twenty-two papyrus looking leaves, thick, grimy, stained, worn, and mutilated ; the whole having the appearance of an immensely old volume that has been through fire and water, lain buried in tombs and catacombs, and has now come forth to do duty as a relic in the hands of antiquaries. All this clever and amusing imitation of the antique is made to serve as the vehicle of a mock epic of Egyptian history, in which very respectable doggerel and capital illustrations in the highest style of Egyptian art celebrate the story of Rhuppsippos, King Rhampsinnit's son-in-law, with his royal wife and child, whose fortunes are chequered by many domestic trials and bear fruit in*



excellent political lessons worthy the attention of modern statesmen. The pictures are a study, and so is the epic, which is a translation from the German original, printed in black letter; and the whole book is one which many a wise man might innocently enough put on his glasses to look at, as did a learned Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, in a Cambridge, Massachusetts, parlor the other evening; not immediately detecting the caricature lurking under so specious an exterior. As a mechanical imitation of the antique, He, she, it is a curiosity; designed in a spirit of pure fun and executed with a marvelousness of counterfeiting skill which ought to make the Shapiras of the day turn pale with envy. The humor of it is a little coarse in places, but some things can be forgiven in such a case as this.

(Oct. 4, 1884, p. 333)

The Biblical Archeology Society (BAS) website has a *Biblical Archeology Review* subscription enticer that introduces the “Shapiras” alluded to, above:

*Moses Wilhelm Shapira, a well-known Jerusalem dealer in antiquities and ancient manuscripts, offered to sell fragments of a scroll of Deuteronomy, including the Ten Commandments, to the British Museum, a regular customer. Thus, in July of 1883, began one of the most celebrated incidents in the history of Biblical scholarship, a saga that continues to this day.*

To learn more about any Shapira on this website, one must subscribe to *BAR*. For free is an awkwardly written and likewise-proofed article by Oskar K. Rabinowicz, “The Shapira Scroll: A Nineteenth-Century Forgery,” *The Jewish Quarterly Review* 56, 1 (July 1965) 1-21. This laboriously detailed article recounts the convoluted Shapira saga. So let me summarize and spare you page proofing or the price of a subscription: Over a period of years, Shapira had fashioned fraudulent artifacts, had had them authenticated by leading and gullible European archeologists and museum officials and, as a result, had enjoyed considerable income and high reputation. His skullduggery was revealed, however, by suspicious English experts.

One of the first English reviews of Seyppel (*The Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 November 1883) avers the noted German archeologist Georg Ebers (and others) assisted Seyppel in the production of his Mumiendruck volume, *Er-sie-es*.

To some degree, then, Shapira, Ebers, and the latter's colleagues may be credited with the Egyptianesque works by Seyppel—works that wear a chador of verisimilitude (subject

matter, narrative imagery—characters, so to speak, who “walk like an Egyptian,” their bodies displayed in the fashions with which we are familiar, courtesy of hieroglyphics and wall paintings—all housed in a volume with an expected weathered, antiquated appearance), yet works which, when the veil is lifted, reveal a tongue-in-cheek.

Ebers, however, may be due special credit for inspiring Seyppel. The reknowned scholar Wikipedia (blind, as of this writing, to the achievements of Seyppel) observes,

*Ebers early conceived the idea of popularizing Egyptian lore by means of historical romances. Eine ägyptische Königstochter was published in 1864 and obtained great success. His subsequent works of the same kind—Uarda (1877), Homo sum (1878), Die Schwestern (1880), Der Kaiser (1881), of which the scene is laid in Egypt at the time of Hadrian, Serapis (1885), Die Nilbraut (1887), and Kleopatra (1894), were also well received, and did much to make the public familiar with the discoveries of Egyptologists.*

Seyppel, however, seems to have conceived the idea of not only cooking up works whose contents satiated public appetite for Egyptian fare, fare that Ebers had been dishing up for almost two decades, but also serving a biblio banquet that would come to be called an “artists’ book”—and at an affordable price fixe. Critics in England and America complimented the German artist and his publisher on their artful, carefully crafted works, well-executed fusings of form and content well worth their modest price. In London, *The Academy* (Sept. 13, 1884, 166) is representative of *He, she, it* reviewers, noting, “Considering the extraordinary make-up of the work, we are surprised that the price asked for it is only six shillings.” In America, the book was priced at \$2. Such modest prices may account for Seyppel's reported financial difficulties mentioned above.

Benign and nefarious documents and publications (AKA forgeries) have long fascinated me. Early in my book arts “career,” I had been amused by the appearance of editions of Calamity Jane's diary. That Jane was illiterate and, in order to peck out the purple prose of her supposed life, would have had to have packed a manual typewriter as she giddy-upped from camp to camp were details the camp follower's ardent champions managed to overlook. Far less amusing had been the activities of the notorious Utah book and manuscript dealer (and forger and murderer) Mark Hoffman. Little wonder, then, the Shapira Affair, with its exotic Middle Eastern and European illicitries, mesmerized, then saddened me. Unveiled, the duplicitous artifact dealer committed suicide in March of 1884, an event which clearly did not deter our Dusseldorf book artist whose works, at least initially, greatly appealed to the public.



To some degree, I realized, the popularity of Seyppel's "Egyptian" works were due to the contemporary notoriety surrounding bogus antiquities, as well as general public interest in all ancient Middle eastern items during the Victorian era, a fascination which would perhaps culminate with Howard Carter's unearthing of King Tut's tomb and its associated curses in late 1922.

Yet of Seyppel's Egyptian mummy paper trilogy only the first two, *Sharp, sharper, sharpest* and *Er you Es* seem to have been translated into other languages. What had happened to *Die Plagen*, a title even I suspected translated as *The Plague*?

## 6. LENI

The San Diego bookseller's web listing for Seyppel sounded the first klaxon, describing my book artist discovery as being an "anti-Semitic humorist." Positive notes, however, were that the listing spelled him "Carl" and it offered two of his titles for purchase, one of which I had found on sale nowhere else (*Sharp, sharper, sharpest*). It had become my first Seyppel.

By mid-May I had made another discovery, a disturbing and confusing citation on the "Nazi Children's Literature Bibliography" page of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. The heading of the page is

### NAZI LITERATURE CREATED TO PREJUDICE YOUNG READERS

beneath which appear the following listings:

Bauer, Elvira. *Ein Bilderbuch Fur Gross Und Klein: Trau Keinem Fuchs auf gruner Heid; und Keinem Jud bei seinem Eid!* (A Picture fur Old and Young: Don't Trust the Fox in the Green Grass, nor the Jew When He Takes an Oath!). Nurnberg: Sturmer verlag, 1936.

Hiemer, Ernst. *Der Giftpilz (The Poisonous Mushroom)*. Nurnberg: Sturmer verlag, 1938.

Seyppel, Carl Maria. *Die Plagen*. Dusseldorf: F. Bagel, 1884.

Suddenly, reasons why English, American and perhaps French publishers were reluctant to underwrite production of the third "Humoreske" volume slithered into mind. For that matter, would reputation as a Nazi artist/bookmaker have affected Seyppel's reputation after his death?

Leni Riefenstahl, thy name is Carl?

Two features of the Wiesenthal entry bothered me, though. Reviewers in England and America did not seem to have

considered Seyppel a "children's author." Also, inasmuch as Seyppel had died in 1913, I wondered how he might be considered a Nazi? Perhaps the plague volume had been reprinted as a children's comic book by Hitler's insidious PR czar Goebbels? After all, Seyppel is most frequently mentioned these days—when mentioned at all—as being influenced by Carl Busch, the inventor of the comic book. Perhaps Seyppel was required reading for Hitler Youth? I recalled an edition of *Sharp* having been published in 1931.... But that was an American edition. Could it have been in German, for export? Or had Hitler credited Seyppel's third Egyptian book as a source of solace or inspiration in *Mein Kampf*?

I sent the following query to the Wiesenthal Center:

*You have listed Carl Maria Seyppel's "Die Plagen" in this category ["Nazi Literature Created to Prejudice Young Readers"]. I do not read German, but am wondering why you have described this title as "Nazi Literature" for "Young Readers." Seyppel dies in 1913 and my understanding is that his books were not designed for children.*

Two days later, I received this response:

*Dear Mr. Trusky:*

*Thank you for your email inquiry to the Simon Wiesenthal Center. "Die Plagen" was part of a three-volume set entitled, "Aegyptische Humoreske: Schlau, Schlauder, am Schlausten; Er-Si-Es; Die Plagen" published in 1882-84. These are German, illustrated antisemitic verse parodies of the story of the Exodus. They contain vicious antisemitic caricatures of Jews - portraying them as sly, cunning and untrustworthy. Though typical of the day in which they were written, these were the precursors to what would later become the malicious antisemitic writings of the twentieth century and the Nazi propaganda machine.*

*Should you have any further questions regarding this type of literature, please contact our Research Department at: [ABreitbart@wiesenthal.net](mailto:ABreitbart@wiesenthal.net).*

*Thanks, again, for writing.*

*Very truly yours,  
Simon Wiesenthal Center*

I was stunned to learn I had purchased two apparently anti-Semitic children's books. Although I have dozens of books



designed for children, I have never been especially interested in children's books, except those which employ remarkable or innovative materials, formats, structures, layout and design.

My cursory readings of the English editions of *Sharp, sharper, sharpest* and *He, she, it* had not revealed any religious bias. Could negative Jewish material have been purged from the editions in English? Or perhaps my Western American sensibilities were only attuned to misdeeds related to murderous Mormon manuscript and book dealers or madams? I grew nervous, suddenly realizing how a query, originating from a state infamous for housing the one-time American HQ of the Aryan Nations, might appear to staff at the Weisenthal Center.

It was time to hire or lure a translator to assist me in understanding Seyppel, especially after I received Columbia University's copy of *Kneip-episteln* with what appeared to be one of the "vicious caricatures" (see verso, Fig. 24).

## 7. MOTHER SHIP RENDEZVOUS

Each May Library of Congress hosts what is called an "Exchange Day" for state centers for the book. State centers, one per state, are designated by LOC to preserve and promote their state's book culture: author archives, literacy, reading and writing programs, literary map production, etc. LOC is the mother of such centers, and I happen to direct its Gem state affiliate. Truth is, these annual meetings have proved to be inconvenient and not terribly productive for me for two reasons: they invariably are scheduled during the university's finals week and the Idaho Center for the Book is one of the few centers (and was the first) to be devoted almost exclusively to making handmade and/or artists' books.

My standard conference dismay dissipated, however, when it dawned on me the 2008 meeting could be incredibly convenient and productive: I could arrive a day early and sift through the library's 18,000,000+ volumes, searching for Seyppels! Had I not already notified the library via their "Contact Us Catalog / Authority Record Errors" email form that WorldCat, most other libraries in the world, and the author, himself, spelled his first name with a "C"?

On the other hand, MYOB is an acronym I perhaps should have heeded, as I will explain.

Using LOC's "Ask A Librarian" email, I contacted the Rare Book Reading Room (which had a copy of the book Charlene had shown us—now a book I owned) and the European Reading Room (which had—wonder of wonders—seven Seyppels!). I notified them that I would be in the area and would appreciate their having the German author's bookworks available. I also inquired if I might take digital

pictures.

Within a few days I had replies. A Rare Books librarian informed me they did not pull books in advance but that the Columbus *Logbuch* would be retrieved for me upon my arrival and that I could take digital pictures, no flash or tripod allowed. The German Area Specialist assured me their books would be waiting for me and no-flash digital pictures would be permitted.

Although I had been attending conferences at LOC for over a decade, I had not really used LOC as a library nor had I spent much time getting lost in the underground labyrinth of tunnels which connect the Adams, Jefferson and Madison buildings that comprise (part of) the library. I was a conference-room, gift-shop-goer or gaze-at-the-Gutenberg-or-Jefferson's-library-or-Dorothy's-ruby-slippers displays kind of guy. But I can't deny it: I was excited to get a Reader's Card and stride off through tunnels connecting the LOC building, just as if I knew where, in the world's largest library, I was headed, Nazis be damned!

The Rare Book Reading Room in the Jefferson Building was a snap. Shortly, the Seyppel volume arrived and I was delighted to see it was as elaborate and as impressive as the two copies I had seen previously, out West. I snapped a few mediocre pictures, then inquired of the librarian about the provenance of their copy. After studying a few penciled notations in the volume and entries on his computer screen, he informed me the book had been acquired in an exchange with the national library of South Africa in the 1950s, news I found vaguely disquieting. One of the books waiting for me in the European Reading Room had "Hottentot" in its title. First Nazis. Now Boers? O Carl...

My apprehension was well deserved, although for quite different reasons I discovered when I moved to the European Reading Room, also in the Jefferson Building. The librarian I had been emailing from Boise was busy elsewhere, so a helpful, black-haired staffer said she would retrieve the books I had requested. A few minutes later she returned, empty handed, and asked to see the emails I had exchanged with the Area Specialist. Studying them, she smiled and went off to his office, only to return with a puzzled look and news that he was still busy elsewhere and the books were not on his desk, as she had hoped. Meanwhile, she would send a runner to wherever it was Hottentots, et al., were stored, to retrieve them if they had not been pulled in advance, as had been reported.

"You've not come far, I hope?" she inquired as she picked up the phone. "You won't mind waiting?"

I had, but I would not, I replied.



A half hour later an exhausted, fresh-faced young man arrived, empty-handed. Another whispered phone call was made, this time apparently to a tenured runner. Another half-hour went by. Then a blonde librarian appeared. It was black-haired lunchtime. The two librarians conferred in whispers, then came to explain the changing of the guard that was to occur, but that I should not lose hope. The black-haired librarian left and another half-hour went by. An elderly man appeared and whispered news to the blonde. It was not good.

Provisionally, the MIA Area Specialist with whom I had been exchanging e-mails came on the scene. Brief cordialities were exchanged, and my predicament was explained.

“You’ve not come far, have you?” he inquired.

I had, I explained.

“I’ll go to the shelves where the books should be,” he reassured me. In the meantime, perhaps I could visit the African & Middle Eastern Reading Room, just down the hall, in case the volumes were being held there for me?

Forty minutes or so later we reconnoitered back in the European Reading Room, each with bad news. If the Seyppels had been moved to the reading room I had searched, they were enveloped there in some backroom haboob. The Area Specialist was equally befuddled. “What’s odd,” he shook his head, “except for one slip noting one of the books was missing”—the tone of his voice indicating air quotes were being positioned around the word before the dash and that such positioning was intended to indicate he was using that word ironically, as a synonym for heisted—“in the early 1980s. A time when a number of books went,” air quotes, again, “missing. Otherwise, there are no slips or notices indicating the books are being repaired, have been checked out or moved.”

(Dear Reader, “MYOB” should now be recalled.)

Silently blushing, I inquired if it were possible all Seyppels had been removed for re-cataloguing, going on to explain my busybodying myself a few weeks earlier, notifying LOC of their spelling problem. The Area Specialist was briefly intrigued with my query. “It is possible,” he said—drawing out the pronunciation of the word in quotes before the comma, “but there would have been a notice to that effect on the shelf.” Unwilling to abandon my brilliant, mid-afternoon Stockholm Syndrome-ish solution, I suggested we might settle the matter by simply contacting the cataloguing department. Specialist frowned. “We have over 500 cataloguers scattered about the city,” he replied, each word within quotes uttered as gently and hopelessly as possible.

“You could always try your inter-library loan, back home?” the blonde offered.

## 8. LU & THE SKYSCRAPER

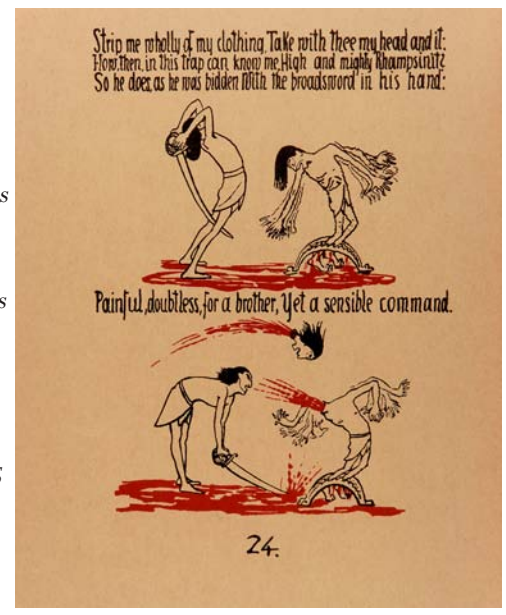
In June, I had mustered myself and reviewed and re-filed all the Seyppel materials I’d collected, discovering in that process I had overlooked one WorldCat listing: the *Sharp* edition published in New York City in 1931. I had recalled it after learning Seyppel had been termed a Nazi author and I had briefly considered the likelihood it had been printed in German for export to pubescent Storm Troopers. I promptly forgot about the Depression-era New York version, however, believing my publishing-for-export plot far too far-fetched. Another reason I put the volume out of mind was because only one copy was known to exist, in a library MapQuest verified as existing at Alfred University in the wild west of New York State.

Ruthlessly but wisely, Alfred’s ILL staff (Sandra) explained to BSU ILL’s staff they would not loan the book because it was too fragile. I countered by e-mailing a plea for Xeroxes, scans, or digital photos. Sandra, conferring with other library officials, kindly agreed to send a disk of photographs of selected pages—gratis! Encouraged, I called Sandra (now Sandy), asking how they had come by their rarity. Sandy explained the book had been a gift of one Mary Lu Wells and Googling outed Wells easy as a Rove or Novak had a woman named Valerie. But Wells had no listed e-mail and refused to answer my incessant phone calls. Worse, Wells was clearly an incorrigible or a Luddite, for she did not have voice mail. She did, however, belong to an artist’s cooperative with its own web site and master, and the latter responded positively to my electronic waterboarding. Webmaster revealed Wells would be back in town the last week of July.

Meanwhile:

I discover the publisher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century edition of *Sharp*, Robert L. Davison, must have been the architect and/or engineer who had worked in China in the Nineteen ‘Teens (after likely having browsed Seyppel’s *Quer durch China...*) and who had published an article on prison architecture in 1931. Of course he had. Davison must have been smitten by Seyppel’s *Sharp, sharper, sharpest* plot that, in part, concerns an Egyptian architect designing the pharaoh’s treasure house with a secret entrance, an entrance only the architect and his gone-bad sons might access to pilfer, freely, until one was caught in a trap and was beheaded (by his brother)—then was strung up by pharaoh for public punishment.





Images from Alfred University arrive on disk and reveal either Elbert Hubbard's ghost or Ted Turner's film minions had got their hands on Seyppel's litho stones. While my English edition uses red and black inks in a fashion of which William Morris would have approved (red, sparingly), Davison's version reeks with red, seems gaudy, almost lurid, in comparison. I'm reminded of some of Hubbard's lesser Roycroft titles or Turner's "colorizing" black and white films.

Figs. 31-36: Comparison of pages in the 1885 White and Allen Sharp (at left) with the 1931 Davison Sharp (at right). Readers with copies of the 1882 German Sharp may wish to further compare editions. (Figs. 31, 33, and 35 CQ; Figs. 32, 34 and 36 courtesy of Scholes Library, NYS College of Ceramics at Alfred University.)

Did Davison re-draw? Re-write some? Further research and closer study will reveal.

As her webmaster had confessed she would, Wells returned home and was vastly amused at my call. "I gave that book to the library over fifteen years ago," she laughed, "and I thought it would sit there forever, gathering dust!"



Wells explained she had been given the book by her mother. Her mother had inherited the volume when her sister Lu—Mary Lu’s aunt—had passed away. According to Mary Lu, her mother told her Lu as a young woman in the late ‘Teens or Twenties had gone off to New York City “to work in some skyscraper. A man a floor or two above her had privately printed the book in an edition of 50 [100?], and he gave her a copy.”

## 9. SHIPS IN THE NIGHT

Reputation. Estimation. Seyppel, even in his own time, had been misunderstood—if not slighted. An unsigned article in an 1891 issue of *The Critic* tells us:

A. M. N. of Bennington, Vt., writes to us as follows:--“In the March *Cosmopolitan* is a story by M. Allen Watson entitled ‘Rhampsinitus and the Wise Thief (from the Egyptian).’ This is exactly the same story written by C. M. Seyppel (sic [sic!]) some years ago and published under the name ‘Sharp, sharper, sharpest.’ The book was in humorous doggerel, curiously illustrated and bound in imitation of the antique, and it had neither date nor place of publication. Are M. A. Watson and C. M. Seyppel one and the same person?”

Vol. 15. No. 374. (February 28, 1891) 117.

As if to underscore my ruminations about justice, mutability and memory, the entry which immediately preceded *The Critic* article cited above notes:

William Morris, the poet and house decorator, intends in future, it is said, to be his own printer, and has established a press in a cottage near his Hammersmith residence. He has long been preparing a new font of type modeled upon that of an early Italian work which has caught his fancy. Mr. Morris, by the way, thinks he has nearly exhausted all that he has to say on social topics, and will gradually give up the lecturing at which he has been so indefatigable during the last few years.

Morris’ “future” is well-known, for Seyppel’s English contemporary is world-renowned for his high standards of craftsmanship, his desire to resuscitate medieval book artistry, impressive books from his Kelmscott Press, etc. In contrast, the German bookmaker has been almost completely forgotten, despite his remarkable publications which, but for Blake’s illuminated works, might well be considered our first artists’ books.

Six months since being handed the *Christoph Columbus Logbuch*... and subsequently discovering at least a portion of Seyppel’s biblio oeuvre, I still am struck by the anonymity that has befallen the German bookmaker. It is as though both Seyppel’s life and works had set sail on the *Santa Maria*, Columbus’s ill-fated vessel. Or was it *Lusitania*?

Whatever. Should readers have survived the rough seas and endless tackings of this preliminary study, perhaps it will have launched better-equipped biblio seafarers or Cousteaus to retrieve, study and evaluate Seyppel’s achievements (as well as his shortcomings).

## 10. Selected, Sometimes-Annotated, Chronologically/Alpha-Ordered “Credits”

Seyppel, Carl [sometimes Karl] Maria. *Der Blick in’s Jenseits : eine kitschliche Geschichte ; confiscirt gewesen! In 32 Bildern von: C. M. Seyppel und Michel Bär*. Dusseldorf: Sauernheimer, 1879; Berlin: Hans Götze’s verl. (aufgekl. :) R. Wiedemann;s Verl., [1879 or circa 1879]. On-line edition: University and National Library Dusseldorf, 2008, <<http://digital.ub.uni-duesseldorf.de/content/titleinfo/122214>>

Title in English (?): *Looking in to the Afterlife in 25 scenes*. Translated biographical information on Eduard Daelen (web site for “Literarische Nachlässe in rheinschen Archiven”) notes one of Daelen’s nicknames was “Michael Bear.” He and Seyppel are credited with this title whose publication date is listed as 1880 on this web site.

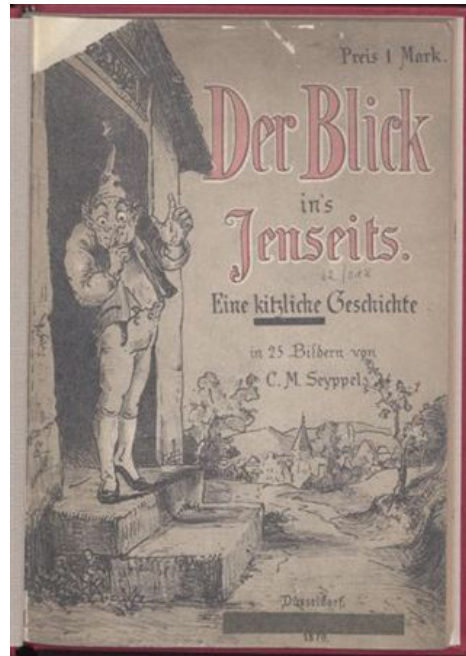


Fig. 37: On-line image of *Der Blick*... cover from the University and National Library Dusseldorf.

*Quer durch China. Abenteuer eines Sibirischen Flüchtlings.* Kreuznach: Voigtländer, 1880. Volume by Robert Konrad Keil, illustrations (four chromoliths, this edition) by Seyppel.



Fig. 38: *Quer durch China*... Seyppel's involvement with production of this exotic title (with six chromoliths and numerous black and white illustrations by others depicting life, landscapes, and artifacts in China) may have contributed to his decision to produce—two years later—his own exotic “Egyptian” titles. (CQ)

*Vom Storchnest bis zur Schul: Gereimt und gemalt für dich, mein liebes Kind.* Dusseldorf: 1881 [as listed by Hinrich, 1886, and Thiel, 1903]. Second edition in 1883 is listed on the SB Berlin PK web site.

[Section] 11 : *Vom Stammtisch und vom Kneipkonfrater, - Vom Spitz zum Affen bis zum – Kater ; Kneip-Episteln / von C. M. Seyppel.* Leipzig: Oberhausen [u.a.]. Spaarmann, 1882. Also listed as: *Kneip-episteln.* Oberhausen Spaarmaan 1882.

*Schlau, schläuer, am schläusten. Aegyptische Humoreske.* Niedergeschrieben und abgemalt 1315 Jahre vor Christi Geburt von C. M. Seyppel. Hofmaler und Poet seiner Majestät des königs Rhampsinit III. Memphis, Mumienstrasse no. 35, 3 etage, 4 x klingeln. Dusseldorf: Felix Bagel, 1882. Second/third? edition 1884/1885? See also 1974 and 1982 reproductions, below. First of Seyppels's Egyptian Humoreske volumes. Translated into English as Sharp, sharper, sharpest in 1885 and 1931; see below.

*Er-sie-es. Ilte Aegyptische Humoreske. Nach der Natur abgemalt und niedergeschrieben und abgemalt 1302 Jahr Christi Geburt durch C. M. Seyppel Hofmaler und poët der seligen Majestät König Rhampsinit III. Memphis, Pyramidenstrasse no. 36, 1st etage. Meldung beim Portier.* Dusseldorf: Felix Bagel, 1883. See also 1982 reproduction, below. Second of Seyppels' Egyptian Humoreske volumes.

British Library copy lists preface by Georg Mortiz Ebers. Translated into English as *He, she, it* in 1884, and French as *Roi- reine- prince* in 1885 or 1886 (see below).

*Die Plagen. Ilte aegyptische Humoreske. Aufgeschreiben und abgemalt bei dem Auszuge der Juden aus Aegypten* von C. M. Seyppel. Dusseldorf: F. Bagel, 1884. See also 1982 reproduction, below. Third in the Egyptian Humoreske trilogy; not translated into English; characterized as Nazi literature for children; more accurately, anti-Semitic.



Fig. 39: *Die Plagen*...from Carl Maria Seyppels altägyptische Trilogie. Köln: Rheinland-Verlag in Kommission bei R. Habelt, 1982. See entry, below. (CQ)

*He, she, it.* Egyptian court chronicle B. C. 1302. A veracious and truthful version preserved and transcribed for general use by the peerless poet laureate of Rampsinit III... Designed by C. M. Seyppel. London: Elliot Stock; printed Dusseldorf, F. Rangette & sohne, 1884. *Er-sie-es*, Seyppel's first book translated into English, the second volume in his Egyptian trilogy.

*Mein buch.* Mit Rand-zeichnungen von C. M. Seyppel [A notebook. With an introductory poem by Friedrich Martin von Bodenstedt.] Dusseldorf: 1884. Note: Seyppel, C. M. and Carmen Sylva. *Mein buch.* Dusseldorf, 1885 [as listed by Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Den Haag, 2595 BE Netherlands]. Second (?) edition published in Dusseldorf by Felix Bagel,

1890. See 1887 and 1905 editions in English (*My Book*) listed below.

*Roi-reine-prince. Récit humoristique égyptien. Peint et écrit d'après nature, l'an 1302 avant la naissance de J. C. par C. M. Seyppel, peintre et poète à la cour de feu sa Majesté le roi Rhampsinit III. Memphis, rue des Pyramides no. 36, 1er étage.* Paris, Kurt Guhrauer, 1885 [as listed by Museum of Modern Art, NY] or Dusseldorf: Felix Bagel, 1886 [as listed by Cambridge University and SB Berlin, PK and U of Dusseldorf]. French version of *Er-sie-es* and *He, she, it*.

*Schmidt und Smith in Afrika Hottentottisches Blaubuch.* Dusseldorf: Felix Bagel, 1885. Is the title the only difference between this volume and the next listed? In all versions (three) of this title, Seyppel mimics and satirizes the title, form, and content of pre-existing publications: official government reports (Blue Books). Seyppel's Blue Books might be described as volumes with comic book panels inset on highly decorated pages with ornamental patterning reminiscent of works by William Morris.

*Schmidt und Smith in Lüderitzland: hottenttotisches Blaubuch mit 118 Kritzeleien.* Dusseldorf: F. Bagel, 1885 [as listed by Hinrich, 1886, and Thiel, 1903]. Luderitzland: an area in southwest Africa named after a German merchant who claimed the land for his homeland, in part to halt English expansion.

*Sharp, sharper, sharpest. A humorous tale of old Egypt. Penned down and depicted in the year 1315 B.C. by C. M. Seyppel, court-painter and poet laureate of His Majesty King Rhampsinit III and done into the English tongue by two mummies of the old dynasty. Memphis, 33 Mummies Arcade. (Ring three times.)* Dusseldorf: F. Bagel, 1885.

*Schlau, schläuer, am schläusten* is Seyppel's second book translated into English, the first volume in his Egyptian trilogy. Likely printed in Dusseldorf but published by White and Allen in New York and London. See also 1931 American version of this title, below.

*My Book.* New York: White and Allen, 1887. Vignettes by Seyppel; translator of Fr. von Bodenstedt's introductory poem is E. Hugh Jones; printed by A. Bagel in Dusseldorf. Seyppel's third book in English—although only his vignettes appear. The book is a blank book/journal for owners to record whatever they wish. Title is listed in *The Book Buyer* (1887) as a "Holiday Book" item selling for \$3.50 and in Bayard Morgan's bibliography.

*Smith and Schmidt in Africa. Hottentot blue-book;* with 118 illustrations by C. M. Seyppel. English words by E. Hugh Jones. New York and London: White and Allen, 1888. *Schmidt*

*und Smith in Afrika Hottentottisches Blaubuch* is the fourth Seyppel title in English. Note inversion in title to appeal to the English-reading audience. The book advertises itself as an official "Blue-book" facsimile; contemporary readers see racist overtones in "Hottentot"—but English and Germans are portrayed as stereotypes and satirized in the volume, too.

*Deutsche Marchen mit Bildern für Jugend u. Volk von Carl Maria Seyppel.* Düsseldorf: Felix Bagel, 1889 [2<sup>nd</sup> ed.].

*Rajadar und Hellmischu; altägyptischer Gesang nut LXXX Bildern nach dem Leben,* von C. M. Seyppel. Berlin: S. Fischer, 1889.

*Christoph Columbus Logbuch, als Geheimschrift von mir selbst, für meinen Sohn Diego, vom 3ten August 1492 an, geführt und mit Schildereien und Karton versehen worden. Aufgefischt von C. M. Seyppel.* Dusseldorf: F. Bagel, 1890. See English translation (*My secrete log boke*...), below.

*My secrete log boke noted and written by himself in the years 1492-1493 – Discovery of America – Fished up on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 1890 and imitated after the original log-boke...* London: Elliot Stock; printed by F. Rangette & sons, Dusseldorf, 1890. Fifth Seyppel work to be translated into English. Layout and design of this version is markedly different than the German (*Christoph Columbus...*) edition. Illustrations in the latter do not appear in the former, whose graphics are smaller and less impressive—or perhaps more spontaneous and/or doodle-y? The German edition is beautifully "calligraphed," quite congruent with its breathtaking illustrations. The English edition—simpler, seemingly writ with a casual quill (or nib?)—achieves an authenticity of which the earlier edition would never be accused. It is as though Seyppel (or someone) re-thought the German edition and re-scripted and re-designed the edition in English with an eye to achieve verisimilitude, not just a prime position on the coffee table. (The ...*secrete log boke* charade is that the explorer has confided his private thoughts, reflections and observations in a personal journal that records events from the courts of Europe to the shores of the New World and then back—until a mid-Atlantic hurricane interrupts February 12, 1493. Believing they are doomed, the explorer places his log boke in a wooden box and heaves it overboard, that it might be found, copied, then wash up in your bookstore.) The English edition, in contrast to the German edition, might be termed an "autograph manuscript in print," to borrow a phrase turned by Steven R. Price (writing of the third edition of *Clarissa*). Is it possible Seyppel learned of Richardson's novel while visiting England as a young man?



Book arts aficionados may know of Tom Raworth's *Logbook* (Poltron Press, 1970), with illustrations by Frances Butler. Raworth's book consists of ten slightly charred, random log pages. Raworth was unaware of Seyppel's volume, for he writes (November 13, 2008), "LOGBOOK was simply a passing thought, back in the early seventies: I've always been bored reading 'long' novels, so I thought let's just cut to the chase. As I remember it all but the last page was written one afternoon, looking out of my window in Colchester. The last page, the following morning, I sent the ms. to Ed Dorn, who was my main correspondent then. It's probably somewhere in his papers, wherever they might be. I remember charring the edges of the pages with a match... a la Treasure Island Maps." For more about Raworth's book see Alastair Johnston, "Off the Road," *The Journal of Artists' Books* (Fall 2008), 40-41.

foundation for they did not seem afrayde / on  
ye contrarie they approached us harmlesly and  
atte a distance of aboute fifty paces they halted  
whilst they made knowne their surprize and  
wonder by lookes and gestures. A few ranne  
backe and disappeared in ye shade of ye palme  
trees whych formed a thicke foreste not far  
from ye shore. But they did not do this to  
ostape / for they soone came backe with  
large troops of other natives who did alle  
watch us wyth grate curiositie and seemed  
to give signes of boundlesse astonishment.  
They were of myddel stature and with a  
reddish skin / longe blacke haire and rather  
highe cheke bones. They were almoste entyrelly  
naked. They wore ringes in theyre eaves  
and noses / and theyre haire was adorned  
with feathers. Theyre weapens were bowes  
and arrowes and some had longe speares.  
When they sawe that we hadde no wythe to  
hurte them / they came nearer in quite a  
friendly manere and as we presented them  
with smalle shelles and other thynges / they were



Fig. 40: Digital b&w photograph of page from *My secrete log boke*.... These are the only indigenous peoples pictured in the English edition. They do not appear in the German version, although relatives may (see Fig. 30). (Reproduced with the permission of Rare Books and Manuscripts, Special Collections Library, Pennsylvania State University Libraries.)

Eine Leine für Den heligen Rock in Trier 1891 zur  
Belehrung aller Hetzer, Antichristen, Zweifler, Ketzler.

Düsseldorf: C. Kraus, 1891.

*A Day with Royalty: being a truthful account of the doings of that greatest of monarchs, Kimanli, recorded for the benefit of posterity, by that wondrous writah, Tellali: B. C. 475, Temple of Karnak....* Omaha: H. L. Stonecycher, 1901. Fiction; one folded leaf of plates. Despite its listing in WorldCat, this volume may not be by Seyppel. Sandy, a helpful librarian at the Brooklyn Museum (sole known owner of this title) describes the volume as being "stab bound with side stitching and impossible to open flat for a scan or Xerox, especially as the pages are thick and brittle. The title page and verso do not list the [publication] information. Opposite the back flyleaf is a text which, as the typeface is deliberately obscure, approximately reads: This veracious chronicle is the work of Alstonecycher [all stone sketcher—lithographer?] of the puissant province of A-Hem-o [Ahem?—or see below] Designs are by the noble Carl Magnus Plein [C. M. the plein air sketcher?], of the same province Copyrighted, 1901, by H.L. Stonecypber [Stonecycher?] Omaha, Neb."

A subsequent e-mail from Mary at the Brooklyn institution, responding to my questions, is justifiably dubious: "I first must say that it's highly unlikely that Carl Maria Seyppel wrote this. The style of the illustrations is somewhat similar but the story is thoroughly American. "The book is printed in black ink only. The text is unrhymed but written in the form of a script. The language is very much like that used by George Ade for *Fables in Slang*. [This 1899 best-seller is available on Google.books.] "The story tells of a visit to King Kimanli [American President McKinley] on the opening day of the baseball season. Throughout this spoof on the McKinley administration, caricatures of contemporary figures such as Carrie Nation and Theodore Roosevelt appear." Mary also noted, in a later email, the volume's flyleaf "A-Hem-o" is most likely "Omaha," a backwards misspelling. Perhaps this volume is proof that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery — or a biblio prank within a biblio prank: a New World author fabricates work of Old World author who had fabricated work of a bogus Ancient World author! Another relevancy (?): Wilh. Herberholz, German artist associated with Seyppel, has a sketch of "the Desert" noted as being in, of, or near Omaha.

*Paradiesche Zustände auf der Düsseldorfer Ausstellung.*  
Düsseldorf: Schnitz & Olbertz, 1902.

*My Book.* St. Louis: W. K. Bixby, 1905. Privately printed volume has "autograph verse" by Eugene Field, prefatory remarks by Field's brother Roswell Martin Field, vignettes by Seyppel. (See 1887 and 1884 editions, above.) Seyppel's vignettes appear in this sixth Seyppel publication "in English."



Die Chronik des Bismarck-Stammtisches "Auf der Hardt" zweiter Teil. emstes u. 'Heiteres au seines Jahres Lauf u. Gedenkblatt für den verstorbenen Altmeister Carl Maria Seyppel gest. 20 Oct. 1913. Düsseldorf-Gemeshein: Selbstverl. d. Bismarck-Stammtisches "Auf der hardt," 1914.

Sharp, sharper, sharpest. A humorous tale of old Egypt. Penned down and depicted in the year 1315 B.C. by C. M. Seyppel, court-painter and poet laureate of His Majesty King Rhampsinit III and done into the English tongue by two mummies of the old dynasty. Memphis, 33 Mummies Arcade. (Ring three times.) New York: Robert L. Davison, 1931. Second edition in English of *Schlau, schläuer, am schläusten*, Seyppel's seventh and final book in English. One hundred copies, privately printed. An approximate facsimile (slightly different cloth and cover design; more red ink in illustrations).

*Schlau, schläuer, am schläusten. Aegyptische Humoreske. Niedergeschrieben und abgemalt 1315 Jahre vor Christi Geburt von C. M. Setppel. Hofmaler und Poet seiner Majestät des königs Rhampsinit III. Neu herausgegeben von Elisabeth Staehelin.* Munchen: Heimeran, 1974. Four editions (!). Includes a "Nachwort" by Elisabeth Staehelin, "Herodots Meisterdiebgeschichte" by Klaus Bartels, and Heinrich Heine's poem "Rhampsenit." Printed in Switzerland. Paperback edition (40% reduced dimensions?) does not attempt to reproduce the Mumiendruck effect. It has an abstract, modernized (Swiss?) cover with snow white text block pages. Black ink only.

*Carl Maria Seyppels altägyptische Trilogie.* Köln: Rheinland-Verlag in Kommission bei R. Habelt, 1982. Includes an introduction by Heinz-Peter Mielke and "Aus dem Leben Carl Maria Seyppels" by son Hans Seyppel. Casebound *Sharp...*, *He...*, and *The Plague* printed on a buff text weight paper that weakly approximates the Mumiendruck effect; page size approximates standard (8 ½ by 11") size, close to original dimensions. Pages (printed in black ink) appear to have been Xeroxed, often creating a muddied effect. These 1974 and 1982 publications are conventional, antonyms of Seyppel's almost century-old artists' book editions.

Tom Trusky is the Director of the Hemingway Western Studies Center at Boise State, Professor of English, and founding head of the Idaho Center for the Book (an affiliate of the Library of Congress Center for the Book) and the Idaho Film Collection, a state archive of silent and talkie feature films shot in the Gem State. He is also co-founder of Ahsahta Press, publisher of poetry of the American West. In addition to making artists' books, Trusky's research has been devoted to silent film writer, actor, editor, director, producer Nell Shipman, and to self-taught Idaho artist/bookmaker James Castle. Trusky has just completed a documentary, "At Lionhead: Nell Shipman in Idaho, 1922-1925," and the second edition of his definitive biography, "James Castle: His Life & Art," was published in the Fall of 2008. He can be reached at <ttrusky@boisestate.edu>.



## An Artist's Journey into Bookmaking

By Nancy Steele-Makasci

I remember quite distinctly the first time I made a book. What a feeling of satisfaction and enjoyment I experienced! Having studied art for my entire life, I was impressed and attracted to the craft and skill devoted to traditional bookbinding. How could this wonderful medium have escaped me for so very long? At that time, I had no idea how influential the book medium would be to my future work as a fine artist.

In 1989, I was an exchange student at the Katholische Universität Eichstätt, a small university in southern Germany. Being bored with German language & translation, I took a painting course. This was not a typical university art course, since those studio courses are taught at academies in Germany. This course was specifically designed for education majors who would teach art in elementary schools. I must admit that I didn't understand exactly everything that occurred in the course since my German was far from excellent. With plenty of experience in art classrooms and after listening closely, however, I would get some vague idea and forge forward with little or no attention to the other students and their projects. One day, our painting instructor came to class and informed us that we would be making books. A little off from the painting curriculum, I am sure, however, I didn't ask questions. In fact, I could barely ask any questions. I always obediently listened to the directions given by the instructor and followed to the best to my abilities. The first book was small, roughly 4" x 6", with single blank sheets glued at the spine. The cover was stiff paper with patterns created through a simple print process using textures, similar to potato printing. The second book, completed a few weeks later, had a hard cover and signatures. I was so excited to know how to make a book. Binder's board was a coveted precious material that I didn't even know how or where to buy. I went back to my dorm room and started making books out of blank pages and photocopied German grammar books. These first attempts to make books on my own resulted in rough and loosely sewn together forms, but I had learned a great deal about the importance of craft and skill in this medium.

It was unfortunate that I didn't find an opportunity to make any more books for some time thereafter. It wasn't until 1993 when I was very happy to spend another year abroad as an exchange student at the University of Urbino in Urbino, Italy. Well known as the birthplace of artist Raphael Sanzio, Urbino is a beautiful little town in the Marche region of central Italy, I took courses at the university but soon found that the more

exciting institution in town for me was the Istituto Statale d'arte Scuola del Libro. I even wondered if I was allowed to be taking classes at this school since I wasn't really one of their students. Thankfully, a German friend from the language courses had found the classes at the School of the Book and was going regularly. She told me that it was totally legitimate for university students to go there also. I didn't ask any more questions. I just showed up to each class. First, I started attending a lecture course on the history of paper. Later, my friend discovered an even a better course at the School of the Book and invited me to come with her. This course covered the conservation of old books and was a studio course. Basically, this course was intended to train the conservators who would work in the Italian archives of the future. During this studio course we learned basic book structures and tying headbands. I loved those days and really looked forward to these classes each week. Some details went beyond my Italian language capacity, however, I would just ask fellow students and they forgivingly helped me when I needed it. This time I was much more aggressive about getting answers than I had been in the painting course in Germany. If I couldn't figure out the sewing or the sequence of instructions from fellow Italian students, I would rely on my German friend to help me out some.

I enjoyed the process of bookbinding, however, on my return to the U.S. I didn't find many venues or reasons to make books - until graduate school when I was working on my MFA in printmaking at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. It just so happened that my graduate school years coincided with a real book arts trend that was occurring throughout the nation. Many artists were making books, especially printmakers. It was as if they had just discovered books with the same excitement and awe that I had had in 1989 in Eichstaett, Germany when I made my first book. My graduate school advisor, color woodcut artist Karen Kunc, was making books that included prints and inventive structures. She was very encouraging of students who wanted to make artist's books and taught us how to make a variety of box structures for print exchange portfolios.



## *The Bonfolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist*

My first book attempts in graduate school were very traditional structures with prints decorating the pages and covers.



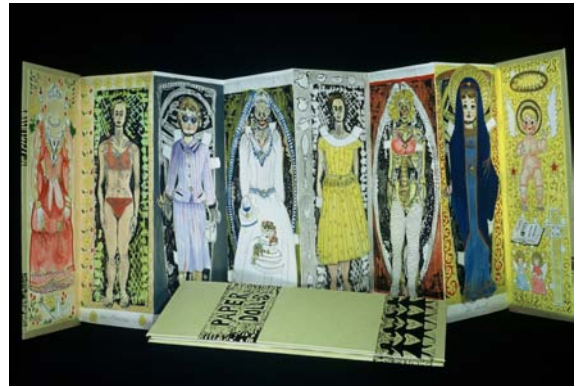
*Lavater & Me*

At some point, however, the traditional book structures and sizes seemed inhibitive. Why not make huge books that are over 9' feet when unfurled?



*Baccar Scroll*

How can paper be manipulated to create more interesting and intriguing structures or even sculpture? After trying a variety of structures, I selected the accordion fold for its versatility and since it can stand easily to display all of its pages at one time.



*Paper Dolls*

I made a number of large mixed-media sculptural altered book works for my MFA exhibition. Recycling old books was my obsession. I would buy old books at thrift stores and dissect them by cutting the covers off and taking them apart signature by signature and page by page. These piles of pages would be printed on, painted, stained, burned and drawn upon to make new pages for my own books.



*Johnny's Thorn*

Editions ceased as I made one-of-a-kind sculptures. In my mind, why would I buy new paper and tear down pages while there are so many old books out there all torn to the same size and with some great prints on them already that could add to the depth and interest of my own work.





*RIBS*

Why should I ever print on a white page again? I thought that I was so clever when I reprinted on a proofing press my own new golden title on a cover of a book with its own golden title. The book format allowed me to make art from paper that was not only three-dimensional but also mixed media.



*Sewing Made Easy*

Making altered artist's books was great for exhibition opportunities because many juried exhibitions were starving for artist's books and they were really easy to send by mail.

Looking back on my experiences as an artist, I believe that my affinity to making books coincides closely to my love of printmaking. In both printmaking and book arts there are many manual tasks that are repetitive and technical. Obsessive measuring, tearing paper, working with paper and ink, keeping working areas clean and the attention to craftsmanship are necessary for both media. As an instructor of printmaking and drawing, I often ask myself why some

students gravitate to a discipline such as printmaking which, much like bookmaking, requires attention to craftsmanship and repetitive manual tasks. In our day and age, often the most manually demanding task of the day entails text messaging or writing an email.

My own attraction to book arts and printmaking is deeply seated in growing up on a farm with a sawmill and woodworking shop where repetitive manual tasks were often the order of the day. Manual skill and dexterity reigned supreme as the most skillful could work more efficiently to make the best products possible. The importance of making objects by hand was seen in every part of our daily lives. My father made furniture and was quite proud of the fact that he could extract a tree from the woods and take it through each and every stage to make finished furniture.



*Tree Stump*

My mother raised animals and butchered on a regular basis, rendering her own lard that she used in cooking. Everyone in my family had their own expertise. One brother hunted and gardened while the other took care of all things of a mechanical nature. My sister excelled at sewing and making anything from fabrics and yarns. I, on the other hand, became an artist. And, even though almost everything produced by the rest of my family was practical in nature, there was always a respect for my decision to become an artist since there was a fundamental understanding that I was still an objectmaker.



*Tablecloth Centerpiece*

An artist's oeuvre is a documentation of an artist's life journey. Each one of us have a unique road to follow and many of our life experiences contribute to a one-of-a-kind artistic vision which is a synthesis and a culmination of our lives. My adventures in making books came about by a chain of serendipitous events that cropped up occasionally throughout my life as an artist. While in full bookmaking mode, my thoughts bubble over about various possible book structures. I wake up in the middle of the night with ideas and I am compelled to make sketches immediately lest I forget them. Like a song playing over and over in my head, one big question circulates in my mind, "How can the basic materials of books, that is paper, ink, thread, board and glue, make interesting and intriguing two-dimensional and three-dimensional forms which can be read visually and literally in various ways and from multiple vantage points?"

*Nancy Steele-Makasci is a visual artist and arts educator creating mixed media two-dimensional and three-dimensional works incorporating unique combinations of printmaking, drawing, painting, collage, and book arts. As a practicing artist, she currently exhibits in regional, national and international exhibitions. While growing up on a tobacco farm in southeastern Indiana, Nancy worked in the fields with her family. She readily admits that the importance of teaching and learning manual skills using tools and equipment on the farm ultimately shaped her own development as an artist and an educator of artists. She relates the following about her*

*childhood years on the farm. "My father and mother were both wonderful teachers as they demonstrated every manual task or use of tools to us when we were the appropriate age, going through all the steps meticulously until we became proficient. Shoddy work was not accepted and often we (siblings) competed with one another to be the best."*

*Nancy earned a MFA in Printmaking from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as, a MA in Art and a BA in Art Education from Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. She was an exchange student at the University of Urbino in Italy and the Catholic University of Eichstaett in Germany. In addition to her current teaching position, she has taught printmaking and drawing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and Kutztown University in Pennsylvania. She currently lives in Orem, Utah and teaches Drawing, Printmaking and Art Education in the Department of Art & Visual Communications at Utah Valley University. She can be reached at <steelena@uvu.edu>.*

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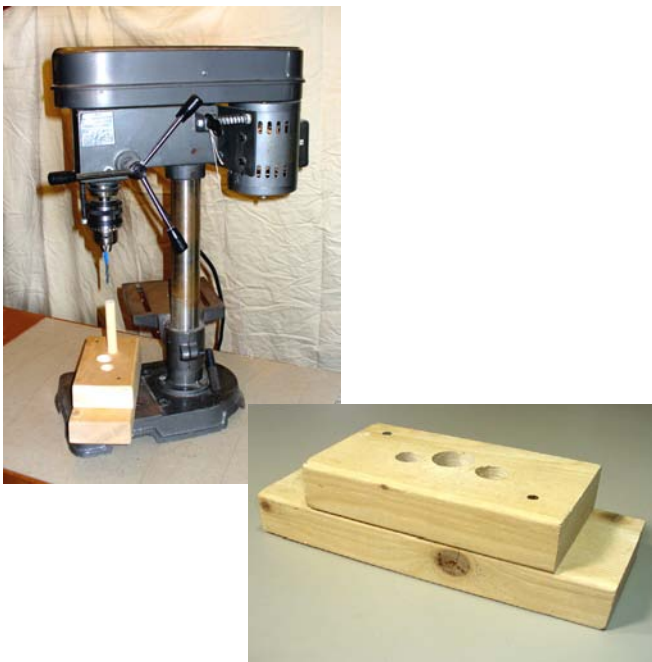
## Making Your Own Finishing Tools

By Jana Pullman

After my first experience with tooling in a workshop setting I returned home not sure what to do next. The large array of commercially available brass finishing tools and their expense was a bit overwhelming. My answer was to try making some tools so I could continue practicing this new and exciting technique. Simple tools can be made by hand with material found in most hardware stores.



Quarter inch brass rod is sold in 3-4 ft. lengths and can be cut into 2 1/2 inch sections using a hacksaw. Then cut a wooden dowel 3/4 of an inch in diameter into 6 inch long pieces for the handles. At the end of the dowel handle make a hole to set the brass piece in. By clamping the dowel upright the hole can be drilled by hand or a drill press can be used with a simple jig to hold the dowel section when drilling.



This jig is made by drilling a hole the size of the dowel through a section of 2 x 4 wood. When I did this, I made additional holes for 1-inch and a 1/2-inch handles. Then you can glue and nail this drilled section to another piece of 2 x 4. If you drill down deeper into the second piece of wood, this will give you a deep hole to hold the dowel when drilling.

Drill the hole into the handle end at a depth of 1 1/4 inches using a smaller drill bit than the diameter of the 1/4-inch brass rod. I use a 7/32-size bit. Check to see how straight the hole is by putting a small dowel or stick into the hole. If it is not straight make a new handle. Now is a good time to round the opposite end of the handle so it will be more comfortable to hold. Use a file to round off the corners and then smooth it with sandpaper.

Heat is used to set the brass rod into the handle. This method holds the brass more securely than adhesives. One end of the brass rod is filed to a slight taper to be inserted into the handle. This tapered end is heated using a propane torch or a small kitchen torch like the one use for heating the caramel layer on the dessert crème brulee. I use a pair of vice grip pliers that lock in place to hold the brass rod when heating it up. To keep the serrated ends of the pliers from scratching up the brass rod I cover them with tape. You will also need a small container of water for cooling the brass rod after it is set in the handle.



## The Bonfolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist

Start heating the tapered end of the brass and look for the color of the metal to change first by darkening and then begins to have a red tint. Push the heated end into the drilled hole of the handle and then pulled out. This step of heating and then pushing the brass rod into the handle and pulling it out is repeated a few times until the hole begins to enlarge and the wood begins to soften and the rod can be pushed all the way in. To stop the heat from continuing to burn the hole put the brass end into cool water until it cools down. Try not to get the handle wet when cooling.

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Now the fun part of shaping the tool face begins. Dots, squares, triangles, and simple leaf forms are easiest to start with. Place the tools in a vise and with a file flatten and smooth the end or face of the brass tool. Then continue smoothing the surface with 220 and then 320 grit fine wet/dry sandpaper. I glue the sandpaper to a piece of book board so when sanding I can keep the face of the tool flat and smooth.



Your first tools should be simple solid shapes. Using a marking pen draw out the shape you want and with files shape the face of the tool. Begin with angled cut tapering down the brass rod. These long angled cut make it easier to see the shape of the tool when stamping into the leather.



When filing, brace the brass rod with your other hand and start with light pressure with your strokes. When you have established the angle of the area you are removing you can increase the pressure. Small shavings of the brass you have filed away will begin to clog the file surface making it harder to continue filing. You can brush away these shavings with a stiff brush.



To refine the shape you can use small needle files with rounded or angle sides. These small files can be found at most hardware or art stores and are sold in sets of five to six different shapes.



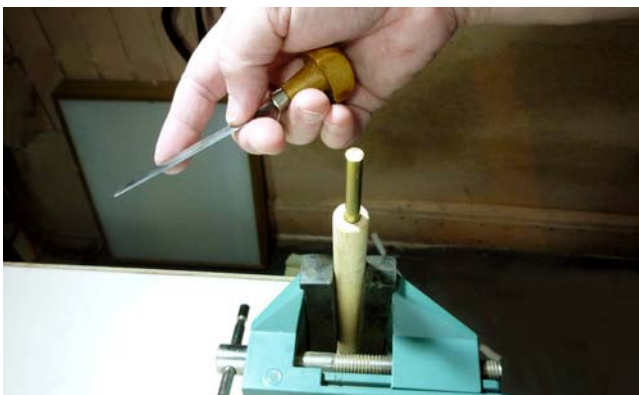
To make a small open dot in the tool face a small drill can be used or you can hammer a pointed cold chisel into the face of your tool. I like to make this open dot first because it is not always exactly centered and then I file the outside shape. See images at top of next page.



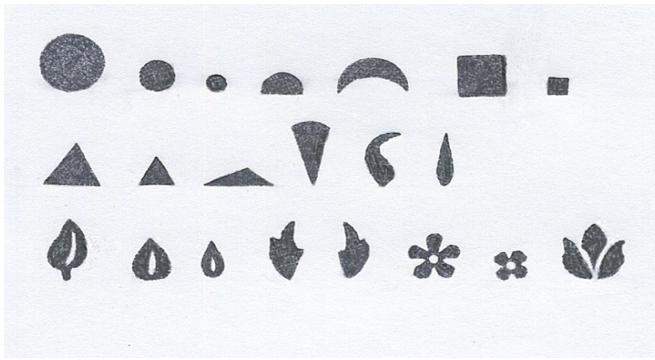
Test the quality of the design on the tool by using a stamp pad to ink up the end and then press it on to a piece of paper. To get a better impression put a blotter or heavy soft piece of paper under the paper you are testing on.



Other small openings or lines are made with metal engraving tools used in printmaking to carefully carve out the areas you want. Make sure the engraving tool is sharpened and again start with a lighter cut. Repeat the cut to deepen it. It is easy to slip with this tool so if the mark is not what you want file the face down until the mark is gone and start again. Shaping your tools will take a bit of trial and error but when you are done you will have new shapes and possibilities for your designs.



When you are happy with the shape use a finer 600 grit sand paper to smooth out any scratches and then finish polishing with a piece of leather rubbed with a polishing compound. How smooth and shiny the face of the tools is will affect how smooth and shiny the gold tooled image will be on your book. Try stamping the tool into a piece of dampened leather to make a final check.



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These are examples of different tool shapes you can make.

Being able to make and replace the handles of your tools will help as you begin to buy and use older tools. Wooden handles can become loose due to charring of the wood from overheating the tool or simple wear from use. With minor loosening if the handle is still in good condition wrap a thin piece of wet cotton wool around the shank and then reset the brass piece without heat. If this does not work or if a handle is badly burnt or damaged, it should be replaced with a new one. For larger tools like decorative pallets use a larger wooden dowel to hold the larger brass shank of the tool.

Over the last few years I have made about fifty tools. Some have been small line segments, most are simple geometric shape and a few are decorative pallets. These simple tools are fun to add in with traditional tools to create new patterns or used individually as an accent to my bindings

*Jana Pullman is the owner of Western Slope Bindery specializing in custom binding and repair of books in Minneapolis. When not making tools she focuses her artistic energies on fine binding and participates in book exhibitions. Jana earned her MFA from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and in 25 years of book arts experience, she has worked as printer, papermaker, bookbinder, illustrator, conservator, and book artist. She can be reached at <pullmanjl@yahoo.com> or on the web at <www.westernslopebindery.com>.*

## Gold Tooling Without Fear

By Jamie Kamph

It surprises me to hear bookbinders speak of gold-tooling as risky decoration that might ruin a binding. It doesn't have to be this way. I've learned to make gold-tooling a logical and natural part of the bookbinding process, replacing the threat of irrevocable loss with a comfortable approach that is about as exciting as knitting.

Free from the anxiety of sudden failure, I can look for ways to make gold-tooling more interesting. I might use gold for accents rather than for outline. I'll gild one side of an object or run gold lines within an onlay for a textured effect. I've titled books using gold hatch-work rather than imprinted letter forms, used gold as light reflections on grapes, and run titles in curves to represent reflections on a vase.

I don't consider my tools sacrosanct. Instead, I work with them and upon them. I often file away at mine, altering their shape, effect, pattern. I keep boxes of old, damaged tools that provide my raw materials. For example, a line pallet scored diagonally becomes a "rope." A thick line filed to a point at one end becomes a "ray." First I design, then I find a tool or alter a tool to work that design. Often existing tools will serve. I don't need a leaf tool to make a plant pattern. I can use a heart-shaped tool upside-down, or I can arrange a geometric tool into a growing design. I've had made a few simple geometric shapes that I use this way, often mimicking historic design patterns using these unusual tools for a convincingly modern effect.

Often you will hear a binder brag about the number of tools he owns. I'd rather own a few tools that can be used in a variety of ways: rolls that can create new patterns when used double, run in opposite directions; *fleurons* that can be combined in interesting patterns (like the 18<sup>th</sup>-century *dentelle* bindings); simple geometric tools that can be used symbolically; a good set of gouges that allows the binder to "draw" any shape he chooses.

When I use a tool, especially in a new way, I will work with it for a while, first using an ink pad and paper to practice making patterns until the tool feels like an extension of my hand, then practicing again on scrap leather mounted on book board.

Gold is not an add-on, but rather an integral part of the book. I don't gild at the end; I start with a structure that will support my decorative techniques. The gradual process that I use for applying gold to the book demands great stability in the book boards. I usually make my own boards by laminating

together sheets of thin conservation board, Bristol board, and paper, according to the thickness I require and the amount of warp I want. Pressing heated tools on the boards tends to tighten up the leather and pull up the boards, so mine are usually constructed with a serious inward warp to compensate.

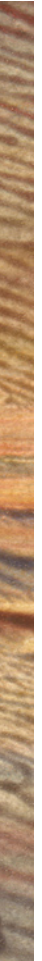
Similarly I arrange my sewing and board attachments to complement the design: tapes and cords can become sculptural elements or they should occur where they are least disruptive to the design. I line my tight spines with leather, suede side up, then sand it to create a base beneath the covering leather that will accept and hold gold-tooling. I know that onlays may lift and gold will wear off gutters and hinges, and try to work that, too, into my design.

I do design a binding in its entirety before even beginning to sew or cover the book in leather. I draw out the design precisely on graph vellum paper, which I fit around the book to guide my blind-tooling. I mark on the pattern a code for each tool impression in the design, even reworking the design with those tools inked to make sure they will fit together precisely. Then I tool through the pattern, using fairly hot tools on dry leather, to leave a clear depression in the leather. Then the pattern paper can be removed and saved as a roadmap for later gold-tooling (since the tool codes are marked on each design element).

For me, blind-tooling is the structure on which gold-tooling hangs. Proper blind-tooling must be smooth, even, clearly defined. If this can be achieved, the gold-tooling is easy. Blind-tool with the leather well dampened, surface water evenly absorbed. Start by using a relatively cool tool – spit will slowly bubble, not sizzle; if you touch it, it will feel hot, but you (and the leather) will not be burned. Listen for the slight sucking sound as the tool leaves the leather. This is the sound of perfect tooling. Go back over indefinite outlines or patterns until they are even and clear. Perfect the depth of your tooling – making it all even and appropriately textured.

If you make a mistake at this point, it can be fixed. Blind-tooled impressions can be removed by pricking them with a fine stainless steel needle, then re-dampening the impression until the leather absorbs enough water through these prick marks to plump itself back out, lifting the impression and lightening its color.

These blind-tooling strictures apply to all tooled design elements, not just to the lines and shapes that will be gilt. As you proceed with the design, you may decide not to gild all the areas you had planned. Wait and see how it looks as you go along. Since I do not "prepare" the leather for gilding by pressing, polishing, and filling or paste-washing, it doesn't



matter whether or not I do gild the blind-tooled impressions.

Once the blind-tooling is completed, onlays and inlays in place, I glaire in only the blind-tooled depressions that I will gild, using a fine brush, or brush-pen. Because I glaire in only the impression left by blind-tooling, I do not discolor the covering leather of the book, which makes the gold-tooling a reversible option. I use Fixor glaire, mixed with water to a pale golden color, stored in glass, not plastic, and renewed when it clouds by stirring it with a swab dipped in ammonia. Fixor seems to give me the flexibility I need to build up gold-tooling. It needs only 15 minutes or so to dry before using, and in reusing can be worked damp after only a few minutes.

Before I begin laying in the gold, I'll clean and polish each tool. Then I heat my tool thoroughly to a cool sizzle temperature. I tend to start cooler than necessary, just to be sure I don't burn the leather. I rub the tool over a pad covered half in crocus cloth (a hardware store staple) to polish the brass surface, the other half, in ultra-suede rubbed with Vaseline to oil the tooling surface. Then I use the oiled tool to pick up just enough gold to cover the stamping surface. For larger tools, I cut squares of gold leaf on a gold cushion. For smaller tools, gouges, lines, and letters, I use ribbon gold, rolls of gold leaf carried on tissue, stretched on a gold holder of my own design.

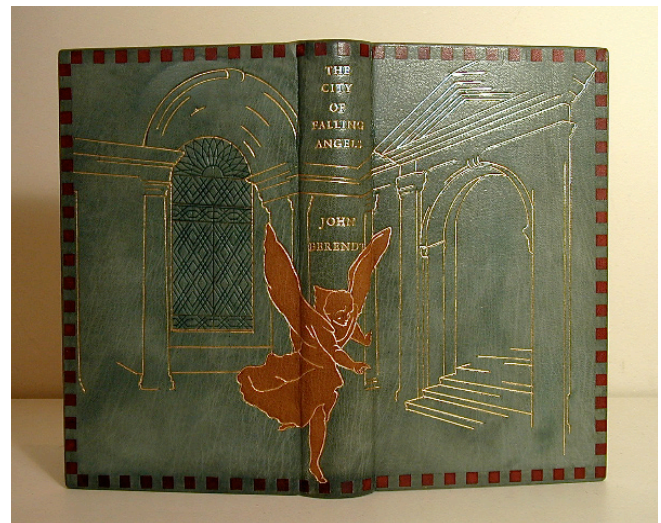
What is most essential to my peace of mind is being able to see what I am doing at every stage in the process; and by seeing the effect of each design technique, I can decide whether or not to proceed with my original plan or to vary it.

Once the gold leaf is on the tool, I use a square of cotton to gently press any overlapping gold back against the edge of the tool. This gives me a clear view of that edge of the tool, which I can then carefully place in the blind-tooled impression on the book. Because the gold is on the tool, not the book, there is no guesswork in placing the tool – you can see it all. Because the tool is relatively cool, I leave it in that impression for a few seconds, rocking it back and forth without compromising its position, then holding it firmly down from the top for a moment before I remove it. If I am working a narrow line using ribbon gold, there will be extra gold still attached to the impression. I use the front edge of the tool to push that extra gold up into the impression, then retool, melting that overlay into the pattern. This can sometimes be done two or three times by using the edge of the tool to push the overlapping gold back across the impression, then retooling. Each time, more gold will adhere, making the pattern brighter. Finally, I clean off any extra gold (there will be very little) with a piece of cotton, so I can see if I need to repeat the process.

If very little gold is adhering to the impressed design, something is wrong: either the tool is not warm enough or there is not enough glaire in the pattern. I may need to heat the tool a bit more or re-glaire. When making these adjustments, I try to work in small incremental increases, rather than radical change. If part of the design should prove extremely difficult to gild, I re-glaire, then tool a few moments later when the glaire is still damp. But I use the tool very differently then. I give it a moment to cool down further than usual, then make a very quick light pass into the pattern to dry the glaire and make one thin layer of gold adhere to the leather. Then I retool using a warmer tool and additional gold.

Gradually the design builds layer by layer until the gold looks rich and thick. In between gildings, I clean around the tool impression with a stainless steel darning needle, dulled on crocus cloth to a smooth round shape, held in a pin vise. A bit of saliva rubbed on the tooling will loosen excess gold.

It is hard to judge the quality of one's own work because it does progress so slowly. When the gold-tooling is not getting any better, stop and set it aside. Then look at it fresh a day later when you can better determine just how bright and fine it is. When I am satisfied, I will polish the book lightly with a brass polisher. I do not treat it with salts or oils for a few days, just in case I want to go back and redo any of the gold. Mine is a time-consuming process, but not an anxious one; it is gold-tooling as a careful process rather than a decisive event.



*Gold-tooling used in combination with blind-tooling, for architectural design and onlay outlines.*

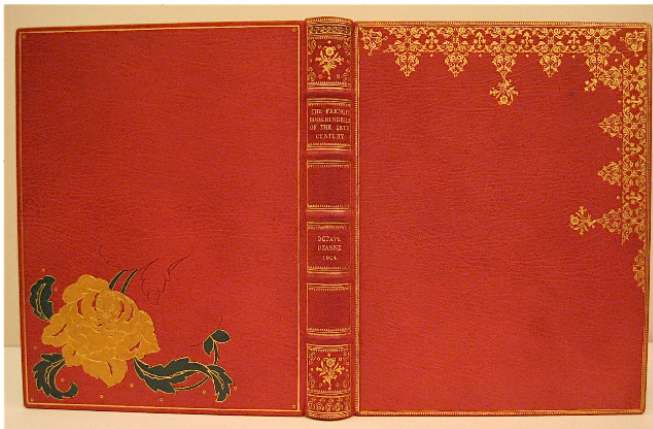




Titling done in hatch-work gold-tooling. Note floating outline at the bottom of the leaf pile.



Gold-tooled lines and geometric shapes used to suggest light reflections



A few simple tools combine to make up a dentelle border.



Gold-tooled patterns made up from 4 tools repeated in different directions



Gold-tooling used to create leaves directly on the covering leather, to outline onlaid flowers, and to texture the zucchini stems.



Ribbon gold roll dispenser and crocus cloth/ultrasuede polishing pad

## *The Bonefolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist*

Jamie Kamph was born and grew up in Princeton, New Jersey, graduated from Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Mass. in 1966, then worked in New York City in magazine and book publishing. She exchanged a career as an editor/publisher for that of a bookbinder in 1971, when she met and began to study under Hope Weil. Since 1973, she has worked as a designer-bookbinder and book conservator at Stonehouse Bindery on her farm in Lambertville, New Jersey. She has lectured and taught at a variety of colleges, libraries, and schools. Her bindings are represented in major library and university collections throughout the country and in several Guild shows. She has written magazine articles and book essays about bookbinding, as well as the book *A Collector's Guide to Bookbinding*. In 2003 she was awarded first prize in the Helen Warren DeGolyer bookbinding competition. She can be reached at <jamiekamph@verizon.net>.

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## The Artist as Paper Engineer

By Carol Barton



Carol Barton in her studio

the most elaborate pop-up constructions often are built on a core of simple pop-up forms such as those outlined in several of the how-to instruction manuals on the market, including my own *Pocket Paper Engineer* workbooks. The challenge is in achieving the total vision – in this case a combination of mechanics, architecture, and visual images that unite seamlessly into a magical world-on-a-page. The more knowledge an artist has of mediums and production processes – graphic design, offset printing, die-cutting, and assembly techniques – the more satisfying the results.



Instructions for Assembly 3



Instructions for Assembly 1-2

The art of designing pop-ups, called paper engineering, is often so delightful and playful that the completed page belies the set of skills required to produce a finished scene. Basic techniques of paper engineering are not difficult. In fact, even

My own foray into the art of the pop-up page began after graduating from Washington University's School of Fine Arts as a painting major. My paintings did not include many clues to my future choice of media, aside from the fact that they were figurative and told stories. But I had grown up building things in my father's basement shop (he was a diesel engine mechanic) and learning how to disassemble objects with hopes of fixing them. I had no fear of delving into a set of wires, screws, gears and other bits and pieces to figure out how something ticked, and I think this experience served me well later in analyzing the mechanisms of the paper engineered form.



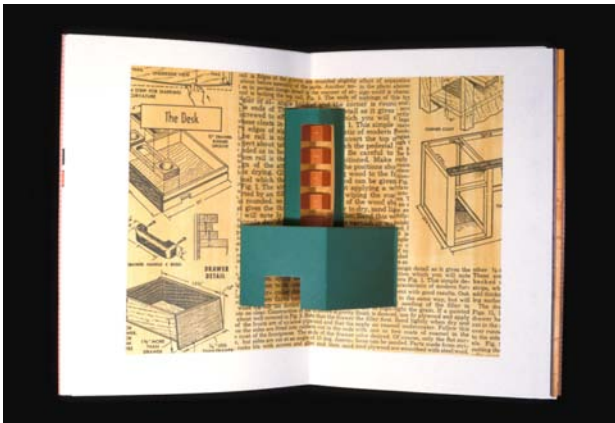
Instructions for Assembly 4



*3-D Design Project*

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Another pivotal episode was a fundamentals class in 3-D design I took in college. Taught by professor Fern Tiger, the class required students to learn to use basic shop equipment and experiment with a range of materials in fabricating projects that interconnected, moved, and worked within a set time frame. Challenged and liberated from the flat plane of the painting, I enjoyed exploring properties of wood, plastics, and metals, and learning about simple electrical wiring, motors, lighting, and gear systems. Even today, although most of my artists' books are of paper, I take pleasure in the work of renovating our home and making furnishings from a range of materials. The thought process behind designing a metal wall sconce, laying tile, or fashioning a garden fountain is not so different from constructing a movable artist's book — it's all a matter of trial-and-error design and perfecting the skills required by the materials at hand.



*Instructions for Assembly 5*

Upon graduating from college, I remained in St. Louis for a year working at the Gateway Arch, Eero Saarinen's stunning memorial to America's westward expansion in the 1800's. Looking back, this was an important time during which I added more skills to my repertoire that would serve me in my later roles as curator and teacher. I developed and gave public talks on Saarinen, tours of the monument, and lectures on various historical subjects related to the American west. I honed my research skills and became comfortable as a public speaker. I also assisted with some of the installation work being done for the new Museum of Westward Expansion under the arch.



*Glen Echo Park*

Moving to the Washington, D.C., area in 1977, I took a job that would gradually move me toward my career as a book artist. Glen Echo Park was an arts center located in Maryland, just beyond the D.C. line. Originally a "chautauqua" or summer arts and education community, it became an amusement park in 1897 and served as such until 1968. Closed with a plan of building high-rise apartments on the site, the park became federal land in a move to block this development. The beautiful old mission style and art deco amusement park buildings sat vacant and deteriorating for a year or two before artists in the community convinced government officials to let them repair the structures for service as studio spaces. By the time I arrived to join the staff, Glen Echo was a thriving arts community of visual and performing artists, among them a group of book artists transplanted from Rochester, New York, where they had graduated from Visual Studies Workshop. At the park, these book artists were working with a resident organization called The Writers' Center.



*Multilith Offset Press*

Book arts was new to me, and I began delving into some of the processes required to make photographic negatives and press plates for printing on the little one-color Multilith offset press at The Writers' Center. Still, I was thinking in terms of producing individual prints as extensions of my paintings, not

in terms of the rich sequential combinations of text, graphics, and visual imagery that characterized the work of Kevin Osborn, Sue Anne Robinson, Alec Dann, and other book artist residents there at the time. Not until several years later, when The Writers' Center received an NEA grant to produce twenty artists' books and approached me with the question of whether I'd like to participate in the project did this happy circumstance prod me to consider the book as a work of art that could serve my own creative themes.



*Beyond the Page*

My first book, *Beyond the Page*, was done sans pop-ups. However, each page did have a cutout window or doorway that visually led into the next page and back to the image on the preceding page. Because I was producing an offset edition of around 250 books, the most efficient method of cutting these page openings was via the die-cutting operation, whereby blades set into a piece of plywood and locked into a press can cut (and score) paper. I contracted with a box-making company in downtown D.C, Thrifty Paper Boxes, to die-cut the edition. It was one of their more curious jobs (not the usual corrugated cardboard product), and I made several on-site visits during the cutting process to make sure the positioning of each window was correct. My interest in the structural aspects of paper was piqued. But once the edition was completed, I said I'd never make another — it had been such a difficult ordeal. I returned to painting.



*Sleeping Beauty Carousel*

Two things eventually compelled me to change my mind about creating artists' books. It was gratifying when my edition of *Beyond the Page* sold out. And a friend's discovery of an early Italian *Sleeping Beauty* carousel book that opened from a flat, compact volume into a circular layered stage made me realize there could be an exciting dimensional aspect to the book form. In other words, a book could be sculptural and mechanical. This was a revelation!



*Library of Congress, photo by Barry Wheeler*

Washington, D.C., is a special city. Aside from its role as our nation's capitol and the center of government, it is home to some of the best libraries, research institutions, and museums in the world, and to some of the most dedicated and engaging librarians, as well. Perhaps I most value this aspect of Washington because it has led me down such a rewarding artistic path. Beginning with a call to Ellen Wells, librarian at the Smithsonian's Dibner Rare Book Library, I was about to embark on a two-year research project to discover

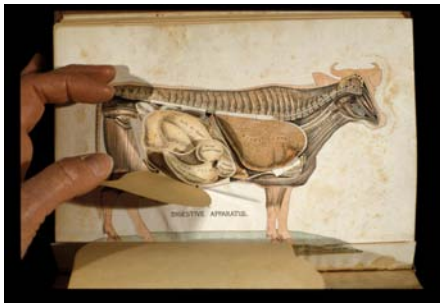
the secrets of movable books. In most cities my research would have come to an abrupt end with that initial call, but within the libraries of D.C. I found a wealth of rare books that incorporated turning wheels, lift-up flaps, moving dials, multiple layers, and pop-up illustrations.

formats and unusual mechanisms. Part of what drove me was the thrill of the hunt. But I was also collecting ideas for my own work.

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*Organum Uranicum, 1536*



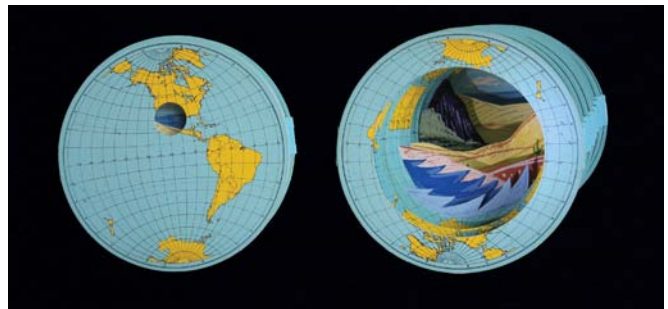
*Successful Stockman, 1899*

I was delighted to find some of the earliest of these “movable books” were sixteenth- and seventeenth-century scientific treatises on subjects ranging from astronomy and geometry to anatomy and landscape gardening. (Science had been another favorite topic for me in school). Of course, I love children’s’ pop-up books, but the rare scientific tomes with movable parts were the ones which first captured my imagination. I began making weekly visits to the Dibner, and Ellen would direct my research from catalogues of movable books she managed to locate. I branched out to other libraries: the Library of Congress, the National Library of Medicine, and eventually to collections and libraries across the United States to find copies of books with sculptural



*Thames Tunnel Book, 1843*  
(Front cover and view from above)

One of the most unique book forms I came across was a “peepshow” or “tunnel book.” The one in the Dibner Library had a scene commemorating the building of the tunnel under the Thames River in London that was completed in 1843 (hence the “tunnel” nomenclature). Historically, these books were often made as tourist souvenirs showing scenic vistas, or as commemorative pieces for special events. They consisted of a series of pages with openings cut in the middles and held in line by two accordion-folded panels attached either along the top and bottom or down the sides. When extended outward at arm’s length, a viewer could peer through a peephole in the book’s cover to see the layered scene inside.

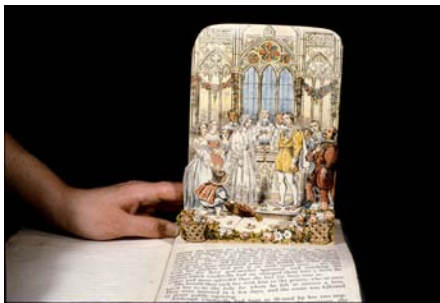


*Tunnel Map*



*Loom*

My definition of a “book” is fairly broad, encompassing a wide range of materials, structures, and historic forms. However, I still have a problem with defining the historic peepshows as “books” because they lack a narrative sequential reading. Then I began to consider the accordions as more than mere supports and realized that the peepshow format joined three books into one: the view through the middle and two folded book sides. By adding text or imagery to all the surfaces, I could force the viewer to “read” the book from many angles and thus re-establish a timeline and resulting narrative within the piece. My first sculptural edition, *Tunnel Map*, is less of a book and more a traditional peepshow, but two later editions, *Everyday Road Signs* and *Loom*, resume the role of visual books that readers must explore and contemplate across time.



*Cinderella Pop-Up*

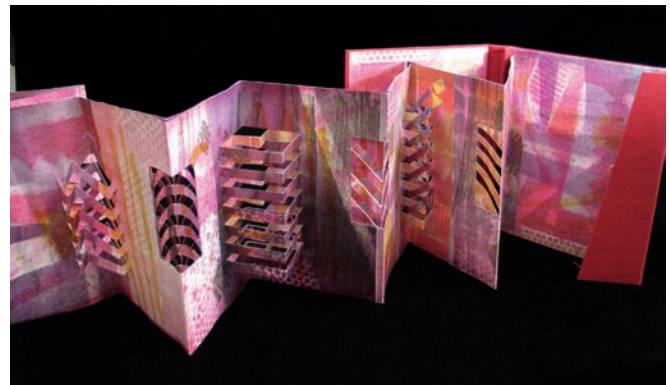
As I continued researching historic movable and pop-up books, I studied their structures to learn how they were designed and assembled. (The distinction between movables and pop-ups is that movable books require the viewer to manipulate something on the page — a rotating wheel or pull tab, for example — whereas pop-up books spring to life automatically as a page is turned). The first true pop-ups appeared in the 1850’s, produced by the London-based children’s book publisher Dean and Sons. These incorporated a flap overlaying the text on the page. When the flap was pulled up, a pop-up scene appeared along with the underlying

text. These first pop-ups were “props” that worked with the flap at a ninety degree angle to the page, thus creating a stage with a page floor and a vertical background “wall.” Images stood parallel to the wall, propped up with a tab connecting them to this wall.

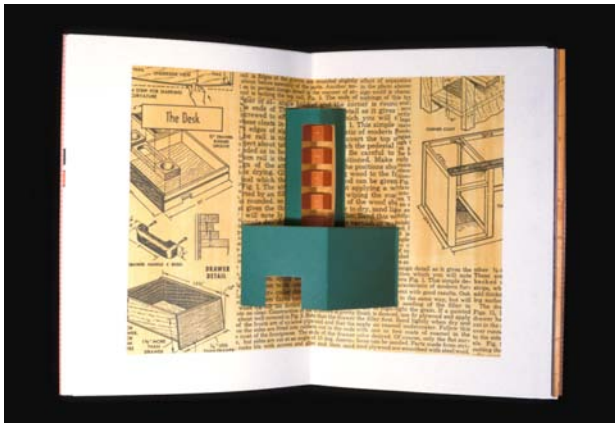


*Pop-Up Pinocchio (top) and Mother Goose (below)*

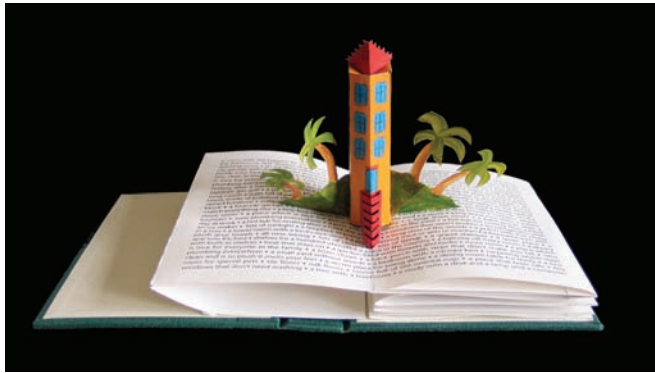
Two other pop-up forms used in many of the early children’s books were platforms and V-folds. Platforms float above the page, sitting on hidden underlying tabs. V-folds stand upright across the centerfold of the page, deriving their name from the fact that they are creased down the middle and glued in a V configuration at their base.



*Rhythmic Notes*

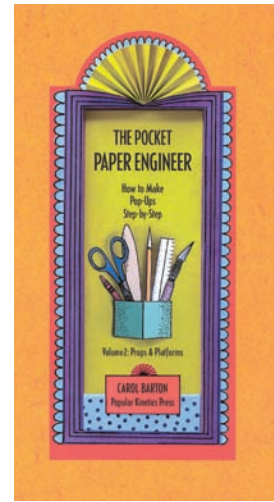
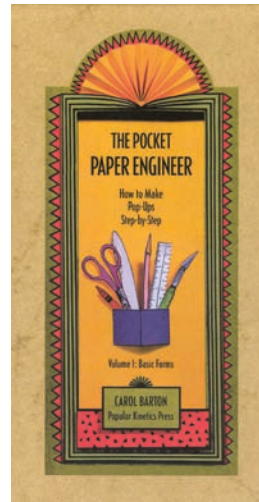


Instructions for Assembly



Home Dreams

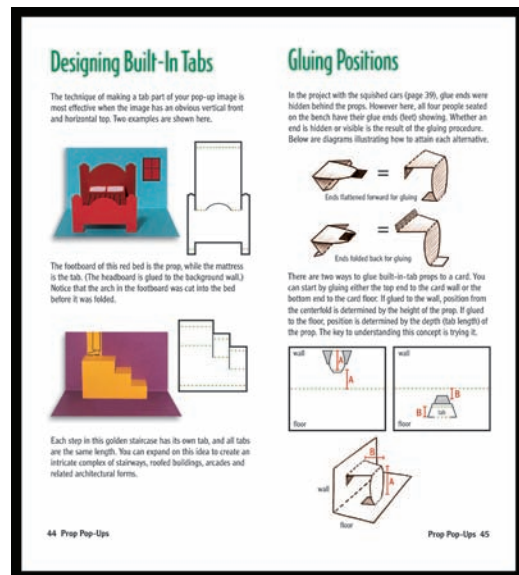
As I was conducting this early research and formulating a lexicon of pop-up devices from the historic examples I was finding, I also began systematizing ways of producing pop-ups for my artist editions. *Rhythmic Note on Seven Folds*, *Instructions for Assembly*, and *Home Dreams* are example of some of my books which utilized these pop-up forms. Then Kevin Osborn suggested I offer a class on pop-up construction at Pyramid Atlantic Center for Paper, Prints, and Books. That was in 1983. Organizing a class required me to put my research to work and find a way to present what I had learned in a clear, straightforward format that was not intimidating to those who did not have a lot of three-dimensional design experience. Because I enjoy analyzing how people learn and devising ways to simplify and streamline production, I found I loved teaching. Teaching allows me to define the craft of paper engineering in logical, step-by-step terms. Plus, sessions in the classroom inform my own book themes and methods of production.



The Pocket Paper Engineer. volume 1 & 2

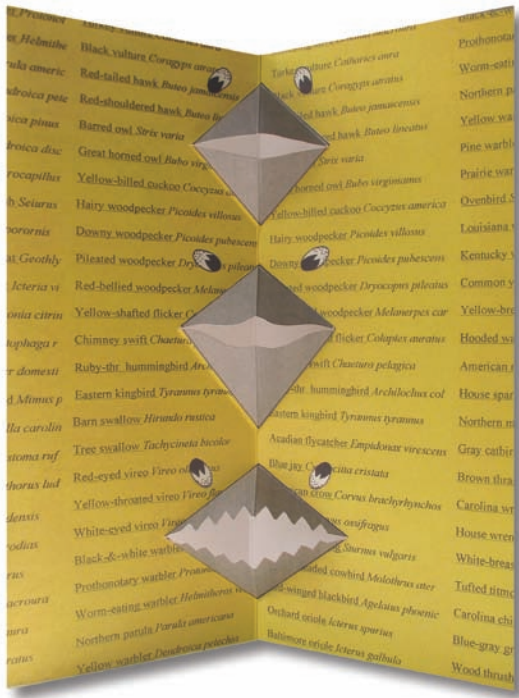
I have always been an artist who prefers doing all the work on a single project at my own pace, eschewing work on deadlines or in collaboration with a publication team.

In keeping with this modus operandi, I ended up self-publishing my latest endeavor *The Pocket Paper Engineer* how-to pop-up workbooks. This in itself was an education. I had originally approached commercial publishers with the idea, and the publishers were interested but wanted a different book designed for a limited audience. I completely redesigned the dummie three times. Each time I became frustrated and I gave up. But the idea wouldn't go away. Finally, I realized if I was going to get the book I wanted, I'd have to do it myself. Luckily, I had friends who had published commercial pop-ups and were willing to advise me on offshore printing and production options.



The Pocket Paper Engineer (excerpt)





The Pocket Paper Engineer (example)

I knew from the classroom that the best way for students to learn paper engineering was by doing it, and that many people had trouble with two-dimensional photos and written instructions when learning to make three-dimensional work. So I wanted to design a workbook with interactive projects for each basic pop-up form, allowing readers to learn “through their hands.” Volume One took three years to complete. For a whole year I corresponded via email with Main Choice, the printer in China. Even when I got on the plane to Hong Kong, I wasn’t sure the book was actually going to be produced. Luckily, it was, and within three months of my return to the states, my husband and I were trucking 500 cartons of finished workbooks from the port in Baltimore to a storage facility a mile from our house. I was introduced to a world very different from that of the artist’s book: a world of 7-color presses, container ships, customs brokerages, commercial invoices, publicists, and shipping, shipping, shipping. By the end of the year, I was no longer an artist but a packing and distribution center.

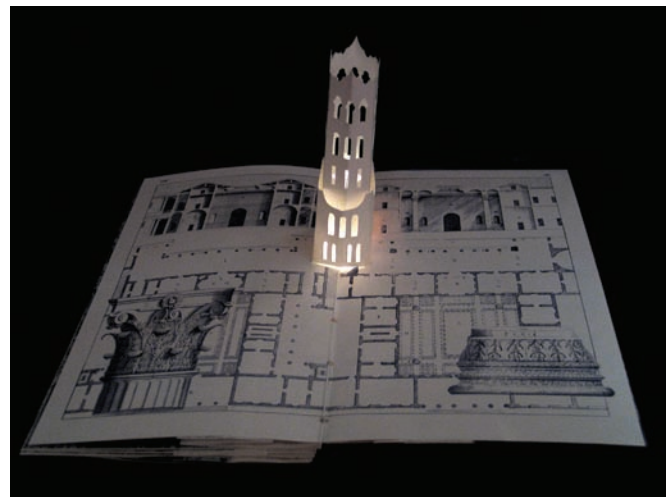


The Pocket Paper Engineer (example)



The Pocket Paper Engineer (example)

When I managed to get IPG as a distributor, I thankfully was able to return to the work of book design. *The Pocket Paper Engineer, Volume Two*, came out this past June, and the third volume of the series is a few more years down the road. After that, I plan to return to making artist’s books full time. In the meantime I’m still teaching, gathering new ideas, and working on a few interesting book-related projects here and there.



Five Luminous Towers

Both the world of artists’ books and that of pop-up book design have expanded greatly over the past few decades. It’s been exciting to see interest growing in both. Technological advances have allowed for much easier access to many of the processes involved in the production of sculptural book

formats. Laser cutting is one that will eventually open up many more possibilities within both fields, as I found when producing my lighted pop-up book *Five Luminous Towers, A Book to Be Read in the Dark*.



*The Pocket Paper Engineer (example)*

Thus, my artistic career gradually has evolved. Looking back, I see it as a fortunate combination of a wide range of interests and experiences, which I think is often how an artist's career develops. The work ends up being a summation of lots of parts that may not seem important at the time, but together end up defining you in a wonderfully unique way. I've made numerous artist's books, some one-of-a-kind and some in large editions. Many were derived directly from that original body of research I did twenty-five years ago. And *The Pocket Paper Engineer* series is a culmination of my many years of teaching.



*Vision Shifts*

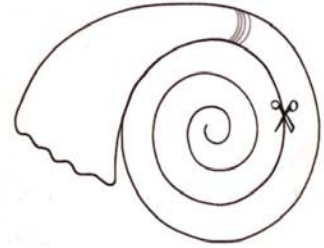
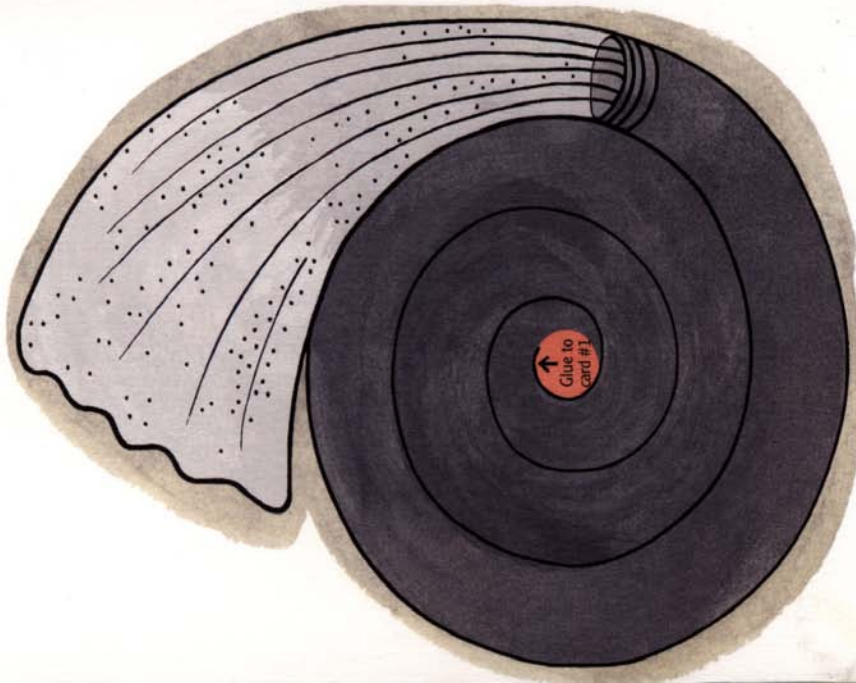
The artist's book looks backward for reference, and forward to new ways of seeing and reading. As a container of knowledge, the book has always been one of the most

revered and intriguing objects within a culture. Pop-ups and sculptural books are just two of the many forms this container of knowledge can assume, perhaps significant at this stage in book history because they retain a tactile, hand-produced feel within an increasingly digitized world. For those artists looking for a way to meld an interest in mechanics and sculpture, design and visual imagery, text and typography, the pop-up book may be the perfect vehicle. It definitely has been mine.

*Carol Barton is a book artist, curator, and teacher who has published numerous editions and has organized both local and national shows of artists' books. Her work is exhibited internationally and is in numerous collections, including the Library of Congress, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. She served as curator for the Smithsonian Institution's exhibition Science and the Artist's Book. She has taught at elementary, high school, and university levels, as well as conducted adult workshops at art centers across the United States. She is on the faculty at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia, where she teaches courses in bookbinding and book structures. She has had residencies at the Bogliasco Foundation in Italy and the Sacatar Foundation in Brazil. Her pop-ups were featured in National Geographic Magazine's July, 2005, article Zip Code 20812: It's Only A Paper Moon. Her most recent books, The Pocket Paper Engineer, Volumes 1 and 2, are artists' how-to workbooks on paper engineering. She can be reached online at <<http://www.popularkinetics.com/>>.*

The following two pages are taken from  
*The Pocket Paper Engineer,*  
Volume Two.  
We invite you to create this spiral pop-up yourself.

## Spiral Pop-Ups



### Cutting Diagram:

- 1 Cut out hose along outside black line.
- 2 Then cut along inside spiral.

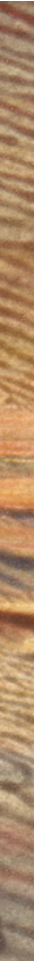


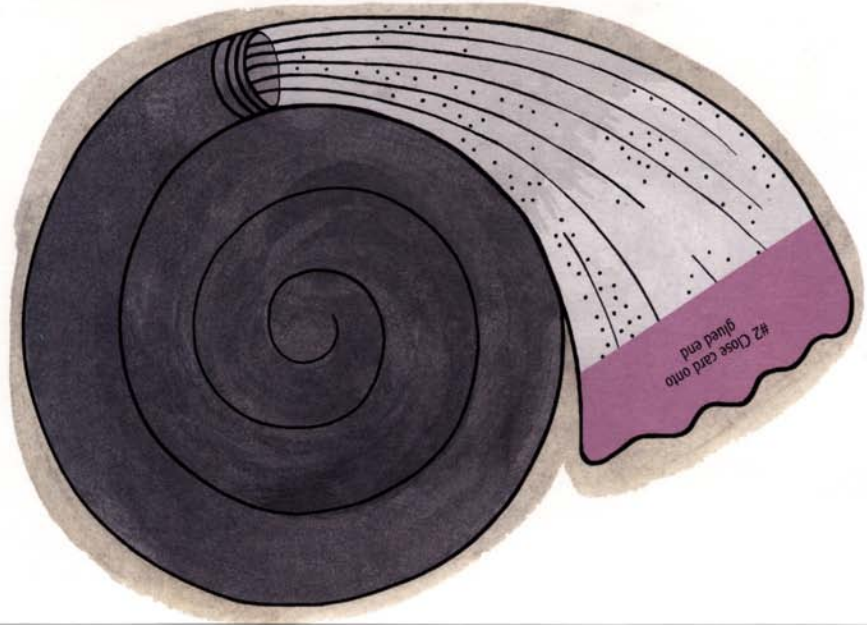
## Spiral Pop-Ups

- Spirals can be cut in various shapes
- No fold required in spiral
- Ideal page position, 180° (fully opened flat)

The spiral is a delightfully simple device, ideal for creating visual effects involving coiling or stretching. As pop-ups, spirals are in a class of their own because they are not folded. Instead, they expand like a spring across the centerfold as the page opens, then flatten as the page is closed and tension is released.

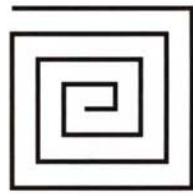
For all their simplicity, spirals can be very dramatic. They can suggest celebratory flourishes like fireworks and streamers or can work as more natural elements, such as a coiled snake, a vine's tendril, or a pig's curly tail. You can experiment with various spiraled shapes. Rectangular or triangular spirals offer some intriguing design possibilities.





## Spiral Variations

Spirals can take many shapes. Here are some examples, and of course you can invent others to fit your own ideas.



58. Spiral Pop-lins

## A Woodworker Makes Bookbinding Tools

by Robert Walp, Chester Creek Press

I've been a woodworker longer than I've been a book worker. Woodworkers, I think, are as inclined as any other of the crafts to make their own tools and jigs. Need a plane to cut a-one-of-a-kind profile on a molding? Grind an old plane blade to the right shape and fit it to a matching wood block. Need to hold a piece at a specific angle to make an odd cut on a table saw? You could buy a chrome plated jig from Widgets Are Us or you could just whip one up from some maple scraps lying around the shop and not have to wait for UPS to deliver it. Nothing beats the satisfaction of solving a problem using your own skills and materials right in your own shop.

Of course, it helps to have a well equipped wood shop but in this article I'll write about making some tools that can be made with basic tools and a little ingenuity.

### Marking Gauge



One of the first tools I made as a new bookbinder was a marking gauge. I find its main usefulness is in marking the square on book covers much as one would use a dividers. Woodworkers have used similar adjustable tools to scribe lines on wood for centuries. The ones I make were inspired by the book *Japanese Bookbinding* in which Kojiro Ikegami describes a gauge made by hammering a nail into the end of a wooden dowel. (Ikegami, Kojiro (1998). *Japanese Bookbinding*, New York, Weatherhill, Inc.) I took the idea a few steps further by substituting a screw for the nail, and turning the handle on a wood lathe to make a bell-shaped end to rest against the edge being scribed that at the same time provides a natural spot where a finger can rest. The screw can be turned in or out to easily adjust the scribe line. A flat spot on the end of the handle keeps the tool from rolling off your work bench. It's these small changes in design that personalize tools and lead to the fascination of making your own.



*Marking gauge in use*

By the way, you don't need a lathe. To make one yourself you could use a wood dowel or carve a handle from a tree branch. Then drill an 1/8" pilot hole in the end and screw in a one inch long drywall screw or a #8 wood screw.

### Punching Jig or Trough



I've read about and used several jigs for punching sewing stations in book sections. Most were made from cardboard or binders board. I have a wonderful collapsible punching jig that Anna Embree taught us how to make when I was a student in The University of Alabama Book Arts Program. I take it with me as a spare to use when teaching binding workshops, but I like having one for use in the studio that is sturdier, more stable, and will last a lifetime. Taking the time to make temporary jigs is fine, but punching holes is something we do a lot of so it made sense to me to make something that I would only make once, even if it took more time up front. Currently I use ash wood for the troughs I make for sale. Ash is heavier than pine so it has a more substantial feel. It is also one of the most stable hardwoods and resists warping and cupping better than most. For that reason it's a good choice for drawer sides in cabinets, or for the sides of punching jigs. Alternatively three-quarter inch plywood or 1x6 boards from the lumber yard would also work.



*Parts before assembly*

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If you're making baseball bats the best ash in the world grows right here in the Adirondacks where I live. It works beautifully for punching jigs as well. I buy it either air or kiln dried in rough board form and then plane it to 5/8 of inch thick. I cut the side pieces to about 5 inches wide by 15 inches long. Then I use a tool called a biscuit joiner to cut slots along the edges of the boards that will be glued together. The biscuits are oval shaped slices of compressed wood that expand when moistened by the water in wood glue. Using them isn't absolutely necessary, but they help hold the pieces in alignment while the glue is drying under the pressure of clamps and they also strengthen the joint somewhat. After the glue is dry I sand or plane the ends of the trough so they are flush and do the same for the glued edge joint. The feet are made from ash or maple. They start out as pieces about 3/4x1-1/2x7-1/2 inches. I use a square to mark a 45 degree triangle about 1 inch deep in the center of the length of each piece, then cut the triangle out with a saw. I use a drum sander to shape the bottom of each foot so there is a secondary foot about 1 inch wide at each end. This helps keep the jig stable if it's used on an uneven surface. The same thing could be accomplished by gluing a thick felt pad to each end of the basic foot. Next the feet are attached to the trough with a 1-1/2 inch long drywall screw or #8 wood screw. First drill a pilot hole through the cut out triangle a bit bigger than the diameter of the screw. Position the feet about an inch from each end of the trough and drive the screw through the hole in the foot and into the trough. To finish attach a strip of wood across one end of the trough to act as a stop. I use a 1/4 inch thick piece of hardwood, but a piece of lattice from the moulding department at the lumberyard would work as well.

### Awls

Of all the bookbinding tools I make, awls are my favorite. When I started binding books I tried several commercially made ones that for one reason or another I never warmed up to. Either the shape of the handle was wrong (I prefer a pear shape, although a long narrow handle also has its uses), the needle was too fat, or they were simply poorly made. A well-

made awl has three parts: a handle, a ferrule, and a needle. The ferrule is generally made of brass or steel, cut from a piece of 1/4" tubing found at any good hardware store. It protects the thin and relatively fragile end of the handle from both dents and splitting.



*Awls (left to right) cherry burl, bird's eye maple, mahogany, cherry burl*



*An awl handle on the lathe after shaping*

A well-fitted ferrule will hold the end of the awl together even if the handle splits all the way along its length. For the needle I use a long sewing needle with the eye snipped off. The intended use of the awl determines the size of the needle - a thin needle for punching sections or a stout one for punching through binders board or other heavy duty use.

A handle can be carved from almost any piece of wood like a dowel, a tree branch, or a piece of kindling from the firewood pile. If you can find some, hardwood burl makes a beautiful and sturdy handle. Burls can grow on most species of hardwood trees, the result of stress, perhaps from damage

caused by disease or insects. They manifest as very large, bark covered lumps on the trunks. Inside the burl the wood grain runs in all directions at once causing dark dots and beautiful patterns. The wood is very dense and difficult to carve with a knife, but it can be worked with saws and files, or on a lathe.



*Cherry burls and blocks before shaping*

Fitting the needle can be accomplished by drilling a suitable size hole in the handle and securing the needle with a drop of superglue or other adhesive. Drilling the hole for a very thin needle may require the use of a jeweler's pin-chuck, an attachment designed specifically to hold very small diameter drill bits. You can also use the needle itself by chucking it in a drill and boring the hole just as you would with a drill bit.

The many parallels between the tools and methods of working with wood and with books are one of the things that attracted me to learning about binding books. For me the satisfaction of making my own tools that fit my hands and the way I work is equaled only by the satisfaction of combining the two crafts I love most. As book workers there is no end to the things we need to do and to learn, but for those with the time and inclination I hope this article will spark some ideas about the many possibilities for making your own tools.

*Robert Walp began his bookmaking career in the Spring of 2000 at Vermont College in Montpelier, Vermont. He has participated in numerous book arts workshops since then and in 2006 earned an MFA in the Book Arts from The University of Alabama, where he received the Raymond F. McClain Book Arts Award. His work can be found in many collections including The University of Vermont Bailey Library, Dartmouth College Rauner Library, Brown University Rockefeller Library in Providence, Rhode Island, The Library of Congress, The New York Public Library, and The Shelburne Museum in Shelburne, Vermont.*

*Robert works from his studio in the Adirondacks under the imprint of Chester Creek Press and has taught workshops in New York at The Adirondack Lakes Center for the Arts in Blue Mountain Lake, Bluseed Studio in Saranac Lake, the Town of Chester Public Library, and the Lake George Arts Project. He has also taught at Penland School of Crafts in North Carolina and at The Great River Arts Institute in Bellow Falls, Vermont. He is a member of The Guild of Book Workers and The Fine Press Book Association, and is curator of the Book Arts Collection at the Town of Chester Public Library. He can be reached online at <<http://www.chestercreekpress.com/>>.*

## Interpreting Deluge: A Story of Collections and Response from the 2008 Iowa Floods

By Kristin Baum

*“What is the appropriate behavior for a man or a woman in the midst of this world, where each person is clinging to his piece of debris? What’s the proper salutation between people as they pass each other in this flood? ~ Siddhartha*

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The symbolic import of a flood in human history runs deep. The mythological flood has been understood both as acts of divine retribution, as well as a “purging” which clears the way for new beginnings. While a survey of such myths show a wide variety of origins—from Sumerian to Siberian, Mayan to Malaysian --of these, the two most prevalent flood stories are that of Noah’s Ark and of Utnapishtim in The Epic of Gilgamesh. Side by side, these stories tell the tale of remarkably similar floods but with varied perspective and outcome . Whether symbolic, historic, or scientific, the interpreting of natural disasters seems to be part of the recovery process. How one chooses to understand and interpret a flood impacts how one responds to the deluge. This hermeneutical dilemma is one that permeates the state of Iowa as we come to terms with our 2008 summer floods and seek to recover lives, homes, and our historical collections. In terms of collection preservation and disaster response, one can learn a lot by contrasting the two floods of the Iowa and Cedar Rivers (in Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, Iowa respectively), the specific collections affected, and the challenges that ensued. While certainly many “riverside” collections and facilities were affected by the flood, this article will focus on the Iowa City collections of the University of Iowa Libraries and Cedar Rapids collections of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library and the African American Museum of Iowa. A comparison of events and outcome can contribute to an understanding of how interpretation and perspective can propel recovery efforts.

### Flood logistics and statistics

Although the flooding of the Iowa and Cedar Rivers occurred within days of one another, the specifics of the two floods greatly differ (See Figure 1, Images 1-3). The flooding of the Cedar River in Cedar Rapids inundated more than 1,300 blocks of the city (10 square miles) forcing 25,000 people to evacuate, involving nearly one quarter of the city’s population and one of the city’s two hospitals. The river flooded 5,400 homes, over 1,000 businesses and all the city, county, and federal government offices. The damage estimate was \$5.6 billion.

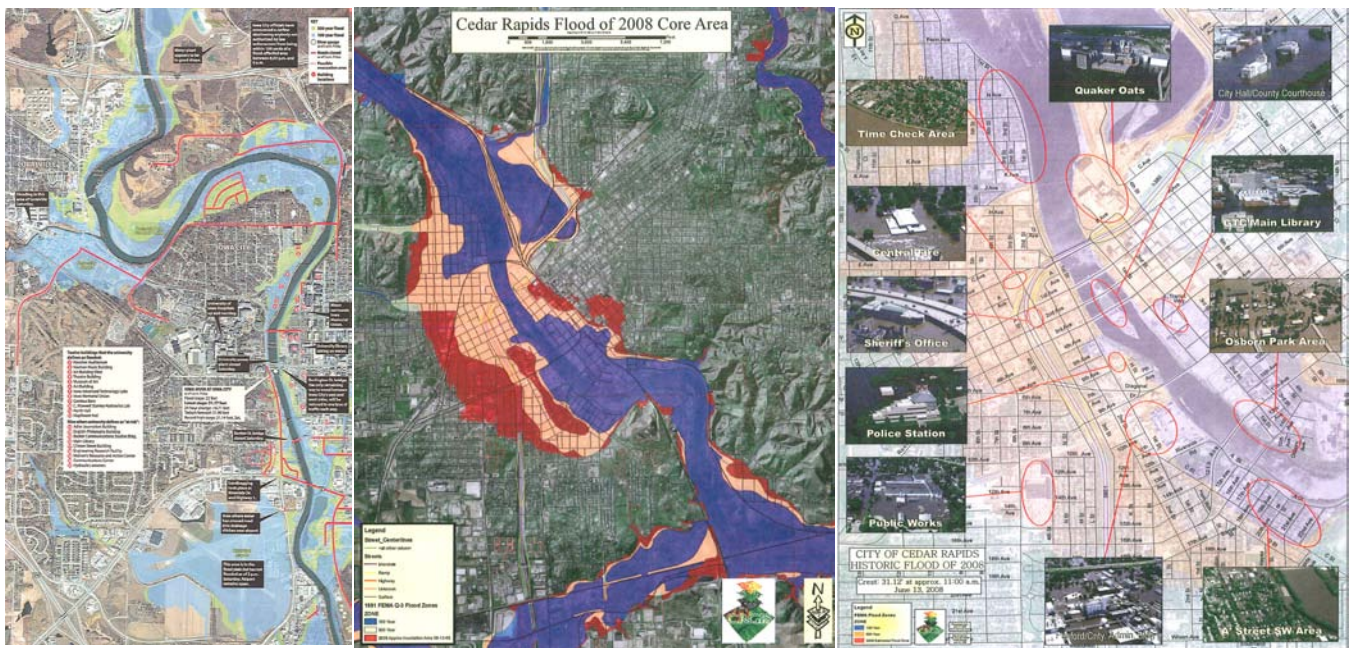
The flooding of the Iowa River in Iowa City forced the evacuation of 500-600 residents, involving less than one percent of the city’s population. The Iowa River flooded over 270 homes, and 60 businesses (although over 88 businesses were directly impacted), as well as the North Waste Water treatment plant. It flooded 20 University of Iowa buildings, 7 of which are still closed. The damage estimate was \$267.55 million. (\$27.55 million in homes and businesses, \$240 million for UI buildings).

### Prepare & Respond: Collection Realities

The floods of the Iowa and Cedar Rivers had each their own distinctive cadence. The disparity between the two was great, and impacted the nature of respective recovery efforts (See Photos 4-12) . Over the course of three days, the Cedar River rose violently, cresting at 31.4 feet on the morning of June 13th, and fell dramatically within 3-4 days. The fast flooding inundated downtown Cedar Rapids, completely submerging neighborhoods and all but one bridge. The speed of this catastrophe meant less time to prepare for the waters and to evacuate people and collections; which meant greater destruction and severity of flood contamination. For both the Czech & Slovak and the African American Museums this meant a significant amount of their collections were flood damaged, and recovery efforts would be arduous. Recovery would entail many hands, quick multi-tiered decision making, time and patience. The African American Museum gained access to their facilities on June 18th. Initial access to the Czech & Slovak museum was permitted the evening of June 17th, but the area was then declared unsafe the following day. On June 19th Czech & Slovak Museum staff regained access and were able to accomplish intensive extraction, washing, freezing and evacuation of its collections. In both collections, extraction and freezing of book and paper materials was given priority and accomplished in approximately 2 days; extraction of other collection materials (artifacts, textiles, wood, and paintings) continued on into the weekend of June 21/22.

In contrast, the Iowa River, situated below a reservoir, rose slowly over the course of a week, and then fell as slowly. This drowsy pace allowed for greater preparation, in terms of sandbagging and evacuation of people and collections, but also prolonged inaccessibility to flood damaged areas after the waters receded. The Iowa River at its full crest of 31.5 feet (on June 15) was 4 feet above the elevation of the basement floor of the UI Main Libraries, but the sandbagging and the collection evacuation provided double-insurance for minimizing damage. Prior to the flooding, library staff was able to evacuate relevant materials from the library basement to the upper floors of the building. The UI Library basement houses a portion of the Preservation Department as well as storage for books, thesis, film and a portion of Special





Iowa City core flood area

Cedar Rapids core flood area

Cedar Rapids core flooding and affected locations

Figure 1 Comparison of water stages for Cedar and Iowa Rivers		
River	Cedar River, Cedar Rapids, IA	Iowa River, Iowa City, IA
Average Stage	7 feet	15 feet
Flood stage	12 feet	22 feet
Previous record high	20 feet, June 1851	28.52 feet, August 1993
June 2009 crest	31.4 feet, June 13	31.53 feet, June 15

Collections. Collection evacuation efforts removed up to 5 feet of materials from the bottom shelves, and the flood seepage that spilled onto the basement floor was less than 3 inches, so collection items were not directly affected by floodwater. The Iowa River receded slowly and the UI Main Library was minimally accessible to a few pertinent staff as of June 19th (5 days after the Iowa River crested), but the building needed to undergo a prolonged cleaning and repair before staff was allowed back in for normal operations in mid-July. The Preservation Department, however, was displaced for over a month.

Images on the following page visually compare the flood damage and response at the University of Iowa Libraries in Iowa City and the National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library in Cedar Rapids.

The disparity between the flood events did have its advantages. Since the Cedar River receded so quickly, the impacted areas were available for recovery efforts well before those affected by the Iowa River. Iowa City folk, waiting for their own waters to quell, were able to contribute to the recovery efforts in Cedar Rapids. The overall community

effort throughout the State of Iowa during flood preparation and recovery was outstanding and compelling, and a testament to why many of us choose to live here. Time and again, I found that people responded to the uncertain adversity with compassionate instinct and a commitment to prevail. It became readily apparent that both how you prepare for and respond to such an event are of equal importance. No amount of preparation can address the uncertain and unknowable aspects of a disaster. Successful response, or “proper salutation,” appears to be steeped in the attributes of adaptability, resilience, patience, and acceptance. UI Libraries’ Preservation Librarian, Nancy E. Kraft, reminded us often to “realize you are in a disaster situation, and to do the best you can and let it go.”

In the next issue of *The Bonfolder* the UI Preservation Department will offer a detailed narrative outlining the different streams of recovery efforts for collections and the buildings that house them. The timeline for recovery efforts is long, often years following a disaster. The epic of recovery is often as potent as the flood event itself and the historical collections saved, the artifacts themselves, will tell the story of both.

University of Iowa Libraries, Iowa City, Iowa  
Along the Iowa River



*Flooding on west side of UI Libraries, June 13, 2008.  
Prior to river crest.*



*Evacuation of UI Libraries' Basement collections.  
June 13, 2008.*



*Special Collections materials evacuated from basement to the  
5th floor. June 13, 2008.*



*Special Collections/UI Archives evacuated from basement to  
the 3rd floor corridor. June 13, 2008.*



*Flood water in the UI Libraries' basement was under 3  
inches, just below the level of the bottom most shelf. July,  
2008.*

National Czech & Slovak Museum and Library  
Along the Cedar River



*Czech & Slovak Museum submerged in flood waters just under 12 feet deep. June 12, 2008, prior to crest.*



*Czech & Slovak Library Director, Dave Muhlena, takes on the arduous task of assessing a wheelbarrow full of flood damaged books. June 19, 2008*



*Above and below, the interior of Czech & Slovak Library after water receded. June 19, 2008.*



Online resources

Cedar Rapids:

African American Museum of Iowa  
<<http://www.blackiowa.org/>>

National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library  
<<http://www.ncsml.org/>>

University of Iowa, Iowa City:

UI Library evacuation timeline  
<<http://blog.lib.uiowa.edu/news/2008/06/14/libraries-evacuation-timeline/>>

UI Preservation PowerPoint slideshows  
<<http://www.lib.uiowa.edu/preservation/Floodsof2008.html>>

UI President's Forum/ Flood Report  
<<http://www.uiowa.edu/floodrecovery/recovery-reports/president-forum-090908.pdf>>

UI Museums of Art  
<<http://uima.blogspot.com/2008/07/flood-photos.html>>

UI News Services Flood Photo Stream  
<<http://www.flickr.com/photos/uinews/sets/72157607124391524/>>

## UI Library Evacuation Timeline

By Kristi Robinson-Bontrager

As the threat of potential flooding on the University of Iowa campus was communicated, members of the Libraries staff began the necessary work both inside the library and across campus to save as much as possible.

### Monday, June 9.

Preparations were made to relocate staff and essential book materials from the Art Library in Art Building West and the Rita Benton Music Library in the Voxman Music Building to the Main Library. Both of these libraries are located on the second floor of the building.

Special Collections and Preservation librarians began assessing potential trouble spots in the Main Library basement.

Staff from across the Libraries volunteered for sandbag duty on campus.

### Tuesday, June 10.

The Art and Music libraries were evacuated along with the rest of the Arts Campus.

A link to the online Flood Recovery Booklet was distributed through the UI Flood Information website and the Libraries website.

Libraries administrators, Special Collections and Preservation librarians met with Facilities Management to further assess flood risk to the Main Library.

Libraries staff members continued working on volunteer sandbag crews.

### Wednesday, June 11.

The fifth floor study lounge in the Main Library was converted to a temporary storage space for Special Collections materials. Through the efforts of the Libraries' student workers, the bottom shelves (essentially 12-18 inches of space) were relocated upstairs.

The materials in Special Collections are unique and/or rare materials including artist's books, manuscript collections, original bound volumes of the Daily Iowan and the University Archives.

Special Collections researchers were encouraged to contact the department because of difficulty in retrieving some materials.

### Thursday, June 12.

After receiving new flood estimates, Special Collections and Preservation librarians determined to move materials from the Special Collections storage area in the lower level of the Main Library. Student workers as well as library staff continued relocating materials.

### Friday, June 13.

Libraries administrators were notified that the Main Library would be evacuated. More than 150 staff members in the Main Library packed their belongings and prepared to disperse to other libraries and locations across campus.

Relocation of Special Collections and other difficult to replace materials continued through the efforts of hundreds of volunteers throughout the day and evening. Handing books along a "book brigade" that snaked down hallways and up stairwells, volunteers were able to move tens of thousands of books from storage including thousands of theses of University masters and doctoral candidates. One volunteer estimated that they were "passing nearly 100 books a minute."

Sandbaggers built a dike along the west side of the Main Library and around the loading dock entrance.

Governor Chet Culver, Senators Tom Harkin and Chuck Grassley and Representative Dave Loebsack along with other University and City officials visited the Main Library and thanked volunteers for their efforts.

Satisfied that as much of the Libraries' collections as possible were out of harm's way and concerned about the additional weight load on the upper floors, Libraries' officials ended the book relocation at 9 p.m. The building was locked and alarmed.



## End Notes

- i. Heidel, Alexander. *The Gilgamesh Epic and Old Testament Parallels*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1963. p. 224-269.
- ii. Statistics provided by Cedar Rapids Chamber of Commerce.
- iii. These seven buildings include: Art Building, Art Building West, Danforth Chapel, Hancher Auditorium, Hawkeye Court Apartments, Museum of Art, Voxman/Clapp Music Building
- iv. Statistics for City of Iowa City provided by Planning & Community Development, City of Iowa City, with special thanks to Wendy Ford; University of Iowa figures provided by <<http://www.uiowa.edu/floodrecovery/recovery-reports/index.html>>.
- v. Photo Credits: Kristin Alana Baum (Images 4, 5, 6), Gary Frost (Image 10), Nancy E. Kraft (Images 7, 8, 11, 12), Dan Schmidt (Image 9).
- vi. See sidebar, *UI Libraries Evacuation Timeline* on page 50.
- vii. A variety of Powerpoint slideshows are available online documenting various aspects of flood response and recovery. For links, see the *Online Resources* on page 49.

*Kristin Baum finds repose in the diverse and curious world of bookbinding and book arts after years of youthful adventures in comparative religion, existentialism, narrative theory, poetry and studio art.*

*She graduated from the University of Iowa with an M.A. in Religion and Literature and from the University of Iowa Center for the Book. She is interested in the sacred and symbolic qualities of books and manuscripts, and specializes in the materiality of book structure as evidenced in historical binding structures and contemporary artist books. Her book studies and art are invested in an interdisciplinary approach; exploring the book as maker, reader and conservator.*

*Currently, Kristin is Assistant Conservator at The University of Iowa Libraries and founder of the cARTalog project. She is proprietor of the Blue Oak Bindery in Iowa City, Iowa. <<http://www.blueoakbindery.com>>. She can be reached at <[kristin-baum@uiowa.edu](mailto:kristin-baum@uiowa.edu)>.*



## Art, Fact, Artifact: College Book Arts Association Inaugural Conference

By Katy Govan

The College Book Arts Association (CBAA) held its first biennial conference in beautiful, snowy Iowa City this past January. Palpable excitement permeated the air as attendees walked down the conference halls of the Seamen's Center at the University of Iowa. John Risseuw, CBAA president, said eloquently in his welcoming address, "It may be winter outside but in here it feels like spring" to an auditorium full of participants. The room swelled with excitement because the participants knew not only were they witnessing something new and exciting, they were witnessing history in the making.

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*CBAA Executive Board*

The first conference exceeded expectation in many ways. There were over two hundred and thirty attendees whose ranks included college educators, graduate and undergraduate students of book arts, and other book enthusiasts; all willing to make the chilly trip to the Midwest with its legendary winters. Attendees came from all regions of the United States and around the world, Canada, Germany, Brazil and England. The breadth and academic content presented in more than forty-five events satisfied even the most avid bibliophile's desire to learn more about the ever growing field of book arts. Furthermore, other events included a Young Educators award, an exceptional student work award, a student portfolio review and a show-and-tell room where participants could share their work with each other.

The College Book Arts Association offers a specialized perspective in the expanding field of the book. The focus of this new organization, according to their mission statement, is to promote the field of academic book arts education by fostering the development of its practice, teaching, scholarship, and criticism. The CBAA membership base is largely comprised of educators and students that support the teaching of book arts at the college and university level. They are seeking to extend the tradition of the book in both the medium of form and its academic analysis. CBAA's vision is to bring together academics and students of the book and create

a venue in which dialogues about further critical, theoretical, and standards of excellence may be explored in a collaborative environment.

The theme for the inaugural conference analyzed the relationship of "Art, Fact, Artifact: The Book in Time and Place." The art book may play many different roles: the book as aesthetic object, the book as preserver of histories, and the book's ability to be an ever evolving form. In other words, the visionary form of the book reaches into the future for inspiration while remaining rooted in its historical importance to civilization. The first biennial conference sought to bridge the worlds of book art, book history, cultural criticism, technology and curatorial work through appreciation of the book as an aesthetic sensorial object.



*Model Teaching: Artists' Book Exemplars in the Classroom, Julie Chen presenting*

The academic tone of the conference was set with the two keynote addresses. The first lecture, "Enfolded by Holes" was delivered by Tate Shaw of Visual Studies Workshop and Preacher's Biscuit Books. The focus of the talk uncovered the dynamic architecture of the book when activated by the reader. The book becomes a series of openings through which the body plays a role in the activation and experience of the books content. Randall McLeod from the University of Toronto presented the second address entitled "Fearful Asymmetry". The thrust of his presentation closely examined the printing process used to create manuscripts of John Milton's original work *Paradise Lost*. McLeod illuminated several examples of how the ghost images throughout the edition due to the offsetting of the printers ink stamped the pages with an additional story beyond the one printed on the page. The offsetting gives light to a much broader history than the one printed on the page. It adds significant insight into the historical details and cultural practices during the time of the original printing of the manuscript.

Following the opening of the conference, a full spectrum of sessions and demonstrations awaited, all set amidst the perfect venue, The University of Iowa Center for the Book (UICB). Julie Leonard and Matt Brown were the organizing hosts of the conference along with their team that included Tim Barrett, and Iowa Center for the Book staff and students. Their thoughtful planning and hard work made for a wonderful experience for participants, especially in light of some of the challenges that they had to overcome. During the summer preceding the conference in Iowa City, parts of the Iowa Center for the Book sustained severe flood damage. Planning an event of this size proves to be challenging enough, but doing so in the wake of natural disaster truly test the limits of ones ingenuity, patience, and capacities. Their perseverance after the floods proved truly admirable. As a result, their planning and hard work culminated a seamless and thoughtful atmosphere that allowed participants to immerse themselves into the program and maximize their time spent learning and sharing. The facilities set a stellar example of excellence for the academic teaching of book arts.



*Tim Barrett demonstrating papermaking during the tour of the Oakdale Papermaking Facility*

The conference offered three days full of academic lectures, innovative demonstrations, and thoughtfully curated exhibitions. Lecture highlights included Betty Bright, Harry Reese, and Inge Bruggeman discussing the importance and relevance of the transition of letterpress printing from utilitarian printing process to art form. Lectures by Kitty Maryatt and Katherine McCanless Ruffin shared teaching pedagogy and standards of letterpress shop practice as implemented in an academic setting. A group of San Francisco Bay Area book arts teachers spoke on model instruction: Each member presented a book arts exemplar that embodied a key component of the medium of the book.

Participants could also chose to attend demonstrations that utilized the excellent facilities of UICB, including a hand papermaking demonstration by Tim Barrett at the Oakdale Papermaking Facilities. Dan Mayor showed attendees how to make both low and high-end polymer plates for relief and intaglio printing. Six different book arts exhibitions were on view, one a juried exhibition of work by CBAA members.

The CBAA conference culminated in a celebratory banquet and silent auction raising funds for student scholarships. Throughout the festive atmosphere participants exchanged new ideas and insights with new friends and old colleagues.



*Silent auction at the celebratory banquet*

Overall, everyone seemed to agree that our first biennial conference exceeded expectations in academic standard and the extremely high energy and openness of the community that formed around this exciting new organization.

In case you missed the opportunity to attend this meeting the next annual meeting of the CBAA conference will be hosted by the Oregon College of Art and Craft in Portland, OR, January 2010. In addition to the business meeting there will be presentations, students awards, and exhibitions. All CBAA members are invited and welcome to attend. The next CBAA biannual conference will be at Indiana University in Bloomington, January 13-15, 2011. Please visit the website at <http://www.collegebookart.org/> to find out more information about the specific dates and activities or find ways that you can become a member and get involved.

*Katy Govan studies contemporary book art in MFA program at the University of Nevada, Reno. She is the student representative on the CBAA executive board. She can be reached at [govank@unr.nevada.edu](mailto:govank@unr.nevada.edu).*

## Skin, Surfaces and Shadows: An Artist's Book by Artist Tommaso Durante with text by Chris Wallace-Crabbe

A review by Joe D'Ambrosio



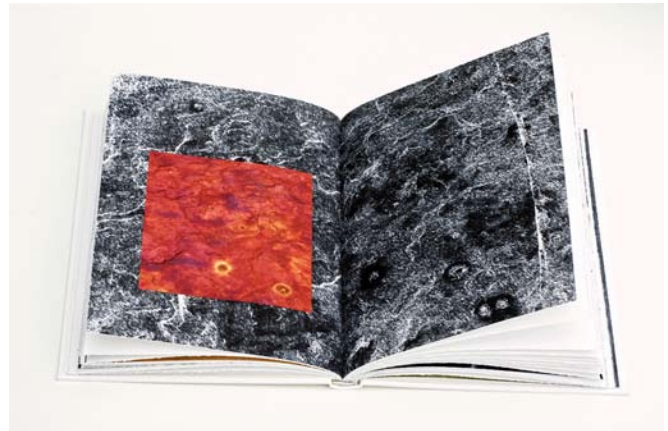
Books began because the human mind was able to manipulate its extremities. Then along came moveable type and the mind directed a machine to do the same thing. Now, in a digital age, that same mind can tell electrical charges to turn certain switches on or off, and thus produce a desired effect. When that mind is genetically inclined from ancient roots in the Italian Renaissance to risk that which is innovative in the relatively new frontier of Australia, *Skin, Surfaces and Shadows* arises.

The Italian artist Tommaso Durante's newfound strength in a somewhat virgin continent where the constraints of age-old nepotism is only just evolving, allows a newly electronically-linked world to experience a sundry of objects as never before. As the painters of old who ground their own colors, so too the artists of today have at their fingertips literally millions of hues and tints encased in an electronic palette. And Durante's knowledgeable use of them creates abstract illusions for the viewer on flat pieces of paper that appear to be in three dimensions without the viewer donning funny glasses. One of his ingenious devices is to place a colored square of abstract shapes within a more massive and less similar background of only black and white. His method tricks the eye the way his forebears did when they experimented with a vanishing point to achieve a sense of depth where there was none on a flat panel surface. Where the artisans of old portrayed realistic scenes, because, obviously, there were no photographic cameras at the time, Durante strives to convey emotional sensitivity through tactile surfaces. And, since he is also working on a flat surface where a sense of touch would be useless, through the use of contrasting colors he informs the viewer's eyes to relay to the

viewer's brain that indeed there is a three-dimensional tactile surface when, of course, there really isn't.

The dust jacket that surrounds this splendidly innovative and hand bound artist's book is embossed with an abstract design on solid-colored almost-white paper, and indeed one can run a finger across the ridges of the embossing to sense the undulating surface. But one need not do so because the eye may inform the viewer of this condition. Perhaps this is Durante's way of setting the viewer up for the interior of the book where the tactile surfaces are indeed totally flat even though they appear to be as three dimensionally as the cover. And, it works.

Brian Gilkes at Pharos Editions printed this book with eight ink-jet color pigments on Somerset Book White, 175gsm paper. The book is skillfully hard bound by George Matoulas with paper over boards, and section-sewn around three tapes with handmade head and tail bands. Tommaso Durante designed the dust jacket that was embossed by Martin King on Rives BFK paper. It is a presentation that is quite sumptuous, yet pure in its simplicity of design.



The genre of the medium of the book as a work of fine art as opposed to that of the book as a conveyor only of the art of literature, begs the creators to satisfy not only their intended communication to the collector, but also to the academicians who will judge the work and to whom collectors seek for guidance. Consequently, certain age-old rules and standards of book making may be seen to be adhered to, or purposely broken as the case may be, to be taken as a serious work. In art, the achievement of conveying an emotional sense to the viewer is really the paramount goal, and the medium is merely, but necessarily, a method of getting to that climax.

Printers of early books realized almost immediately upon looking at a two-sided page that if the lines of letters on one side of a page do not line up with the letters on the other side of this almost-translucent surface, dark ghostly areas appear and intrude upon the empty space between the lines on either





side. So the object is, generally and where possible, to line them up on both sides so they will not interfere with the viewer's line of sight. Also, constancy is a great aid to a reader, and the beginning of a text block on one page should be at the same height as the beginning of the text block on the next page. And, yes, if the artist's goal is to have the viewer's eyes jumping all over the page, then that design is justified.

Not only the artist, Durante designed the typography. He states, "I imagined the single pages of the book as paintings of an exhibition within a folded traveling exhibition (the book) and the text blocks are centered on each page to balance it with the image adjacent to it. Therefore, transgressing standard rules is a deliberate necessity."

Chris Wallace-Crabbe's word sculpturing and Tommaso Durante's artistic design have its roots in a previous work titled *Terra Australis* that debuted in 2003. In the first endeavor Chris's work is termed 'poetry'. In this new work, *Skin, Surfaces and Shadows*, his collaboration does not use as a description, 'poetry', but instead uses the broader term, 'text'. The broader term gives Chris more latitude to conjoin with Durante's artwork using the new freedom to build images from word associations without the constraints of poetic dictates. At the same time the viewer senses another direction of emotion from Durante's innovative images. The marriage works quite nicely and the result is a work that succeeds like a well-orchestrated symphony.

So, one may ask, what is this book about? That is a question most often asked when a book is referenced in conversation. Therein lays the major difference between an artist's book and a standard book of only literature. Would one ask that question while looking at a painting hanging on a wall? I think not. One would refer to the title and sense the answer rather than expect a written or oral explanation.

The edition of this work is only 25 copies and it is not inexpensive to own. For the many who should have access to this achievement it is strongly suggested that most of the edition should be procured by institutional holdings so that it may be available to a larger audience.

*Skin, Surfaces and Shadows*, an artist's book (Size: 260mm x 210mm) by Artist Tommaso Durante with text by Chris Wallace-Crabbe. Melbourne, Australia 2007, 80 pages, Edition of 25. AU\$2,500. All enquires should be sent to Tommaso Durante at <tdurante@bigpond.net.au>.

*Joe D'Ambrosio has worked as an artist within the book medium since 1969. He writes the text, sets type, prints letterpress, designs, does the artwork, and binds the work. Sometimes he even makes the paper. The book becomes a total work of art combining many spectrums of fine art and book mediums. His editions are signed and numbered and issued similar to limited edition fine art prints. In more than thirty years he has produced over ninety different titles. His "Memoirs of Book Design 1969-2000," was recently published by the Book Club of California (1-800-869-7656). In February of 2005 he was awarded The Club's Oscar Lewis Award for his contributions to the book arts.*

*A Chicago native, he attended The American Academy of Art first, and then The Illinois Institute of Technology. The first to become an artist, and the second to become an electrical engineer. In Chicago he worked with Gordon Heuter, a paper conservator from the Art Institute of Chicago. In 1979 he moved to the Southwest and Sherman Oaks in Southern California. In 1994 he moved to the Phoenix, Arizona area where for seven years he published a newsletter of the book arts called, "Artists' Books Reviews."*

*Joe D'Ambrosio has exhibited in many one-man and group exhibitions, and his works are in many private and institutional collections, including the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, and the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. His archives are located at the California State Library in Sacramento. He gives creative bookbinding workshops, and an illustrated lecture to interested book and artist groups on his work and his creative process. He may be reached at <joebooks@cox.net>.*



Nelly Balloffet & Jenny Hille Preservation and Conservation for Libraries and Archives. Chicago: American Library Association, 2005.

A review by Colyn Wohlmüt

The stated purpose of this ALA publication is to serve as a guide for preserving working collections. It is specifically targeted at “Institutions with limited staff, equipment, and training.” The authors have refined materials from their extensive teaching careers and gathered the most common questions or problems into this well organized manual. Most of the instructions are intended for those with little or no formal training in conservation or preservation. Both administrative and repair issues are addressed, making the volume applicable to administrators and staff members alike. This 240 page hardcover book is available through the ALA website <<http://www.alastore.ala.org>> at a cost of \$138.00 (\$124.20 for members)

Each section begins with a thorough description of its content. The book commences with HVAC, storage, disaster response, and furniture. For someone in a small library or archive with limited resources and staff, these basics are clearly explained and easy to follow. Tools, working tips, and setting up for conservation techniques are introduced in Section 2. The rest of the work is devoted to basic preservation techniques, book conservation, and paper conservation with a final section devoted to mounting exhibitions. The inclusion of how to lend, borrow, and exhibit materials is a vital addition as institutions attempt to increase their visibility and public presence through exhibitions often without dedicated exhibitions staff. Appendices include: simple care of photographs; an index of suppliers; advice organizations; a glossary; and bibliography.

The book is well designed as a reference work, one merely needs to refer to the appropriate technique and complete instructions are included. Basic instructions are repeated at every step, making no assumptions about pre-existing knowledge on the part of the reader. One of the strengths of this work is that Hille’s illustrations are simple, clear, and positioned directly in front of the text to which they refer. This allows the user to refer easily to the book while performing needed operations.

To test the instructions for clarity, I invited a sculptor friend who has taken one bookbinding course to pick a technique and follow it without guidance. She chose sewing pamphlets into a binder and read only the appropriate section. She successfully completed the instructions, but found that

advice on how to determine thread length was neglected in the description. As a result, she overestimated by a factor of three. An inexperienced individual will most likely over or underestimate in this case, resulting in wasted materials until skills naturally develop.

Language is precise and sometimes poetic as in the following example, “Rest it on its spine on the table or work counter. Allow the front and back boards to drop to the table and then begin opening pages alternately at the front and at the back. Gently smooth the pages over the boards with your hand. Keep opening pages a few at a time until you get to the middle of the book.” Although it describes the simple act of opening a new book, it is eloquent and evocative of the concern which the authors possess for library materials; a concern which transmits to the reader.

There are, however, some notable omissions. Reprography and digital preservation practices are not discussed. The reader is continually reminded that rare or valuable items should be referred to a conservator, but no guidance is offered on assessing the value of an item or a collection.

Although the cost may be prohibitive for some institutions, at which this work is clearly targeted, it will prove to be a valuable resource in many circumstances. As professionals are increasingly called upon to provide more collections care with less money, the techniques provided in this book will allow current staff to perform treatments which would otherwise need to be outsourced. Balloffet and Hille have succeeded in providing a complete resource for small institutions where budgets for training are small and challenges must be responded to as they arise. For those who are not currently working in libraries or archives, it provides an effective overview of some of the main topics in preservation and conservation which can serve as a foundation for further research.

*Colyn Wohlmüt studies hand bookbinding privately with Constance Hunter in Soquel, CA. She will receive her Masters of Library and Information Science from San José State University this Spring. In addition, she works as a Bibliographic Assistant in the History of Science and Technology Collections at Stanford University and can be reached at <[crwohl@stanford.edu](mailto:crwohl@stanford.edu)>.*



## Grant Supports Research on Letterpress Art & Craft

By Betty Bright

At 10:45 in the morning of January 8th, Harry Reese, Inge Bruggeman and I stood at the front of a small lecture hall on the campus of the University of Iowa-Iowa City, and watched the people come in. The first panels were beginning of the conference, "Art, Fact, and Artifact: The Book in Time and Place," sponsored by the College Book Art Association. There were about forty-five seats in the room, and by the time our panel on "Risk and Renewal in Letterpress" began, it was standing room only. What brought so many to the topic, and inspired the energetic discussion afterwards?

The interest expressed by the artists, teachers, librarians and other booklovers in Iowa City speaks to a recognition that letterpress printing is experiencing a phoenix-like revival of interest. Teachers of printing in non-profit book art centers around the country attest to classes filling and of waiting lists comprised of students of all ages, from graphic designers desperate to reengage the haptic and mix their own ink colors on a press, to students gravitating toward the medium because of its intrinsic attributes of autonomous artistic production and one-time financial investment.

I began work in this field in the mid-1980s, when printers were watching sources for high-quality lead type diminish in number and there was a pall hanging over letterpress. From that perspective, this turnaround is breathtaking in scope, and telling its story brings into play luck, insight, and flexibility. I want to follow this thread, to look at the larger histories of art and book art from 1980 to the present, in order to determine how letterpress printing fits into that picture. I want to talk to established printers and younger artists reinventing the medium as they go. I'm curious about how ideas of craft are changing, because craft is one of the touchstones of letterpress as well as a topic of discussion and debate in the book art field.

Thanks to the Craft Research Fund from The Center for Craft, Creativity & Design, in Hendersonville, North Carolina, I've received a research grant to consider these questions and others over the coming year. I am attending conferences, interviewing artists, and seeking the stories and commentary of letterpress printers. I'll be launching a blog within the next few months, and will hope for printers to add their voices to this conversation that is evolving, to help to better tell this story and perhaps gain a sense of the unfolding directions for the letterpress medium. Findings will also be published in *The Bonefolder*.

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# MFA IN THE BOOK ARTS

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This photo was taken at *Taller Experimental de Grafica* in Havana, Cuba on a recent collaborative book project with UA students, faculty, and a Cuban author, artist, and hand papermakers. Our website features *news* about our energetic program, as well as nearly eighty *podcast interviews* with amazing book artists (available on iTunes as *Book Artists and Poets*). Visit us at [www.bookarts.ua.edu](http://www.bookarts.ua.edu).

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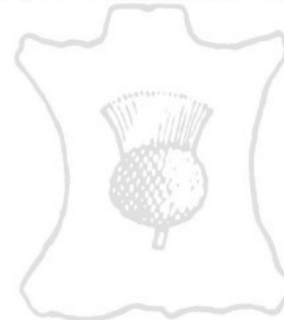


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The language of the *Bonfolder* is English, though it may be possible to work with authors in the translation of non-English articles.

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