

# *the BUNFOLDER*

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



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*Volume 2, Number 2, Spring 2006*

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## Marketing Fundamentals for Book Arts Professionals

Deb Carlen

It's not "marketing fundamentals vs. book arts professionals." It's *for* book arts professionals. The toughest place for a book artist or preservationist is between what the market demands as buyable goods and what your heart dictates you to produce. In teaching marketing to artists of many disciplines, I learned—very quickly—that most artists will not compromise or re-tool their output for the marketplace.

**This is the polar opposite** of traditional wisdom about producing and marketing services and products. Generally, marketing satisfies the criteria of a specific audience or need or desire. Within your area of expertise; e.g., automobiles, hydraulic lift equipment, carpets, you research what people want, how much they'll pay, what color they prefer, and hundreds of other characteristics defined by research; you produce it and sell it. When I began work with book artists and high-end craftspeople in other media, I would suggest that they might benefit from producing their work in this year's colors, or create finished shapes that fit a home decorating trend, or create 50 of a small item instead of 15. After I scraped off the tar and feathers, I went back to the drawing board, talked one-on-one with artists, visited studios, and strolled the best shows—again. Now I get it.

We can craft a marketing scheme that allows you to stay true to your art: first, decide what you want to do, then we'll locate and cultivate a market for it. Here's what I would like to achieve with these short articles: create a basic understanding of marketing, and give you solid, tested ideas to use.

### The Gap and the WIIFM

Artists often don't understand "the gap" between creation and sale: we don't know what to do with the product or service once we've produced it. People should know, right? They know what you do, how wonderful it is, what a joy it is to own or contract. They should OFFER to pay you, right?

Not so much, actually. Welcome to the competitive marketplace - a place where nothing can be assumed, where friendship and neighborliness are eschewed if not disavowed. Anything goes. Henceforth, you must bridge the gap with marketing and communication, produce the goods, and ask for the money. You have to answer—in advance, for the buyer—the only question in the world that matters in the marketplace: "What's in it for me?" This is the WIIFM, and

you've chosen the toughest sell there is: something non-essential, unless you have a captive clientele that can afford to demand art and artisanship as one of life's staples. Put yourself in the place of a buyer of your products and services, and examine your reactions. Answering the WIIFM question and incorporating the answer into your marketing brings you much closer to making the sale.

### Benefits and Features

How to pitch your marketing rests on two components of market planning: benefits and features. **Benefits** answer the WIIFM question and **features** make the benefits believable. Concentrate on the benefits: they can see the features but you may have to point out the benefits. Advertising and promotion is full of examples of feature-based selling. Don't do it! If you cannot answer WIIFM for your customer, you're not marketing.

It will take practice to tell the difference between benefits and features. For instance, what's the benefit of a handmade volume of poems with tipped-in photographs? Your first thought is likely "it's a beautiful, unique art object." And it is. But that's not the reason the prospect will buy it. He'll buy it because looking at the volume creates a feeling that is pleasant. Buying the volume translates to owning the good feeling and having it at hand, at will. Sell the **resulting feeling**. Make it credible with the features: what inspired you, a description of the handmade paper, the hand-set type, the photos taken with an old Graflex, and the story of what inspired you. Now you've legitimized the good feeling the prospect has when viewing and holding your product. Creating a desired *feeling* is a better benefit than "saving money" or "for comfort." Remember: you're selling a non-essential luxury item. Create positive emotions as the benefit that hastens the sale.

### A Marketing Plan

Another important basic in marketing is planning, which is comprised of strategy and tactics. The advantage of planning is that once it's done for a quarter, a year, or 18 months, all you have you do is follow the instructions, making course corrections along the way for inevitable changes. Without a marketing plan, you're going to waste huge chunks of money and time, you may appear inconsistent and unprofessional to your prospects, and you're likely to panic when nothing's being sold. Marketing plans can be extremely complex documents with much market research. Here, instead, let's stick to a plan that's easy to produce and execute. A plan gives you focus, and takes the guesswork out of what to do next, allowing you to build momentum that results in referrals and greater visibility. Give yourself a specific amount of time to



produce a marketing plan.

## **Questions to answer in your plan:**

1- What's the philosophical goal or mission statement for your work?

2- How much money do you want to make?

3- What period of "calendar time" will the plan cover?

4- How much weekly "clock time" will you invest in marketing?

5- How much money can you spend on marketing and sales promotion?

6- Who are your prospects and customers?

7- What are your strategies and tactics?

## **GLOSSARY (not alphabetical)**

Prospect: someone with characteristics that increase the likelihood that he or she will buy your products or services.

Customer: someone who has bought something from you.

Conversion: the marketing that turns a prospect into a customer.

Calendar time: most plans find three-month quarters, six-week periods, or 12 to 18 month spans easy groups of "calendar time."

Clock time: like any repetitive task that improves with practice, so does marketing, especially if you'll review your plan and prepare for the next action item on a weekly basis; even 45 minutes to two hours a week may be enough to keep things rolling.

Marketing: my definition is "every activity up to the exchange of funds" to sell an item or a service, and an evaluation after the sale of what worked and what didn't.

Strategy: your overall plan of marketing action.

Tactics: how you're going to accomplish your strategy; i.e., using ads, co-ops, others.

Your marketing plan should address:

- Your current situation.
- Who and where the prospects and customers are.
- What the competition is doing.
- Strategy and specific tactics.
- Budgets for promotion activities.
- Plans to evaluate your activity.

After you determine this information, write a one-page "executive summary" and put it at the beginning of the plan. The summary is an overview of what you say in the plan. (NOTE: if you find the summary can't be written in one page, it's likely that you're writing plan content, not summarization. Extract the planning and put it in the body of the document.) The lovely thing about marketing plans is that banks and investors love them when you come to ask for money. Make sure the budgets are correct and realistic.

## **Finding Customers**

Traditional marketing dictates that you find new customers as a result of advertising, trade shows, and the other usual channels. I'm not disputing it, but since we're approaching marketing in a non-traditional way, you'll

need a different plan to find customers. To simplify a basic understanding of customer populations, I've developed a technique called BackTrack<sup>SM</sup>. The statistical modeling for BackTrack<sup>SM</sup> isn't finished yet, but the technique is based on observable customer behavior, and gathering information based on facts embedded in the behavior. You can use BackTrack<sup>SM</sup> to discover new individual prospects or retail outlets. As your understanding of marketing grows, you'll find that BackTrack<sup>SM</sup> is the beginning of market segmentation.

Let's take three people who have bought your products. The only thing they appear to have in common is their purchases of your product or service. Although that may be the only thing they have in common\*, each one of them represents a group of prospects. It's up to you to discover the characteristics that could be duplicated in other prospects

## **Am I Your Prospect?**

When I was a young child, our family had books and drawing paper, but no rugs or carpet on the floors. The first big fight I had with my mother occurred at age three: she wanted the books and paper on the shelf; I wanted them open on the floor and on my bed. This difference of opinion lasted for four hours and only intervention by my father, returning from a grueling day at his new printing company, ended it. My perception was that the ownership and display of books and paper was more important than a) family rules, b) safety, c) common sense. Thus, since age three, I remain part of the PERMANENT BOOK ARTS CUSTOMER MARKET. All you need for monetary success is 999 more of me, to cover attrition, and to expand your market by 15% annually.

by backtracking information. We want to know as much as possible about these people, and the fastest, least expensive way to find out is to ask. In today's security-conscious climate, you need to provide strict anonymity when gathering characteristics. Backtracking doesn't require names and addresses, but you will eventually want this information. "Permission" or "opt-in" marketing are methods to gather names and other contact information while promising that you'll only use it in connection with your marketing; i.e., you won't sell the names to anyone. When prospects give you permission to gather on a web or mail or phone survey, you might offer an incentive such as a free note card featuring your work, a bookmark, or similar piece. I strongly suggest that you tell them exactly why you're asking the questions: you're looking for more good customers like them.

Let's select Customer A at random, contact her, and discover these facts by conversation or survey:

- She's between 40 and 49
- She belongs to two professional organizations
- She has an associate degree
- She spends more than \$200 a year on books
- She spends more than \$200 a year on gifts
- She collects something (it doesn't matter what)
- She found you by referral from someone who had one of your products; she asked about it.

This is so much information that it will take time to use every lead it gives you. Let's backtrack from **one** piece of information: she was referred to you. You immediately know that your current customers are a great, inexpensive source of additional prospects. MARKET TO THEM. Design a program that rewards them for sending you customers. A rewards program could include membership in your Collectors Group, to whom you offer pre-release notices and discounts

on first orders of new editions; a free newsletter, a somewhat customized birthday scroll ... whatever you feel will cement their loyalty. If the referral came from a retail store, reward the store with something for the owner to give the sales staff, and make a call to propose quarterly buying by the store, an in-store demo or appearance by you, or a cross-promotion where you and the store share the costs of an ad or a mailing.

If you're getting referrals, mine the current customer mailing or e-mailing list. If you don't have a customer list, start one today. All those business cards you collected go

on the list immediately. Send a postcard mailing to verify addresses and interest, and to obtain permission to contact them. This is called an "opt-in" program, or "permission marketing." Don't overlook family: if they're paying for your items, they're valid customers and so is everyone to whom they've given your items as gifts. As you read this article, you know five people who have bought from you. Put them on the list. If two of these people refer one each to you, and three of the group of seven people repeat an order or continue to order from you (because you stay in touch), you've just sold a minimum ten items. BackTrack<sup>SM</sup> encourages you to collect and observe characteristics that are shared, and market directly to people who possess these characteristics. They're more likely (pre-qualified by characteristic) to be receptive to your products. Instead of changing what you create, find customers already interested in buying your work.

\*This is actually unlikely. If you dig a little, you'll find that they may all have purchased online on a Saturday night two days before a major holiday, which gives you three or four buying traits to market to.

### **Just in case ...**

Two of Customer A's characteristics will help you plan future products, should you decide to respond to market/customer conditions with traditional marketing:

She belongs to two professional organizations

She has an associate degree

If you find that three or five or 41 people who buy from you belong to the same organization, you just found an entire captive group to whom you can market. Some characteristic of the membership matches what you create. Take an ad in their newsletter, offer them a special discount, pitch your services to their leadership for their annual meeting. Are there commemorative book arts pieces they could give as honoraria or awards? Years ago I doodled a design on a piece of paper at a volunteers-for-the-library meeting; an engineer saw it and asked to use the design on certificates of achievement for their annual meeting. I turned it over to a book artist/calligrapher; what did I know about this sort of thing? Everybody was happy, and the calligrapher did the engineer's wedding invitation a year later. Further, the importance of the associate's degree is that it helps you determine the degree of sophistication that the project can exhibit for this prospect group



## Tactics = Tools

Paraphrasing Thomas Edison, “remember that good fortune often happens when opportunity meets preparation.” The preparation for marketing includes tools: tangible stuff, time, and intent.

When you’ve done your homework in strategy, what tactics will work? Here’s the big insider fact: **anything** will work if you repeat it consistently. Digital mail, direct mail, ads, publicity, or a combination. The key is getting your brand out there continually and consistently. Customers trust a seller in the game over time, and you’ll also knock down a bit of the preconceived notion that artisans are not business people. A good example of consistency resulting in success is the 1 column x 1” ad programs that run forever in The New Yorker magazine. There’s a women’s clothing store in southern Georgia that began to buy tiny display ads 25 years ago, doing no other national advertising. They hung in there, and now have huge catalog and online sales and a fine reputation simply by consistently appearing and staying true to their brand.

## You need a visual brand

This does NOT have to be a representational element, but you must use it consistently, and until you’re “known” it should be presented with a cutline (a clever but clear phrase or slogan that tells us what you offer). Use it on everything. “Everything” includes outbound address and package labels, your stationery, your info block on e-mails (embed it as a small gif or jpeg), tee shirts, pens, everything. Did you know the United States Postal Service has okayed the design and use of personal postage? The cost is a little more than regular postage and a whole lot less expensive than other branding expenses. It’s legal, it’s your art work on a real postage stamp, and it’s a great way to create brand visibility. See <http://www.zazzle.com/stamps> or <http://www.real-photo-stamps.com/>.

## You need business cards

The book arts are among a select group of occupations not bound by a million rules for visual marketing. Make it the very best business card you can design, and spend what you need to do it right. Since your talents can literally be viewed on every card, the only rule is “tell everyone what you do” on the card. “Book arts” doesn’t mean anything to 98% of your customers. Be specific. And who invented that stuff about every card looking exactly alike? As long as you BRAND your visuals with the consistent use of a single element—a logo,

logotype, a glyph—you can change the color, the shape, the size of your card. I suggest you make it easy to see and easy to keep, but if you insist on making a triangle card, you’ll get some mileage out of it. I also suggest that you design it so that it’s not a budget buster to reprint. If you don’t mind doing the die-cutting yourself for 5,000 cards, and you’re convinced it’s the best way to go, do it. However, a poorly hand-inked or stamped card loses its caché if it’s illegible or the stock is too light-weight.

## You need collateral materials

This sounds elementary, but can you, at this moment, give me a brochure, a sell sheet, a catalogue, or an ad—all with prices—if I ask for it? Your carefully shepherd market wants to see something tangible before it buys. You don’t have to have everything on the list, but you need something that you can land mail and e-mail. Collateral

material is especially important if you’re marketing to retail stores: they want an assurance that you’re prepared to do business, even if you’re a small independent.

## You need business knowledge

People go into business because they have a specific skill or calling. Businesses fail—among other reasons—because owners are clueless about the business of business. Take a short course in how to run a business. Buy a book, contact SCORE (the Service Corps of Retired Executives), call the

### Boomers and Paper in America: Perfect Market Prospects

Although disposable American income has been running a little scared since 9/11, the “nesting” atmosphere at home has turned collecting interests to a deeper discovery of ethnic and family stories, and the paper ephemera and memorabilia exemplifying them. Additionally fueled by the transfer of huge amounts of inherited monies and properties, Baby Boomers (born from 1944 to 1964) have turned to projects that concentrate on the preservation of treasured books and personal histories. There is an emotional quest to discover the tangible things left by ancestors, and a rush to preserve the present for future generations. As “The Greatest Generation” leaves us, Boomers are anxious—if not in an outright panic—to safeguard and care for those things that define parents and grandparents. Handcrafting, scrapbooking, photography and videography, preserving family documents, storytelling, and heightened intra-familial communications have exploded as mediums for preservation. You’ll find many niches for the sale of the book and preservation arts in this societal movement.

Small Business Administration (SBA, a government agency), talk to other small business owners, go online for help. You must know the bottom-line fundamentals of business operations. How will you accept payment? Do you pay sales tax, get a Federal ID number, buy a business permit? Are you set up to land mail or e-mail responses to requests within 24 hours or less? What will you charge for shipping? Handling? It's not only about marketing. Basic business information and legal requirements **fulfill the promise** of strong marketing. An absence of information about anything here is dangerous.

## Do you need a web site?

It looks so effortless. Small children have them. It's an incredibly powerful, 24/7, global presence. A web site is also a commitment that requires money, serious planning, and an experienced, reliable systems administrator. If you have the necessary expertise or can hire it to design, write, code, and maintain a site that really helps you sell with a good shopping cart system, do it. You'll have the opportunity to sell wherever in the world a customer will give you USD (US dollars) without the overhead of a traditional store. You won't avoid customer interaction completely, but it won't likely be face-to-face.

## The Power of the Group

Here are two ways to exponentially expand the strength of your marketing:

- Co-operative promotions
- Cross promotions

By joining two other artisans with non-competing offerings, you're a consortium. You can share the cost of advertising, of counter-top displays at the wedding planners' convention, of attending and schmoozing the booksellers' shows. This requires cooperation and management, but shares the monetary and time pressure.

You can also cross-promote. The local gift store that sells your work can host a show or an appearance, and advertise it in their regular ad in the local paper. They may already have

a display ad contract guaranteeing that they'll buy a certain number of column-inches in a 12-month period, and you'll help them fulfill contract obligations by sharing in the cost of an ad. You benefit from adding a public appearance at a known retail outlet, and from appearing in the print ad.

Cross promotions can extend to a characteristic proven by your BackTrack<sup>SM</sup> results. Idea: arrange to present a display of your work in the lobby of the hall where college music majors perform their recitals. Why? Backtrack<sup>SM</sup> it: there are common characteristics among book lovers, gift buyers,

ephemera collectors, and music lovers. Give the bookstore a percentage of what's sold when you display at an in-store author reading. Frame or shadow-box ten pieces and display them at a local hotel or conference center that hosts professional meetings (make sure you attach business cards). Several hotel chains still require the display of local artisans in their lobbies, in displays that change every quarter.

## Send it out

**Direct mail** is a printed or digital piece of advertising sent directly to the prospect. It requires a mailing list, a printed or digitized piece of sales promotion, postage, patience, and low initial expectations. For an untried mailing list, expect 2% to 10% "nixies"—undeliverable mail that's returned to you. If you're going to lease a mailing list, contact me and we'll walk through the advantages and pitfalls. The big advantage of direct mail for book

artists is that the medium itself provides a great showcase for your work. You're mailing them a collectible, thus pushing your marketing past its perception as advertising.

Cut your mailing list into manageable chunks. The last thing you want to do is wear yourself out getting a mailing of 1,200 out the door, then getting a 15% buying response. That means 180 customers want to buy something from you, and they'll all want it yesterday. For most book artists, this will create a bottleneck that prevents you from filling orders

## Correcting Contrarians

**What you hear:** Advertising is too expensive.

**Really:** No, it isn't. You have to know what you're buying, the right media outlet, and how to buy it. Here's an excellent opportunity

## Ephemera Society of America

"Ephemera News" has been published since 1981.

A glossy publication with a targeted circulation of 1,000 including collectors, institutions, and dealers. Ephemera News accepts pdf, jpeg or tiff files as well as camera-ready ads at the following pre-paid rates:

Quarter page (3.25" x 4.5")	\$70
Half-page vertical (3.25" x 9.5")	\$105
Half-page horizontal (7" x 4.5")	\$105
Full page (7" x 9.5")	\$185

Deadlines are March 1, June 1, September 1, and December 1. Publication dates: 15th of April, July, October, and January.

Contact: [info@ephemerasociety.org](mailto:info@ephemerasociety.org)  
<<http://www.ephemerasociety.org>>:

quickly, unless you've stocked inventory AND custom pieces. Customers *understand* but do not *care* that you're creating by hand and need time for excellent product. Inability to fulfill the response from a promotion is a swift, certain death of your credibility. Instead, consider staggering your mailings in small groups every month. There will be a lag time in response—it's shocking but true that people don't act immediately when they receive a sales promotion piece—but if orders become too numerous, you can push future mailings out.

If you're selling preservation education or consulting services, customers are more likely to understand that the calendar is a linear thing, and you can't be two places at once. With products, the perception is that if you offered to sell it, you have the goods on hand, and the simultaneous arrival of 28 orders is your problem, not the customer's.

**What you hear:** Only the "rich" can afford to buy/collect my work.

**Really:** What's your point? Even if this IS true, market directly to the group with these "rich" characteristics. See BackTrack<sup>SM</sup> above.

**What you hear:** I can't afford a marketing strategy or a marketing plan.

**Really:** You can't NOT afford one. It's not a White Paper, it's an attitude and an action plan on a piece of paper. You don't have to write a dissertation; an outline and a calendar will work. No plan, no goals = no income.

**What you hear:** Nobody spends money on a) book preservation; b) crafted invitations and announcements; c) unique editions.

**Really:** Industry associations and sociological trends disagree with you. The scrapbooking industry **alone** grosses \$3.5 billion annually in the United States (Scrapbooking in America Study, NFO Research, Inc., and Rose Market Research Group, 2003 and 2004). People are putting invitations, chapbooks, keepsakes, and dozens of other book arts into scrapbooks. PrimaSoft sells software to organize private book collections <<http://www.primasoft.com>>. Amazon.com, eBay, and various collectibles groups are doing big business as well.

I hope this helps you get started. There's a huge amount of information available on marketing, and it's tough to bring it to a few short, initial pieces. Now get out there and market your beautiful work!

*Deb Carlen is a veteran of the marketing, advertising, and PR worlds. She graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in journalism, and was the first female sports information officer (SIO) on the Carolina college circuit. Her interest in the communications essential for productive marketing pushed the "jump" to advertising. Deb co-owned an Atlanta ad agency that won awards for audience recall and paper use in print advertising. She spent six years lecturing and consulting extensively on advertising, marketing, and publishing in seminars for individuals and companies in the US and Canada. Among her clients were Motorola, Allstate Insurance, OshKosh B'Gosh, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, and AT&T, as well as several Washington, DC, embassies, and hundreds of micro-businesses, organizations, and entrepreneurs. She has worked in large corporations and organizations as a Director of Business Development and Director of PR and Marketing, and left a five-year assignment as Creative Leader at a northern California firm in 2005 to consult full time.*

*Deb has additional formal education in the medieval history of northwestern Europe (these things happen in one's youth), marketing, graphic design, writing and editing; and experience in video scripting, staging, and shooting. She has authored and published articles and instructional non-fiction, keynoted dozens of meetings, and holds several copyrights and service marks.*

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### A QUOTE

"My not-so-well-kept secret is that I am truly a paper freak: paper crafts, paper history, paper manufacture, old books, deconstructed books, experimental books, paper as art ... paper, paper, paper," Carlen states. She grew up in a printing and publishing firm, and cut paper dolls from the oversized clip-art books used by newspapers and commercial printers. "I'm thrilled to see the book arts enjoying renewed popularity here and in Europe. I want the amazing artisans in these disciplines to benefit from the same marketing tools and tactics that the 'big guys' use, at a fraction of the price."



## Circuit Riders for Book Arts: Some Observations from a Road

By Bill Stewart

As Vamp & Tramp, Booksellers, LLC, Vicky and I represent the work of 150+ contemporary fine presses and book artists. For simplicity's sake, we're going to use the term book artist for everyone, even though we know how inadequate and even insulting that broad brush can be. As we travel the country taking that work to institutional and private customers, we often talk with groups of book artists about the commercial side of things. We've been asked to write about the issues we cover about the commercial side of creating contemporary fine press and artists' books.

We'll try to keep this a practical tale. Not exactly a *How to Sell Your Book Works* article, because frankly we don't know the answer to that. What we can offer is only *How We Try to Sell/Place the Works We Choose to Represent*. Everything we say will be mired in the muddle and eddy of particular circumstances and limited to our experience.

And you should know up front that that experience is limited. Ten years ago we didn't know what an artists' book was. Wondrous serendipity and Ron King's *Antony and Cleopatra* let in the light. But it's only 2 years ago that we closed our book and art gallery in Birmingham, Alabama, and took to road as fulltime circuit riders for book arts.

To give the article some kind of form, we'll look at three areas: how Vamp & Tramp operates; how we approach dealing with collections; and some general but no less personal guesses at why some works succeed with us and others do not.

### **Vamp & Tramp: What and How**

No matter what term you use — agent, broker, dealer, and parasite — primarily we are traveling salespeople, selling Book Arts in general, selling the works of book artists we represent specifically. The service we offer is for book artists who for whatever reason choose to have someone else sell their work. (Because we represent their work does not mean that they can not sell it themselves, or have other agents represent them.) We take work on consignment and search

for a buyer. No money changes hands until we sell the work and are paid. Then we receive an agreed on percentage of the selling price.

While we do have a website and exhibit/sell at selected book fairs, a vast majority of our sales (we've never stopped to figure it out, but 90% is a guess) come as a result of personal visits to private and institutional customers. No matter how good the website or the catalog, there is no substitute, we find, for actually showing the work. And so, we spend a lot of time on the road, traveling at least part of 11 months a year (December being the odd month out).



Because we feel strongly that the sort of work we represent is best sold by taking the work to the institutions and collectors, we ask artists to send us one copy of each work they want us to represent. We show the actual work to potential buyers, and place orders with the artist as we sell their work.

The logistics might be of interest since they play a part in which works we take on. We pack a Dodge Grand Caravan with wheeled cases of book works (anywhere from 6 to 10 large suitcases, probably 100 to 200 separate works) targeted to the collections and collectors we have been able to make appointments with and hit the road. As an example, for a 5-week trip to the West in January-February 2006, we have 23 institutional appointments scheduled, will see 3 or 4 individual collectors, and will exhibit at the California International Antiquarian Book Fair.

At each institutional appointment we'll take in anywhere from 10 to 60 works — the exact number and general slant of books depends on whom we are presenting to and how much time we have been allotted, two hours being an optimal time, but by no means what we always get. As you can see, one of the realities about being represented by Vamp & Tramp is that when we show your work, it is one of many works on the table.

The sessions take on all forms: sometimes we meet with just the head of Special Collections, sometimes with a committee, or teachers who will be using the books, every now and then the visit will be announced campus-wide and a more-or-less crowd more or less drifts in and out. Some librarians like to have each book presented individually; others like to look at a selection pretty much by themselves and then ask any questions they have. Some are too busy to do

anything but look at books; some like to be regaled with the backstories. Ideally, we like to hand-sell each work. In reality, that happens too infrequently.

If there is a norm, it would be that the librarian begins to make a stack of work she is considering. Then there is the inevitable culling. Here is a not too inaccurate list of overheard mumblings: I don't have this much money in my budget, We have an exhibit coming up, How would I shelve this?, It will display well, It's too involved, It's too simple, I hate ribbons, What a lovely ribbon, I can get these five books for the price of that one. In the end, we hope to come away with an order. We pack up. We move on.

## How Do We Find and Choose People to Represent?

The simple, admittedly unhelpful answer is that we find them any way we can, and we choose to represent those whose work we like. It's a mushy, delicious process, sometimes visceral, sometimes cerebral. Let's take the two issues separately. When we began, after we stumbled onto Ron King's *Antony and Cleopatra* and made contact with Ron, we were referred to other (mostly) fine presses by Ron and then John Randle (Whittington Press). It was our first experience of the generosity that as a rule permeates the world of contemporary fine press and artists' books. Now, some 8 years later, we continue to have printers and book artists recommended by those we already represent.

Moreover, since we now have something of a track record, printers and book artists contact us. The process begins in a variety of ways – email, jpegs, letters, prospectuses, phone calls, work submitted over the transom and unannounced – but in all cases, we will want to see the work, actually get to hold and manipulate it, before we make a commitment.

Then we come to the choosing part of the process: one of us, usually it's both of us, but it has to be one, must have what we call the Wow Experience. Talk about the inadequacy of words. But when I first opened Ron King's *Antony and Cleopatra*, felt actual chills up and down my spine, was sucked into the eddy of aesthetic focus – all I could say was, Wow. And something like that happens with the books we choose to represent. We find, unsurprisingly, that the books we are most successful with are the books we like the most. I really don't think of myself as a salesperson, but I am someone who can get excited about certain things, and who likes to share that excitement. It's subjective and personal and probably ultimately indescribable. It has to do with taste and background and a million other things that only our mothers (possibly) and a therapist (with the meter running) would be interested in.

In words it sounds like a young diarist coping with first love. I like books that haunt and comfort me. Can I be fuzzier? The work has to speak to me on some level, and those levels are many. I believe in being inclusive rather than exclusive. I am reluctant to try to define what I like, even what constitutes an artists' book or a press book. I find joy in simple things, and complex things, beautiful things, and beauty redefined, I like text, and images, quiet things, and over-the-top things, like inexpensive work as well as things I'll never be able to afford, like humor, but more I like wit.

It's easier to describe things that don't appeal to me: I don't like shoddy work, work that uses the "I am art and so I can be as sloppy as I care to be" argument, don't like pretentious work, work that spouts its life-changing importance. One-liners, even collections of one-liners, one-look books, and gimmick books are fine, but they rarely get my commitment.

For me, content is often the spoiling apple. A work of poor poetry – no matter how beautifully printed, no matter how seductive its paper or elegant its binding – is a work of poor poetry. And life is short.

In the end, the best way for you to get an idea of what moves us is to spend a little while on our website <<http://www.vampandtramp.com>> . You'll see a variety of styles, formats, processes, prices. Somehow, all of these have produced at least a wheezing 'wow' from one of us.

## Selling to Collections: Librarians Live in a Real World Too

When you are creating, doing your work, I don't think you should think about this. I'm starry-eyed enough to think that the work has its own insistent demands that should be satisfied first. After that's done, assuming that you want your work out in the world, you – or someone acting in your stead – has to put on another hat and consider who might buy your work.

Because we find ourselves serving primarily the institutional market, I'm going to restrict comments to that market. Most librarians are asked to do too much in too little time with too few resources. They must justify, they must shelve, they must explain. For many, Book Arts represents only a minute part of what they are responsible for. All are limited to 24-hour days, and most have lives outside their libraries/institutions. You'll be more successful, we think, if you can get inside their reality before you approach them.

I can't write this as a librarian. For a librarian's point-of-view, I recommend you study the witty and wise closing address given at last summer's excellent Wellesley Artists' Book Conference by Mark Dimunation, Chief, Rare Book and Special Collections Division at the Library of Congress.



Available on-line at <<http://www.jennypress.com>>, or contact the Jenny-Press, PO Box 207057, New Haven, CT 06520. You want *Book Arts Essay 2, ABC: The Artists' Books Conference Keynote Addresses*, which packages the opening address by Betty Bright and Dimunation's closing address. At \$15 postpaid in the US, it's a bargain.

Also, as a guess, I think you'll get better information by talking to colleagues who have been doing this for years, because what we can tell you is experiential and therefore limited to the librarians who will let us in. Some librarians see dealers as a way to best use their limited time. We can show them the work of 20 artists in a session; 20 separate sessions might take several weeks, and several bushels full of stress. On the other hand, there are librarians who prefer to buy from individual artists. Getting to know the artist is a chute to getting to know the work, which makes their job of representing its best face to the world easier.

Whoever it is who approaches the institution, she should be prepared to talk about the work. And not just in technical terms. I am suspect when I feel as if I'm being overloaded with technical jargon. Fellow artists (and some cataloguers who are having difficulty relating to a book) may be vitally interested in fonts, type sizes, the serial number of your Vandercook, and such, but I want to know why the work was made and how I can have a richer experience with it. And that's what we find most librarians want. If Vamp & Tramp is doing it, give me clues to enter the world of the work. As Mr. Dimunation points out, a rose may be a rose, but your rose might seem a not-rose to others. Help us appreciate your garden.

### In the same vein, stories help people connect

We always ask our printers and artists for *stories* about their work. Muriel Rukeyser has a line that goes something like, The world is not made of atoms, it's made of stories. That rings true in our world. Stories about your work give people something to hang on to, a way of approaching what may seem mysterious or formidable. Why did you choose this format? What decisions did you have to make? What were some of the bottom burps in the life of the work? If the paper contains the foreskin of your first son, is it important that we know it?

### Shelving is a concern

Most institutions house books, even artists' books, on shelves. The book on Piercing Problems with the cover pierced by knives might not be a good neighbor on the shelf.

As a general rule, I think **boxes or enclosures are a good idea**. The best boxes/enclosures like Julie Chen's not

only protect the work and allow the book to be shelved safely and easily on shelves – library or otherwise – but they also are part of the total experience. And if at all possible, why not put an identifying label on the spine. One important dissenting note, Sandra Kroupa, Special Collections, University of Washington, maintains that much damage is done getting books into and out of slipcases. She catalogues and shelves slipcases separate from the books.

### Prospectuses

Prospectuses work for many presses and book artists. They don't work for us because we are willing victims of how we choose to do business. Our customers expect us to bring work to show them. When we send a prospectus, the reply is apt to be, "Make sure you bring that when you come." If our artists choose to do a prospectus or announcement, we like to have one to send with each work we place. Librarians and cataloguers seem to like them.

One other caution about prospectuses. An established and successful press told us a tale that went something like this: 'When we started printing, we spent a lot of time and money printing an elaborate prospectus for each book, sending them out to an increasing mailing list. Then, we paid a first-time visit to a large university, and were surprised when the head of Special Collections told us that they already collected our work, had in fact quite a collection. Our printers protested, having no record of having sold this place anything. But to prove he was telling the truth, the proud librarian produced a folder — that overflowed with every prospectus.'

### First impressions count

Time is always a factor. First, we are allotted a certain amount of time. Second, there is a limit to what can be absorbed in one sitting. Each librarian, each group of curators has a different capacity. After a certain point, everyone's eyes glaze over. We are, I feel certain, guilty of putting too much work on the table, of blunting the effect. There are reasons for this, if no absolute justification. At any rate, the point is that you have a limited amount of time to grab a prospective buyer. With a lot of work out on the table, anything that takes a long time to explain may get overlooked.

### Size matters

Size matters because your work has to be housed somewhere: on a library shelf, in a vault, in a glass case. If it's a book we want to represent, size matters because we have to transport it to the collectors. Our mini-van is roomy, but not inexhaustible. We use rolling cases to get the work from wherever we have to park to the library or conference room. You and your creation project will determine how large, how



heavy, how wieldy the final work is. Just realize that somehow it will ultimately have to be transported from your studio.

## **Librarians change.**

Librarians change. And that means collecting policies and tastes change. “We don’t collect your sort of books” can become “We didn’t use to collect your sort of books.”

## **Pricing is a crapshoot.**

Pricing is a crapshoot. At Vamp & Tramp, the artist/press always has the final say on price. We will give our opinion, especially when asked. At present, we carry work with prices that range from \$10 to over \$8000. We like the variety, because it lets us promote book arts to all kinds of people. Obviously, as the price rises, the pool of potential buyers diminishes. You can read volumes with theories of the psychology of pricing. Are there price barriers? \$100? \$500? \$1000? \$2000. Will something that sells at \$950 be impossible to sell at \$1000? Frankly, that doesn’t interest me. But it does make sense to me to acknowledge that all of our customers have financial limits. And it does make sense to me that beginning book artists should consider underpricing their work. If you have a business, you would realistically expect to spend years building that business up. A beginning book artist’s first priority, I think, should be to get her work into the world, into worthy collections. I’m not suggesting you give your work away, but I would advise making sure you’re not stalling your career for the wrong reasons.

## **To Edition or Not**

A few collections absolutely will not consider one-of-a-kind works. A slightly larger number of collections say they won’t consider one-of-a-kind works. A still slightly greater number say they rarely consider one-of-a-kinds. We don’t know of any who won’t consider editioned work. (N. B. We’ve asked several of the hardliners how many it takes to make an edition. The consensus? Two.)

## **What sells? Almost every thing has a chance, but not everything gets our commitment.**

In the talk I mentioned above, Mark Dimunation cites three attributes that “shape” his reaction to a work: Transparency, Quality, and Integrity. These attributes make sense to me, and so I’m going to borrow them here, embroidered with my own comments.

## **Transparency**

The term may be a bit misleading, but not the concept. If comes down to this: Do I have “a sense that if [I am] willing to explore, ask questions, read and re-read, that [I] will achieve

an understanding of the work”? The success of your work with me depends in part on me. And you had nothing to do with the predilections I have. Even so, you can help me get to where I need to be by providing hints, clues, and suggestions. I’m not asking for a roadmap, or obviousness. But if I can’t breach the walls you’ve thrown up, I’m likely to tip my hat to your superiority and move on to the next battle.

## **Quality**

Mark Dimunation cites Victor Hammer: “Be honest to your work and do it well.” Your choices in creating the work determine what you have to do, but whatever that is, there is no excuse for not doing it well. Except in rare cases, shoddy work seems to me indefensible.

## **Integrity**

Probably the most important aspect for me. Dimunation cites translator and bookbinder Zahra Partovi, who told him that “every action, every atom that goes into the book goes toward its art — and if it does not, she takes it away.” The work has integrity. The parts work toward something, perhaps ineffable, but no less vital and true. Creation may be mysterious, but in the books I like, it isn’t willy-nilly.

One final note that will take us a bit off topic. Even if from this instant there were never another fine press or artists’ book bought or sold, I have no doubt that book printers and artists would continue to produce wow work — because it’s their nature. What concerns me the other side of that question: How do we cultivate new customers who might sustain these artists? Here I mean sustain in the sense of feeling connected, feeling appreciated, feeling validated by financial recognition — finding someone cares enough to pay for what I do. It would be nice if people could make a living as printers/artists, but in our world at this time for most that’s just a pipedream. In spite of the niche Vamp & Tramp finds itself in, we realize that depending on a limited number of institutions is not the answer. I think we have to preach and show and educate and preach some more — and preach not only to the choir, not only to the already converted. The type of work we represent is not for everyone. But if Vicky and I had a wooden nickel for everyone we’ve heard gasp, “Good lord, I didn’t know this stuff existed,” we could start a bonfire that might bring light to those that can say — as I did — wow, just wow.





*Bill Stewart, a lapsed English teacher, and his wife, Vicky, a corporate VP, eleven years ago launched Vamp & Tramp, Booksellers, selling 20th-century literary and mystery first editions. Today from their base in Birmingham, Alabama, they travel the country for at least part of 11 months a year representing over 150 contemporary fine presses and book artists. They claim serendipity as the sole agent of their change. Bill: I love, believe in, and can attest to the redeeming power of serendipity. It was wonderful serendipity and Ron Kings *Antony & Cleopatra* [Circle Press] that led us to this road. He can be reached at <[mail@vampandtramp.com](mailto:mail@vampandtramp.com)> or on the Web at <<http://www.vampandtramp.com>>*

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## Librarians' Books

By Sarah Bodman



University of the  
West of England

Bower Ashton  
LIBRARY

This book should be returned by the last date  
stamped below.

16 JUN 2005

### LIBRARIANS' BOOKS

As part of our research into artists' books at The Centre for Fine Print Research, at The University of the West of England, UK, we have built up contacts over the years with curators and specialist artist's book librarians from national and international collections. Visits to our centre in 2004 by curators from Tate Britain and Winchester School of Art, prompted the concept of this project. Meg Duff, Maria White, Linda Newington and Catherine Polley, had all mentioned at various times that they spend much of their working day amongst artists' books and had considered making one themselves, yet had never quite got round to it. This inspired us to set up the project and subsequently extend an invitation to institutional and library staff that we had contact with, asking if they would each like to produce an artist's book for an exhibition. Forty-five people accepted our invitation to make a piece of work, and this relatively simple idea then snowballed into the Librarians' Books exhibition tour 2005-2006.

To offer some guidance before they started making their work, we ran a one-day artist's book workshop at The University of the West of England, in February 2005. Twenty of the project's participants were able to attend, where they discussed their ideas with the group, viewed examples of books from our collection and each made a four-hole, Japanese stab-bind book with Tom Sowden's guidance. Those unable to attend were sent a pack of work notes.

After this, the librarians were given five months to make and document their artist's book for an exhibition at The University of the West of England, in summer 2005.



We had no idea what to expect from this. The project was initiated to give the participants a chance to concentrate on making a piece of work, inspired by their specialist interests. The exhibition was set as the goal for showing their final work to their colleagues, other participants and interested parties. We archived each participant's work and documentation on our website for future reference, so that the librarians, and anyone else can access images of the final pieces of work, and details of their ideas and processes used.

Some of the participants were already practicing artists with many years experience, for others, this was the first time they had the incentive to create an artist's book. What they each brought to the project was their experience and expertise of selecting, defining, documenting, archiving, displaying, repairing, caring for and loving artists' books and most of all; their passion for the subject. They also had the advantage of a vast working knowledge of the history and range of artists' books formats and processes, which informed the creation and production of this wonderful selection of artists' books.

Opening the parcels which arrived over the week before the exhibition was a great experience, with murmurs of "oh, I wish I had thought of doing that" as we unwrapped altered books, handmade paper books, sculptural books, bound volumes, embroidered pages, photo journals and DVD books. A huge range of fantastic ideas, formats and concepts appeared. Some of the contributors had even made two or three books in their enthusiasm.

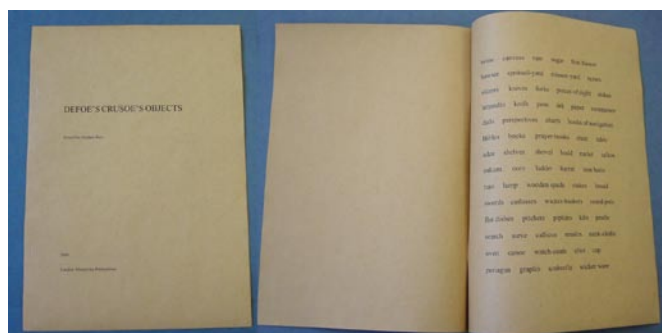
The participants had spent their allotted time filming, photographing, printing, drawing, typing, dyeing, binding, cutting, sewing and recording. Their subject matters range from: art, day-to-day living, popular culture, religion, small

animals, secret diaries, poems, secrets, music, their lives, collections of ephemera, people, books, and even things that really annoy them.



A selection of the Librarians' Books on display at the Royal College of Art Library, London. Photograph: Dominic Sweeny, Royal College of Art

Books in the exhibition include documentary works: Stephen Bury's *Defoe's Crusoe's Objects* (British Library) is a list of objects mentioned in the 1719 edition of Robinson Crusoe, printed on Kraft paper, as an unlimited edition.



"Defoe's Crusoe's Objects," Stephen Bury, British Library, London, 2005, unlimited edition, 6 pp, laser printing onto Kraft paper.

Elizabeth Lawes' *An inventory of popular music ephemera 1995 – 2005* (Chelsea College of Art and Design), covers a 10-year survey of collected items both found and purchased. Meg Duff's *Workplace* (Tate Britain) is a miniature tour of workstations in the Tate Library and Archive. The workstations appear in order of location; librarians and archivists appear alphabetically.



"Workplace," Meg Duff, Tate Library and Archive, Tate Britain, London, 2005. Edition of 35 published by Meg Duff, printing and binding by MakingSpace, Isle of Wight, 50pp concertina format, double-sided, colour inkjet on paper

Catherine Polley's *Small Animals* (Winchester School of Art Library) is a collection of her photographs based on "that moment when you are out on a walk in the park, by the river, perhaps in the woods and you see something move. It's a small animal. You photograph it thinking you've got what it takes to be a wildlife photographer. The photographs come back from Boots. The animal is smaller than you remembered..."

Altered books included: Tim Pate's *Stone* (Tate Britain) which "chronicles the journey of a stone over one year (2004) and the correspondence between two people (Tim Pate, and Karen, finder of the stone). Each place the stone was photographed another stone was collected. The original stone is now in the possession of its owner." This wonderful book has the stone images snugly cut and placed throughout the book, as a documentary of the sights and views on the



"STONE," Tim Pate, Tate Library and Archive, Tate Britain, London, 2005. Edition of 3, variable no. of pages, 10 stones, 20 photographs.



journey.

For *Present, Christmas 2004*, Hazel Grainger (University of Westminster) used her 55 collections of wrapping paper from presents opened over Christmas 2004 to create a 4-volume edition. "All pieces in each are visible as a single 'page' arrangement. The names of the people present, and the locations are printed on the reverse."



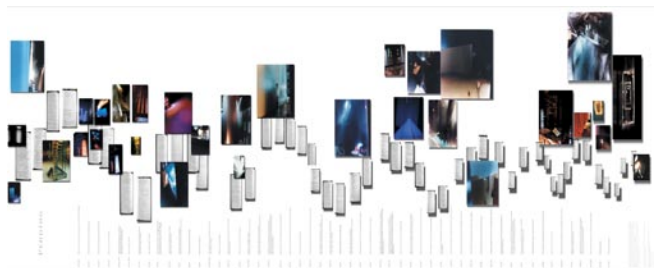
*Present, Christmas 2004*, Hazel Grainger, University of Westminster, London, Jan-June 2005. One edition of 4 volumes, 55 collections of wrapping paper, numerous pages, old wrapping papers, hand bound with ribbon ties.

Lucy Gosnay's unique book *Diary* (Victoria and Albert Museum) is a beautiful, reworked, second-hand diary, with texts then written by the artist to "trespass boundaries beyond its own form, offering varied representations of the private person on paper".



"Diary," Lucy Gosnay, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, 2005. Unique book, 111pp, mixed media.

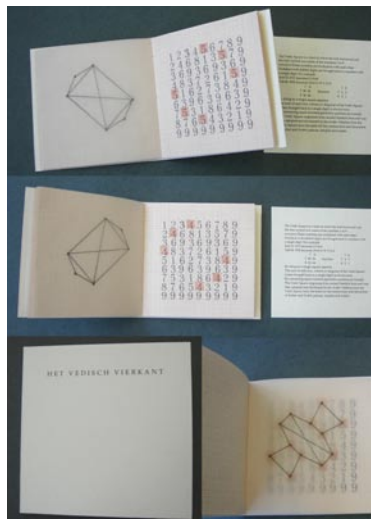
Doro Böhme's *Pending*, (School of the Art Institute of Chicago) also concerns the 'private' inspired by reading a book of prayer requests in a tiny chapel on the German-Czech border, combined with images shot during her years of working as a lighting technician in the State Opera, Stuttgart.



"Pending," Doro Böhme: book design, photography, Kevin Henry: acrylic box. Eric von Haynes: slide scanning, text layout. School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Chicago, USA May/June 2005, open edition, one scroll, Kodak Wallpaper, Epson 9600 Inkjet printer, clear acrylic box.

*Strip Lit Flick*, a DVD of several thousand frames of digital movie clips by Althea Greenan (Goldsmiths College): "It's late and the researchers have all gone home. It's time to tackle the backlog under the fluorescent tube. I happen to have a digital camera and an artist friend called Francis Summers who can make DVDs. Yes! Is this an artist's book? I'm not sure. The stacked sheets still require you to handle them to run the words and images into a certainty. But here you watch someone else do the flicking: the librarian who already knows what's there."

*Het Vedisch Vierkant* (The Vedic Square) by Marion Bouwhuis (Academie voor Beeldende Kunst en Vormgeving, The Netherlands) "is a magic square, formed by a multiplication table (up to nine times nine) and by replacing each number by its digit's sum. By connecting equal numbers, geometric patterns are formed."



"Het Vedisch Vierkant" (The Vedic Square) Marion Bouwhuis, AKI, (ArtEZ) The Netherlands, 2005. Edition of 9, 40pp, screenprint, stamping, scan and print, colouring, drawing.



Sculptural pieces included *I Would Rather You Be Silent Than Compliment My Hair* by Anna Sheppard (Royal College of Art), a mixed media work of hairgrips bound in printed paper. *Stop trying to get a grip on me when I'm attempting to get to grips with myself.*

Jennie Farmer (Victoria and Albert Museum) bound two volumes, each containing five paperback novels, *Brave New Ulysses: A portrait of the great Lolita as a young man* (Best Novels) and *Five Irish Quarters of Atonement: Don't you want to be good girls?* (Best Sellers). Farmer explains: "Both books are amalgams; one containing the top five best novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the other, the top five bestsellers on Amazon. They have been rebound in identical hardback covers with gold lettering on the spine. They are an exploration of the nature and concept of high literature and popular fiction."



"*Brave New Ulysses: A portrait of the great Lolita as a young man*" (Best Novels) and "*Five Irish Quarters of Atonement: Don't you want to be good girls?*" (Best Sellers) Jennie Farmer, Victoria and Albert Museum, London 2002. Two unique books, c. 1600pp, paperbacks and binding materials, gold-tooled lettering. Photograph: Dominic Sweeny, Royal College of Art

When the exhibition opened and it became apparent to all of us how many books had been produced, some of the participants asked if they could also show the books at their own institutions. The Librarians' Books project swiftly evolved into a seven-month tour which visited: The School of the Art Institute, Chicago, USA and The Royal College of Art, London, before the grand finale at the Library and Learning Resources Centre, London College of Communication, University of the Arts, London, in January 2006. Bristol Central Library also held a special readers' viewing event over a weekend in September 2005.

### The artist's book contributors are:

Anthony Beeson, Bristol Central Library

Doro Böhme, Joan Flasch Artist's Book Collection, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Marion Bouwhuis, Academie voor Beeldende Kunst en Vormgeving, The Netherlands

Dr Stephen Bury, The British Library

Sarah Clifford, Bower Ashton Library, The University of the West of England, Bristol

Jacqueline Cooke, Goldsmiths College Library

Meg Duff, Library and Research Centre, Tate Britain

Andrew Eason, Bristol Central Library

Jennie Farmer, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

Catherine Flood, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

Jane Furness, Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art Library

Lucy Gosnay, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

Hazel Grainger, Learning Resource Centre, University of Westminster

Althea Greenan, Goldsmiths College Library

Clare Hemmings, Winchester School of Art Library, University of Southampton

Cathy Johns, Royal College of Art Library

Éilis Kirby, Bristol Central Library

Rikka Kuittinen, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

Irene Lafferty, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

Elizabeth Lawes, Chelsea College of Art and Design Library

Richard Loveday, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert Museum

Darlene Maxwell, Royal College of Art Library

Linda Newington, Winchester School of Art Library,  
University of Southampton

Tim Pate, Library and Research Centre, Tate Britain

Bianca Peters, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert  
Museum

Alexis Petroff, Joan Flasch Artist's Book Collection, School of  
the Art Institute of Chicago

Catherine Polley, Winchester School of Art Library,  
University of Southampton

Anna Sheppard, Royal College of Art Library

Rachel Sim, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert  
Museum

Logan Sisley, Edinburgh College of Art

Maria White, Library and Research Centre, Tate Britain

Amy Whitehead, Word & Image Department, Victoria and  
Albert Museum

Zoë Whitley, Word & Image Department, Victoria and Albert  
Museum

Lynn Williams, Bower Ashton Library, The University of the  
West of England

Yolande Willink, AKI Academy of Visual Arts and Design  
Academie voor Beeldende Kunst en Vormgeving, The  
Netherlands

April Yasamee, Goldsmiths College Library

Many thanks to all of the participants for making this such a  
wonderful project.

*Sarah Bodman, CFPR, University of the West of  
England, Bristol, UK*

All quotations in the text are from the librarians'  
documentation. All of the artists' books and documentation  
for this project can be viewed at: <[http://www.bookarts.  
uwe.ac.uk/librar05.htm](http://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk/librar05.htm)>

*Sarah Bodman is Research Fellow for Artists' Books at  
the Centre for Fine Print Research, at the University of  
the West of England, Bristol, UK.*

*Sarah's own artists' books include "Viola", and "Flowers  
in Hotel Rooms Volume II, November 2005," a series  
of books with images inspired by Richard Brautigan's  
novel "The Abortion." Sarah's artists' books are included  
in many international collections such as Tate Britain,  
the British Library and the V & A Museum, London;  
Yale Centre for British Art and MOMA, USA; Museum  
van het Boek, The Hague: Joan Flasch Artists' Book  
Collection; Brooklyn Museum of Art, New York, The Art  
Institute of Chicago and Institute of the Arts, Canberra,  
Australia.*

*Sarah is also editor of the "Artist's Book Yearbook," a bi-  
annual publication on contemporary book arts, the most  
recent issue 2006-2007, was published in September  
2005. Sarah has also written "Creating Artists' Books for  
A&C Black" on contemporary artist's book production,  
which was published in July 2005 in the UK, and Sept  
2005, by Watson-Guptill, New York, USA.*

*She can be reached at <[Sarah.Bodman@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Sarah.Bodman@uwe.ac.uk)> or  
on the web at <<http://www.bookarts.uwe.ac.uk>>*

## Make It Gouda

By Emily Martin

"I read the various emails on the Book Arts list serve that followed the publishing of Johanna Druckers article Critical Issues/Exemplary Works, Spring 2005 with increasing bafflement. I have since reread the article and the responses several times and I am still puzzled that in all that collective hand wringing there was little mention of the usability of the expanded record. I am an artist not a librarian and I think the expanded record will be useful for artists and teachers as well as librarians. I very much enjoyed the pithiness of Beyond Velveeta, Druckers follow-up article. (Beyond Velveeta, Johanna Drucker; *The Bonefolder*, an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist, volume 2, number 1, fall 2005.) I prefer to have my own say about my books rather than leaving them to be misread or worse yet ignored. The arrival of Betty Brights excellent book *No Longer Innocent*, Granary Press is very timely for this discussion. She addresses this issue while discussing the book arts community at the Center for Book Arts in New York City, on page 151:

"That open-door spirit came to characterize CBA and later book art organizations, but it has also subjected them to dismissal as frivolous retreats for crafty hobbyists." (Bright, Betty (2005). *No Longer Innocent*, New York, NY: Granary Books.)

Then on page 153, she goes on to say:

"But if CBA tried to provide a safe haven in which art and craft could freely interact, it naturally had to endure the same aesthetic and financial conflicts inherent in any community. Not everyone wanted what it offered: studio access and support free of the constraints of the traditional fine press aesthetic. CBA's inclusiveness challenges traditionalists in fine printing, for whom the perfection of craft was an end in itself and a finished book represented a binder or a printer's skill and heightened the esteem accorded to the literature held within the book. Some of the artists who frequented CBA would be likely to view the conventions of fine binding as useful skills, and yet they might respond by testing the boundaries of these conventions. Even so, (Richard) Minsky maintained that, "...one of the reasons I started the CBA ...[was that] instead of putting the artists down, [CBA would] raise their craftsmanship up." (Bright, Betty (2005). *No Longer Innocent*, New York, NY: Granary Books.)

Bright uses the terms artist's book and book art as umbrella terms, with fine press, deluxe books, multiple bookworks and sculptural bookworks under the umbrella. Further she discusses how many books are hybrids or combinations of

these categories. Drucker's expanded record also allows for a broad range of types of artist's book when discussing Production Aesthetic. Reading Bright's book I feel I have a much better sense of my own pedigree within the context of the book art umbrella. To borrow from horse breeding, my parentage would be multiple bookworks out of fine press starting in the mid 1970's, with the addition of fine binding, paper engineering and writing in the 1980's and on. Bright's book is a very even-handed account of the many facets of book art. She has focused her attention on American artists' books from 1960-1980. I hope she will next explore American artists' books from 1980-2000. She quotes printer Jim Trissel from his essay *The Rise of the Book in the Wake of Rain* in her introduction:

"too often the critics of artists' books have resorted to an effort to segregate kinds of books into category[ies] and to proclaim something now called the 'artist book' the emergent and superior species." (Bright, Betty (2005). *No Longer Innocent*, New York, NY: Granary Books.)

Drucker's expanded record can serve the book art community well as a means of describing and discussing the broad field of artists' books. I would suggest putting the expanded record to the test, use it to describe an artists' book of your own or any artists' book that you have access to. I often harp at my students that they need to know the proper techniques of bookbinding in order to make decisions based on knowledge rather than blindly in ignorance. I think the same argument can be made for critical writing. We need a broad and inclusive vocabulary to cover the range from fine press books to book-like objects; the expanded record is a good place to start.

In my Artists' Books class (Fall, 2005) semester at the University of Iowa Center for the Book, I decided to give the expanded record several test runs. I also presented the expanded record for discussion in the Center for the Book seminar, more on that later. I gave my artists' book students, made up of three graduate printmakers, a visiting Chilean artist, an undergraduate design major, an English Ph.D. student, a poet from the Writer's Workshop and a student from the UICB graduate certificate program, the assignment of using the expanded record to describe a book of their choice from the more than 800 books listed as artists' books in the UI Special Collection holdings. Having to describe a book in detail also caused them to truly look at that book, hold it, read it, listen to it, and even smell it. They also used an abridged version of the expanded record to describe their final projects for the class. It was most interesting reading these expanded records and comparing them with what is available from the Library online catalog. These students were able to glean a great deal of information just from



examination of the book itself. Several students thought that in certain categories there should have been a choice of “other”. A few students resorted to Google to find additional information.

I then applied this expanded record to 3 books of my own, *My Twelve Steps*, *The Anxiety Alphabet-standard and deluxe*, and *The Vicious Circle Series*. I chose these books for several reasons, they are quite different from each other in format and intent and they are in the UI Special Collections so I have the conventional record too. Below are the specifics of the records for one of my books.

First is the record for *My Twelve Steps* in the online catalog of the UI Libraries:

Record 1 out of 1

**Author:** Martin, Emily 1953-

**Title:** *My twelve steps*.

**Published:** [Iowa City, Iowa]: Emily Martin and the Naughty Dog Press, c1997.

**Description:** 1 v. (unpaged); 16 cm.

**Subject:** Martin, Emily (Emily Jean)

**Subject:** Artists' books -- Iowa -- Iowa City.

**Authors, etc.:** Naughty Dog Press.

**General Note:** Title and imprint from accompanying card. One accordion folded leaf laced into a tan and white paper board portfolio which forms a “staircase” when opened showing a different 12-step slogan imprinted on each “riser”.

**System Number:** 001814660

**Format:** <Book>

**Location:** Special Collections x-Collection N7433.4.M364 M9 1997

**Second is my use of Drucker's Record Expanded to suit Artists' Books to describe the same book:**

## WORK



**Thumbnail:** [Martin-image 1.jpg]

**General title:** My Twelve Steps

**Initiating Agent:** Artist, Emily Martin

**Additional Agent:** Printer Janice Frey and her Out of Hand Press provided technical assistance with the making of the polymer plates and the letterpress printing including the use of her Vandercook press.

**Project conception:** An original production that exists only in this book form.

**Aesthetic Profile:**

**Content type:** A combination of a personal narrative and a theme based collection mimicking the twelve-step organization of self-help as used by Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Thematics:** The twelve statements combine to make a collective statement of independence from the unspecified “you”.

**Production Aesthetic:** Letterpress printed in the fine press tradition and case bound. The pages are not organized as folios but rather are folded to form an actual set of steps. The text is a type of experimental literature as found in the small press tradition. The presentation is intentionally very spare to focus attention upon the text. The case binding and pull cord are used to facilitate the opening and closing of the book.

**Edition Information:** Edition of 100 and two artist's proofs printed under the imprint of the Naughty Dog Press in 1997 in Iowa City, IA, USA.

**Community:** The seed of this book came from a workshop session with Susan King at the May, 1995 Paper and Book Intensive held at the Penland School of Craft, Penland, NC. During this workshop I began using texts in my books. The text for this book was developed months later in November 1996. Both Annie Tremmel Wilcox and Pam Spitzmueller suggested the use of the pull cord closure during a discussion of problems with various pop-up styles of steps.

**Sources:** I wrote the text, it arose from a chance remark by my husband regarding his dependence upon me.

**Subject terms:** Martin, Emily (Emily Jean) – Artists' books – Iowa – Iowa City.

**Time Period for this work:**

Conception: May 1995 - Mar 1997

Production: Mar 1997 – June 1997

Publication: May 1997

Distribution: this book is currently in print



**Exhibition history of the work (incomplete – a single entry included a sample):** 2005 Contemporary Creative Books, 8<sup>th</sup> International Book Fair, Parc Chanot, Marseille, France.

**Collection history of the work (incomplete – a single entry included a sample):** Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Visual and Concrete Poetry, USA.

## **OBJECT**

### **Agents:**

Initiating artist: Emily Martin

Producing assistance: Janice Frey

### **Conventional publication information:**

Status: Limited edition of 100

Title: *My Twelve Steps*

Place of Publication: Iowa City, IA USA

### **Time period:**

Conception: May 1995 - Mar 1997

Production: Mar 1997 – June 1997

Publication: May 1997

Distribution: this book is currently in print

**Edition:** #? Of 100

**Thumbnail:** Martin-image 1.jpg

### **Descriptive Bibliographical info:**

**Media of production:** Letterpress printed from polymer plates.

#### **Format:**

**Size:** Vertical: 6 inches x Horizontal: 6 ¼ inches x Depth: ½ inch. Size when opened out: 5 inches in height, 6 inches in width and 10 inches in depth

**Number of pages:** 1 folded page.

**Structure type:** The book looks like a traditional case bound book when closed but through the paper engineering of the page becomes a sculptural object when open.

#### **Materials:**

##### **Paper:**

**End sheets:** tan dyed Japanese paper, sometimes referred to as Moriki paper.

**Text paper:** Rives heavyweight rag paper.

**Spine paper:** University of Iowa Center for the Book Paper Facility text weight flax paper.

**Cover paper:** tan dyed Japanese paper, sometimes referred to as Moriki paper.

**Binding:** A codex style case used to contain an accordion folded page, holes are spaced along either side of the accordion with a waxed linen thread woven through to aid in the refolding of the accordion when the book is closed. A bamboo rod is attached to each end of the thread on the outside of the case, the thread and rod can be wrapped around the fore edge of the book and braced against the glass beads attached to the outside of the case, thus dealing with the excess thread and holding the book closed.

**Inks:** Oil based letterpress ink.

**Adhesive:** PVA glue mixed with methylcellulose for covering the boards. 3M 415 double sided tape was used to attach the steps to the boards.

#### **Means:**

**Typography:** Times Roman computer font.

### **Critical description and analysis:**

#### **Structural features:**

**Internal structure:** The presentation is intentionally spare, no added images or any other elements that would distract from the starkness of the written statements.

**Book features:** The accordion folded single page allows for separation of the twelve statements but provides no specifics as to order of reading, the statements may be read up or down the steps.

**Binding:** The binding is neutral but allows the accordion page to physically represent the twelve steps as well as to contain the written steps.

**Thematic features:** Intentionally there isn't an introduction, beginning, climax or resolution. It is important that the twelve statements appear as of equal weight and as stand-alone statements, which also join together to make a collective statement.

#### **Repository**

**Collection information:** This information is the same as that found under the WORK.

**Shelving/storage:** The glass beads on the outside of the case binding are somewhat vulnerable when shelved without additional packaging.

**Exhibition requirements:** It is suggested that this book be exhibited fully open. The insertion of a piece of 20-point card stock (4 inches by 9 inches) under the steps will keep the steps from sagging.

**Preservation history:** Occasionally glass beads have broken and have needed to be replaced.



**Exhibition history:** This information is the same as that found under the WORK.

The Center for the Book is an interdisciplinary department and this mix is reflected in the participants of the Book Studies Workshop. This article in a preliminary form, my students' expanded records, my expanded records of my own books and the actual books along with two books of Johanna Drucker including *Ravaged Spring* were presented during the Book Studies Workshop. Participants read the related articles in the Bonefolder before the discussion. The discussion was lively in regard to both the development of a canon and the use of the record. There was a consensus that a canon could not be forced into being but would develop and change over a span of years. The issue of the canon is not addressed in this article, Drucker introduces the idea on page 3 of her article. (Critical Issues/Exemplary Works, Johanna Drucker; The Bonefolder, an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist, volume 1, number 2, spring 2005.) Tim Barrett, UICB papermaker, wondered what critics or scholars would make of the artists critical descriptions in the expanded record. It is not uncommon for artists and scholars to place different interpretations on their work. There were suggestions regarding making use of Wikipedia <<http://www.wikicities.com/wiki/Wikicities>> where records could be posted and then supplemented and/or edited by other readers. Second, a PhD student in the English department, Jessica DeSpain observed that the elements of the Critical description seem tailored to describe the type of artists' books that Drucker herself makes. In my use of the record when my particular book did not fit easily into a specific feature I either inserted my own "other" or I explained why that feature was not a part of my book.

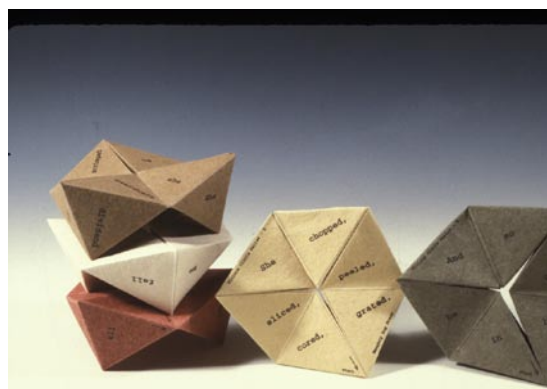
In my use of Drucker's expanded record, as the maker of this book I have knowledge far beyond what could be found by another person examining the finished book. Much of this information particularly regarding the project conception would be of value to scholars and critics examining the book. I have expanded the information in my record to include paper fiber content, inks and adhesives. Conservators would find all details of construction under the physical description useful when dealing with this book as time passes. The expanded record is comprehensive and as details of my specific book were plugged in to the categories, I realized that the expanded record is also quite flexible. For example, under Critical description: Thematic features, the book I was describing intentionally does not make use of the features of introduction, preface etc. in order to focus equal attention on each of the 12 statements/steps. Rather than stating the use of those features, I could explain my reasons for not using them.

There is a certain amount of repetition between information under the WORK and under the OBJECT. Drucker makes distinctions between the two in the descriptions of each category. The WORK is concerned with the overall project and includes all aspects of the project including:

"all editions, printings. Objects, elements, variations, notes, mock-ups, production records, etc. An OBJECT is a subset of a work and inherits all it's properties except where specified. An OBJECT has its own specific information that distinguishes it within the work." (Critical Issues/Exemplary Works, Johanna Drucker; The Bonefolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist, volume 1, number 2, spring 2005.)



"Anxiety Alphabet," 1998



"Vicious Circle Series," 1997

This distinction allows for the cataloging of multiple objects that relate to a single project and was useful when dealing with the standard and deluxe versions of the *Anxiety Alphabet*. The information under the WORK is identical for both books and the information under OBJECT is specific to each type of edition. I am curious as to the necessity of this separation. How often are there multiple objects related to a single project to be cataloged? Might not a meshing of the WORK and OBJECT descriptions eliminate duplicated information and make for a more streamlined form.

The expanded record is presented in juxtaposition to the conventional record in her article on page 11. When describing my own books, I felt that the expanded record was adequate to presenting the details of all the books I chose. I intentionally included a book with a nontraditional format. Even with this book, unlike the conventional record, I did not feel that something was being left out. The appendix B, pages 12-15, provides details of the categories that aided me greatly in sorting out what information was to go where. Drucker is generally even-handed and inclusive in her listings under Production Aesthetic although I was amused by the bias Drucker revealed when describing *livre d'artiste*:

“Livre d’Artiste:

- Image-text pairing, one usually dead artist/author
- Oversized paper
- Inflated production values
- Case-bound or portfolio-like”

(Critical Issues/Exemplary Works, Johanna Drucker; The Bonefolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist, volume 1, number 2, spring 2005.)

It was not a quick process to plug in the details of my books using this expanded record although as I became more familiar with the record it became easier. I am pleased that certain important information about the book is now on record. Much of this information would not become available in any other way. As was demonstrated to me by my students, use of the expanded record by a third party while not as extensive as what could be provided by the producing artist/author still provides more information than is available using the conventional record. If this expanded record was in use for all artists’ books and available online, it would be possible to search for artists’ books using a variety of criteria not currently possible. If artists won’t take their own books seriously enough to place them in context within the aesthetic tradition from which they arise why should anyone else.

I would like to thank my students in my Artists’ Books class, fall of 2005: Wende Fugate, Tom Keegan, Carolina Larrea, Erin Maurielli, Liz Munger, Erin Rinderknecht, Lauren Shapiro and Jessica White and the participants in the Book Studies Workshop, fall 2005: Tim Barrett, Kristin Baum, Matt Brown, Jessica DeSpain, John Gillette, David Horvaldt, Julie Leonard, Penny McKean, Sara Sauers, Dory Weiss, and Jessica White.

Critical Issues/Exemplary Works, Johanna Drucker; The Bonefolder, an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist, volume 1, number 2, spring 2005. <<http://www.philobiblon.com/bonefolder/vol1no2contents.htm>>.

Beyond Velveeta, Johanna Drucker; The Bonefolder, an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist, volume 2, number 1, fall 2005. <<http://www.philobiblon.com/bonefolder/vol2no1contents.htm>>.

Betty Bright, *No Longer Innocent: Book Art in America, 1960 to 1980*, September 1, 2005. 7” x 10”, 350 pp. is the first history to trace the emergence of the artist’s book in the U.S. during the 1960s and 1970s. This history takes an inclusive view of the varied field of book art and redresses the sporadic or confused acknowledgment from the art world that has long marginalized the artist’s book. The book identifies European precursors of these kinds of artists’ books, and then quickly moves to America with the development of artists and books and non-profit organization. *No Longer Innocent* also addresses the ways book art affected and responded to art movements, such as Pop, Fluxus or Conceptualism. The book’s inclusive approach suggests that it will appeal to a broad audience, from collectors of fine press books and deluxe books, to artists making multiple and sculptural bookworks, to cultural historians, librarians and booklovers interested in the phenomenon of the persistence of the book metaphor. Teachers in higher education with a broad view of the field’s beginnings will find this book useful for classes in American studies and art history, as well as studio arts classes in printmaking, photography and sculpture. ISBN:1-887123-71-7, \$39.95 (U.S.).

Emily Martin <<http://www.emilymartin.com>> began making artists’ books in the mid 1970’s as a graduate student at the University of Iowa. She was a student of Jim Snitzer’s, cofounder of Chicago Books. and Kay Amert’s who had studied with and then succeeded Harry Duncan at the Typographic Laboratory in the UI School of journalism. Martin is an adjunct assistant professor at the University of Iowa Center for the Book and also teaches short workshops at various book arts centers around the US. She has been producing limited edition artists books under the Naughty Dog Press imprint since 1995. Martin’s books often make use of sculptural book forms. Recent titles include *Mutually Exclusive*, produced in residence at the Center for Book Arts, New York (2002), *The Family game* (2003), *Slices* (2004), and *Fly Away* (2005). Her work has been exhibited and collected in libraries and museums including the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Harvard University, University of Iowa, Yale University, Virginia Commonwealth University, University of Washington, Marvin and Ruth Sackner Archive of Visual and Concrete Poetry, Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago, Metropolitan Toronto Reference Library, Scripps College, Tate Britain in London, and many others.



## Notes on the Limp Vellum Binding

By Pamela Barrios

### Introduction

Much has been written about the beauty and function of the limp construction commonly used with vellum, historically and in the present. The limp vellum form is particularly appropriate for small volumes for personal reading. It was commonly used on prayer books and textbooks: octavo books of approximately 5 x 7 inches. The pages do not open perfectly flat, but the question may be, “did they need to?” or “were they intended to?”

When used in historical conservation, inherent flaws may be used to discourage the use of any form. I have observed in historical models from the L. Tom Perry Special Collections at Brigham Young University, that the thong laced in at the head and tail of a limp vellum volume may tend to break over the centuries. I have also observed that the fold in the vellum at the head and tail of the spine tends to crease in a way that may cause the vellum to split. These conditions do not affect the reader’s appreciation or the usability of the volumes.

As I often use the limp vellum form for conservation and artist books, I would like to address these observations and offer some solutions that do not greatly change the appearance of the original form. For full construction I would refer to Christopher Clarkson’s “Limp Vellum Binding” originally published in 1982, but republished in 2005, and Jen Lindsey’s step-by-step directions in the *New Bookbinder*, vol. 11, 1991. I cannot improve on these works.

For this experiment, I found vellum that was stiff, to test the boundaries of the inherent restrictions. I cut all parts of covering material from the same skin. Three textblocks are 5 x 7 inches. They were sewn using the same 24-pound-weight paper, #25-weight thread and a backbead endband using the same thickness of sewing thread as the textblock sewing. All supports were cut from the same piece of alum-tawed pigskin.

### Observations

Ease of opening begins with spine treatment, regardless of the chosen covering. Any textblock sewn on cords of any kind will not open flat without gaps between the signatures. Avoiding the gaps requires a pasted spine and paper linings and will create an arc. A reasonable openability for a limp-vellum style binding can be achieved with a pasted spine, gentle rounding, and a layer of Japanese paper. Large books may benefit from an additional layer of western paper such as an acid free bond. Smaller books do not need more than the Japanese paper, as the textblock supports create the arc of the book.



This seems to me an appropriate arc for the reading of a small 16<sup>th</sup> century volume. If we are satisfied with the opening of the textblock, the key is to create a cover to preserve it.

### The Problem of Creasing and Cracking Vellum

Changing the double fold to a single one can eliminate the creasing at the fold. Figure 2A shows the traditional pattern for making exit and reentering stations for the classic limp vellum. The exit holes at the endbands are positioned below the folded head and tail of the cover. The vellum is folded again at the spine area above the endband, and this causes creases and bulk. I propose removing vellum at the inside spine crease. This will not show on the outside of the spine, and will allow the sides of the cover to move more freely.

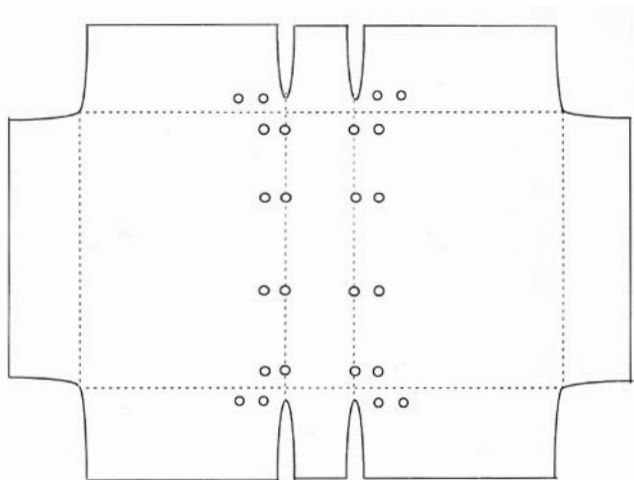


Figure 2A



Figure 3A was constructed using the pattern in Figure 2A. Figure 3B followed pattern 2B.

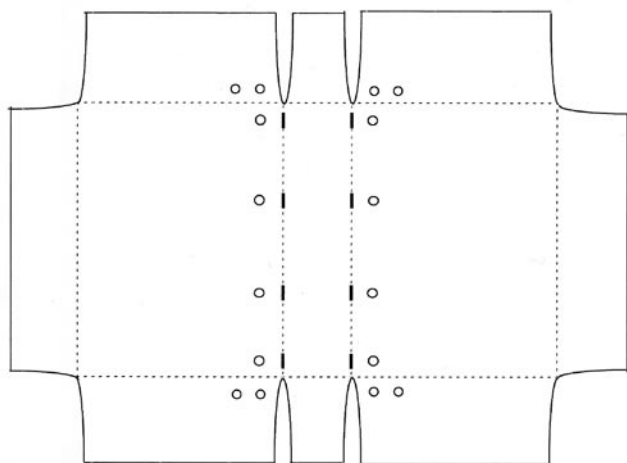


Figure 2B

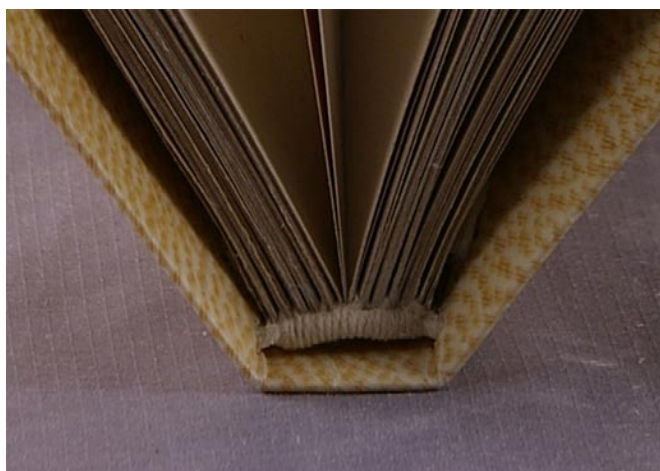


Figure 3A



Figure 3B

On reentry, the practice of angling the endband supports downward at a 45-degree angle could place restriction on the book's movement. Reentering without an angle encourages

equal movement of the supports along the entire spine. A horizontal endband reentry can be seen in Figure 3B.

## **The Problem of Limited Opening**

When a typical book is opened, the text spine will arc, as the outer signatures are pushed toward each other. The cover spine will move away from the text spine creating a gap. With a stiff spine such as vellum, the outer signatures will not be able to move closer, and this restricts the opening of the volume. The practice of using round openings set forward of the spine fold (as in figure 2A) encourages this restriction. I propose using slots along the spine for the exiting supports as in Figure 4. This has been done historically. Of course, the spine fold should be precisely at the shoulder of the text spine.



Figure 4

A slot should always begin and end with circular holes made with an awl, to stop the slot from widening. Slots can be made slightly smaller than the width of the support. The slot will open to accommodate the textblock support, and compress to hold it in place.

## **A Wider Opening**

If more of an opening arc is desired, the folds at either side of the spine of the textblock must move closer to each other. This can be done with a 3-part construction. In 1993, Robert Espinosa suggested such a construction, but changed the spine material to alum-tawed skin. This greatly changed the appearance of the form and necessitated other changes such as sewing the alum-tawed skin to the back of the textblock at the endbands.

My own experiments show that a 3-part construction, using vellum for the spine and each side, allows the sides of the cover to move closer to each other. One or two millimeters is surprisingly enough to increase the ease of opening.

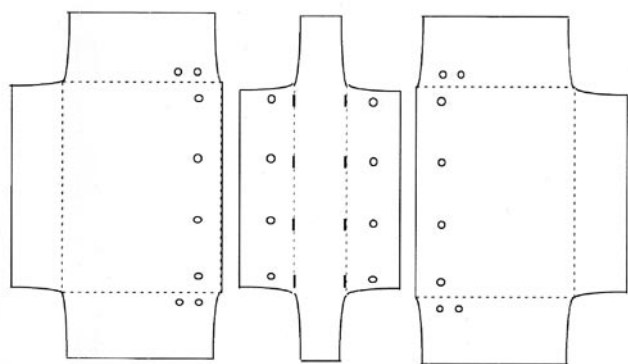


Figure 5

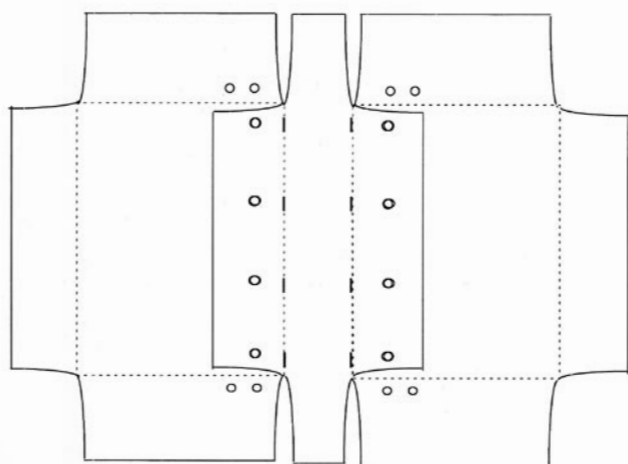
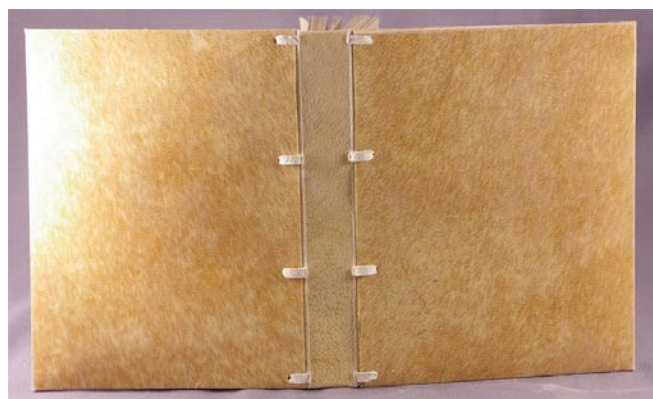
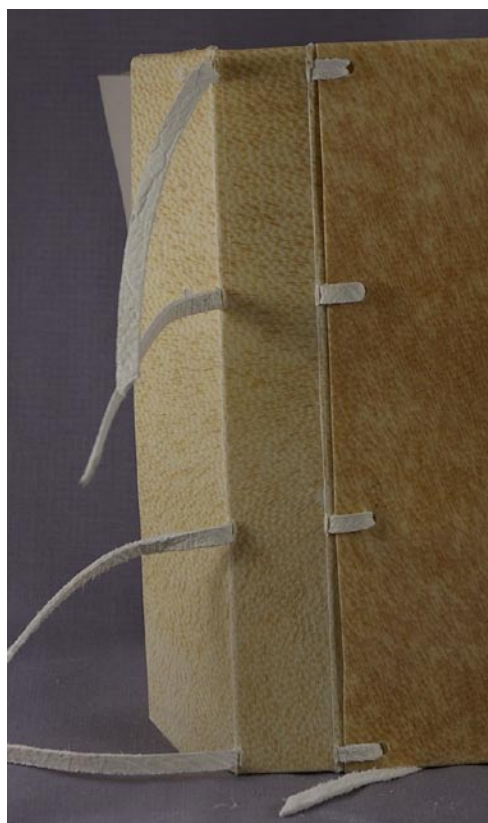


Figure 5A

The spine is placed on the spine of the book, and the thongs exit the spine fold of the spine as illustrated in figure 7.

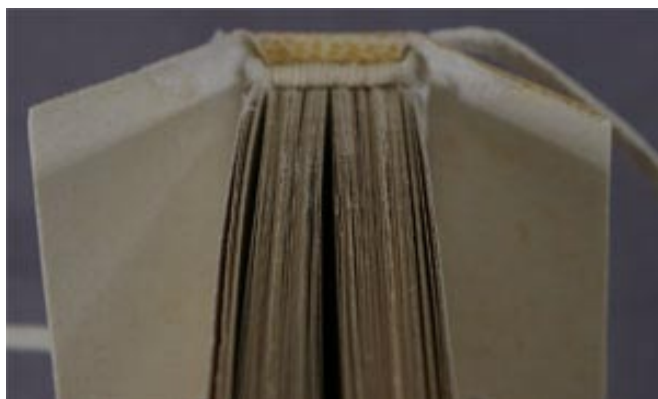
Each side overlaps one flap of the spine piece [figure 7, right side overlapped], and the reentry holes in the spine and sides are lined up.



The thongs reenter the outside of the sides [figure 8] and catch the holes of the spine flaps on the inside. The covering can now be completed as with a one-piece covering.

Figure 6, Figure 7, Figure 8

Figures 6, 7 and 8 respectively show the placement of the spine piece, lacing-on of one side, and the finished construction.



## Conclusion

These comparisons show that slight adjustments to the construction of the historical limp vellum binding can create a more flexible opening with all of the advantages of this time-tested and elegant structure. The wood blocks used for weights weigh 150 grams or about 6.3 oz.

### A. Classic Limp Vellum Style

B. Classic style adjusted with cut-away vellum at the head and tail, slots for exiting supports, and horizontal endband reentry.

### C. Three-part construction.

## Bibliography

Clarkson, Christopher. *Limp Vellum Binding*. Oxford: Christopher Clarkson, 2005.

Lindsay, Jen. "A Limp Vellum Binding Sewn on Alum Tawed Thongs", *The New Bookbinder*, Volume 11, 1991.

Espinosa, Robert. "The Limp Vellum Binding: a Modification", *The New Bookbinder*, Volume 12, 1992.



A



B



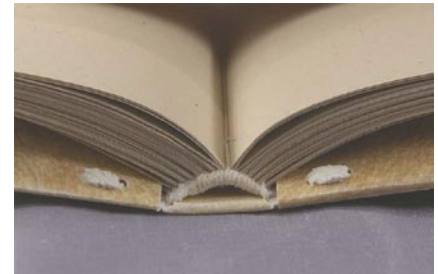
C



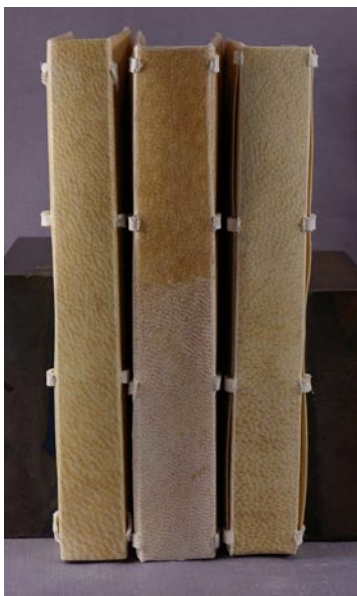
A



B



C



A, B, and C



## New Possibilities for Board Slotting

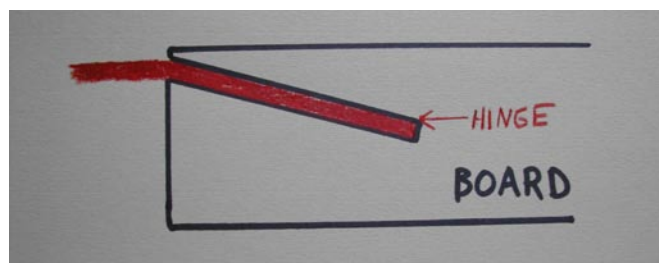
By Jeffrey S. Peachey

### Abstract

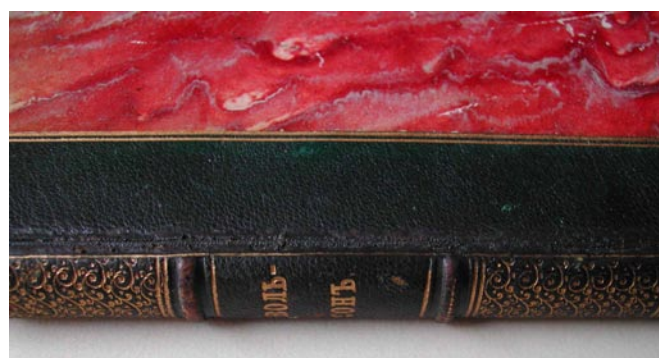
Although established in England and in Europe, board slotting has yet to become a common treatment option in North America. Board slotting is perhaps the least invasive, most durable and strongest method of board reattachment. The history of board slotting is briefly reviewed, a new machine is introduced, specific machines and techniques are discussed and the costs are considered.

### Introduction

Briefly, board slotting is an angled slot, cut into the spine edge of a book board the thickness of the hinging material – often laminated linen or cotton and tissue (fig. 1). The slot does not disturb the turn-ins, pastedown or covering material. The angled slot accomplishes four things: it positions the hinge for optimum openability, it provides strong adhesion on three sides of the hinge, it places the hinge into the center of the board where there is likely less deterioration, and minimizes the chance of damaging the covering material when inserting the hinge. The exact thickness of the board is maintained, eliminating creases that can arise with traditional rebacking (fig. 2). It is ideal for books with thin, deteriorated leather, or extensive tooling.



*Fig. 1- Cross section of a slotted board with the hinge inserted.*



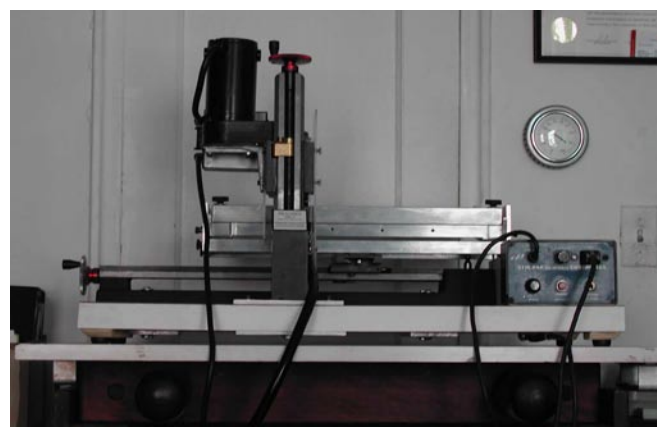
*Fig. 2- Detail of the hinge area after being reattached by board slotting. The hinge and losses at the board edge were toned with Acrylic paint*

Christopher Clarkson invented the technique of board slotting in the late 70's while at the Library of Congress, in an attempt to deal with small, highly decorated late 19<sup>th</sup> C. binding structures. In 1992 he detailed his early developments, equipment and techniques (Clarkson, 1992). Edward Simpson expanded on his original approach and provided a specific step-by-step process for establishing a board slotting program (Simpson, 1994). Both Clarkson and Simpson used a modified metal milling machine in conjunction with angled wedges to cut the slot, requiring knowledge of wood and metal working to fabricate. The conservation department at Harvard University constructed the only modified milling machine in North America, to my knowledge.

Friederike Zimmern, in collaboration with Becker Preservotec, introduced the first dedicated machine for board slotting in 2000. The Becker slotter featured a platen to clamp the book board, instead of removable wedges, and a cutting head that can be angled to plus or minus 20 degrees. Although this machine significantly reduced the amount of preparation necessary to begin board slotting, it didn't sell well due to its high cost and the large size of the required transformer necessary to operate on US electrical current.

Bill Minter developed another machine, and instead of using a spinning circular blade, it uses an oscillating blade powered by a FEIN MultiMaster tool, and Manfred Mayer refined this approach by building a more precise jig to hold the board (Minter, 2006). The advantage of this approach is that the blade is incapable of cutting human flesh, however, it appears difficult to slot near the board edges without cutting through them.

The Peachey Board Slotting Machine<sup>1</sup> (PBSM) was developed in 2006 to encourage board slotting by offering an easy to use, fully adjustable, moderately priced unit. (fig. 3). It is the first machine to use a variable speed, reversible motor to control the movement of the board.



*Fig. 3- The Peachey Board Slotting Machine. Note the portable carriage control unit on the right.*



## Consideration of Board Slotting Machines

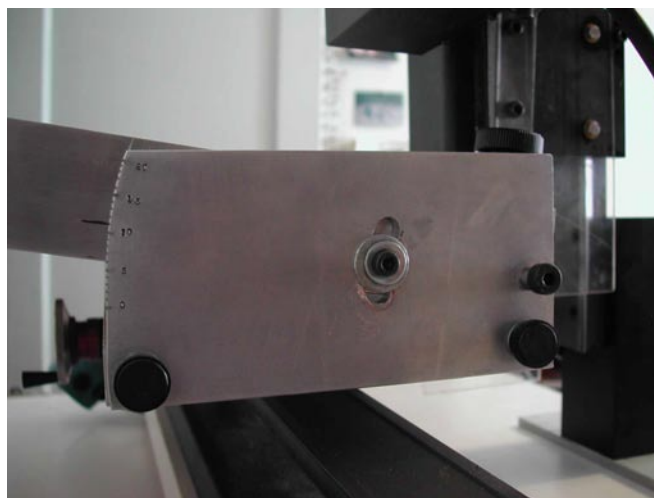
The expertise necessary to modify the milling machine, build and set up wedges, the tedious hand cranking, the large size and noise of the machine and perceived danger from a spinning blade seem to have prevented these machines from being adapted for board slotting.

Converting a milling machine into a board slotting machine requires a considerable amount of work: making wedges, purchasing appropriately sized slitting saw holder and blades, adding a dust collection system and safety guards, learning about milling machine operation and clamping systems. Some of this specialized knowledge will need to be imparted to each staff member that uses the system.

Wedges need to be constructed to hold the board at the proper angle when modifying a milling machine. Zimmern points out the difficulty of fitting wedges to the proper board size or angle (Zimmern, 2000), although Simpson seems to find that 3 standard sizes work well for most books (Simpson, 1994). Another possible problem, not reported, is that the wedges need to be accurately positioned in order to get an accurate cut; one thousandth of an inch deviation is a 10% margin of error using a .010" blade. This is difficult to obtain without the use of other specialized equipment, such as a dial indicator. Every time a wedge (or board) is changed, it must be accurately realigned and clamped to the table. The Becker makes this much easier: since the platen is stationary, only the board needs to be aligned to the platen. The head of the motor can be tilted to the desired angle, eliminating confusion in picking the correct wedge. I am unclear if the Minter machine cuts an angled slot or not, however it can only cut an extremely thick slot, making it useless for books with thin boards. The PBSM's board carriage is aligned and bolted to the bed, can cut slots from .010"- .050" thick, can be angled from 0 to 20 degrees, and the book board clamps with two knobs (fig. 4).

Both milling machine wedges and the Becker clamp the entire board flat. I find this undesirable for three reasons: it makes positioning of the board difficult, any stray bit of board debris may permanently damage the surface of the leather when the board is clamped, and most boards are not perfectly flat to begin with. Stressing thin deteriorated leather can cause cracking and flaking. The Minter and the PBSM clamp only the spine edge of the board, yet provides enough pressure to prevent the board from shifting during the slotting process. The other three edges of the board are left free to aid in rapid, accurate placement.

Hand cranking is tedious and slow, but it is also tedious to slowly move the cutting head by hand. Boards often have differing rates of deterioration and composition. Anyone



*Fig. 4- The carriage of the PBSM, showing the angle adjustment and clamping bar.*

who has split a board by hand can feel this when encountering glue-encrusted slips that are laced through the board. It is difficult to hand feed the blade when encountering such irregularities and maintain a slow, even speed through the board. With hand control it is also difficult to accurately stop the machine short of the board edges, to do so necessitates the use of placing stop blocks, which adds another step in the setup process. Both the Becker and the Minter rely on hand feeding. The PBSM uses a motor controlled carriage, variable speed and reversible. At its slowest speed it moves approximately .150 of an inch per minute, which makes it easy to control the length of a slot without having to set stop blocks.

Both milling machines and Becker are quite large and heavy. Simpson's machine weighs 70 kg, or 154 lbs (Simpson, 1994). This weight is not easily moved, and he recommends housing it in a separate room to isolate the noise and dust. The Becker has a dust collector, but requires a large transformer so that it can run in North America. The milling machine Clarkson and Simpson use has a ¼ horsepower motor—contrasted with the PBSM's smaller, yet more powerful 1/3 horsepower motor. I haven't found information on the horsepower or weight of the Becker. The Minter machine is extremely small and lightweight. The PBSM weighs around 55lbs, is a table top machine which can be moved out of the way when not in use, and takes only 18 x 30" of bench space. A HEPA filtered Nilfisk GS-80 vacuum cleaner, which powers the dust collector, is noisier than the machine itself. The PBSM works with most current worldwide with a simple plug adaptor<sup>2</sup>.

Both milling machines and the Becker require the operator's hands to be uncomfortably close to the spinning blade, though the Becker has safety guards. The Minter machine is completely safe. The PBSM, because of its

automatic feed, allows the operator to walk around the machine, holding the hand control unit, observing and adjusting the speed from a safe distance.

## Observations on Board Slotting Technique

The technique of board slotting is adequately described in the existing literature (Clarkson, 1992, Simpson, 1994, Zimmern, 2006) however, it involves somewhat different procedures than in standard bookbinding or conservation, and the following observations are intended to illustrate some unfamiliar aspects.

One extremely important consideration, which is not found in board slotting literature, is the difference between conventional and “climb” cutting. This applies only to machines with spinning blades. If the blade and the board are moving in the same direction (fig. 5) the blade has a tendency to deflect and not cut straight. This is especially critical with thin (.010”) blades. It is analogous to ripping a board on a table saw, but feeding it from the back edge of the table. A much more accurate cut is made when the rotation of the blade cuts into the board (fig. 6), which is moving in the opposite direction. It has the additional benefit of expelling most of the debris, rather than redepositing it into the slot that has already been cut.

A hollow back is obviously much faster to remove than a tight back, which needs to be lifted. As a time saving device, on some tight back books, I use “biscuit slotting”. Only the head and tail spine panels are lifted and the board is slotted

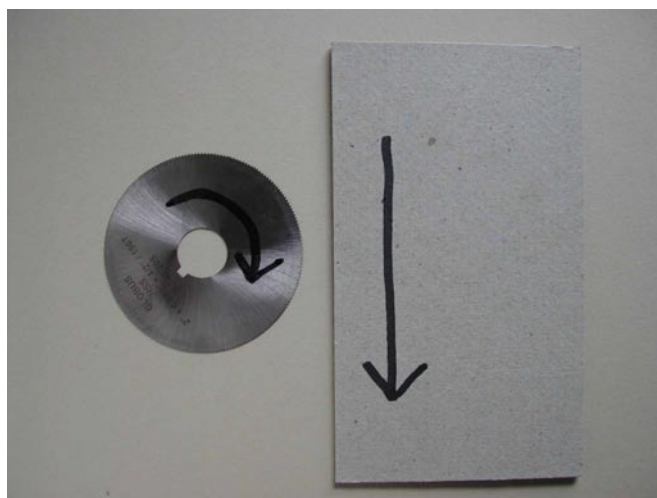


Fig. 5- It is not advisable to operate a board slotting machine by “climb milling”. The blade has a tendency to deflect and redeposit debris into the slot.



Fig. 6- Every board slotting machine should be operated in this direction when cutting.

at these areas only. Not only does this allow the boards to be rehinged with a minimum of disturbance to the spine, it also allows access to the endbands and signature ends for reinforcement.<sup>3</sup> Alan Puglia has proposed attaching the hinge to the shoulder only for difficult to lift spines, although he cautions it is not very strong and not appropriate for large books (Puglia, 2006). Simpson has some very interesting ideas on the construction of a natural hollow, instead of a traditional; say one-on, two –off, paper hollow. This structure uses a thicker slot: both the board hinging material and the material for the hollow are inserted into it (Simpson, 1994).

Clarkson, Simpson and Zimmern all attach the hinge to the spine before inserting it into the board. I find this to be very tricky, because you have to align the board to the text and fully insert the hinge at the same time. In theory, I believe attaching the hinge to the spine first is stronger and neater, but for circulating collections I often insert the hinge into the board first, let it dry, and then adhere it to the spine. A blunt end syringe is useful for getting the adhesive into the slot. Also, both boards can be dried at the same time. If two layers of spine linings interfere with proper spine movement, a frayed or slightly overlapped joint near the middle can be made, which can later be pared smooth when dry. Large, thick books sometimes benefit from having two layers of cloth spine linings. If the text block is placed on top of the board when adhering to the spine, it is easy to check the squares for accurate placement.

If a high degree of aesthetic integration is necessary, the hinge can be covered with toned tissue to match the endpapers, and the outer joint can be covered with onlays of tissue, much like a tissue repair (Etherington, 1995) or with thin leather, like a Brockman style reback (Brockman, 1991). It seems board slotting would be stronger than the procedure

described by Brockman, since the strength of the hinge is adhered on three sides in the board, not just edge glued.

Board slotting is theoretically not reversible--some board material is lost during the slotting process, but when compared with the losses that often occur with rebacking, a bit of interior board material seems preferable to a line of tooling on the exterior. I have, however, successfully reslotted a board to a slightly larger thickness as an experiment. In this case, paste, not PVA must be used to adhere the original hinge. PVA will quickly gum up the blade when trying to reslot and can cause burning<sup>4</sup>.

A common difficulty with any board slotting machine operation is aligning the blade just a hair below the covering material. Sometimes loose or frayed covering material or pastedowns on the edge of the board make it difficult to find the optimal place to start the cut. If the pastedowns or covering material of the boards are loose, they should be pasted down before slotting. Listed below are three different methods for aligning the blade:

1. By eye--simply position the blade a hair under the covering material on the board.
2. By marker--place a scalpel blade into the board where you would like to enter it before clamping it in the machine, and then slowly move the blade to it until they touch.
3. By measurement--comparison or quantitative. If the board is thick enough, you can set dividers from the bottom of the board to where you want to make the cut, then move the blade the height of the dividers. If all else fails, you can always use a caliper to measure from the bottom of the board to where you want to make your cut; align the saw with the bottom of the carriage, then make your cut using the divisions marked on the handwheel, which is marked in ".001" gradations.

### **Time and Costs of Board Slotting**

The time it takes to actually slot the board varies with the experience and skill of the operator, the depth of the cut desired and the size of the board. However, Zimmern claims it takes 15-22 minutes to slot a board on a milling machine, but only 7 minutes on the Becker (Zimmern, 2000). Simpson claims it takes 25 minutes to assemble, set up the jig and cut the slot on a milling machine (Simpson, 1994). Using the PBSM, it takes around 5 minutes to set up and slot an average sized board. In addition to the slotting time, one often needs to remove a hollow, clean and reline the spine, repair board edges, etc.

Cost is likely the main reason board slotting programs haven't been set up in North America. The Becker costs more the US \$13,000. A milling machine can be purchased for less, but it has other less obvious expenses to set up and modify before it can be used for slotting. The Minter machine is quite inexpensive, but can only slot a limited variety of board thicknesses, requires a fair amount of precise hand manipulation to operate and seems difficult to control near the edges of the board. The PBSM can be plugged in and with minimal training be put to use, and costs less than US \$6,000. At first, even this might seem prohibitive, but consider the timesaving in a medium to large size lab. A lab that rebacks 100 leather books a year, at an estimated time of 6-9 hours per book, could board slot 100 books a year at 2-5 hours: saving about 400 hours of a conservator's or highly trained technician's time per year. Within 2 years the machine would easily pay for itself, not even considering the shorter training period to learn to operate the machine and the savings in leather costs<sup>5</sup>.

### **Conclusion**

Board slotting is an extremely useful technique; it is minimally invasive, durable and strong. The size, expense, and the difficulty of modifying a milling machine seem to be the main reasons that this technique has not yet become commonplace in North America. Although board slotting has been rather slow to spread, it can aid many institutions that are inundated with detached boards, and fragile, deteriorating leather bindings. The ease of use, portability and other benefits of the PBSM may encourage board slotting to become a standard treatment in many labs in North America<sup>6</sup>.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thanks to Alan Puglia, Mary Helen Kolisnyk and Edward Adcock (formerly known as Edward Simpson).

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> While there may be potential for conflict of interest in offering critical analysis of existing machines while I am marketing a machine of my own, the conservation world has seen this before. Friederike Zimmern was trying to sell the board slotting machine she developed, Derek Beck published three articles about the design of bookbinding equipment he was selling in *The New Bookbinder* (Vol. 1, 26-38, Vol. 2, 40-46, vol. 4, 41-60) and Christopher Clarkson was marketing his "Clarkson Mark III" sewing frame through his article "Thoughts on Sewing Frame Design for the Book Conservator" in *The Paper Conservator*, Vol. 19, 1995. pp. 41-54. The market for conservation tools and supplies is too small to attract much interest from industry. Many new products come from those working within in the field.

<sup>2</sup> The blade motor on the PBSM can operate from 100-240 VAC, 50-60 Hz, and the carriage motor from 90-130 VAC, 50-60 Hz. A small, 250-Watt transformer is necessary to operate the carriage motor outside of North America, which costs less than US \$100.00.

<sup>3</sup> On books that have extremely thin leather--the spinefolds of the signatures are visible under the leather--it is often advisable to add some thin vellum to control the opening. Without reinforcement, these volumes tend to split where they are opened.

<sup>4</sup> If burning occurs, try slowing the blade speed or the carriage speed, clean the blade, and make sure it is sharp. Simpson recommends checking the blade with a magnifier each time a board is slotted. Although the HSS blades are designed for cutting metal, it is surprising how quickly they can become dull.

<sup>5</sup> Any board slotting machine, however is a simple machine: it requires skill and expertise on the part of the operator. One cannot just press a button and expect to have a hinge magically appear from the board. Like any new technique, it takes practice to get good results. However, when dealing with hollow backs in particular, it is only slightly more difficult than performing a tissue repair.

<sup>6</sup> Hopefully, this will not be the last generation of board slotting machines. One might imagine a board slotting machine of the future controlled by Computer Numeric Control (CNC). The operator could enter accurate measurements, along with speed and feed rates, into a computer and the slotting would be carried out automatically. The operator would only need to position the board in the carriage. I doubt this would be practical for single items, but for large batches of books of the same size it might save time and reduce operator error. A laser temperature gauge could be incorporated into a system that would automatically shut the machine down if the blade heat surpassed a temperature that could cause burning.

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## **"SC6000 and Other Surface Coatings for Leather: Composition and Effectiveness"**

By Tish Brewer

### **Introduction**

Today, much of the information available to conservators in the area of leather treatment comes from the leather industry itself, and the products developed for industrial purposes are not fully evaluated for use in conservation and preservation. That said, several acceptable coatings are available for use in book and leather conservation, whether they were developed for industrial purposes or other.

The field of conservation has recently adapted newer techniques for the coating of leather bindings as a measure of protection and aesthetic appearance. The much used, and older, method of treating leather with lanolin and neatsfoot oil is now avoided, as it does significant damage to the text when applied too heavily, migrating through the leather and causing staining and deterioration of the paper. Most commercially produced neatsfoot oil is made of lard, whose excess fatty acids can cause spew on the surface of the leather, while lanolin steals the skin's natural moisture (Fredericks). Coating materials in current use include Marney's Conservation Dressing, a solvent free mixture of waxes and oils; Pliantine; a beeswax and lanolin mixture; Klucel G, a hydroxyl propyl cellulose; and SC6000, an acrylic wax mixture (Haines 2). This paper aims to give characteristics of each, but will focus on the properties of SC6000.

It is important to note that in 1996, SC6000 was reformulated and replaced by SC7400 to meet British Health and Safety Standards. Since that time the new formulation has been supplied under its original name of SC6000. Practical tests on the new formulation show similar results to those done on the original formula, however, SC7400 has not been thoroughly scientifically evaluated. Because results of tests on the two products are similar, we continue to use the same name of SC6000 for the current product (Minter 189).

### **Desired characteristics of leather coatings**

In 2002, the Leather Conservation Centre published a study done by Betty Haines titled "Surface Coatings for Binding Leathers". In her introduction, Haines lists some desired characteristics for a coating, including continuous flexibility of the film over the leather surface, firmness rather than tackiness, chemical and physical stability over time, minimum changes in color and texture of the leather, easy removability without damage to leather, and retardation of moisture

permeation and pollutant penetration. Oils alone simply lubricate the leather surface, while waxes alone tend to crack and lack flexibility. For an ideal coating to be film forming and have easy removal, the choice of polymer is an acrylic over a urethane, as urethanes are irreversible. Blending an acrylic polymer with waxes will produce a surface film that is flexible and without the disadvantages of wax alone. This mix also requires polar solvents to bring the polymer into suspension for blending, which may have a negative effect on the leather depending on its method of tanning. Vegetable tanned leathers can be effected negatively in highly polar solvents, as tans can migrate to the surface of the leather causing dark staining and embrittlement (Haines 1).

Generally, conservators have observed that liquid dressings are more difficult to apply evenly and sparingly than are cream formulations. There is also a tendency for oils and dressings to darken the leather more than products designed to give a surface coating only (Haines 4). All products tested in Haines' study were deemed acceptable after testing flexibility, surface tack, permeability to water vapor and atmospheric pollutants, and pH. She emphasizes that the choice of which coating to use is still up to the book conservator, who should select a coating on the basis of ease of application and desired final appearance (Haines 14).

### **Klucel G, Pliantine, and Marney's Conservation Dressing: Test results and effectiveness**

Particular disadvantages are associated with the coatings Klucel G, Pliantine, and Marney's. Klucel G can give a dull finish and tend to break upon repeated flexing of the leather (Haines 2). Consolidants can be problematic because they usually contain polymers with molecules too large to penetrate the surface of the leather well, but Klucel G seems to be "relatively benign" as a surface consolidant when diluted properly (Fredericks).

Pliantine can give a tacky surface to the leather if applied too liberally (Haines 2), and stains the leather badly (Haines 5). In addition to the ingredients of lanolin, cedarwood oil, and beeswax, Pliantine also contains trichloroethylene (Haines 3), a toxic solvent usually used to clean grease from metal parts (Trichloroethylene). The trichloroethylene used in the current formula replaced the problematic hexane used in the previous formula of Pliantine. The difficulty with a solvent such as hexane lies in its rapid evaporation. Before the fat/hexane mixture can penetrate the leather, the hexane evaporates to the surface, taking most of the fat with it. The other main ingredient of Pliantine, beeswax, prevents air pollutants from penetrating the leather, but does so by closing off the leather, disturbing its water balance and causing it to dry out (Guidelines).



Marney's Conservation Dressing acts more as a lubricant than a coating, and can also leave a tacky surface if not applied judiciously (Haines 3). It is difficult to apply and can darken leather, bringing out blemishes (Haines 5). Coatings like oils and dressings tend to be too viscous to penetrate the leather deeply enough, so they remain on the surface and prevent the leather from breathing. These lubricants are also prone to oxidize, leading to discoloration and hardening of the leather, and causing organic acids to be released in the leather. Lubricants used to make up for a deficiency of fat in the leather can cause "overfatting", drawing moisture out from the leather and disturbing the natural water balance (Guidelines). Lubricants alone do not provide protection against sulfur dioxide in pollutants, and can leave the surface sticky, attracting lint and dust. Most leathers are stable at an oil content of about 5% by weight, and an oil too concentrated can raise the oil content by up to 10% when applied to the leather surface, thus robbing the leather of its natural moisture content (Fredericks). "Before adding a lubricant to any leather, it is important to decide if it actually needs more flexibility, and to understand why it is stiff. If the fibers themselves are deteriorated and brittle, lubrication will not help" (Fredericks).

#### **SC6000: Test results and effectiveness**

SC6000 has a drawback in its application, but is otherwise an effective coating as tested so far. When the product is not applied correctly, the pattern of application can remain visible after drying (Haines 5). It should be applied in small areas at a time, and slowly, in order to give the desired result. SC6000 shows the least amount of darkening to leather when compared to the other coatings, but does darken the surface slightly. In testing permeability to pollutants, SC6000 showed only small reduction in pH, which would mean a small increase in acid content in comparison to either no coating or other coatings. SC6000 shows effectiveness in protecting leather against water vapor transmission and acidic atmospheric pollutants (Haines 9), especially if a thicker surface coating has been applied (Haines 13). Addition of SC6000 to leather resulted in a 19-24% reduction in water transmitted, variance depending on the type of skin (Haines 8). When a solvent cleaner was applied to a leather surface coated with SC6000 and assessed microscopically, it showed complete removal of SC6000 without discoloration or damage to the grain surface of the leather (Haines 14). Haines concludes that SC6000 is an effective coating for new or undamaged leather. No other coatings tested showed any particular advantage over SC6000, and this result supports its wide use in binding and conservation. It should be noted that no acrylic coating alone can be recommended for application to scuffed or red rot areas of leather, as they will cause

darkening and embrittlement, probably due to polar solvents affecting partially deteriorated leather grains (Haines 15).

#### **SC6000: Its history and composition**

SC6000 is a combination of natural and artificial waxes blended together with a soft acrylic resin. It was first formulated as a final top spray for the shoe industry in the late seventies and began being used for bookbindings in the early eighties. SC6000, unlike other surface coatings at the time, "gave a continuous impermeable layer which resisted the penetration of sulfur dioxide in artificial aging chambers. The material has been used since then in increasing quantities by book restorers and conservators" in Europe and particularly in the United States (Thomson).

Material Safety Data sheets for SC6000, clear selfshine cream, show that it contains up to 40% isopropyl alcohol and less than 1% of aromatic hydrocarbon. Emulsification is assisted by increasing the pH using less than 1% ammonia. Diacetone alcohol, also called DAA, is also present in less than 5% (MSDS). DAA contains both an alcohol and a ketone group, and acts as the solvent for both hydrogen bonding and polar substances ("Diacetone"). SC6000, is 22-24% solid, with a boiling point of eighty degrees Celsius and a flash point of 29 degrees Celsius. Its pH is approximately 9-9.5, and it is incompatible with strong acids, alkalis, and oxidizing agents. Hazards to health are low. Hazard to environment is that of a floating fire hazard, as SC6000 is flammable and will float on water. It may also be harmful to fish and microorganisms used for water treatment, and may not be discharged into sewers or waterways (MSDS). The only existing MSDS comes from 1994, presumably describing the original formulation rather than the newest.

#### **The properties of a shoe cream**

No patent is found for SC6000, but in looking at similar patents it is seen that the term "shoe-cream" implies particular properties. Inventors of shoe-cream intend it to be a salve-like mixture of one or more different waxes and solvents. The composition may be applied easily, and after polishing should resist water. "The solvent content of the shoe cream makes possible a quick cleaning of street dirt and grime, and enables removal of spots and discolorations of all kinds." The cream with soft wax components dissolved in solvent penetrates into the leather and provides a "secondary lubrication which is necessary for the retention of flexibility in the leather". After application the solvent evaporates to leave a protective, water repellant layer of wax on the surface. After polishing this results in a lustrous but thin film. These compositions have the additional advantage of temperature stability. Waxes used in shoe cream include both natural and synthetic waxes, with

different melting points and densities (Muller).

The properties seen in an ideal shoe cream are also desirable in the coatings of leather used for conservation, especially continued flexibility and resistance to water permeation. Protection against soiling and a pleasant sheen and handle are also properties of an ideal coating for leather used in binding and restoration. The same is wanted for leather shoes. Perhaps this justifies the switch from shoe coating to leather coating for conservators and bookbinders.

## **Concluding thoughts**

Nearly all technical and chemical information on SC6000 is that of its first formulation, making current research on the product difficult. As mentioned before, no patent is found on either formulation and the MSDS is one that may not be exact. However, all tests with the newest formula prove the coating to be pleasing not only aesthetically, but also as a protective measure against degradation of leather by moisture and atmospheric pollutants. While commercial products can tend to change according to the market, it seems that SC6000 can be trusted for use in conservation, especially when compared to other coatings.

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## Bill Anthony: The Lineage of a Master

Iowa Artisans Gallery

Iowa City, Iowa

July 21 - August 23, 2005

Through this exhibit we honor master bookbinder William Anthony (1926-89) and celebrate his role in preserving and enriching the craft of bookbinding in the U.S. Bill taught us in a range of venues and formats.

From 1971 to 1989, Bill trained seven apprentices who worked alongside him in his Chicago studio and in the Conservation Department at The University of Iowa Libraries. All seven apprentices are represented in this exhibit: William Minter, David Brock, Mark Esser, Lawrence Yerkes, Annie Tremmel Wilcox, Sally Key, and Ralph Weber.

Bill also taught private classes in Chicago, and his students there have become prominent as conservators, binders, and book artists. Of these students, four are represented in this exhibit: Bonnie Jo Cullison, Norma Rubovits, Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, and Pamela Spitzmueller. At The University of Iowa, Bill invited talented students to serve as interns in the Conservation Department. Three of those interns have contributed to this exhibit: Lisa Anthony Dubeck, Jim Downey, and Penny McKean. Hundreds of binders – including many represented in this exhibit – learned from Bill through semester-long courses he taught at The University of Iowa and through workshops and demonstrations he gave under the auspices of the Guild of Book Workers and Chicago Hand Bookbinders.

Bill has influenced – and continues to influence – countless binders and artists through the teaching of his apprentices and students. This exhibit includes nearly 20 works by those who form this “second generation” of Bill’s legacy.

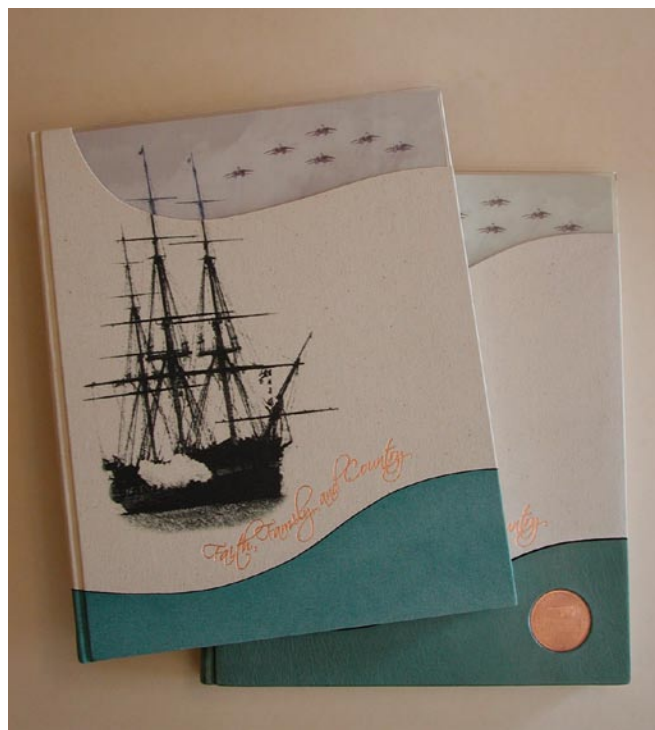
This exhibit is a companion to the exhibit of “William Anthony: Fine Binder” at The University of Iowa Museum of Art, April 18-July 31, 2005. Julie Leonard conceived the idea of an exhibit honoring Bill’s legacy and influence. She, Lawrence and Barbara Yerkes curated the show. We needed help and encouragement, and these we have received in abundance. From Astrid Bennett, who quickly and exuberantly offered space, dates, and logistical assistance at the Iowa Artisans Gallery. From Sara Sauers, who volunteered to handle a variety of tasks related to the production of this catalog. From Barbara Yerkes, who helped write the grant application and is invisibly present in every word of the catalog. From The University of Iowa Center for the Book, which generously helped fund the exhibit. And from the Iowa Arts Council, whose grant funded the production of

the catalog and will help us return the items to exhibitors, insured and intact, at the conclusion of the exhibit.

## Exhibitors

Apprentices

William Minter, Chicago, Illinois



*Faith, Family, and Country*: A modern family heirloom including some family history and comprised mainly of select reproductions from the logbooks of the USS Constitution “Old Ironsides.”

Full cloth, partially painted with acrylic paints, over clear plastic boards through which specially printed endsheets are partially visible. Red Moriki paper endbands. Copper/bronze foil stamped on cover and spine. Edition of ten. 13 1/4 x 10 3/4 inches.

Picture in the exhibit shows the original book, also by William Minter: Full cloth with leather inlays and medallion (from copper reclaimed from the restoration of “Old Ironsides”) inset under the leather. Date of binding 2005.



David Brock, Palo Alto, California

*The Tenth Arch* by Robert Cremean.

Limited edition for Manuscript Press. Leather-bound deluxe edition, paper-bound standard edition. 5 5/8 x 8 3/8 inch book, in 6 1/4 x 13 1/2 inch box, with CD. Date of binding 1996.

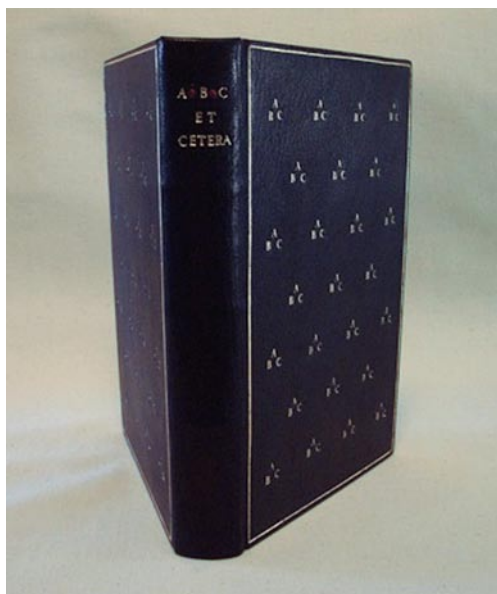
I had known two things for years before I became Bill Anthony's apprentice in 1978: that I wanted to work with my hands and that I barely knew how to make anything. Bill took me in as a raw 24-year old and through the six years of my apprenticeship molded me gently into a craftsman. I knew at the time that I was fortunate to be learning and working by his side, though I could not know then how the years ahead would teach me, many times and many ways, just how fortunate I truly was. —David Brock

Mark Esser, Boston, Massachusetts



*L'Infinito* by Giacomo Leopardi, 1997. Full black oasis goatskin with onlays of oasis goatskin. Blind and gold tooled. Handsewn silk endbands. Edges sprinkled with acrylic ink. 11 3/4 x 8 3/8 inches. Date of binding 1998

Lawrence Yerkes, Iowa City, Iowa



*ABC et cetera* by Alexander and Nicholas Humez, 1985

Black goatskin leather. Gold tooled with two red leather onlays. Handsewn silk endbands. 9 1/4 x 6 inches. Date of binding 2005.

Annie Tremmel Wilcox, North Liberty, Iowa

*Apologia Ecclesiae Anglicanae*, 1591.

Full vellum dyed to approximate original vellum binding. Conservation treatment. 5 x 2 inches. Date of binding 1988.

Sally Key, Dallas, Texas

*Thesaurus Magistri Sententiarum* by Peter Lombard, 1495.



Quarter alum-tawed pigskin over beech boards. Conservation treatment. 7 3/4 x 5 5/8 inches. Date of binding 2000.

Loaned by Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology and Southern Methodist University.

Ralph Weber, Clear Lake, Wisconsin

*Untitled.*

Coptic binding. Paste papers over boards. Brass fasteners. Ribbon ties. 6 x 5 inches. Date of binding 2003.

Students, Interns, Colleagues

Bonnie Jo Cullison, Point Richmond, California

Book Decoration by Douglas McMurtrie.

Brown oasis goatskin. Blind tooled and stamped. Sewn on four single raised cords laced into boards. Handsewn silk endbands. 8 5/8 x 5 1/2 inches. Date of binding 1979

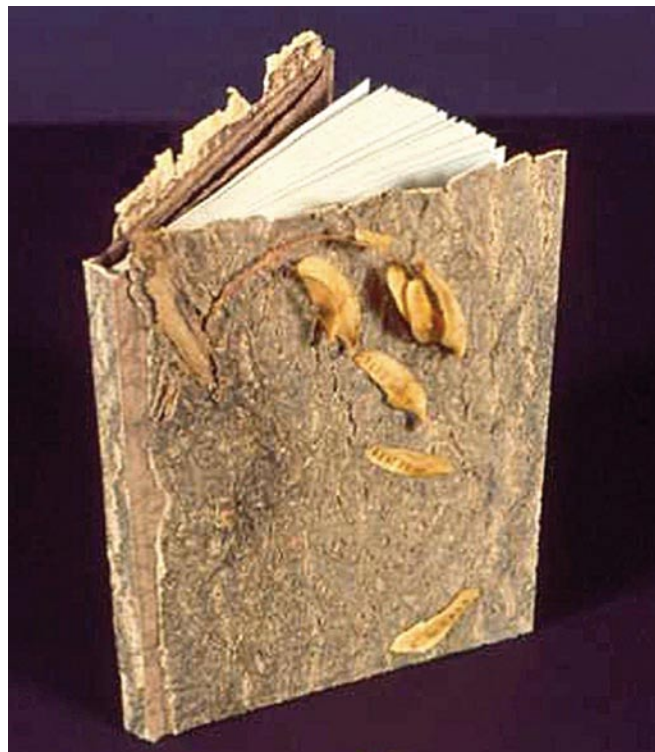
I was a student of Bill Anthony from 1975 to 1980. I chose to exhibit this book because I can so distinctly remember tooling it under Bill's watchful eye. The memory of him looking over my right shoulder as I heated the tool, tested it, eye-balled it into place and rocked it to produce an even impression is still, after so many years, vivid in my mind. I am grateful to have been his student and pleased to participate in this exhibit to honor his teaching and skill. —Bonnie Jo Cullison

Lisa Anthony Dubeck, Downers Grove, Illinois



Leather-covered book box. Green leather with gray and white leather onlays. Lined with white leather. 5 13/16 x 4 3/16 inches. Date of construction early 1990s.

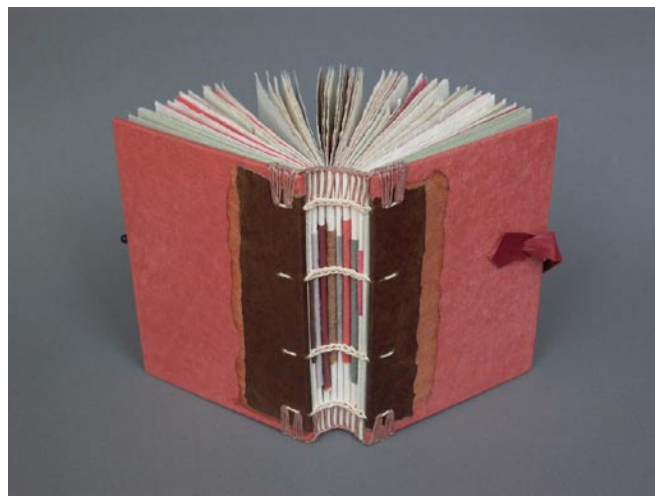
Jim Downey, Columbia, Missouri



*Tree of Heaven* by James McKean, 1994.

Case binding with ailanthus bark and leaves. 9 x 6 inches. , Date of binding 1994.

Penny McKean, Iowa City, Iowa



*Loose Ends #2.*

Coptic binding. Armenian endbands. Moriki papers on binders board. Charter Oak end papers. Text pages are flax from the UICB Paper Facility and a miscellany of papers ("loose ends") saved from other book projects. 5 x 3 1/2 inches. Date of binding 2000.



Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler, Washington, DC



*Scarecrows* by Avon Neal; photography by Ann Parker, 1978.

Full green goatskin leather with cutout window containing bits of feather & metal. 8 1/4 x 8 1/4 inches.

Norma Rubovits, Chicago, Illinois



*Nick the Greek* by Harry Mark Petrakis, 1979.

Full black oasis goatskin. Winning poker hand from story onlaid on cover. Gold stamped spine. Handsewn silk endbands. Protective box covered in marbled cloth. 5 1/2 x 6 inches. Date of binding 1982-83.

When I began study with Bill Anthony I was not new to binding. I was a frustrated perfectionist amateur at an impasse. Bill was an inspiration. His relaxed attitude, his conviction that perfection does not exist and that some imperfection can be accepted, gave me more courage to forge ahead.

—Norma Rubovitz

Pamela Spitzmueller, Medford, Massachusetts



*All Animal.*

Smoked brain-tanned deerskin. One tab endband embroidered in white and turquoise. Parchment clasps with brass nails and tread lifters. Vellum textblock sewn on two alum-tawed bands laced into quarter-cut wood boards. Spine lining of red-ruled old ledger parchment. 9 1/2 x 2 3/4 inches. Date of binding 2003.

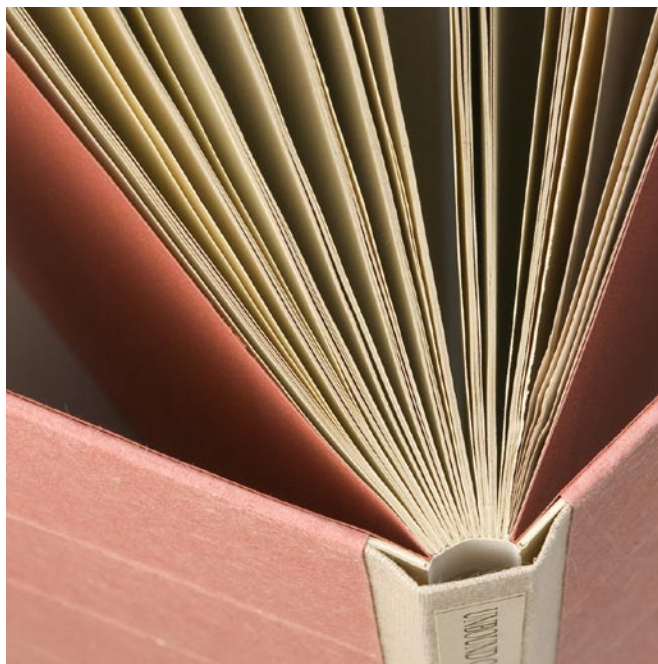


*Personal Devotional*

Quarter-cut oak boards covered with velvet chemise with silk pockets; tassel weights covered in cotton thread. 8 1/2 x 7 inches. Date of binding 1997.

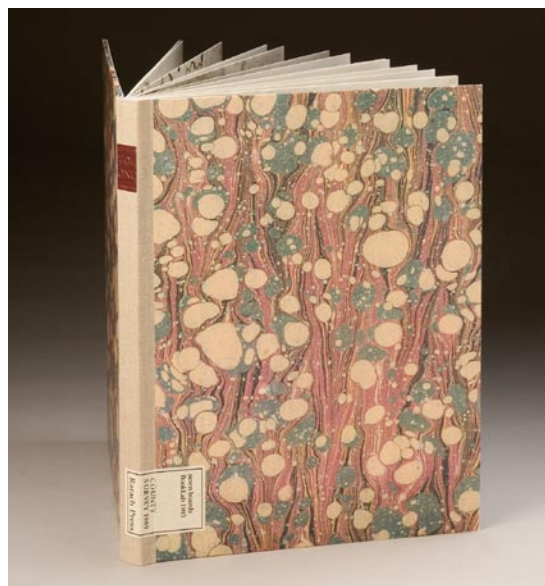
# *The Bonefolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist*

Gary Frost , Iowa City, Iowa



*Volume One*

Sewn Board binding demonstrating full opening of inflexible plates. Anthony wrap around label. Xeroxed decorated papers. 9 7/8 x 12 5/8 inches. Date of binding 1990.



*Unbound copy of early hypertext output to paper*

Submission model to bind a last remaining copy of first edition Ulysses. 10 5/8 x 15 inches. Date of binding 2000.

## *Drawings*

Two Ways to Lace Thongs 1978. 13 x 16 1/8.

Sewn Board Binding Proposal 1996. 21 5/8 x 21 1/6.

Students of Bill's apprentices & students

Dorothy Africa, Bedford, Massachusetts



*Little Wide Awake: a Story Book for Little Children* by Mrs. Sale Barker, 1875 and 1876.

Books rebacked and rehinged. Conservation treatment. Box includes inlaid piece of needlework found in one of the books with the name of conservator's great grandmother, who owned the books and the date "1877". Date of binding circa 1992.

Sherry Barber, Frisco, Texas



*Bookbinding Materials and Techniques* by Margaret Lock, 2003.

(Description continued on next page)



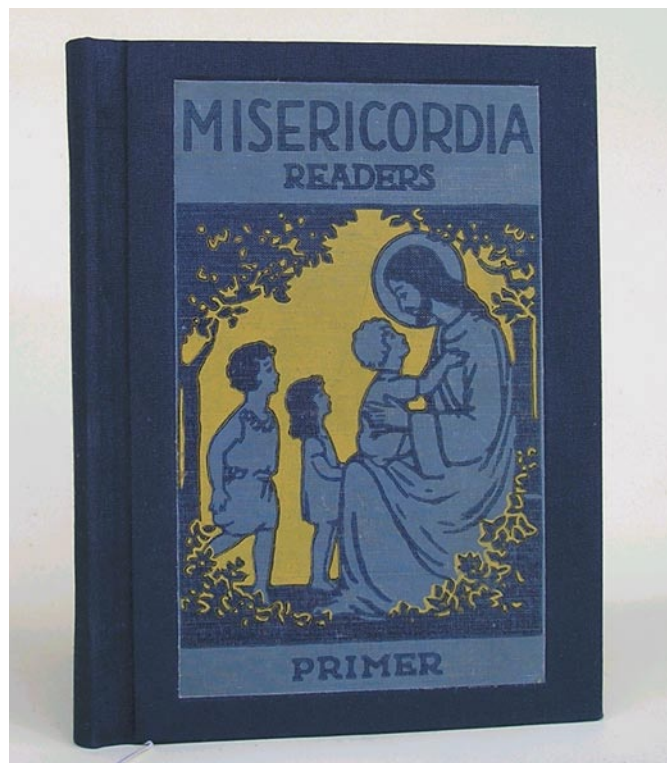
(Continued from previous page)

Ochre goatskin, case-bound in French fine binding style. Leather hinge. Sewn endbands. 9 x 6 1/4 inches. Date of binding 2004.

Kristin Alana Baum, Iowa City, Iowa

No description available

Cindy Beall, Dallas, Texas



*Misericordia Readers Primer*, 1936

Restoration. New case binding with original cover illustration inset into front board. 7 1/2 x 5 3/4 inches. Date of binding 2005.

Jake Benson, West Columbia, South Carolina



*White Fang*, by Jack London

Full goatskin over sculpted boards, sanded outer grain, hand-dyed sky. Onlays of white alum-tawed goatskin, inlaid with gray goatskin suede. Recessed sheepskin parchment, toned with pastels and interference pigments. Tooling in blind, silver, aluminum, and hologram foils. 7 3/4 x 5 3/4 inches. Date of binding 2003.

I have had the pleasure of learning from two of Bill's apprentices, Mark Esser and Sally Key, at the North Bennet Street School in Boston. Both were excellent teachers who imparted a refined sense of craftsmanship that they had honed under Bill. After training with them, I spent several years in various internships and then working for Book Conservator Don Etherington, an experience that was similar in a number of respects to the apprenticeships of my teachers. Now I am working out on my own and feel fortunate to have built a clientele base throughout the southeast region. The fact that many clients recognize and value the quality of my work is a testament to Bill's legacy of craftsmanship. Without his efforts together with those of his students, I frankly wonder how much more difficult it would be to learn this trade in America today.

—Jake Benson

Patty Bruce, Dallas, Texas



*The Prince and the Pauper* by Mark Twain

Rustic binding with polymer clay cover and leather hinges. 11 x 7 3/4 inches. Box of wood and binders board. 13 x 8 1/2 inches. Date of binding 2005.

Al Buck, Iowa City, Iowa

Untitled

Coptic binding with ebony boards. 4 x 5 inches. Date of binding 2005.

Anna Embree, Tuscaloosa, Alabama



Three Byzantine binding models

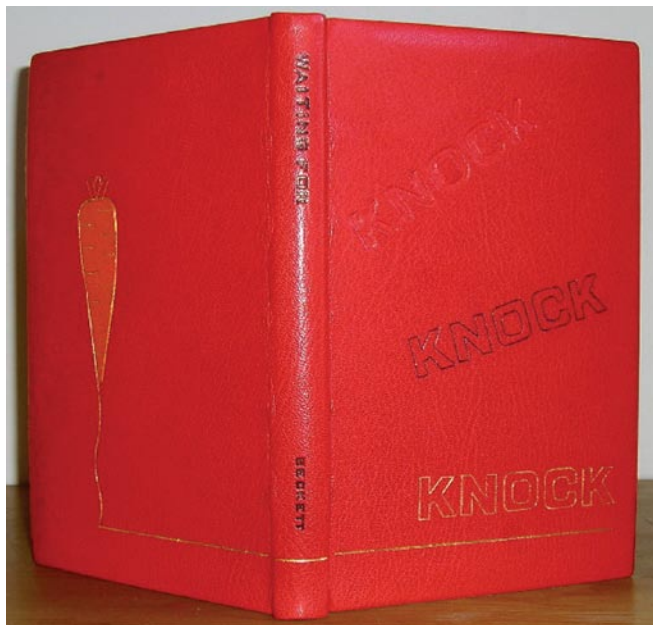
One model with uncovered boards, cloth-lined spine and handsewn endbands. Two models covered in brown goatskin leather, blind tooled, clasps with plaited leather thongs. Each model 8 x 6 inches. Date of bindings 2005.

Throughout my training at the University of Iowa Libraries I was surrounded by models made by Bill Anthony and his apprentices. These models greatly influenced how I look at books and inspired my own interests in historic binding structures.

—Anna Embree

Cynthia Fields-Belanger, Belmont, Massachusetts

Susan King, Mt. Vernon, Kentucky



*Waiting for Godot* by Samuel Beckett

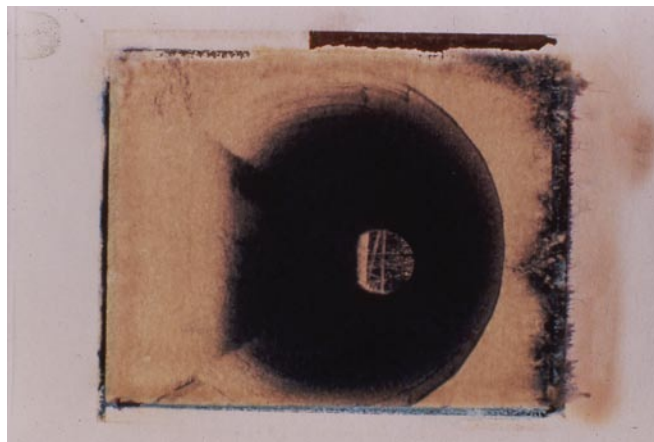
Full red leather goatskin with leather flyleaves and paste downs. Gilt edges. Book 8 3/8 x 5 7/16 inches; chemise and slipcase 9 9/16 x 5 3/4 inches. Date of binding 2003.

Forrest Jackson, Dallas, Texas



*Stigmata: An Anthology of Writing and Art* edited by Jerad Walters

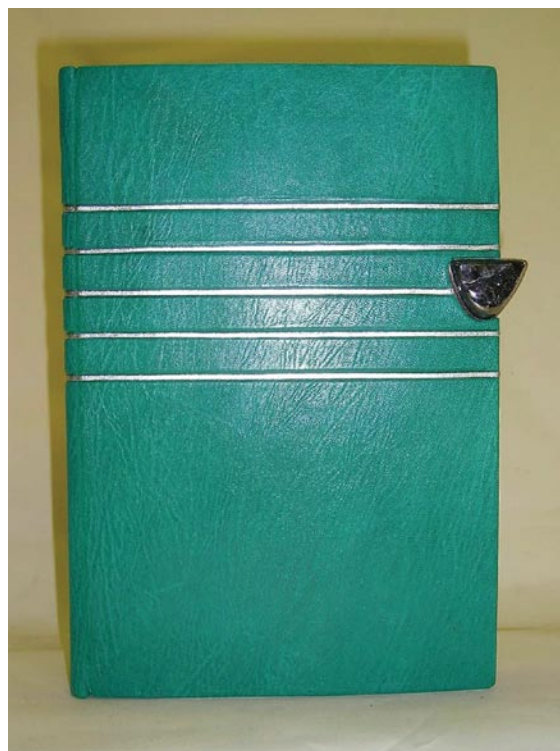
Carolingian binding. Quarter-sawn oak boards, lacquered black. Black goatskin leather spine. Blind stamping. Maltese-cross-shaped tabs. Graphite edges. 11 3/4 x 8 1/16 inches. Date of binding 2005.



*I Dream Atget*

Polaroid transfers, letterpress, paste papers, original writing by Susan King. Binding by David Brock. Edition of 17. 12 x 15 inches. Date of binding 1997.

David John Lawrence, Irving, Texas



*Song of Songs*, Asconas Centro del bel libro, 2003

Teal goatskin with silver lamé leather onlays. Druze and hematite set in sterling. Silk endbands. Graphite edge. 6 1/16 x 9 5/8 inches. Date of binding 2004.



Shanna Leino, Harrisville, New Hampshire

*Ode to Iowa*

Ivory Triptych. Coptic lacing, ivory, Jesse Meyer white suede. 2 1/4 x 2 1/8 inches.

Coptic and Tacketed binding, Jim Croft elk bone, UICB handmade papers, linen thread. 2 1/4 x 1 1/4 inches. Date of bindings 2004, 2005.

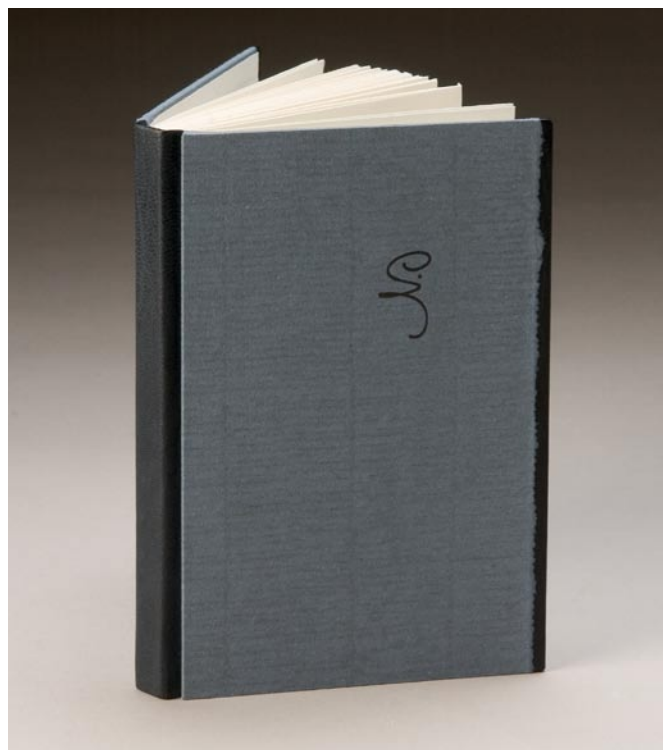
These are devotional pieces in honor of all the good stuff I learned in Iowa.

—Shanna Leino

Julie Leonard, Iowa City, Iowa

*Corruption*

Accordion fold, handmade flax/abaca, collage, stamping, wire rods. 24 x 18 inches. Date of binding 2003.



*Naming* by Philip Levine, 2004

Limited edition for Sutton Hoo Press. Quarter leather lapped case with Roma cover papers. 7 1/4 x 5 1/2 inches. Date of binding 2004.

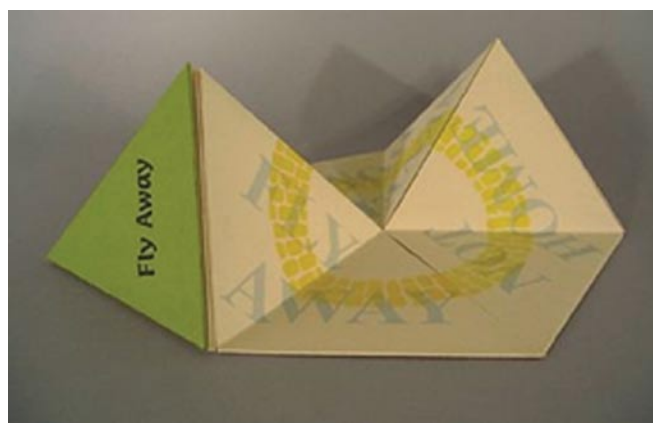
Nancy Lev-Alexander, Baltimore, Maryland



*A to Z: An Adaptation of Kantner's Illustrated Book of Objects*, 1892

Full oasis goatskin with cut leather design and paste-paper inlay. 4 1/2 x 5 1/8 inches. Date of binding 1998.

Emily Martin, Iowa City, Iowa



*Fly Away*

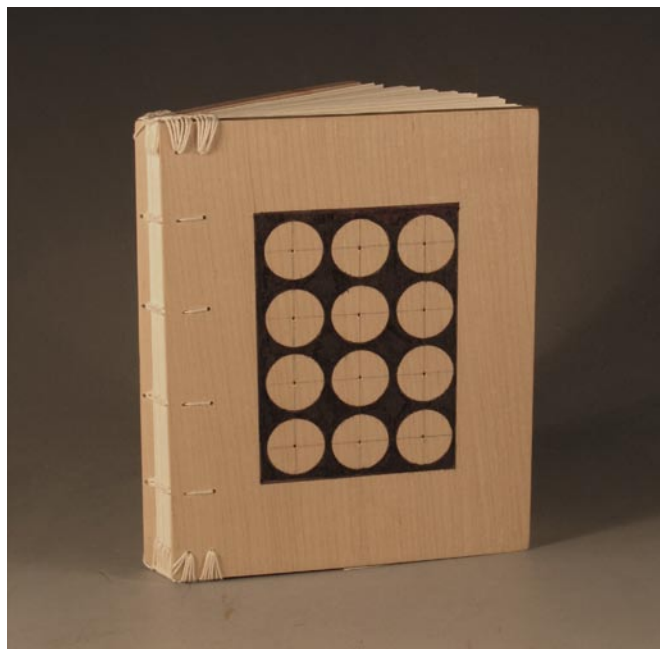
Triangular accordion book. Cover wrapped in Moriki paper. A nontraditional variation of the Japanese double-leaved album. Edition of 50. 9 x 8 inches. Date of binding 2005.

I first learned traditional bookbinding from Larry Yerkes. He was an apprentice of Bill Anthony, so I am a second generation student of Bill's. When Larry was teaching me he would often refer to elements he had learned from Bill Anthony. Larry has a reverence for the tradition of bookbinding and also the flexibility of mind to be intrigued by how traditional forms can be adapted to contemporary artwork using books.

—Emily Martin



Mary Merkel Hess, Iowa City, Iowa



*Circle Grid*

Coptic binding with wooden cover. 7 x 5 inches. Date of binding circa 1998

Chela Metzger, Austin, Texas



*Bird Book*

Goat parchment non-adhesive case binding. Goat, deer, and calf parchment (nest and feathers). Sewn on goat parchment strips. Hand-sewn silk endbands with parchment core. 5 1/2 x 6 1/4 inches. Date of binding 2004.

I was a student under Mark Esser at the North Bennet Street School, and Mark was one of Bill's apprentices. In school, when we would watch videos of Bill Anthony working, we could see that Mark and Bill made almost identical motions with their hands while working. It was spooky and beautiful.

—Chela Metzger

Peter Verheyen, Dewitt, New York



Saturday Night, 1953/The Elements, Angorfa Press, 1998

"Millimeter/edelpappband" case covered in pastepaper with blue eel-skin leather trim at head, tail & fore-edge. Solid graphite edges. Title stamped in black on spine. 5 x 7 inches. Date of binding 2003.

Elizabeth Zurawski, Chicago, Illinois

*Pride & Prejudice*, Nottingham Court Press, 1985

Rust-brown leather spine. Rubovits marbled paper sides. Hand sewn silk endbands. 10 x 7 inches. Date of binding 1990.

Educational Displays by Anna Embree, Gary Frost, Julie Leonard & Lawrence Yerkes

William Anthony, artist and craftsman, inspired and instructed the binders in this exhibit. He was trained in hand bookbinding in a system of apprenticeship and journeyman work that has its roots in the late middle ages. This method of learning profoundly affected his relationship to books and to the craft of binding. His career was also influenced by other forces—his study at academic schools of art, his association with other handbinders, and by the increasing interest in the conservation of old books that began in the 1960s. These diverse methods of learning and applying the craft of binding can be seen in the work of Bill's students, and the students of his students, whose books are exhibited here.

In 1942, when sixteen-year-old Bill Anthony began his apprenticeship at Croker & Co. in Waterford, Ireland, his tasks may not have been so different from those of a teen-aged apprentice in the sixteenth century. One of his first tasks was bringing blank paper to the senior binders for the books they were making, and he soon became expert in judging by eye the number of sheets that were needed. Over the seven years of his apprenticeship, he became expert in all the operations of that bindery, where blank account books were made for businesses. He learned to fold gatherings of the book and sew them together, make the endsheets, color the edges of the text paper, cut out the index tabs, line the spine and create a hollow that allowed the book to spring open, prepare the boards, and cover them. He learned how to work the various covering materials—leather, vellum, and cloth.

His apprenticeship finished, Bill worked as a journeyman to five other production binderies in Ireland and England, specializing in different styles of handbinding. In these workshops, the emphasis would have been on efficiency as well as workmanship. There he repeated the same procedures many, many times, acquiring a deep familiarity with each stage of forwarding and finishing the book, an intimate knowledge of his materials, and an instinctual knowledge that resided in the hand and eye. He helped train the apprentices and younger journeymen coming after him. Here, in a sense, began Bill's career as teacher and mentor.

Most who trained alongside Bill in the production binderies of Waterford, Dublin, and London would continue to work throughout their lives in large commercial shops. As a journeyman in London, Bill was already taking a different tack, studying design and fine binding at the prestigious Camberwell College of Arts and the Sutton School of Arts. He also taught at Camberwell for a time.

The last bindery in which Bill worked in London, F. G. Marshall's, specialized in large vellum books of remembrance. On his own time, he bound Thomas Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church Yard* in vellum. John Cuneo, who saw the book in an exhibition in London in 1963, offered Bill a position at the Cuneo Press in Chicago. There Bill worked as director of the Art Department and later as director of the Fine Binding Studio. The Studio's major project each year was to bind a deluxe edition of the Cuneo Press's *Christmas Book*—50 copies bound in full, red goatskin, stamped on the cover and spine with a special brass die. A single copy bound in white leather would be presented each year to the Pope.

Bill's career was profoundly affected by the devastating flood of the Arno River in 1966, which soaked the libraries of Florence, Italy. Bookbinders from around the world traveled to Italy to help salvage the ancient texts from the muddy water. New methods were developed to care for damaged books, and new ideas about ideal book structures and materials emerged, as did research into historic book structures. These developments stimulated binders everywhere. At the same time, libraries and museums were becoming more aware of the need to conserve valuable old books in their collections. In 1970, Bill took on the important commission of restoring Northwestern University's rare, intact copy of John James Audubon's four-volume *Birds of America*. In 1973, when he left Cuneo to go into partnership with Elizabeth Kner, Bill worked primarily as a conservator for institutions and individual collections. While he still occasionally worked on editions and continued to produce fine bindings for exhibitions, most of his paid work was in restoring old books to usability while maintaining as much of the original materials and structure as possible.

In 1984, Bill came to Iowa to establish the Conservation Department in the UI Libraries. While conserving books for the UI Libraries' Special Collections, he had greater opportunity to reflect on and experiment with the ideas and techniques that had shaped book conservation since the floods of Florence. He and his apprentice Mark Esser began to make models of historical book structures, seeing these models as educational tools for the general public and as aids in teaching students and apprentice conservators. The models became well-known as a result of being exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1986 and through the visits of binders from the U.S. and Europe to the Conservation Department, stimulating an interest in models that has grown over the years. Every year classes are offered throughout the country in making models of structures that Bill and Mark first copied in the early 1980s. Today Bill and Mark's models are the nucleus of a collection that the current University of Iowa Conservator, Gary Frost, has much enlarged.

Bill had taken on his first apprentice, Bill Minter, in 1971 while at the Cuneo Press. David Brock became the next apprentice in 1978, followed by Mark Esser in 1981. After Bill came to Iowa, the number of apprentices burgeoned to include me, Annie Wilcox, Sally Key, and Ralph Weber. Indeed, Bill had been attracted to Iowa by the opportunity to establish an apprenticeship program in book conservation that echoed his own apprenticeship in handbinding in Ireland.

Bill's apprentices trained with him for varying lengths of time. Bill figured that for someone who started an apprenticeship as a motivated adult rather than an adolescent, four to six years would be sufficient, rather than the seven years he spent as apprentice. Our apprenticeship was a much longer sustained period than most young binders now experience. Aspiring binders often begin on their own, studying from books and supplementing their knowledge with short workshops. Some may live in a community where a binder teaches private classes or offers classes through a college, university, or crafts center. A few are fortunate enough to study at the training programs that have grown up in the U.S., most notably at The University of Iowa, the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Alabama, and the North Bennett Street School in Boston—at all of which Bill's apprentices and students teach or have taught.

Bill was an influential member of the Guild of Book Workers and was chair of the Guild's Standards Committee for the last four years of his life. In this role, he organized demonstrations and workshops at the Guild meetings through which a new generation of binders could learn skills and techniques. He saw his service to the Guild as a way in which he "gave back to the craft." Making a return to the craft and tradition that had nurtured him was a very important principle for Bill.

Toward the end of his life, Bill began to take an interest in yet another form of binding, the artist's book. Book artists often use nontraditional structural principles and/or materials to create a work of art that expresses an intellectual or artistic statement. This area is one that Bill's students in Chicago practiced and excelled in. In 1986, Bill mounted the Guild of Book Workers 80th Anniversary Exhibition at The University of Iowa and served as one of the judges. Twelve of the 72 books in the show were artist's books, two of them by Bill's students Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler and Pamela Spitzmueller. Bill encouraged his students to find the areas of bookbinding in which they were most comfortable, and for some who have become quite prominent, that meant artist's books.

Most of Bill's apprentices and students continue to devote their efforts to the tasks that Bill himself excelled in, bookbinding and conservation as well as teaching in university-based programs, private classes, and workshops. Students of Bill's students and apprentices are now also working professionally as bookbinders, artists, conservators, and teachers. The future of the finely printed and expertly bound book is, literally, in the hands of younger book workers. Bill Anthony innovated and crossed bridges from the book craft industry and its conventions to the wider fields of the sciences of preservation and the prospects for artists' books. Now his students need to convey fine traditional bookwork in an environment of screen based reading and digital libraries. These are exciting challenges that Bill prepared us to enjoy.

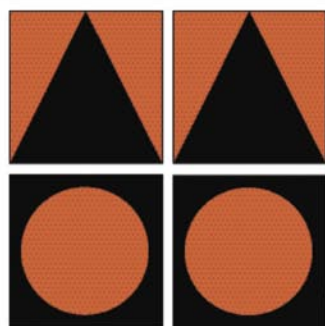
—Lawrence Yerkes

*The exhibition and catalog were supported in part by a grant from the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs*

The *Bonefolder* welcomes articles on exhibitions, significant binding and artist's book projects, one-of-a-kind or editioned. If you would like to share your project please contact the editors at <bonefolder@philobiblon.com>.







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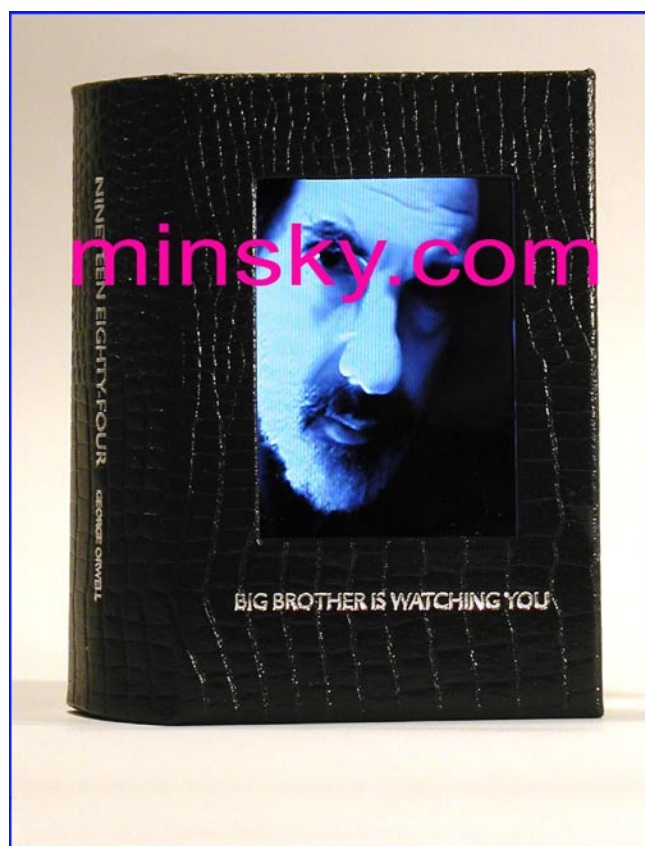
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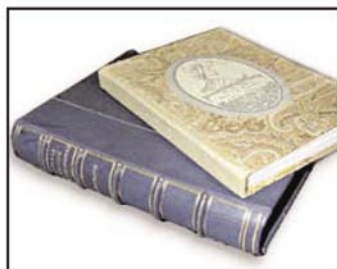




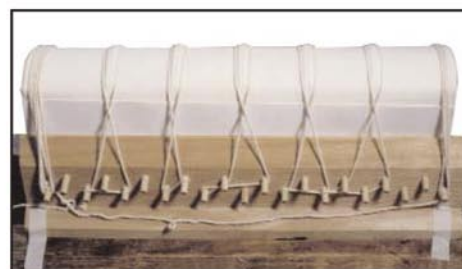


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Bonnie Stahlecker,  
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