

GUILD OF BOOK WORKERS JOURNAL

VOLUME XXXVI

NUMBER 2



EDITOR'S NOTE

With this issue, a new feature is presented that will appear occasionally in the Guild of Book Workers *Journal*. I have invited Laura Wait to inaugurate the "Artist's Eye View" series, an informal discussion of the thought process underlying our performance.

Jean Stephenson

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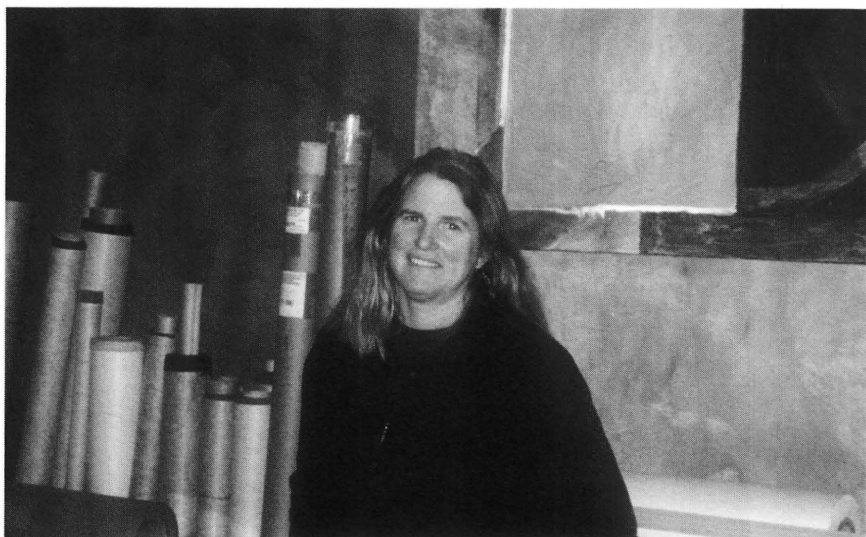
Published biannually by the Guild of Book Workers, Inc.
a not-for-profit corporation
521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10175

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The Cover: Photograph of Laura Wait's exhibition, *Explorations & Transformations*, held February 20–May 3, 1998 at Regis University Dayton Memorial Library, Denver CO. Photograph courtesy of Andy Dorfman. **Back Cover:** Cover of Laura Wait's 1995 binding for *Aesop's Fables*. The snake design is based on woodcut illustrations within the book.

Articles and reports by members and non-members are welcome for consideration. The views and opinions expressed in this Journal are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the Guild.

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ISSN-0434-9245



Laura Wait in her studio.



Laura Wait's exhibition at Regis University Dayton Memorial Library, Denver CO.

INTRODUCTION TO THE ARTIST/ Jane Dalrymple-Hollo

Laura Wait grew up in Boulder, Colorado when it was still a small western town, and perhaps the spirit of that place and time helped form the sense of open space and possibility one finds in this exhibit. In 1973, Laura left Colorado to continue her education in New York, but by then she had already studied painting, printmaking, and sculpture at Boulder High School and ceramics through the Boulder Department of Recreation and at The University of Colorado. After earning her baccalaureate degree in art history at Barnard College in 1975, Laura moved to London to study printmaking at Croydon College. She worked in lithography, silkscreen printing, and etching, but it was her class with bookbinder Richard Tullett that shifted her aspirations.

Primarily a trade binder, Richard Tullett had received his training at the Zaehnsdorf bindery, a firm established in London in 1842 and internationally known for its high level of craftsmanship. For 4 years, Laura was officially enrolled in Tullett's class through Croydon College, but spent most of her time working with him on independent study. At the end of this period, she presented a thesis show that was juried by the Croydon College faculty, including Professor Tullett and an independent trade binder who served as an outside evaluator. She received her Certificate in Bookbinding with Distinction from Croydon in 1981.

In the United States at that time there were no degree programs in library conservation, and training in bookbinding was usually in one of the library conservation labs that were being established in major university and research libraries. The emphasis on conservation certainly raised the standards for treatment of library materials, but in-house training was necessarily driven by administrative concerns, the specific needs of the collections, and a somewhat abstract desire to "professionalize" the field. Laura Wait's work with Richard Tullett was far from conventional abstract. It consisted of analyzing problems in bindings, prescribing solutions, and making unobtrusive but functional repairs in a straightforward methodical manner, all under the supervision of a master binder. She learned to work efficiently because her clients demanded it. She also became adept at gold tooling, a skill that has been the hallmark of fine binding for centuries.

After her graduation from Croydon, Laura returned from England and immediately began her private practice in Denver. She quickly made friends with conservators at the Rocky Mountain Conservation Center in Denver, the Humanities Research Center in Austin, Texas, and other conservation institutions, and learned conservation techniques not routinely practiced in England at the time, such as washing and alkalizing paper. Even so, Laura was a bit of an anomaly in the professional conservation organization, the American Institute for Conservation, where

we first met, because most book conservators worked for institutions, and the majority were based on the East Coast. Her traditional skills paid off, however, when she was one of a handful of binders from across the country selected to participate in a 2-month master class taught at the Humanities Research Center by Anthony Cains, conservator of rare books at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland. In addition to minutely analyzing the functions of various binding structures, everyone in the class completed models adapted from a medieval style of binding with wooden boards and raised cords.

Laura has a series of models of medieval bindings she has made over the years. Some are sewn onto cords and laced into wooden boards; some are laced into shaped binder's boards and covered with alum-tawed pigskin; some are sewn onto thongs and laced into limp vellum structures. When asked to discuss them, she quickly points out that at present these structures are more useful as a point of departure in her creative work than for the rebinding of medieval manuscript leaves. And this leads to one central fact about Laura Wait: her work is intricately related to, and grounded in, craft of the highest standard.

Laura still primarily earns her living as a conservator of rare books, maps, and manuscripts, but for as long as I have known her, the walls in her studio have displayed her paintings. One of the largest, most colorful and full of motion, is a humorous send-up of Rubens' "Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus." There is also a series of smaller road paintings—views of various Western roadways from behind the steering wheel of a car—that are the precursors of her travel books. These paintings, strong in their own right, skillfully balance freedom and control, but when Laura began to combine this personal visual iconography with her highly developed skills in bookbinding, she joined a group of artist/bookbinders small enough to be counted on the fingers of two hands. To see artwork such as Laura's incorporated into meticulously functional codex or accordion structures (which have, nonetheless, undergone her personal interpretation) is rare enough to be almost startling.

In following her inspiration to combine bookbinding with her artistic talents, Laura draws from a large repertoire of skills. Gold tooling, for example, is a highly technical process that begins only after a book is forwarded (which consists of endpaper construction, sewing of the sections, and endbanding) and covered in leather. It is tricky to do. If the tool becomes too hot, or dwells on the leather just a moment too long, the leather may be irreparably marred. Since she returned to the United States, Laura has continuously improved her skills in tooling by creating unique design bindings for limited edition letterpress books.

Laura began making custom pastepapers for use as endsheets in her design bindings several years ago. She turned a corner when she discovered that the Mylar

she used to protect her working surface developed interesting layers of muted color and decided to fold these sheets and make them into sections. Suddenly, she was making the insides of books! In 1994, Laura and her husband, architect Bob Hagerty, acquired a photocopy machine for use in the office they share, and she immediately began using it for bookmaking. One result, the edition of three post card books (No. 7), consists of post cards exchanged among three generations of Laura's family, carefully organized (one could almost say choreographed), photocopied onto translucent Mylar, and painstakingly hand-colored. Each volume is bound in a different traditional leather binding with gold tooling and leather inlays that amply demonstrate Laura's skill in design as well as its application. In 1995, Laura renewed her acquaintance with lithography by taking a class at the Art Students' League in Denver. Always fascinated with road signs, she developed a set of lithographic images inspired by post cards that eventually found their way into the marvelous black and yellow "Open Road" books (Nos. 14–15) which "read" like a metaphorical road trip.

When Laura attended the Book and Paper Intensive at Penland School of Art in the summers of 1995 and 1996, she found that the connections she made there, particularly with artist/bookbinder Tim Ely, affirmed and expanded the direction she was already taking. Ely is best known for his high level of craftsmanship incorporating personal and esoteric marks and symbols. His teaching method, described by Laura as "letting the unconscious reign, and then pulling things out without worrying about their being perfect from the beginning," must have been an ideal antidote to the rigors of conservation and even traditional printmaking. After working with Ely, Laura's artwork and her repertoire of personal symbols became more spontaneous. Most influenced by her work with him are the "Soul Garden" books (Nos. 8–11) in which, by turning the pages, one silently "walks" through a splendid landscape of formal but tilted geometry, along pathways (which Laura refers to as metaphors of the self) and among mythological creatures, all interwoven in layers (leaves) of time and space.

I know, from my own experience, the humility and gratitude of suddenly realizing that I am being carried by a current of ideas. Part of the delight I find in Laura's new work is that it conveys the exhilaration and awe of that realization. There is a cohesiveness that comes from a place of stillness and absolute confidence that Laura is exploring while letting us peek over her shoulder. But her work is not "confessional" in any way: it is thoroughly connected both to the traditions of design binding and those of contemporary art. I have often wondered what Ed Ruscha (creator of conceptual artist's books—*Thirty-Four Parking Lots*, *Every Building on Sunset Strip*, etc., and painter of the mural in the Denver Public Library's new wing) would make of Laura's *Open Road* and *Postcard* books.

During the time Laura Wait has practiced bookbinding and conservation in the Denver area, there has been a steadily increasing interest in book and paper arts. The Colorado Calligraphers' Guild, which was founded in 1977 and increased in national stature when the late James Hayes moved to Colorado, has a long history of sponsoring seminars for its members, many of whom share an interest in making books. The Rocky Mountain Chapter of the Guild of Bookworkers, recently founded by Pam Barrios and Laura Wait along with colleagues from Utah and New Mexico, now sponsors workshops with book artists of national and international reputation and joins the Brad Rogers Bookbinding Group and the Book Arts League as a forum for ideas and information. The specialty collections departments of Regis University, the University of Colorado at Boulder, the Denver Public Library, and Colorado College are among the many institutions now actively collecting representative works by book artists, calligraphers, and letterpress printers working in the state. It's an exciting time for book arts in Colorado, and with this exhibition, Laura Wait has considerably upped the ante.

Jane Dalrymple-Hollo, an artist and former library conservator, resides with her husband, poet Anselm Hollo, in Boulder, CO.

AN ARTIST'S EYE VIEW OF A BOOK EXHIBIT/ Laura Wait

This article will discuss my exhibit of books "Explorations and Transformations." It began on February 16, 1998 at Regis University, in the Dayton Memorial Library, and ran through July of that year after being extended several months over the original length. I will share my ideas and describe my creative process and bookbinding structure.

Regis recently renovated their library and added an extra floor with a special collection room. Andrew Scrimgeour, the head of the library, asked me to have the first book show in the renovated library several years ago. There were many delays due to construction so I had plenty of time to get my work together. (Of course, most of the work was done during the six months prior to the show.)

Renovation began in 1996, but I was not able to tour the library until the summer of 1997. There was a large exhibition case with a wide expanse of glass in a semi-private room on the ground level. This would accommodate my *Open Road* books, which are 15' long when fully opened. Andrew graciously agreed to let me use this exhibition space instead of the special collection room. I am pleased to say that this area is still being used for changing shows and has recently hosted the Colorado Calligraphers annual show of books.

It is rather exciting to be asked to do a one-person show. I thought that with several years of lead time that I would have plenty of working time. However, time caught up with me, and for the last six months before the exhibit opened, I spent at least half my time working on books for the show. The last month was primarily spent finishing the *Garden of Verses* bindings and designing the show as a whole.

The 15' case had glass shelves held up by brackets. The background was covered in a dull gray-blue fabric. I made some very large sheets of dark paste paper with silvery flecks in it to cover the background, and attached the paper to the wall with handmade copper tacks. This look related much more strongly to the books than did the fabric, and helped to hold the exhibit together. I placed mirrors behind the books to allow the viewer to simultaneously view the cover and the pages. In addition, I used metal balls recycled from the mining industry to help hold the pages open. These have rough surfaces and look almost medieval, and relate more closely to the books than do plastic blocks.

The only lighting source in the room was from the very strong halogen bulbs that shone straight down from the ceiling. These were on constantly and I was concerned with light damage. This problem was eventually solved by installing motion detectors for the lights. Thus, they turned on only when someone walked through the hallway from the main room. It was a simple and effective solution and I enjoyed the experience of seeing a dark mysterious room that lit up with lots of colorful books as a visitor entered.

This exhibit was a valuable opportunity for me because I don't think I would have spent as much time on my own work if I didn't have an available venue and a commitment to the library. Fortunately, a number of my books had sold the year before, and that afforded me the financial freedom to continue working on the books for the show. There were a number of books that I started, and didn't get finished, and am only now binding.

This article will give an artist's eye view of the creative development of my artist's books and their structure.

There were 15 books and 2 wall pieces in the show. It was hard to fill up a large case and my first grand schema included only major, painted artist's books! I gradually became more realistic, and ultimately included most of the creative bindings that were completed at that time. These books are listed in chronological order, and photographs will be included whenever possible.

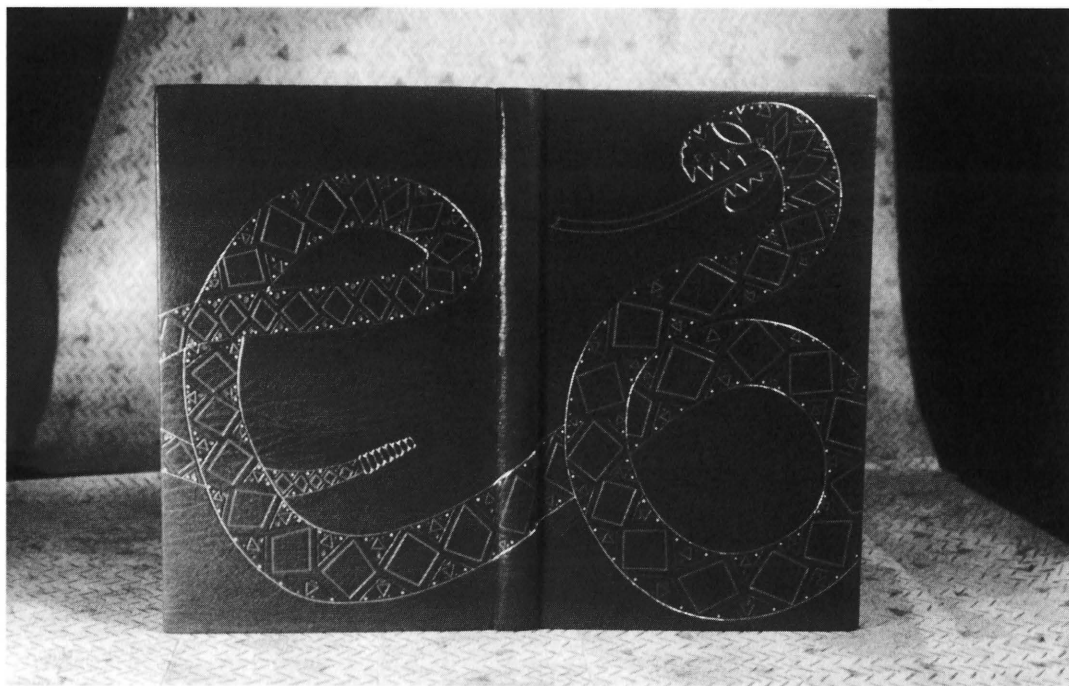
AESOPS' FABLES

The design of this bookbinding is based upon the early twentieth century woodcuts that illustrate the book. I was inspired by one of a snake and an eagle fighting. I used the snake as a design element across the entire cover. The tooling was colored with a combination of airbrush paint, colored foil, and blind and gold tooling. I often combine pigment and foil to get a dense line of color. I put down colored foil, then a layer of the same color Golden airbrush. This creates a solid background for the color, and achieves better color density which is particularly important when using yellow, which is especially transparent.

AESOPS' FABLES

Fine leather binding on small press edition by Golden Cockerell Press. Binding 1995. Terra cotta leather, graphite edges. Hand-decorated paste endsheets. Decorated with acrylic paint, colored foil, and gold tooling. Snake designs based on woodcut illustrations within book.

Collection of the artist



Aesop's Fables. Cover. The snake design was derived from an illustration in the book. I simplified the drawing of a serpent fighting an eagle. The tooling is blind, color foil, paint, and gold. The red lines have a color foil background with acrylic airbrush paint on top to create a really rich vermillion.

POSTCARD

This was my first artist's book in multiple and I made three copies. While I was making it, I thought of how writers often write their first novel about growing up. *Postcard* is about my family and childhood.

The idea for this book came about while sorting a pile of postcards. I have a collection of postcards collected by my maternal grandfather, myself, and a few other members of the family, and although I had a remote idea that these might be interesting as a part of a book, I didn't have much conception of how to begin.

I first made piles on the table of categories such as: animals, old travel, European travel, beaches, buildings, and so on. I realized after several hours that I was most interested in those cards sent from family members to other family members. I withdrew these and put the others aside.

Ultimately, these cards were organized chronologically. I selected interesting writing and images from each generation and paired them together, although not necessarily the actual front and back of each. Once I had an order, I thought about the structure of the book, and eventually designed it with images arranged into sections that could be sewn through the fold.

The postcards were then photocopied onto Saunders 90 lb. Watercolor HP and translucent drafting Mylar used by architects. While working on this book, I learned a lot about what copying machines can do. It is important to have a smooth surface, so I used hot press paper and have had good luck with up to 140 lb. paper. The paper grain must be lined up so that the paper can bend with the rollers. The paper should also be a standard size or it may be lost in the machine, resulting in loose toner and a mess trying to get it out! Since then, I have also found that Bristol paper is too stiff and gets stuck before the heating phase of the cycle.

I reduced some postcards and enlarged others, alternating the watercolor paper with drafting Mylar. These translucent pages made it possible to see some of the postcard photographs and writing on the back at the same time. The entire book is hand colored with watercolor and Prismacolors. I made special paste-paper endsheets that have wavy cancellation marks.

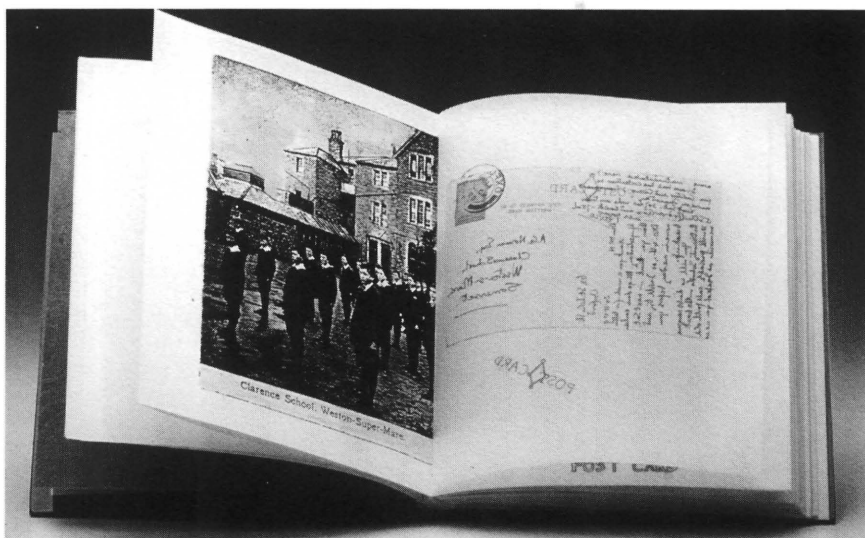
I decided to sew the sections onto tabs so that they would open well. This is very important since the Mylar will not bend, glue, or round very well.

Each book is covered in a different color of leather and has a unique design. The cover designs incorporate graphic images that I had noticed on the backs of the postcards. These graphics overlay each other and generally include the word "postcard," with the writing lines, the dividing lines, stamps, and various cancellation marks. The tooling is blind, colored foil, gold, and painted lines. The title is generally on one of the postcard rectangles, and can be anywhere in the cover design.

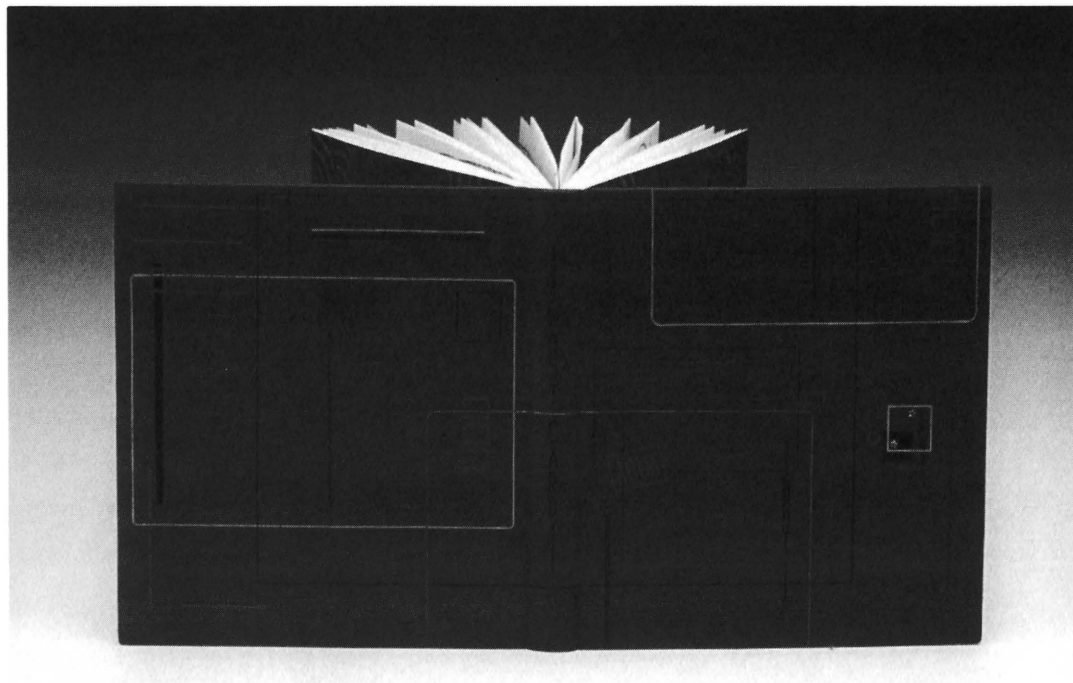
POSTCARD/ Laura Wait

Leather binding on artist's book. Copy No. 1 of 3. Cover designs are unique. The text is a history of the artist's family in postcards. Hand-colored photocopied images. 1995. Terra cotta leather. Hand-decorated paste endsheets. Decorated with acrylic paint, colored foil, and gold tooling. Design based on graphics on the back of postcards.

Courtesy of Truepenny Books, Tucson, AZ



Postcard. The first spread of the book. The school grounds are from a postcard my grandfather sent to his father at his school near Bristol, England. It is enlarged by at least 300%. The picture is colored with watercolor and colored pencil (Prismacolors). The right-hand side is printed on frosted Mylar, and you can see it from behind. This is the back of the same postcard, enlarged by about 150%.



Postcard. One of three unique covers for this book. The designs are based on the graphic elements I found on the backs of postcards; the outlines of postcards themselves, stamps, cancellation marks, and dividing lines. The tooling is built up with rolls and straight lines, mostly blind tooled, with some color foil and paint. The yellow foil was very transparent and I tooled a layer of foil followed by color to “beef it up.” In addition, this makes the line very sharp and clean in appearance.

Postcard. A postcard from my great-great aunt in India. It was originally in black and white of course, but it is now colored with pencils. The left-hand side is contemporary writing; perhaps it is not the exact same postcard.

PAPER BOUND

Many Guild of Book Workers' members have seen this book, since it was produced for the "Paper Bound" show, which is still on the Internet. I was at first mystified by the stack of papers that arrived in single folds of wildly variant thicknesses of paper. I wanted to sew this book through the fold to make a codex, but knew that the swelling would be extreme due to the single folds.

I have been working with wooden board covers over the past few years with my own books. This type of structure can accommodate large swelling. Thus, I decided to make a very thick cover out of paper and then use traditional sewing and board attachment as if it were a wooden book. I had a piece of "gatorboard" in my scrap bin just large enough for the basic core. I shaped this roughly like an airplane wing and then filled it with lightweight filler. I covered this with handmade paper that I created with paper scraps, and used gold foil stampings from titles. This reminded me of some of the paper in the book, which includes newspapers and other letterforms.

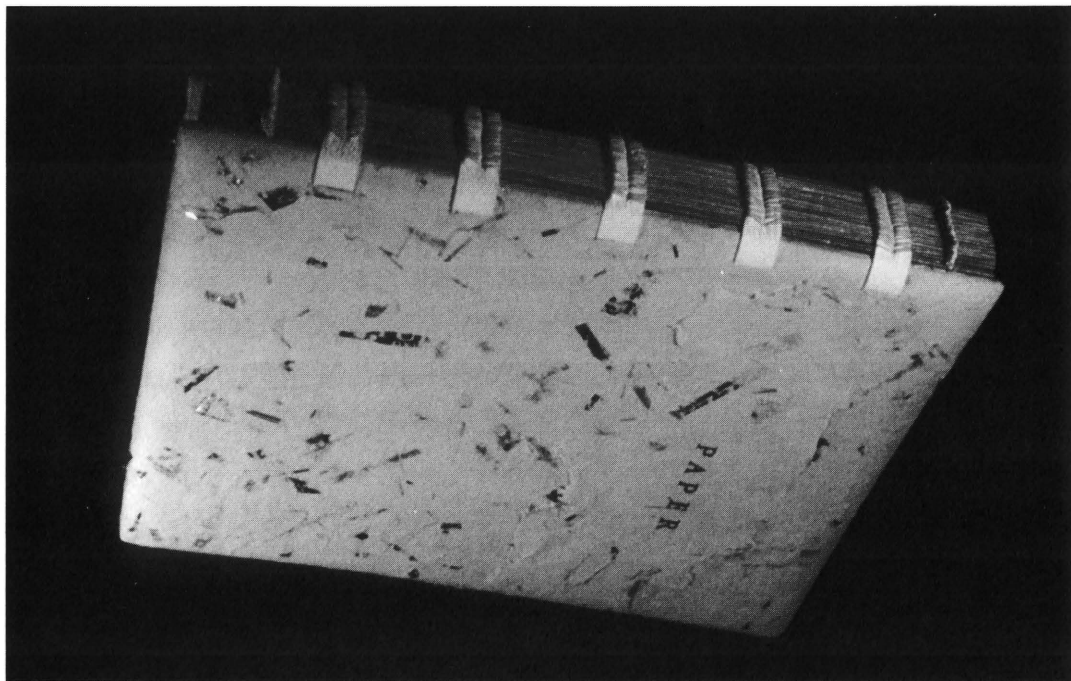
I used a paper concertina on the spine because I wanted some consistency of color and height rather than the variable heights, thicknesses, and colors of the text. I sewed the text onto pigskin thongs with herringbone sewing. The thongs were attached to the cover through slots, and glued down on the inside.

The title is gold stamped "Paper" on the same paper used to make the cover. I used this primarily to identify the front from the back.

PAPER/ Laura Wait

Papier maché cover with handmade paper by artist. No. 157 in edition of 195. Handsewn onto pigskin supports with a paste paper concertina. The book consists of paper samples from paper mills in the United States and was printed by Peter and Donna Thomas in 1994. The book was a set book bound by 21 members of the Guild of Book Workers in a traveling show during 1996–1997. Bound 1996.

Collection of the artist



Paper. Binding for Peter and Donna Thomas' paper samples from American mills. This cover is made with layers of paper made with clippings from gold foil stampings and Japanese paper. The core is honeycomb board and the boards are attached as if the board were wood.

GARDEN OF VERSES—STARS

This is the fourth of seven bindings I made for this book during 1995–1998. Four were included in the show. They are all traditional English fine bindings with laced-on boards, edge coloring and handsewn endbands. Working with this text was quite exciting because there is so much going on in the text, with references to many childhood interests in blocks, skies, stars, moons, gardens, mothers, and so on.

The design of this cover was inspired by an atlas collection of eighteenth century French star charts I had bought at a garage sale. I used the prints as the underlying structure of the design. I copied these and put them together into a large chart. I don't have the whole set, so there were a lot of holes.

The fanciful zodiac animals and other constellations of the atlas reminded me of stories from *A Child's Garden of Verses*, so I decided to incorporate them into a cover design. I searched my star chart with a rectangular book shape cutout until I found a suitable design, which included an arc of red and black rectangles with Taurus and Pegasus.

This design was photocopied onto a thin, strong piece of Japanese paper that I could use as a working pattern to tool through. Fortunately, Karen Crisalli had some French tools for sale at the time, and I was able to obtain three stars.

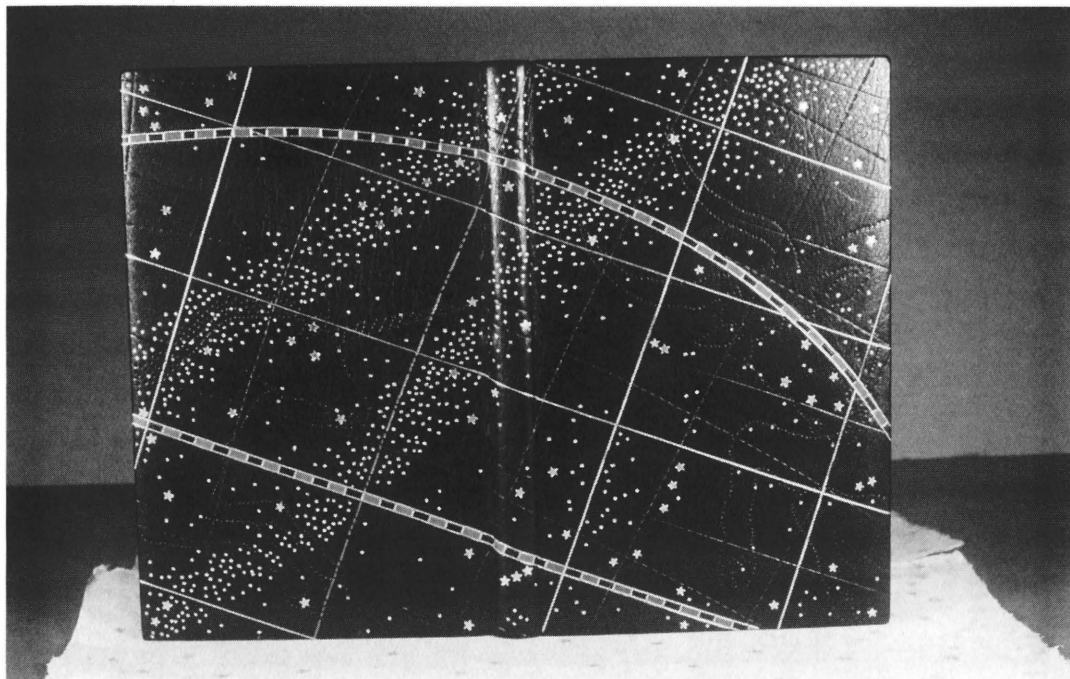
The cover decoration is a combination of gold and blind tooling with red leather onlays. The stars are all in gold. The small star was a little scary getting in several times in gold, but I became reasonably adept at it if I didn't worry about it too much!

The constellations, Pegasus and Taurus, are outlined in blind dots because I didn't want these to overwhelm the stars. The paste endpapers also have a star pattern, and these were made using a Mylar stencil and iridescent acrylic paint.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES/ Robert Louis Stevenson

Fine binding on small press edition by Adrian Wilson of Tuscany Alley Press, 1978. Binding 1995. Black leather, graphite edges, red leather onlays, and blind and gold tooling. Hand-decorated paste endsheets. Star design based on star charts from one of Jean Fortins' editions of *Atlas Coelestis*, first published in 1776.

Collection of University of Colorado, Special Collections.



A Child's Garden of Verses. One of the seven bindings I have made on this book, two of which are covered with stars. This binding has Pegasus and Taurus outlined in blind dots in the background. The meridian line has red leather inlays, and is tooled in gold. There are many small stars as I was trying to achieve a feeling of the Milky Way.

THE OPEN ROAD

The Open Road began as three lithographic prints produced after not doing any lithography for 15 years. I think of this as my “full circle” book since lithography is what first brought me to bookbinding. In 1976, I began a one-year printmaking course in London at Croydon College of Art, which included lithography and bookbinding. After a few years, I dropped the printmaking and took up bookbinding seriously. I started printmaking again a few years ago as a method to make book editions as well as individual prints.

The Open Road is a travel book of the American West. I have always been fascinated by the idea of open roads and the shapes of roads themselves going off into the horizon and space. In addition, I find the striking graphic imagery of road signs, kitschy roadside motels, and tourist attractions very appealing.

Half of the images in this book were pulled from drawings in sketchbooks that I kept while driving through the West. I started working in sketchbooks on the road in high school, and kept them for over 25 years. Many of these are done while the car is in motion, and parts of the car are included in the drawing. I paired each sketch with a postcard from the roadside stops.

I made three prints with five pairs of images. Initially I transferred the sketchbook image to the lithograph plate using a toner transfer method using photocopies of the originals. After etching the toner into the lithography plate, I was able to draw into the sketches with lithographic crayon to further develop the images.

I do not carefully plan my books, but it might have helped in this case as the final structure was quite time-consuming to construct. Initially I thought I might do a concertina book like the old postcard wallets. When I made a prototype, the prints looked cramped because there wasn't any space around them. I put them aside and thought about it for several months.

I kept returning to the idea of a concertina wallet, so I expanded the form, and put each image into a frame to create more white space. I wanted to achieve a feeling of space and movement, as if traveling on a road. Because the finished book would have been 30' long, I divided the prints into two volumes, “The Pacific Coast” and “Mountains and Deserts.”

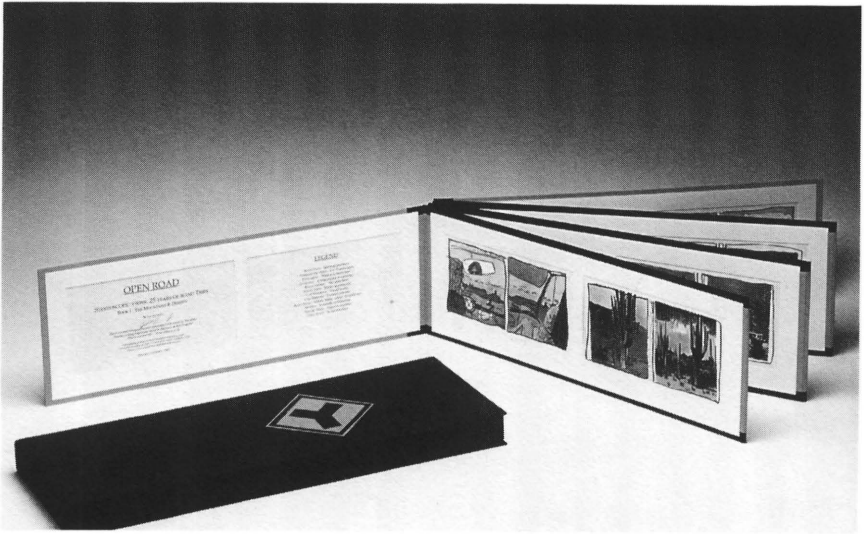
The prints are all hand colored with watercolor. I like the variation and richness of color, as opposed to the flatness of lithograph ink. The book is 15' long when fully opened and the black background cloth is 156" long! The covers have hand-stenciled highway signs as titles on hand-colored yellow cloth. The clam-shell boxes also have a highway sign instead of a title.

THE OPEN ROAD/ Laura Wait

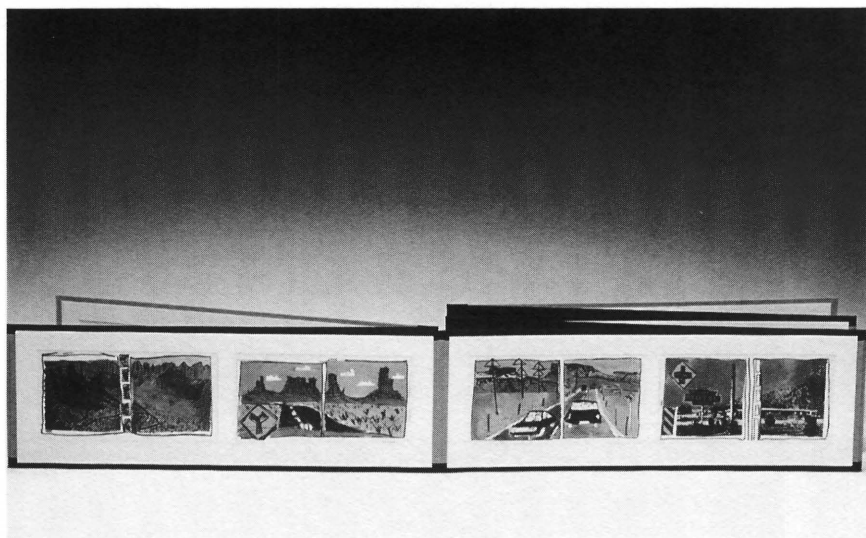
Volume I: The Mountains and Deserts

Lithographs hand-colored with watercolor. Title pages and legend are laser-printed. Prints are mounted with frames onto panels made into a concertina book. This can be read like a book or set up to be almost 15' wide in exhibition. The images come from 25 years of travel sketchbooks of the west and related postcard images. Cover is hand painted with acrylic, utilizing road sign imagery, which is also on box No. 4 of edition of 12.

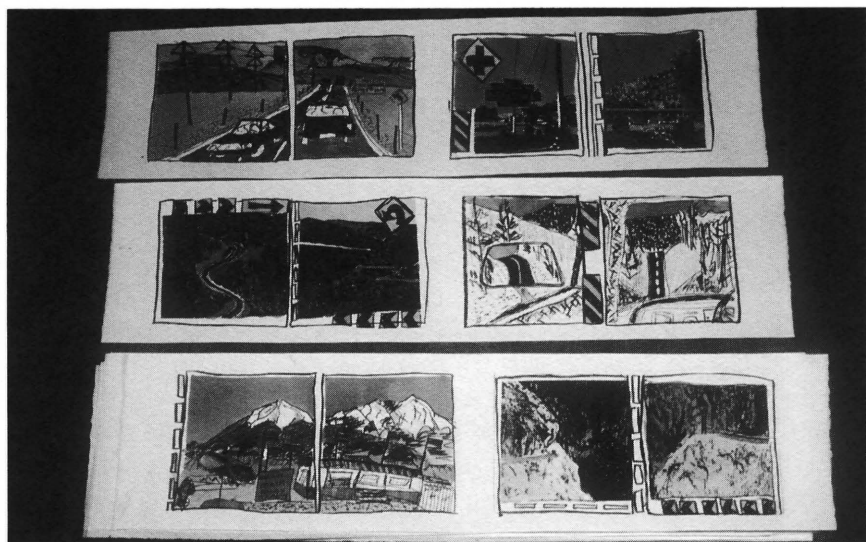
Regis University Libraries, Denver, CO, Special Collections



The Open Road. Box and first page of Volume I, “The Mountains and Deserts.” The concertina pages are 22” wide. There is a frame cut from Bristol boards to hold the prints in place. The road sign on the box cover is hand painted. The title page contains a “legend” of words having to do with road signs that serves as keys for the images.



The Open Road. Volume I. Near Sedona and Monument Valley, approaching Grand Junction and the Western Slope motel on the right.



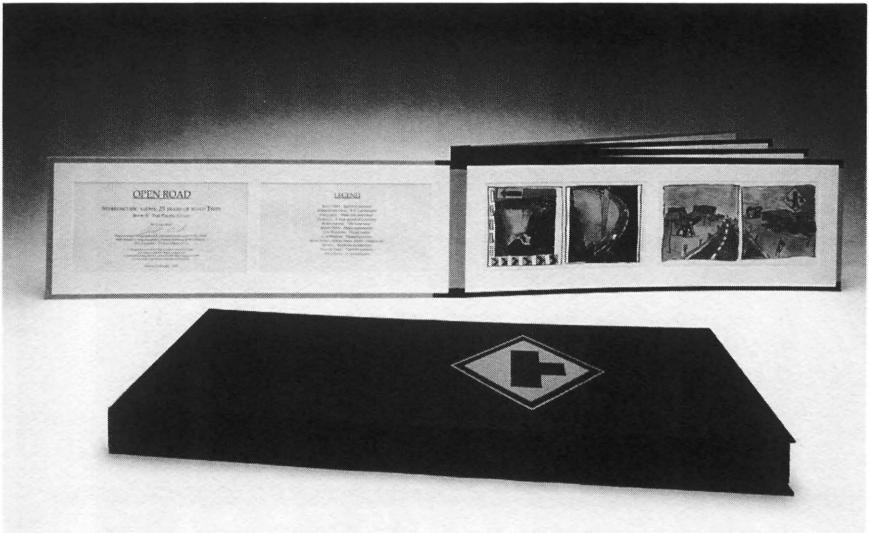
The Open Road. Partially colored prints from both volumes. These were printed on a large aluminum plate. There were three plates with five pairs of images, each with a sketchbook drawing accompanied by a postcard transfer. Detail was drawn into both with lithographic crayons.

THE OPEN ROAD/ Laura Wait

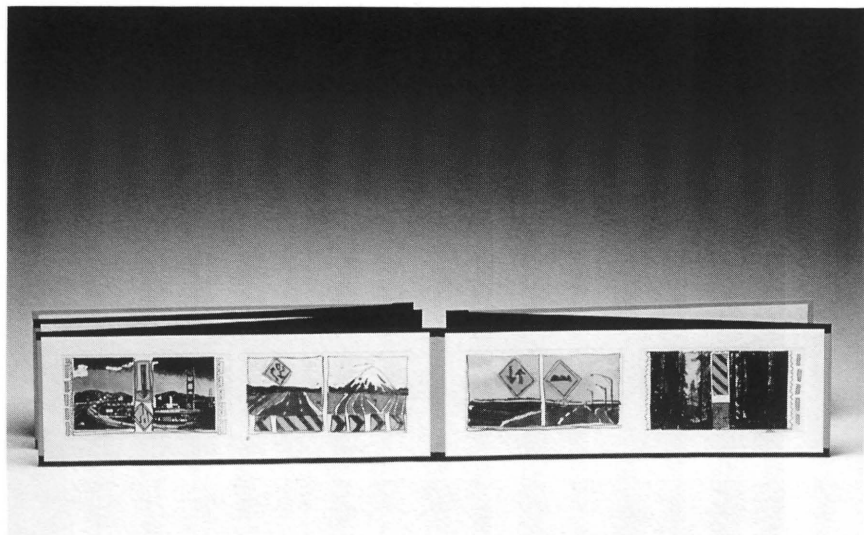
Volume II: The Pacific Coast

Lithographs hand-colored with watercolor. Title pages and legend are laser printed. Prints are mounted with frames onto panels made into a concertina book. This can be read like a book or set up to be almost 15' wide in exhibition. The images come from 25 years of travel sketchbooks of the west and related postcard images. Cover is hand painted with acrylic, utilizing road sign imagery, which is also on box No. 4 of edition of 12.

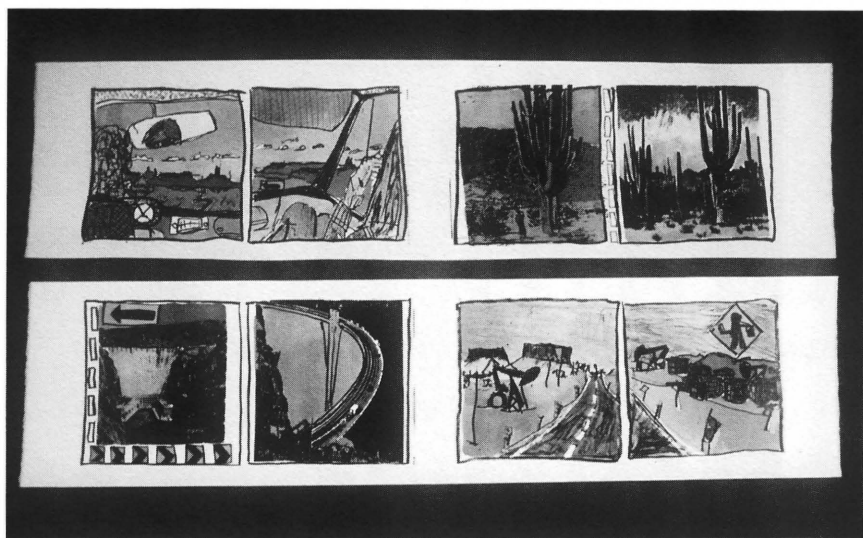
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The Open Road Volume II. Box and first page of "The Pacific Coast."



The Open Road Volume II. The Pacific Coast: Leaving San Francisco at Sunset. Road with Mt. Shasta in the background. Central Valley fields and California redwoods on the right.



The Open Road. Hand-colored prints before attachment to pages. Mountains and deserts: Approaching Monument Valley. Sonoran desert cactus on left; Hoover Dam and California oil wells on right.

THE HOLY TRINITY AND THE FOUR EVANGELISTS

This book was my first exploration into the area of religious symbolism and was, in fact, my first true painted book. I continue to work with religious and garden symbols, which are closely interrelated.

I began *The Holy Trinity and the Four Evangelists* with a vague idea of incorporating religious iconography into a book that expressed some religious frustration. The book became more abstract and symbolic as I went along, and less about frustration.

I started this book by drawing churches and rose windows. A layer of paint covered the line drawings, and then a further layer illuminated the shapes or obscured them further. Eventually I added squares and triangles. I used very fluid acrylic paint, thinned with medium and wheat paste for each layer as well as gold and red ink. The primary colors used are gold, black, yellow and red, and the book is very abstract.

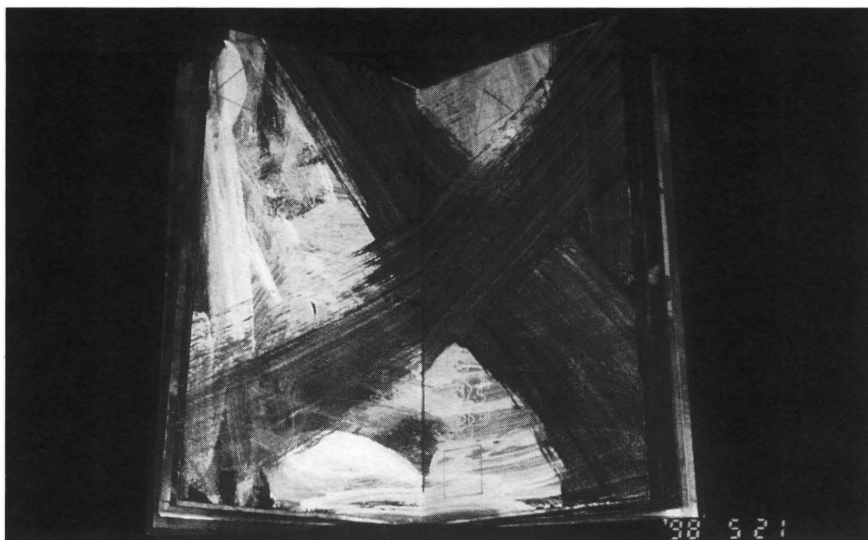
The boards are wood stained black with Fiebings leather dye, and the front cover has a piece of copper decoration worked in a cross design. The sections are sewn nonadhesively onto laminated leather and parchment supports. The supports are attached to the covers with copper plates and rivets.

It was difficult to part with this book. Fortunately it is now part of a local collection that I can visit.

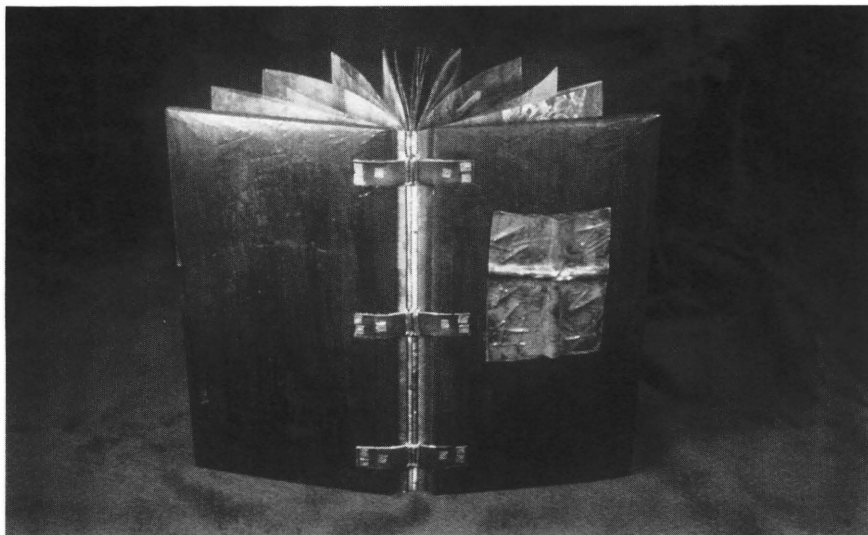
THE HOLY TRINITY AND THE FOUR EVANGELISTS/ Laura Wait

Wooden cover on unique artist's book. Copper cross insets on cover. Handsewn onto leather supports that are riveted onto cover. The text is based on religious symbols, the triangle, and the square. Hand painted in acrylic on Arches cover paper. 1997.

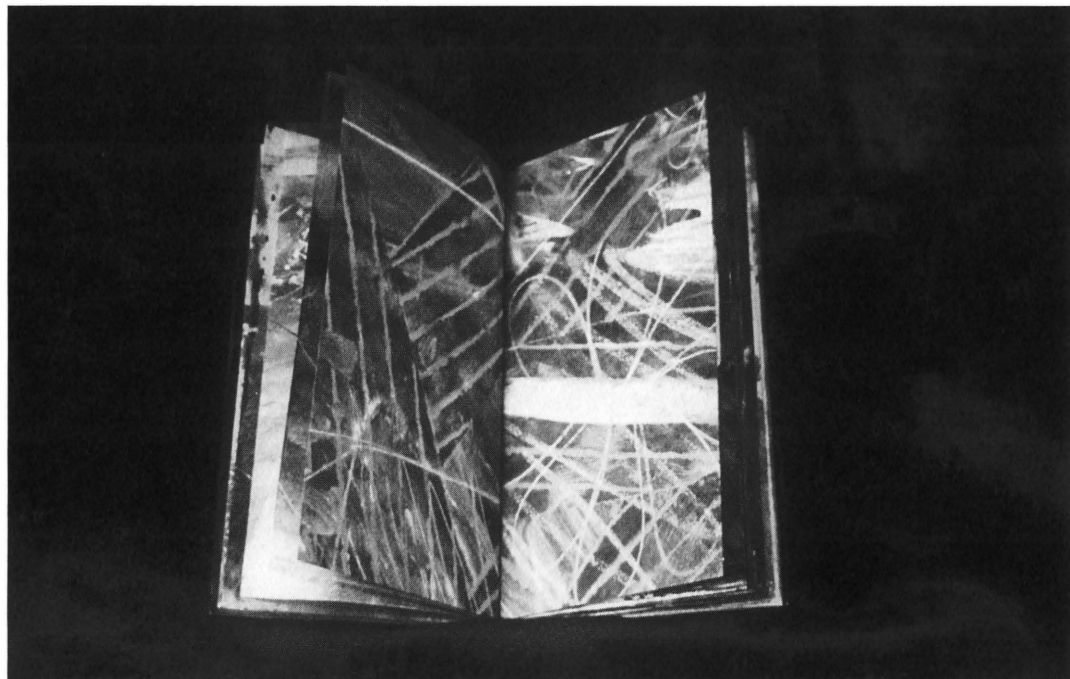
Denver Public Library, Special Collections



The Holy Trinity and The Four Evangelists. A black cross of motion and connections. This is the first truly abstract book I have done. I primarily limited the colors to black and off white, yellow, and red, with some pinks creeping in. There are gold geometric shapes drawn in ink. In the last two years I have done a series of paintings using this book as the starting point.



The Holy Trinity and The Four Evangelists. Sewn-on leather straps with thick linen thread. This book is bound very simply with a cedar cover, stained black. The boards are attached with rivets through the straps, boards, and copper plates. The copper cross decoration was hammered and heated to achieve its color and texture.



The Holy Trinity and The Four Evangelists. Beginning with a rose window drawing and using brayers with incised lines for background patterns, this spread developed in a confused fashion. Lines across the pages were added to help hold the design together.

DA VINCI'S FABLES

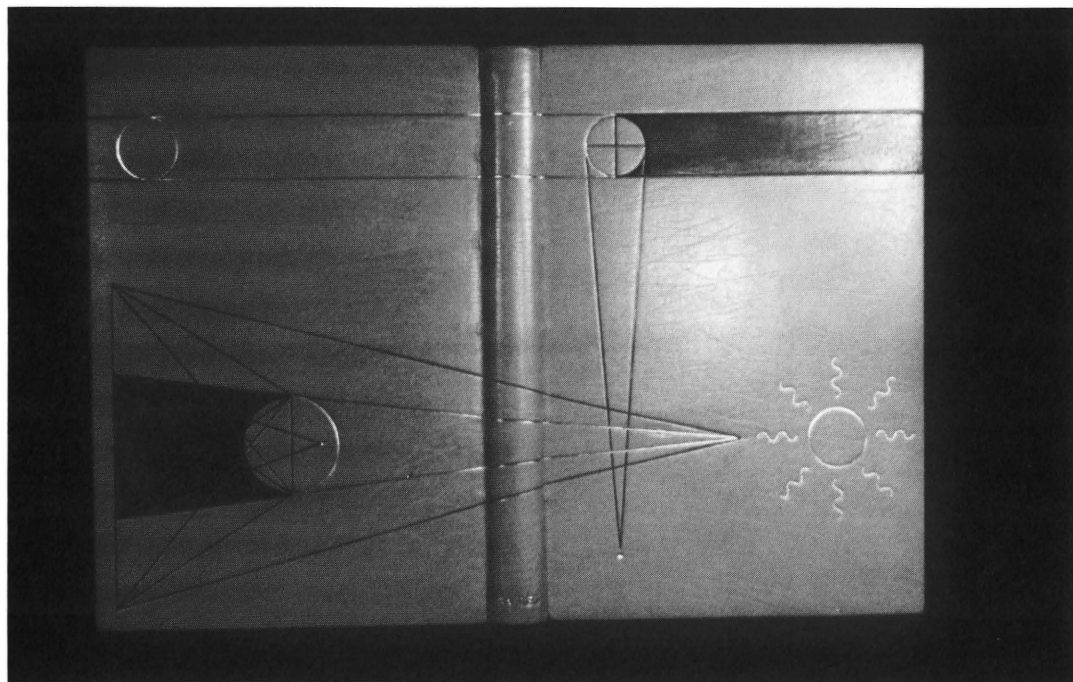
This binding was supposed to be in the recent Potomac Chapter show but wasn't finished on time. The structure is a traditional English fine binding, with leather joints inside. The endpapers are my own paste papers in a velvet wallpaper pattern. I did not color the edges because the paper is very soft and has nice edges.

The design for this book came very quickly. I looked at Leonardo's drawings of solar observations; these are geometric in nature and lend themselves to simple line tools and gouges. I used two of these drawings in an overlapping combination to make the design. There is gold and blind tooling and acrylic paint for the dark side of the moon.

FABLES/ Leonardo Da Vinci

Fine leather binding on small press edition by Snails Pace Press. One of 50. 1996. Binding 1997. In English and Italian. Tan leather. Hand decorated paste end-sheets with leather joint. Decorated with acrylic paint, and blind and gold tooling. Design based on Da Vinci's solar observations.

Collection of the artist



Fables by Leonardo da Vinci. Two of da Vinci's solar observation drawings are overlapped here. The gold is meant to represent light, and the dark is meant to show the area in the shadow of the planets.

THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (Design Proposal)

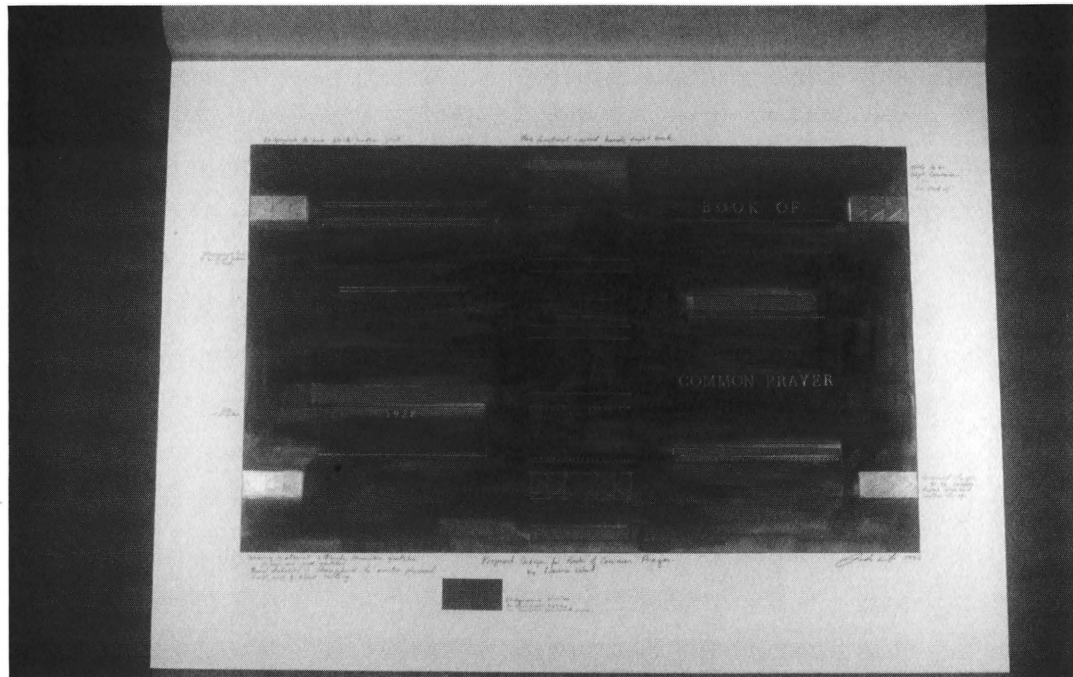
Because there was some wall space near the cases, I included this design for the Helen deGolyer competition for the binding of *The Book of Common Prayer*.

The general theme of this design was derived from the page design of the printed book itself. I looked at a copy of the book and its page design. The cover design is divided into areas that relate to the division of type on the pages. Some of these type blocks are in red. Thus, I have a red area on the design. Plain lines were used for plain type areas and large lines were used for larger type.

DESIGN OF *THE BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER*/ Laura Wait

Watercolor on board. 1996. This is a design for the Merrymount Press edition of *The Book of Common Prayer*, 1928. A competition was held for binders to create designs for the vellum copy at the Bridwell Library of Southern Methodist University. An exhibition was held of the designs and examples of the binders' work. The winner received a \$5000 commission to bind the book. An exhibition of all submissions was held.

Collection of the artist



The Book of Common Prayer. Made for a competition at SMU several years ago, this design was based on the pattern blocks of the pages in the printed book. I looked at an original copy. There were basic type block shapes and colors in the books, which I transferred to abstract shapes on the outside of the book.

FOUR SOUL GARDENS BOOKS

I began my first garden book at the same time I started *The Holy Trinity and the Four Evangelists*. I only finished it a few months ago, although the later group of garden books (including the *Soul Gardens* books) were finished for this show.

I have always been interested in symbolism. This interest has recently become more active along with my interest in gardening. I first realized that garden symbolism was related to religious symbolism when Tim Ely pointed out that “paradise” is a Persian word for “garden.” In Christian and Persian religious mythology, paradise is divided up into four parts each relating to the “four corners” of the Earth. The cross is a symbol of the division of the worlds into four.

Other symbols are similarly interrelated. Gardens and forests are symbols of change, and include enchanted gardens, sacred groves, dark forests, gateways, labyrinths and many other symbolic growth rituals, as well as Earth mother and life forces.

Pathways in gardens have always been special to me; they are symbolic of the pathways in life, a way to go to an imaginary dream place. Gardens can also be metaphors for both the soul and self. An over controlled garden is a soul under bondage. A garden that is allowed to grow, and change with skilled care from a gardener is similar to the development and freedom of the soul as it reaches its full potential. I just like these images. Perhaps this is because gardens are a place of healing and rebirth. For some years before I made these books, I had been gardening a lot and not making art. I felt a sort of creative rebirth from the earth.

The four *Soul Gardens* books were started using photocopies of an Italian garden book that I was working on in my conservation business. My images are a collage—bits and pieces rearranged and copied. There is one complete original set of images on the paper, and one on Mylar. Each set started out as one larger book, but I decided that the smaller format was more interesting so I cut it up into two horizontal books. The smaller format pages were each arranged into two books, all in a different order.

Over the black and white images, I covered the pages with burnt sienna. I don't like seeing a blank canvas with no color and always start with a colored ground. I treat book pages the same as paintings. After the sienna layer, the pages were air brushed with greens and gold with some interference colors, which is why many of them shine. The final layer was done more carefully with acrylic paint and colored pencil drawings. As I added each layer, I added my own imagery. The writing is a stream of journal writings having to do with gardens and symbolism. Each book has the same text.

The bindings of the two *Soul Gardens* books on paper are fairly traditional and use a leather case binding. The sections are sewn on meeting guards so that they

will open flat. The endpapers and Mylar flyleaves are made with paste mixed with acrylic paint. I sometimes sand the Mylar before using it like paste paper, but not always because sanding ruins the transparency. If the color gets too thick there may be some trouble with peeling, but generally this is not a problem.

The cover design of the *Soul Gardens* is derived from the images within the book. It is executed in blind and gold tooling pigment and foil tooling. I also used acrylic paint diluted with paste. I wanted the covers to be similar to the paintings in the books.

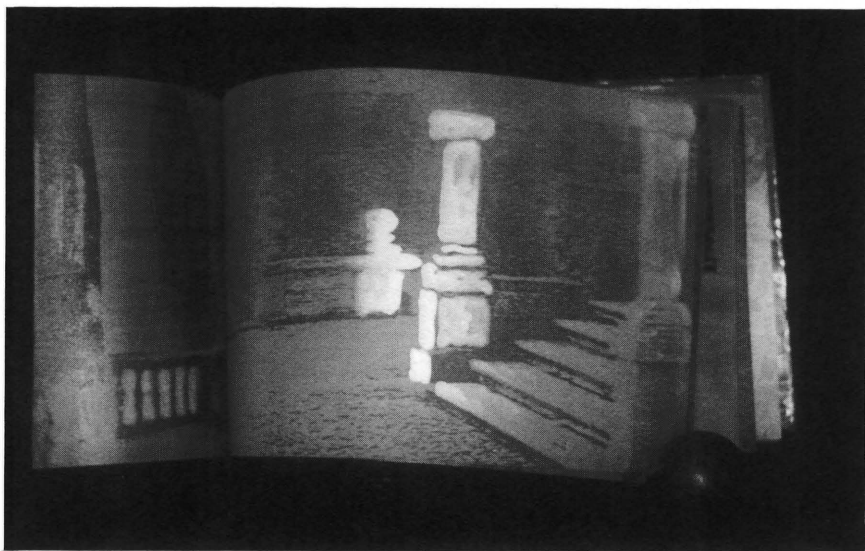
The Mylar page books are sewn on supports made of laminated, dyed, alum-tawed cowhide and parchment. The books are sewn with a link stitch using thick, colored, linen thread. The covers are very thin copper wrapped around matboard, the leather thongs are simply inserted into a groove, and the metal hammered shut. There is no lettering or other decoration. I like metal and am using it more and more on my book covers.

There were three or four more garden books that I started with the intention of entering them into the show. These will be the next generation; they are done with simple drawn and painted imagery, as well as my own writing.

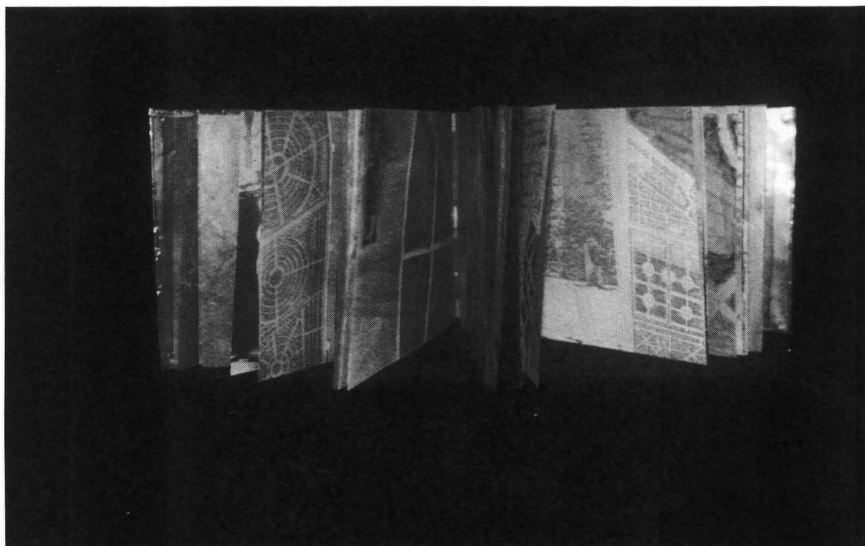
SOUL GARDENS NO. 1/ Laura Wait

Copper cover on artist's book. No. 1 of four related, unique books. Handsewn onto leather supports. Text is a garden exploration, with some writing by the artist. Hand colored photocopies and painted images on Mylar. 1997.

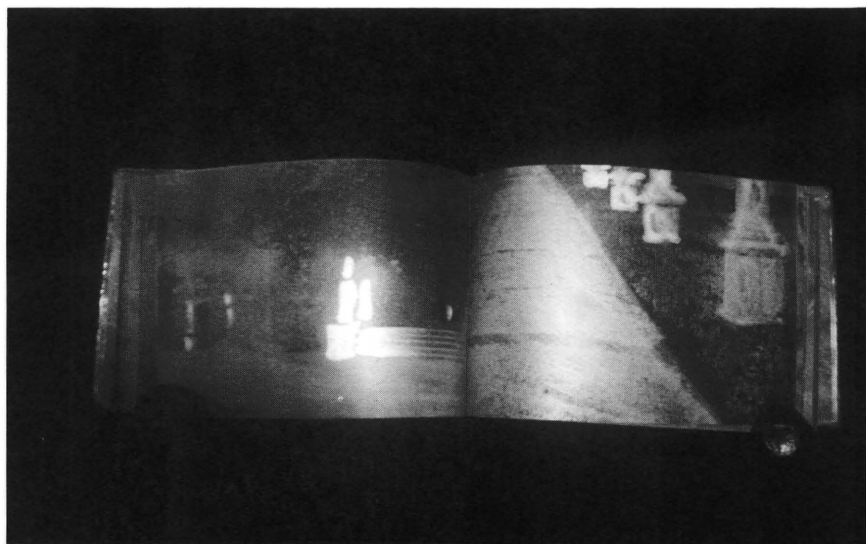
Collection of the artist



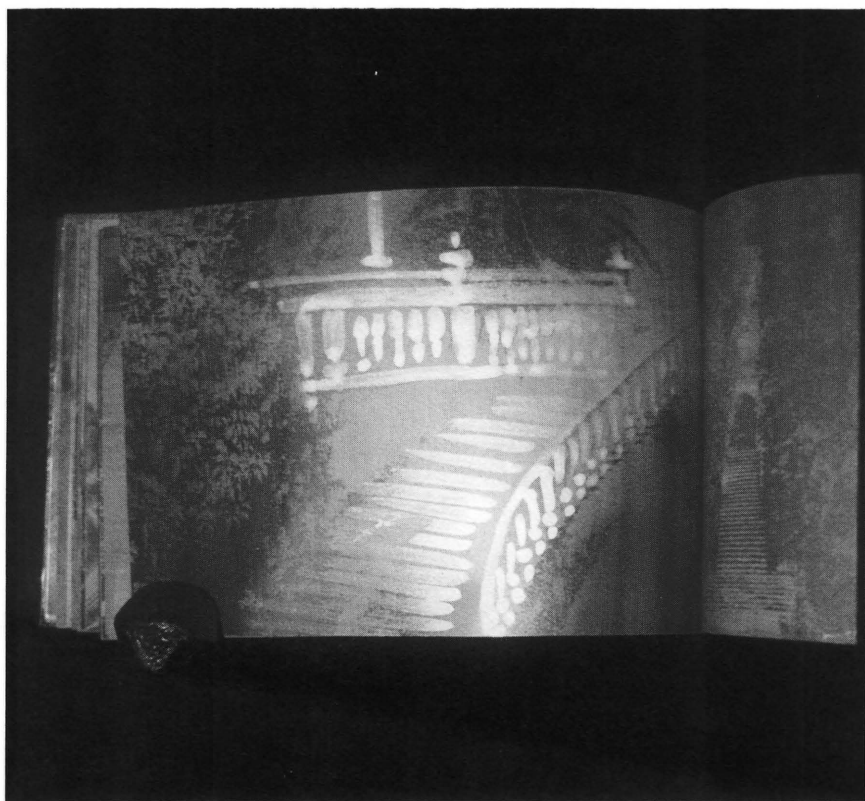
Soul Gardens No. 1. A column and a stair painted in luminous paint. The iron ball on the right was used in the exhibition to help hold the pages open. Such balls are used in concrete recycling to help break down the pieces, until they eventually become small enough to be discarded.



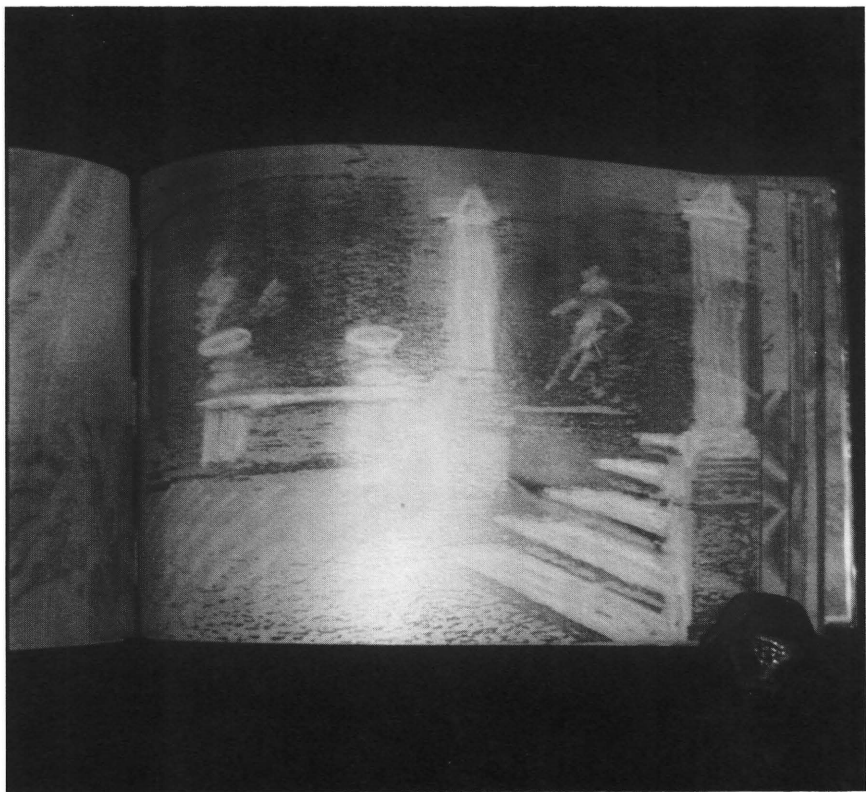
Soul Gardens No. 1. Open pages of the book, mostly garden plans. You can see the garden plans as well as the grass. The pages were first photocopied with images, then painted with terra cotta colored paste paint, then airbrushed with greens and gold acrylics. Detail was then added with color pencils and acrylic paint, primarily a thin airbrush paint.



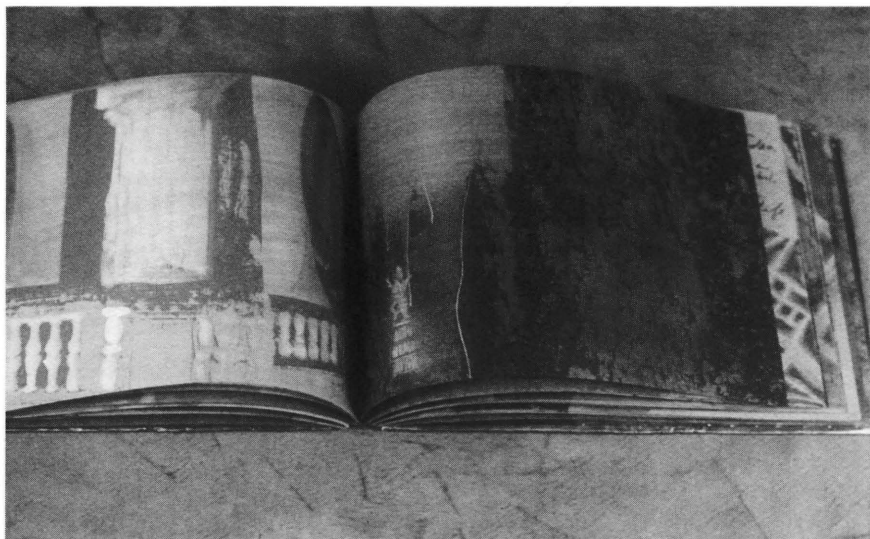
Soul Gardens No. 1. Pathways and walkways and mysterious figures peeking out from the forest. I am fascinated by garden pathways, by ritual walks, and by dreams.



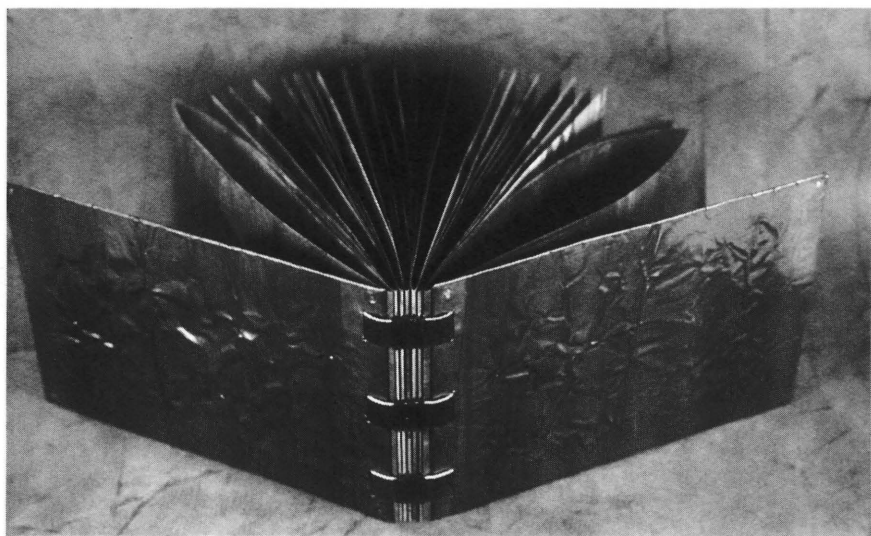
Soul Gardens No. 1. A stairway painted in luminous paint—going nowhere but everywhere.



Soul Gardens No. 1. Columns and magical figures in the gardens. Another stairway in which only the beginning is visible.



Soul Gardens No. 1. Dark trees and balcony colonnades.

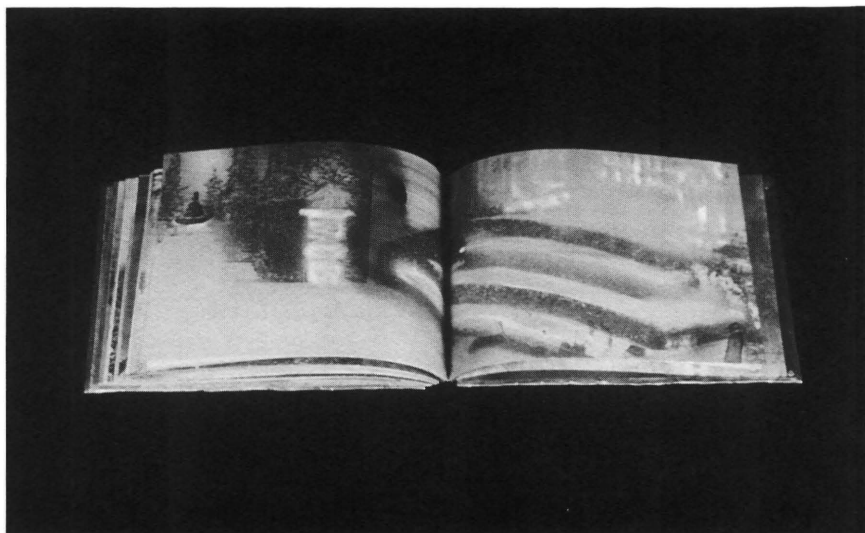


Soul Gardens No. 1. The cover. The sections were sewn onto leather straps. These were attached to a thin card cover wrapped with copper. The copper was deliberately wrinkled to create an interesting appearance. *Soul Gardens* No. 2 was also bound in this way.

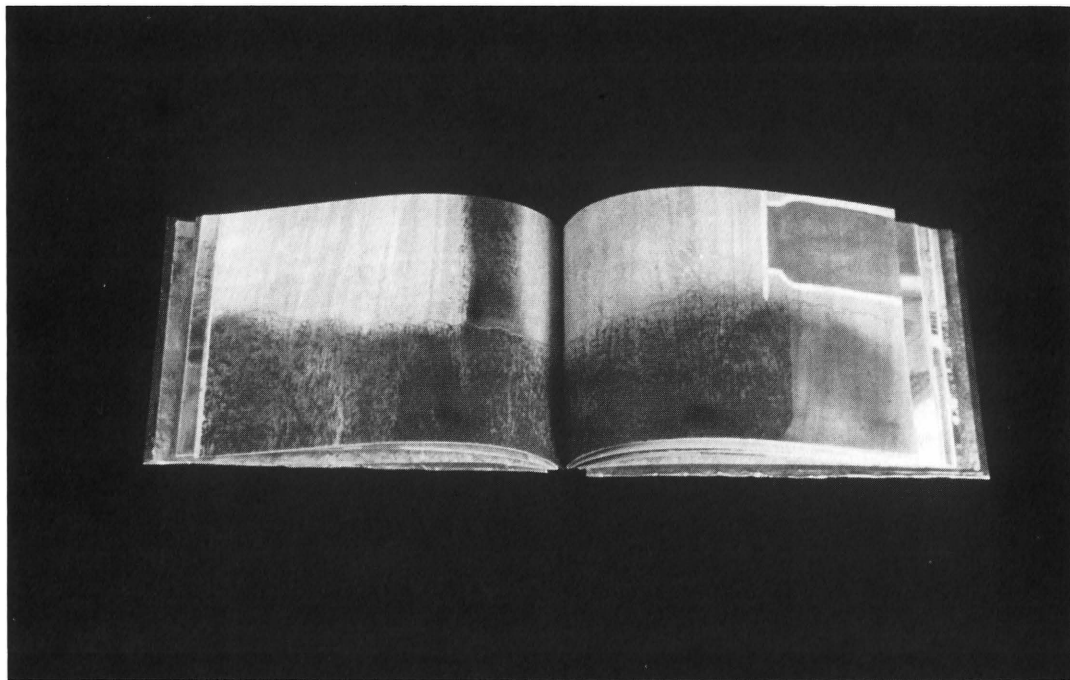
SOUL GARDENS NO. 2/ Laura Wait

Copper cover on artist's book. No. 2 of four related unique books. Handsewn onto leather supports. Text is a garden exploration, with some writing by the artist. Hand-colored photocopies and painted images on Mylar. 1997.

Collection of the artist



Soul Gardens No. 2. Fountain in the background on the left-hand side, and a golden stairway on the right. I used a blue shiny paint for most of the water.

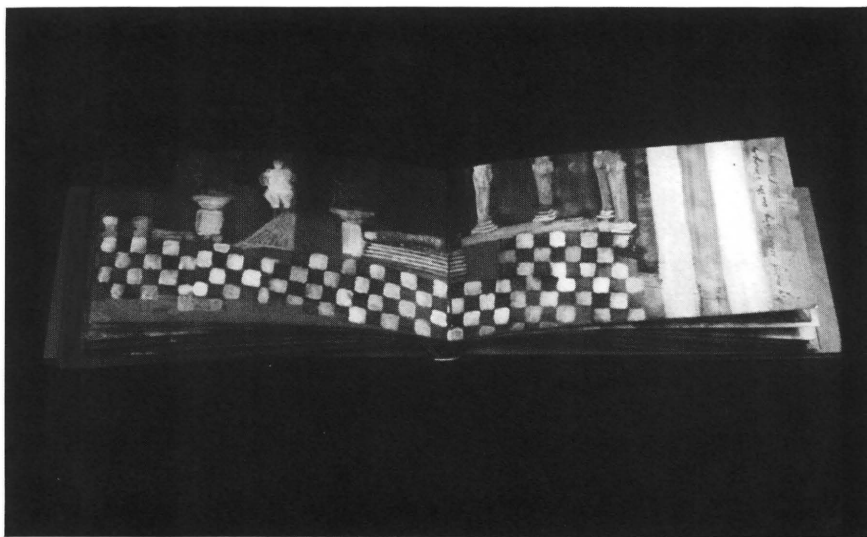


Soul Gardens No. 2. This page was used on the back of the small flyer that was published for the show. Green trees with a terra cotta background; a shiny green line delineated the hedge on the bottom.

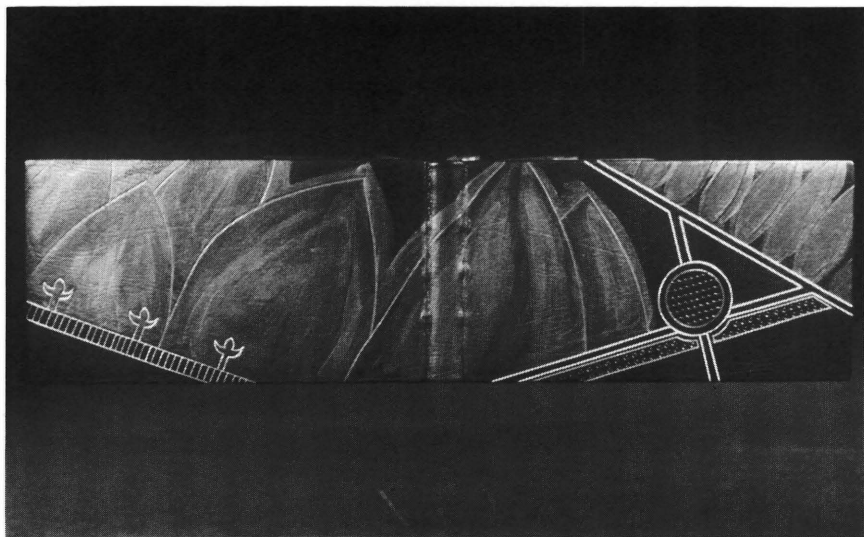
SOUL GARDENS NO. 3/ Laura Wait

Leather binding on artist's book. No. 3 of four related unique books. Cover unique. Text is a garden exploration, with some writing by the artist. Hand colored photocopies and painted images. Dark green leather. Hand decorated paste endsheets. Decorated with acrylic paint, colored foil, and blind and gold tooling. Cover design based on artwork within book. 1997.

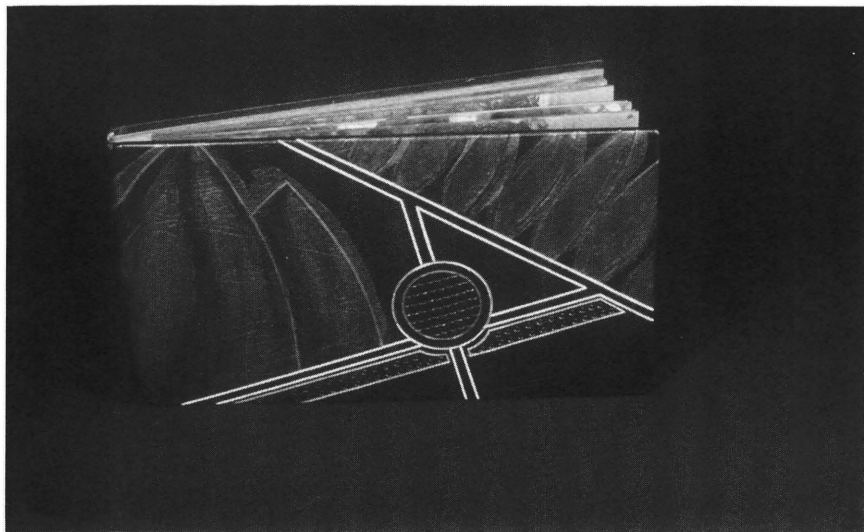
University of Colorado, Special Collections



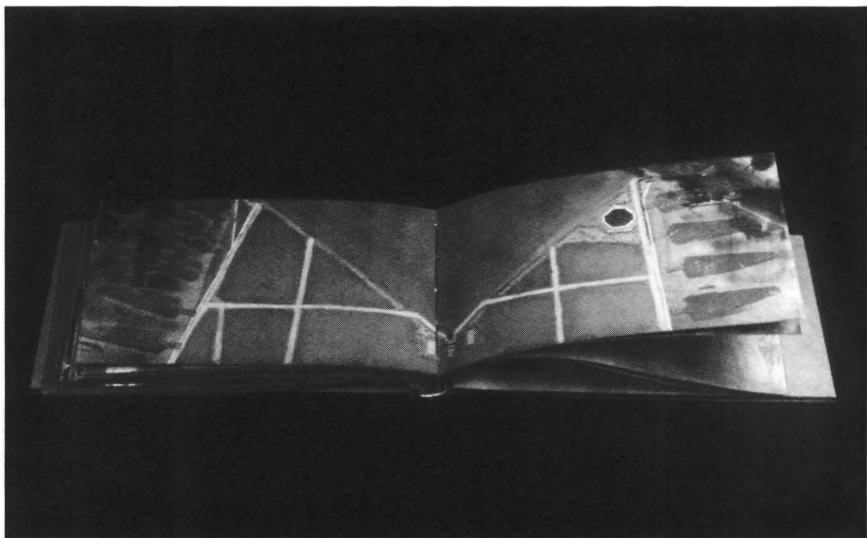
Soul Gardens No. 3. Books No. 3 and No. 4 started with the same imagery. These copies were printed on paper to start. This page has columns, caryatids, and a checkerboard pattern. For some reason, I love checkerboards and put them in many of my paintings.



Soul Gardens No. 3. The cover is dark green Harmatan goatskin, with a design taken from one of the pages within this book. The trees are painted with several layers of very thin paste and acrylic. The lines are gold and yellow foil and paint. There is a water fountain in the middle of the right-hand side.



Soul Gardens No. 3. The front cover (right-hand side only).

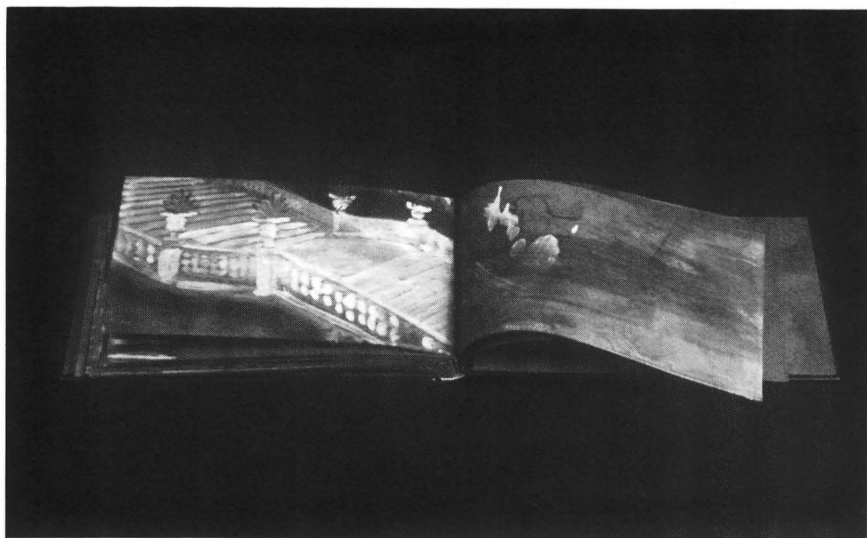


Soul Gardens No. 3. A painted garden from above, with parkways and green fields. Dark green trees on the edges.

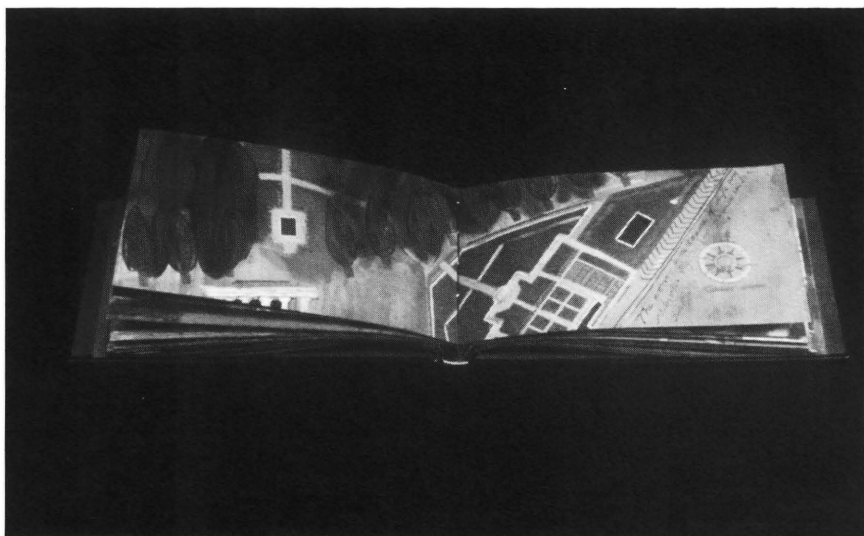
SOUL GARDENS NO. 4/ Laura Wait

Leather binding on artist's book. No. 4 of four related unique books. Cover unique. Text is a garden exploration, with some writing by the artist. Hand colored photocopies and painted images. Dark green leather. Hand decorated paste endsheets. Decorated with acrylic paint, colored foil, and blind and gold tooling. Cover design based on artwork within book. 1997.

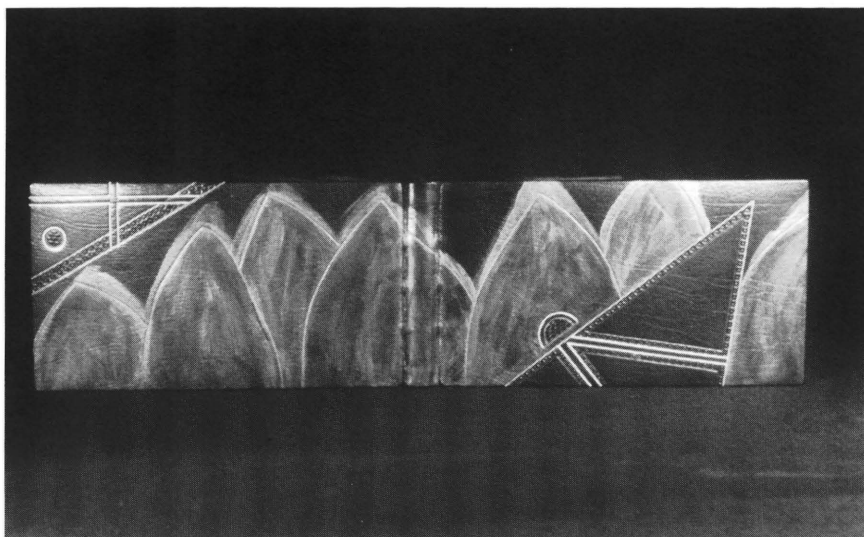
Collection of the artist



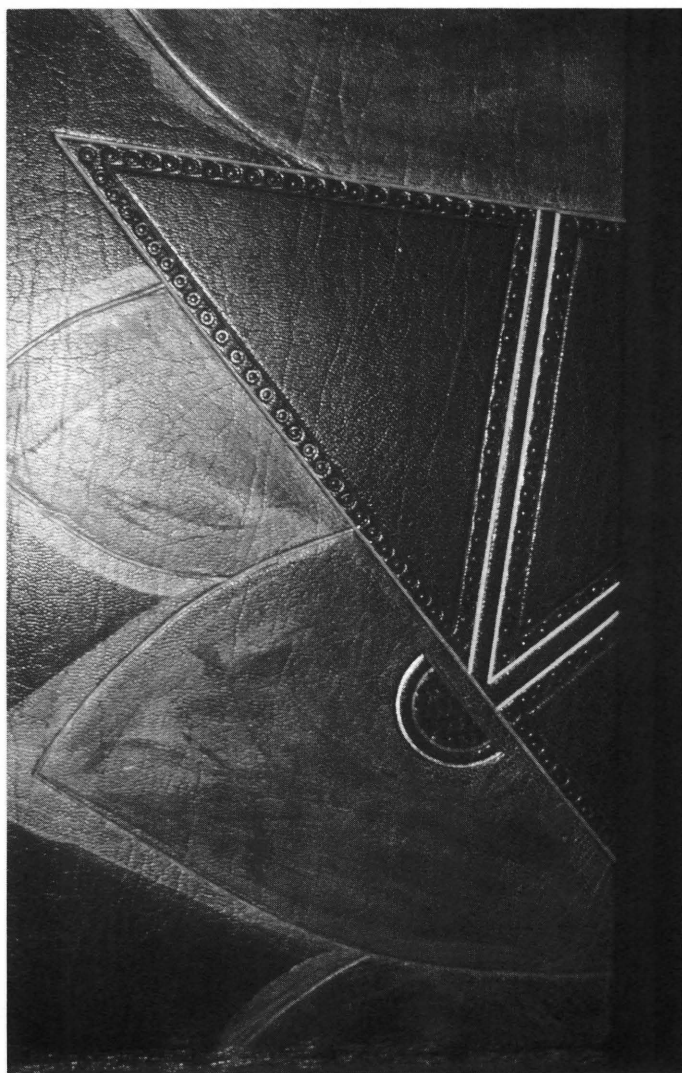
Soul Gardens No. 4. The last page—a stairway walking out of the book. The right-hand side shows the endpapers, which are Mylar pages with many layers of paste acrylic paint on them. These are followed by endleaves of paste paper attached to the cover.



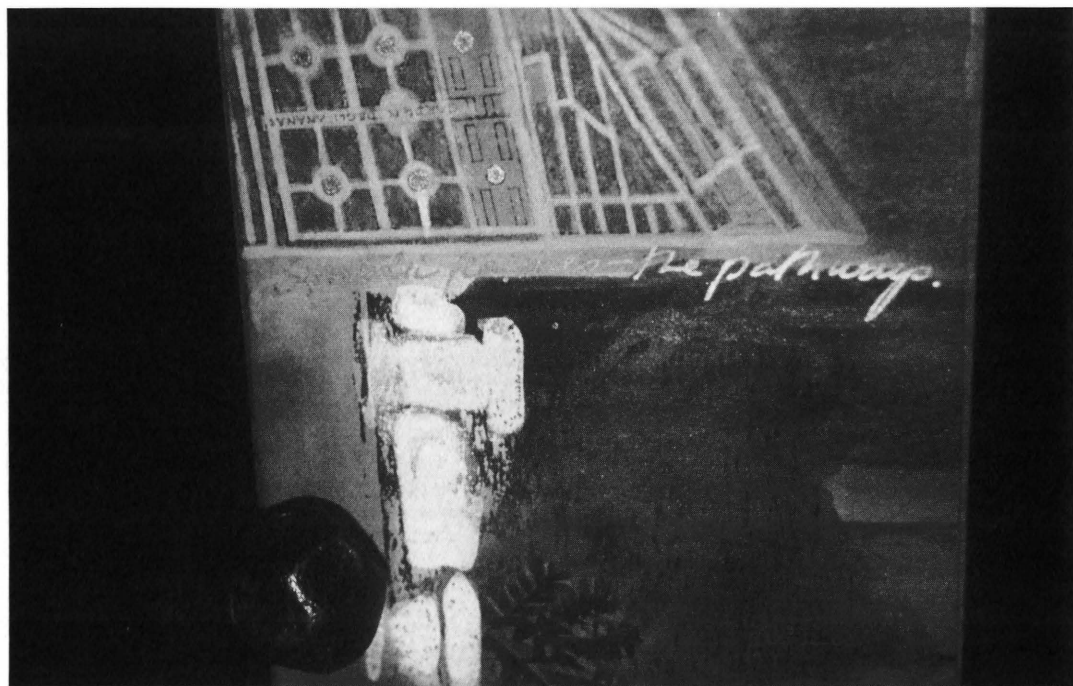
Soul Gardens No. 4. Garden plans. The paper allowed me to apply more layers of color. It is not as mysterious, but is more detailed.



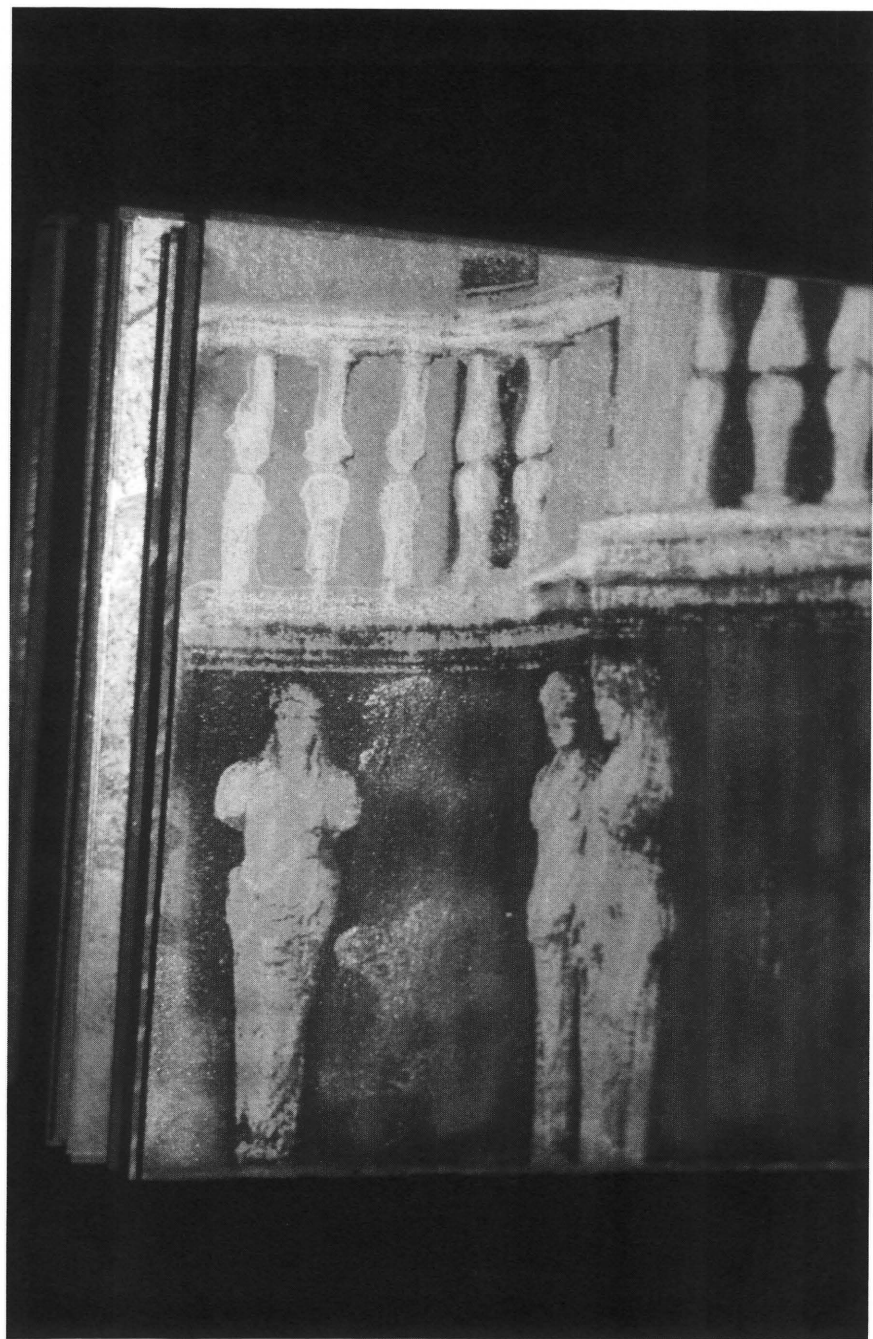
Soul Gardens No. 4. The cover. The style is very similar to that of No. 3.



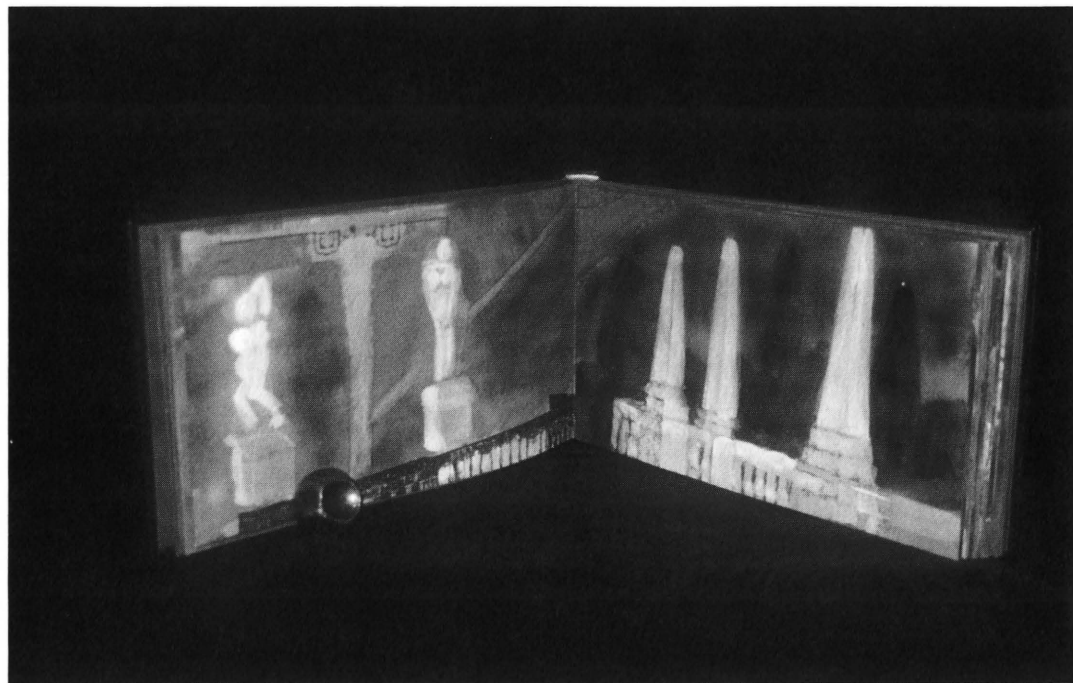
Soul Gardens No. 4. A detail from the back cover of book No. 4.



Soul Gardens No. 4. A detail from a page with trees and a garden plan. The iron ball on the left is another one of the iron balls – the very wired ones with honeycomb patterns.



Soul Gardens No. 4. Three caryatids columns. These female figures represent some of my older work, when I painted a lot of nude female figures. They seem to be creeping back into my work.



Soul Gardens No. 4. Brighter colors than those used in books No. 1 and No. 2, this spread has a bright blue sky and a terra cotta background, with columns and caryatids.

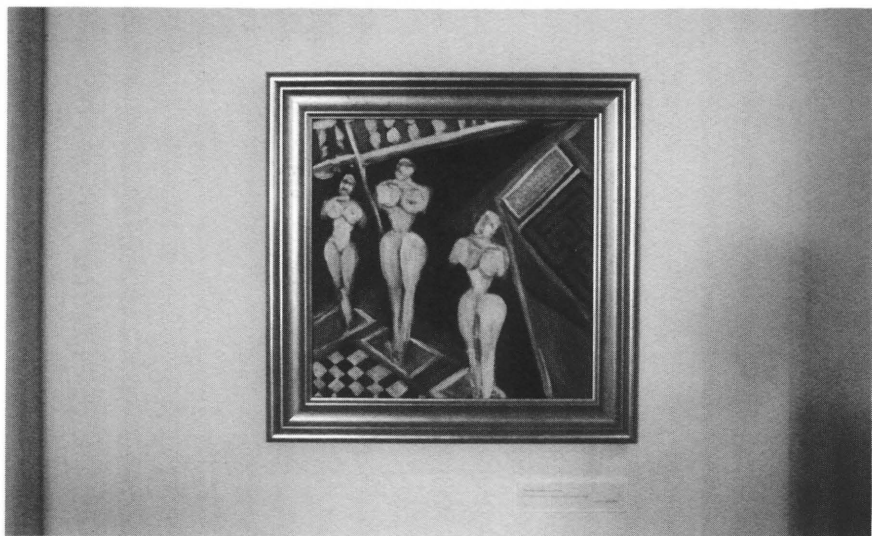
THE THREE GRACES (Painting)

This painting is derived from one of the images in the *Soul Gardens* books. I took a square cut out of cardboard, and looked around the pages for an interesting composition. The general idea is related. The three stages of woman—virgin, mother, and “old crone,” and in this case, the three graces. The painting style is very similar to the book pages, using many thin layers of paint to build up an image.

THE THREE GRACES/ Laura Wait

1997. Acrylic on canvas. Design derived from garden books.

Collection of the artist



The Three Graces. The female figures here are based on one of the drawings in *The Soul Gardens* books.

THREE GARDEN OF VERSES BINDINGS

The design of these books is an example of how design evolves with a series of related books. I started my ABC garden book *Cosmic Garden* for the GBW Abecdarium show during the time I was working on the *Soul Gardens* books. The images in the ABC book are derived in part from the *Soul Gardens*.

The binding designs for the three bindings for the *Garden of Verses* were in turn based on some pages from the *Cosmic Garden*. In addition, I recently finished two more garden books that have an expanded garden alphabet and wooden covers.

Two of the cover designs are basically garden plans. The other is the three graces, or the three stages of woman: virgin, mother, and old crone. Some people have had a hard time relating this to the book, but see it as dream imagery and that the abstract concepts of "woman" and "garden" are naturally connected.

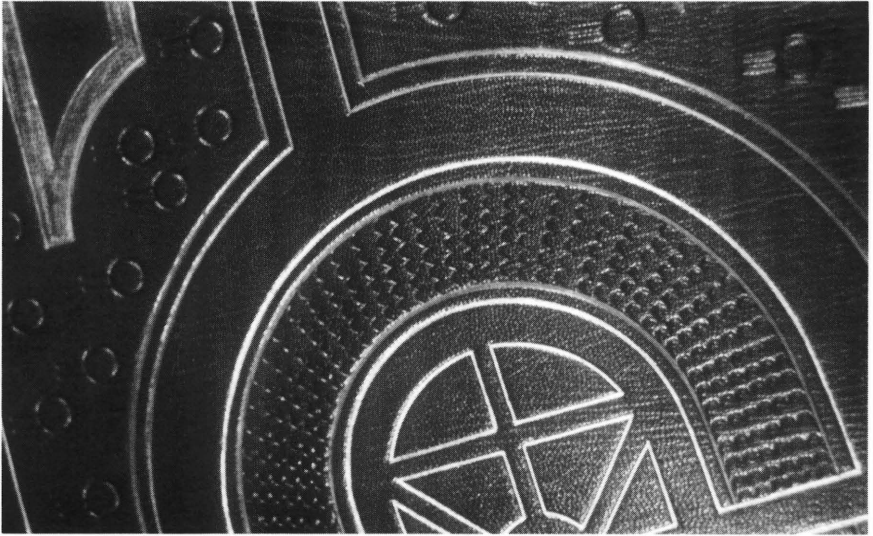
Again, I went through the *Cosmic Garden* with a cut-out and found three designs that I liked for the covers. I copied these onto thin Japanese paper and used this as a tool pattern, working through it to begin the tooling. After the designs were blinded in, I used airbrush acrylic paint to apply color. I like to use this very thin (diluted with paste) so that the leather grain shows through. I have found that it is indestructible and can't be removed once it is in place, so I am fairly careful about its application. Color and occasional gold tooling finished the tooling. These are traditional English fine bindings, with handsewn endbands, and colored top edges.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES/ Robert Louis Stevenson

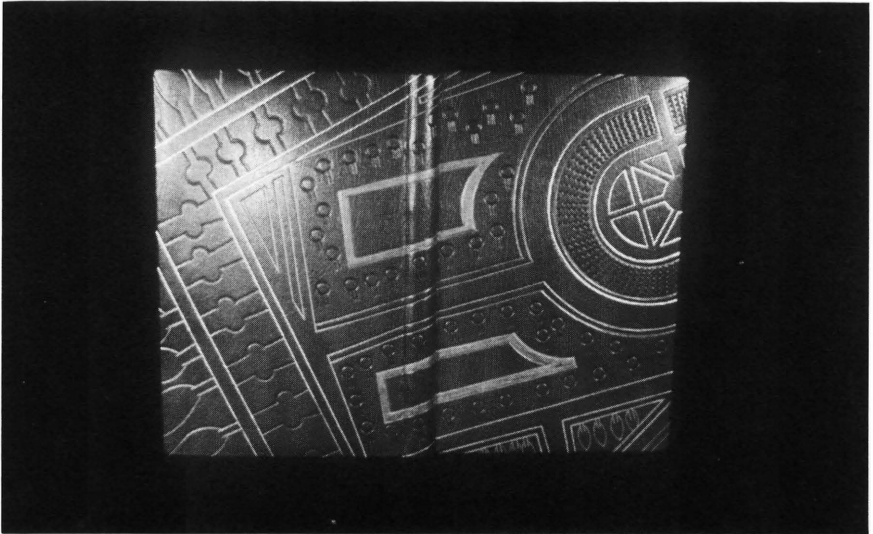
Dark green.

Fine leather binding on small press edition by Adrian Wilson of Tuscany Alley Press. 1978. Binding 1998. Dark green leather, colored edges. Hand decorated paste endsheets decorated with acrylic paint, colored foil, and blind and gold tooling. Garden design based on artwork of unique books created by Laura Wait.

Collection of the artist



A Child's Garden of Verses. Dark green. A detail of the tooling for the binding of this book. The designs of all three of these books came directly out of the pages for the *ABC of Gardens* that I did directly after completing the *Soul Gardens* books.



A Child's Garden of Verses. Dark green. The cover is meant to work as an entire painting, with a garden plan spreading over the cover.



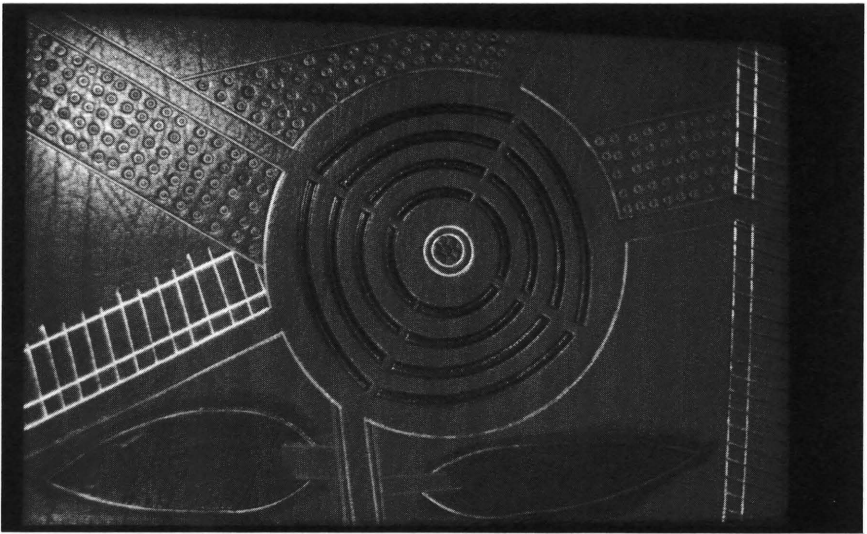
A Child's Garden of Verses. Dark green. The tooling is gold, blind, blue, and red and dark green foil. The painted green areas are done with acrylic paste paint. I have found this to be impossible to remove, so mistakes can't be made!

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES/ Robert Louis Stevenson

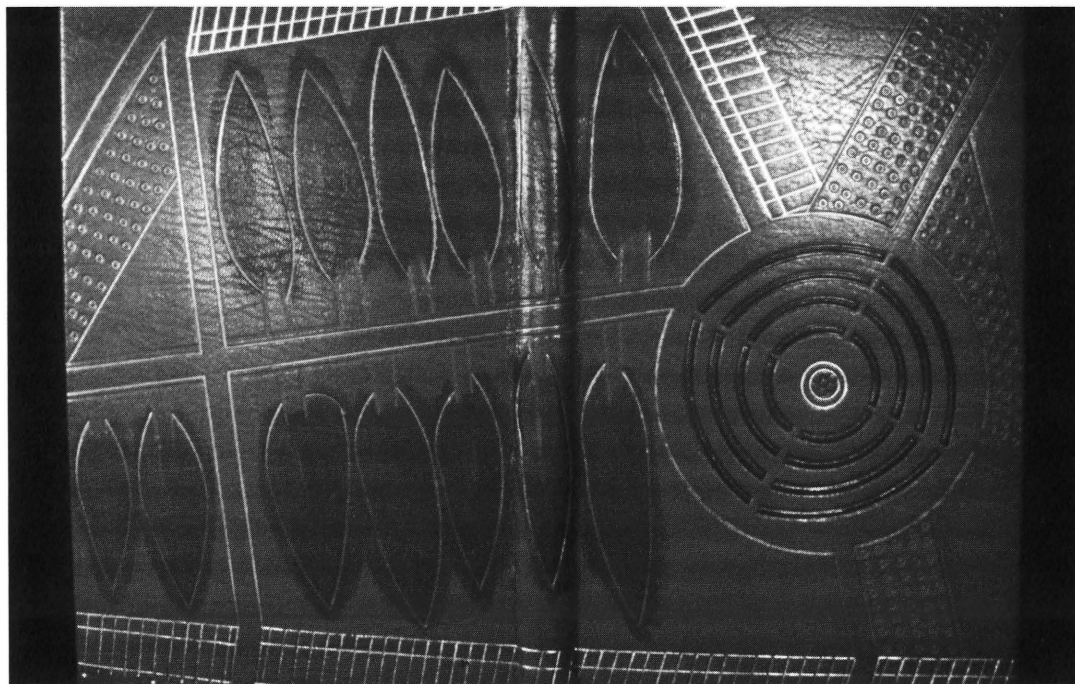
Terra cotta.

Fine leather binding on small press edition by Adrian Wilson of Tuscany Alley Press. 1978. Binding 1998. Terra cotta leather, colored edges. Hand decorated paste endsheets. Decorated with acrylic paint, colored foil, and blind and gold tooling. Garden design based on artwork of unique books created by **Laura Wait**.

Collection of the artist



A Child's Garden of Verses. Terra cotta. Detail of the front cover. The circular pattern around water is a recurring motif in gardens, with pathways outward to enter the garden.



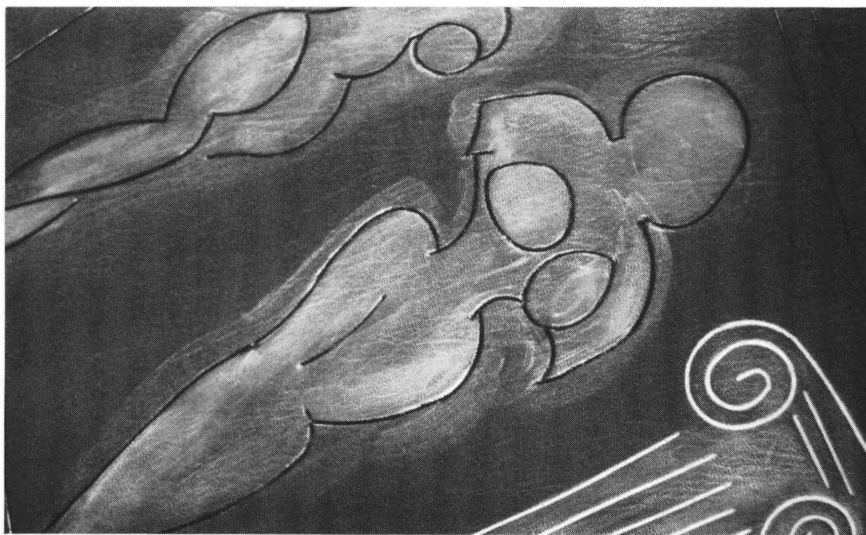
A Child's Garden of Verses. Terra cotta. This tooling is similar in style to the dark green book.

A CHILD'S GARDEN OF VERSES/ Robert Louis Stevenson

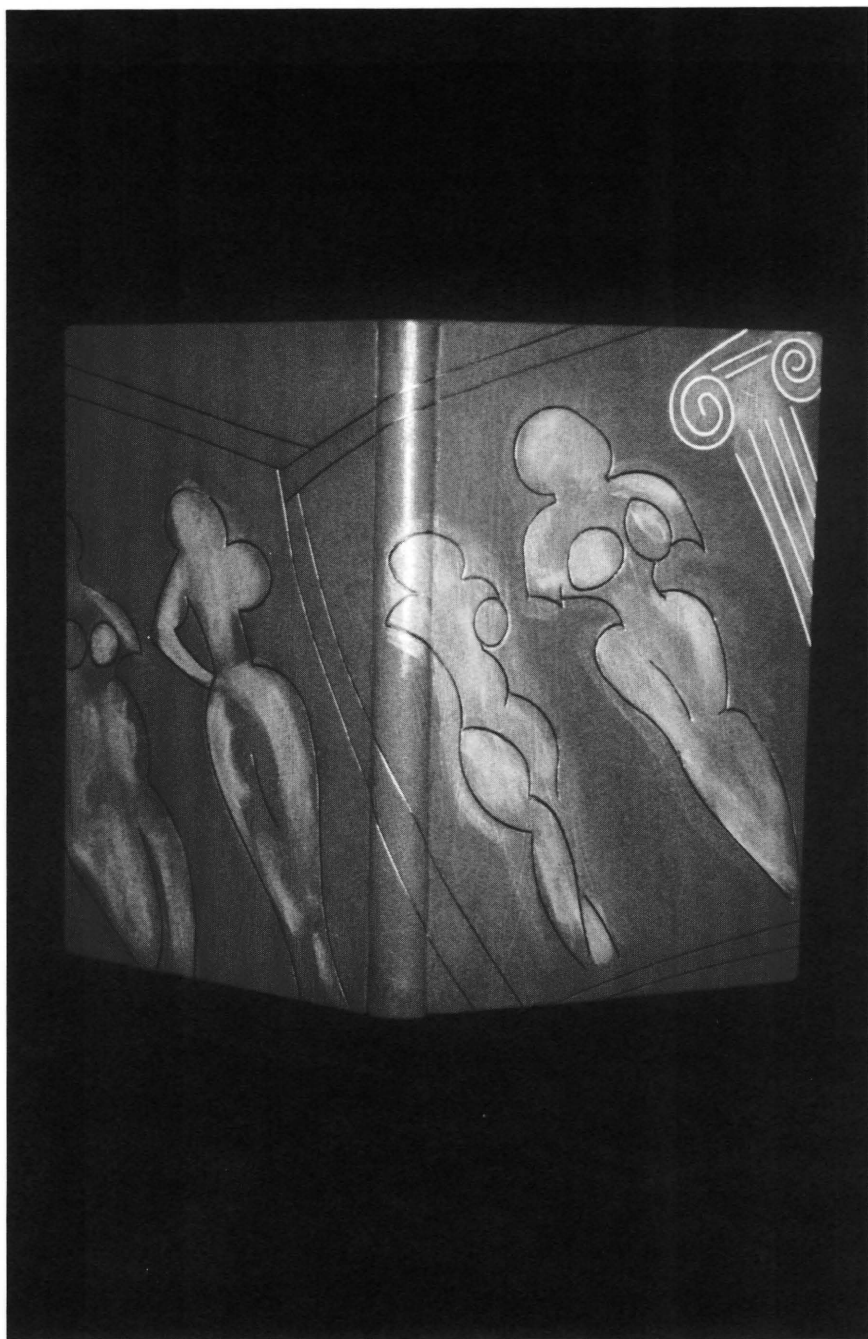
Tan.

Fine leather binding on small press edition by Adrian Wilson of Tuscany Alley Press. 1978. Binding 1998. Tan leather, colored edges. Hand decorated paste end-sheets. Decorated with acrylic paint, colored foil, and gold tooling. Caryatid design based on artwork of unique books created by Laura Wait.

Collection of the artist



A Child's Garden of Verses. Tan. Detail of the caryatids. These are from the gardens and I see them as female/mother figures.



A Child's Garden of Verses. Tan. This binding has more paint on it than the others, and very spare tooling, mostly in gold and cream. The cream-colored lines are foil with paint added.

CONCLUSION

In conjunction with my exhibit, Regis University published a handout catalog with a complete list of my books and an article by Jane Dalrymple-Hollo. The article is reprinted here. They also hosted a reception, sent out a postcard, and took my husband and me out to a very nice dinner after the reception.

In conclusion, I am honored to be asked to write this article, and thankful for the opportunity to discuss my work. I am most interested in the ideas and the creative processes at which one arrives to some resolution in artwork. The books and ideas I discuss here are the foundation for my current work, which continues to draw heavily on symbolism. My images are becoming more abstract, and my books are gradually including more text and handwriting. The pages are becoming more spontaneously generated like my paintings, rather than relying on a bank of photocopies. The paintings and books inspire each other.

Please feel free to write or call me with questions.

I would like to give thanks to Alicia Bailey, Jane Dalrymple-Hollo, Shawn Gerwig, and my husband, Bob Hagerty for reading and reviewing this article.



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All back issues of the *Journal* ea. \$5.00

Fine Printers Finely Bound, catalogue of the 1986 exhibition of finely made books in edition bindings shown at the Metropolitan Museum \$5.00

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Exhibition catalogues from the New England Chapter, previously included as inserts in some *Journal* issues, are available. Inquire.

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