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AND MORE...

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The Guild of Book Workers is a national organization representing the hand book crafts. There are regional chapters in New England, New York, the Delaware Valley, Washington DC, the Midwest, California, the Rocky Mountains, Texas, the Northwest and the Southeast.

Membership is open to all interested persons and includes a print copy of this Newsletter, among many other benefits. To become a member, please visit the Guild of Book Workers website:

guildofbookworkers.org

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Front Cover: Guiseppe Arcimboldo. Bibliotekarien, ~1562.

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Letter from the President

DEAR MEMBERS,

Happy New Year!

We are looking forward to seeing many of you at the Standards of Excellence Seminar in San Francisco from September 28th through 30th. We are thrilled to announce the stellar line-up of presenters: Brien Beidler, Gabby Cooksey, Jeff Peachey, and Steph Rue!

Among the events during Standards, the American Academy of Bookbinding will be hosting a 30th Anniversary and Graduation celebration at the American Bookbinders Museum on Friday, September 29th at 7pm. More information about Standards will be coming soon.

At the November meeting of the Board of Directors, the following committees were approved:

NOMINATING (ELECTIONS) COMMITTEE: Jesse Hunt, Rachel Payne, and Deb Wender

AWARD COMMITTEE: Jeff Altepeter, Sephora Bergiste, and Lisa Muccigrosso

You can submit nominations to the Nominating Committee February 1–April 1 (bit.ly/gbw-nominations). The election will take place in June, with officers beginning their terms in September of 2023.

Nominations for the *Laura Young Award* and the *Lifetime Achievement Award* close on June 1, and will be awarded in September 2023.

Both the Nominating and Awards Committees will be sending out official notices, and please direct any nominations or questions to the appropriate committee.

As always, I welcome your questions or comments at president@guildofbookworkers.org

Be well,

Kate Levy President, Guild of Book Workers

Letter from the Editors

DEAR READERS,

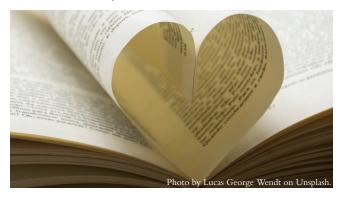
Is it trite to speak of Love in the February issue of a publication? Probably. But in the depths of winter, we all need a little joy and cheer (and love!) to get us through the cold and the dark, *n'est-ce pas*?

In that spirit, this issue features some affectionate articles about terminology (Iris Nevins' musings on marbling troughs, trays, and pans), teachers (Nancy Levitt's tribute to calligrapher Peter Halliday), and texts (co-editor Bridget McGraw's interview with collector Robert Bolick). Beth Lee treats us to a meditation on the fleeting, and perhaps underappreciated, pleasure of practicing one's way back into top form after a break from creative practice. Jeff Peachey reminds us all of our fondness for indecisive clients and patrons in our new feature, Humor Bound.

We offer warmth from the the wider community in the News & Notes zone. The Guild's DEI Committee notifies us of an educational scholarship opportunity for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous & People of Color) teachers and learners, the American Bookbinders Museum and the Newberry Library announce exhibitions, and the Rocky Mountain Chapter offers some more opportunities for admiration of the book. Of course, too much sweetness can be a bit cloying. For an antidote, we have Carletta Carrington Wilson's poetic and thought-provoking piece, which explores the connections between binding books and the bondage of slavery. Take care; the pictures may be emotionally challenging. And Barbara Adams Hebard reviews a book on the history of the book that is perhaps a bit too imaginative for the tastes of a knowledgeable audience such as yourselves.

Show your appreciation for fellow GBW members by nominating someone for the *Lifetime Achievement Award* or the *Laura Young Award*, or by volunteering to cozy up to the Board of Directors in one of the board's open offices (now accepting nominations).

With love from your Newsletter Editorial Team!



THE DARK ARCHIVES SCHOLARSHIP FUND— OPENING MARCH 27, 2023

In partnership with its donors, the Guild of Book Workers is pleased to announce an upcoming funding opportunity.

The scholarship is designed to help expand funding opportunities in the area of Book Arts education. The scholarship funds may be used by any individual identifying as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) towards taking or teaching a book arts class.

Individual grants will be awarded in sums up to \$800. Awarded funds will be payable to individuals with a US tax ID; alternatively, funds for a student's tuition can be paid directly to the institution hosting the class.

Project proposals may include:

- · taking a class offered through a center for book arts
- materials fees for a university class
- private study with a bookbinder
- the purchase of materials necessary to teach a class, etc.

Keep an eye out for an email with more information about the application, which we will post at bit.ly/gbwdarkarchives on Monday, March 27, 2023.

Mark your calendars and share widely. Thank you for helping us spread the word!

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS—GBW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OPEN OFFICES

The following offices are up for election/ re-election in 2023:

• VICE-PRESIDENT: OPEN POSITION

• Secretary: Open Position

• Membership Standing Committee Chair:

Open Position

• TREASURER: Current Treasurer, Lawrence Houston, standing for re-election

• JOURNAL COMMITTEE CHAIR: Current Chair, Kyle Clark, standing for re-election

• LIBRARY COMMITTEE CHAIR: Current Chair, Jay Tanner, standing for re-election

Nominations for these positions will be open to Guild members between February 1st and April 1st.

For full position descriptions—and to submit nominations—please visit GBW's new, online nominations form:

bit.ly/gbw-nominations

2023 AWARDS NOMINATIONS

The Awards Committee of the Guild of Book Workers is seeking written nominations for the 2023 *Lifetime Achievement* and *Laura Young Awards*. We invite all members, Chapter Chairs, and the Board to pass this word along.

THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD—This award recognizes significant contribution to the goals of the Guild and to the field of hand book arts at large via education, professional practice, research,mentorship, etc. Nominees do not need to be GBW members, and we welcome nominations from the larger community of diverse voices and experiences. The award recipient is granted lifetime membership with no obligation to pay dues.

THE LAURA YOUNG AWARD—This award is given to an individual "in recognition of sustained commitment to the Guild; that is, service to the Guild given 'above and beyond." Nominees must be current or former members of GBW.

All nominations must include a letter of support. Letters should include who you are, how you know the nominee, and specific contributions/attributes/achievements you think qualify the nominee for the award. You may submit nominations via email or our new nominations form at gbw.formstack.com/forms/nominations.

To submit directly to the committee via email, send your name, the name of the nominee, the award you're nominating for, and a letter of support to:

Lisa Muccigrosso, Awards Committee Chair— Imucci@iastate.edu

Sephora Bergiste—sephora.bergiste@tufts.edu Jeff Altepeter—jaltepeter@nbss.edu

en miepeter—jatepeter@nbss.edt

The deadline for receipt of nominations is *April 25, 2023*. More information about past award recipients can be found at guildofbookworkers.org/awards.

BOOKNESS | UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD PODCASTS

Heard a good podcast lately? Please, let us know what you're listening to. Kim Norman, our Book Arts Correspondent, suggests this one:

Bookness | University of Oxford Podcasts

A podcast series that wanders into the Bodleian Library's collection of artists' books, pokes around a bit and asks 'what's all this then?' We will be talking to artists, makers, researchers, and curators, and pondering matters such as what makes a book a book, anyway? What happens if a book is made of something that decays? Are there any limits to what a library can collect?

podcasts.ox.ac.uk

News & Notices Cont.

CALLING ALL BOOK ARTS MAKERS! The Rocky Mountain Chapter of GBW is sponsoring an open exhibit in 2023. Online Registration Form: bit.ly/gbw-2023rockyform Accepting Submissions 1/23/23-2/13/23 (all packages must arrive by this date) Send Submissions to: Petrina Bryce 462 S 700 W American Fork, UT 84003 We hope you will participate for a chance to win some fabulous prizes! Prizes: -1st place: (\$500) -2nd place: (\$250) -People's Choice Award: (\$100) We have received amazing donations from the generous sponsors listed below: -Harmatan Leathers -J Hewit & Sons -Talas -Rocky Mountain Leather -Mulberry Paper -Legacy Press JUDGES Madelyn Garrett (UT): Madelyn Garrett is an artist, art historian, former rare book curator and book conservator at the University

of Utah Marriott Library, where she established a nationally recognized book arts program, led the Marriott Library's own Red Butte Press fine press printing program, and conceived and developed a statewide K-12 history-ofthe-book program for Utah's children. She is most interested in the historical book, and her work often references the books and book forms of the past.

Christina Thomas (UT):

Christina Q Thomas was first trained as a book conservation technician while a student at BYU from 2000 to 2004. She later completed the two-year bookbinding program at the North Bennet Street School in Boston in 2008. After completing conservation internships at Haverford College, the Boston Public Library, and the LDS Church History Library, Christina joined the BYU Library Conservation staff in 2009.

Karen Jones (CO):

Karen has been a book and paper conservator in private practice in Denver for more than 30 years. A professional associate member of the American Institute for Conservation since 1990, she is also employed at Jefferson County Public Library. A long-time member of GBW, she's served as a

board member of the Rocky Mountain chapter in every role, currently as treasurer.

Rhiannon Alpers (CO):

Rhiannon is a papermaker, letterpress printer and book artist. She has taught academic courses and workshops nationally since 2003 and relocated to the Denver area with her family in 2020 from San Francisco. Currently she is Executive and Creative Director at InterOcean Studio, an educational facility for the book arts in the Denver metro area. She produces limited edition and sculptural artist books under the imprint of Gazelle and Goat Press.

Important to Note:

-You CAN resubmit work from digital exhibits for traveling exhibits.

-Your submissions will be returned to you by the end of September 2023.

We are so excited for this exhibit and hope you will participate!

Happy Binding! Your RMC Board

NEWBERRY LIBRARY MOVEABLE BOOKS **EXHIBITION**

The Newberry Library's forthcoming exhibition, Pop-Up Books through the Ages, will be open to the public in the Trienens Galleries March 21-July 15, 2023. The exhibition, which features books and ephemera from the Newberry collection, "traces the extensive history of hands-on reading. Tactile, interactive components can be found in everything from a 1483 astronomical calendar to a 1932 edition of Pinocchio. Viewing these different items in one place, visitors will see how the art, science, and business of pop-up books evolved over hundreds of years."

THE MANY LIVES OF BOOKS: EXPLORING THE WORK OF BOOK **CONSERVATORS**

January 28-April 29, 2023

American Bookbinders Museum, San Francisco

"Enter the nuanced world of the Book Conservator. To the uninitiated, book conservation suggests book repair: taking a book that has been damaged through age, use, or accident, and fixing it so that it can go back into service. But Conservators look at a damaged book and see not only the physical damage, but the story the book itself has to tell. The goal: to retain as much of the book's physical history as possible, while making it strong enough to continue as a resource.

... From the beginnings of conservation through the Florence flood of 1966, to modern techniques and the tools

News & Notices Cont.

of the conservator's workbench, this exhibit provides a window into what it takes to preserve the story of a book."

CALL FOR CONSERVATION-THEMED ARTICLES

Have you hotly debated the difference between conservation and preservation with your colleagues? Do you have dramatic (or comic) "Before and After" images that you would like to share with the Guild?

We are planning to dedicate our August 2023 *Newsletter* to conservation and preservation.

Please send us your articles, bibliographies, or descriptions of interesting or unusual treatments by July 1st. If you'd like help developing an idea, please get in touch and we'd be happy to help! We can be reached at newsletter@guildofbookworkers.org.





Chapter Reports

Midwest

CHAIR: Lisa Muccigrosso

Members of the Midwest Chapter are invited to send their intent to enter our upcoming virtual exhibition: *Modern Renaissance*. We welcome members to explore an aspect of rebirth and/or share something new you've made over the past few years. We're accepting work in the following categories: Fine binding, artists' books, boxes or enclosures, cut paper and/or paper engineering, and flat works (prints/ broadsides, calligraphy, marbled and decorated papers).

The intent to enter will be open between January 15 and February 28, 2023. Submissions will be accepted online May I-3I, and the exhibit will be launched online in July 2023.

Send your intent to enter, and learn more, at the following URL: midwestgbw.wordpress.com/exhibits/.

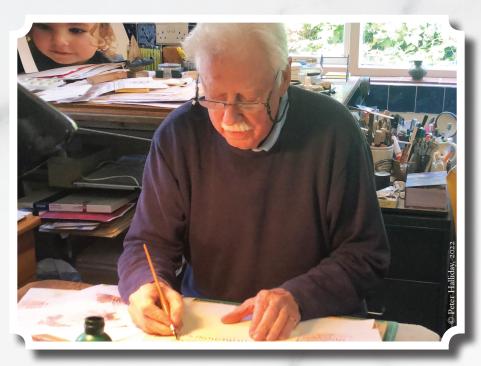
Potomac

CHAIR: Shannon Kerner SECRETARY: Nora Lockshin

Tawn O'Connor was featured in a short photo essay about the Grand Reopening of the Frederick Book Arts

Center (January 7, 2023). Check out the piece in the Frederick News Post or via FBAC's Newsletter (please sign up!) for terrific shots, and more about supporting the phoenix that supports our western reach. Katie Wagner, as co-curator, opened an exhibit entitled *Nature of the Book*, focused on the material culture of bookmaking. The exhibit is on view in the Smithsonian Libraries and Archives cases within the National Museum of Natural History through early 2024. A webinar and virtual tour, with insights about the unique challenges and successes of creating this exhibit throughout the pandemic, is available for viewing at bit.ly/ gbw-natureofthebook.

A call for entries has gone out to DC, MD, and VA-based members for the biennial Creative Crafts Council exhibition, a consortium of twelve crafts guilds that sponsors one of the Washington area's premier craft shows. The show will open in May and be on view through July 2023 at the Mansion at Strathmore in North Bethesda, Maryland. We look forward to planning more in-person opportunities for meetups as conditions permit.



OBITUARY

Peter Halliday, SSI calligrapher, 1939–2022

by Nancy Leavitt

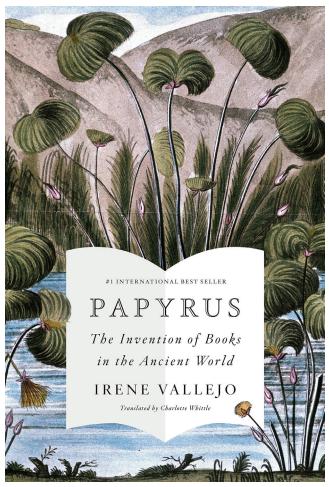
FIRST MET PETER HALLIDAY in the early 1980s when he travelled to the coast of Maine to teach several summer workshops. In our first class he taught us how to make glair (distilled egg white) and use it as a binder with gouache. We were introduced to fine handmade papers and writing vellum, and then—he cured and cut us each a swan quill. It was a calligrapher's dream.

Peter considered that he had a classical education in lettering and illumination, since his instructors were descendents of Edward Johnston's teaching at the Royal College of Art. His first assignment from Maisie Sherley at Medway College of Art was to design and create a book. The project involved preparing writing vellum and quills, hand lettering and gilding a text on the vellum, and binding it.

Peter Halliday graduated from Medway College of Art in 1960 with a National Diploma in Design, specializing in Writing, Illuminating and Lettering. He was a full-time teacher until his retirement in 1992 as Head of the Faculty of Art and Design at John Taylor High School in Bartonunder-Needwood in Staffordshire. He then continued his parallel career as a freelance calligrapher and lettering artist. Peter taught and lectured widely in the British Isles and the USA and wrote, edited and contributed to many books on calligraphy and lettering. He was elected a Fellow of the prestigious Society of Scribes and Illuminators in 1976 and was its Chairman from 1981–85. He was a founding member of Letter Exchange and is the Founder, Chairman, and Honored Fellow of the Calligraphy and Lettering Arts Society.

He exhibited widely throughout the UK, Europe and the USA. His works are held in the Collection of Contemporary Calligraphy in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and in the Houghton Library, Harvard University, USA. He also has work in many public and private collections. As quoted in his profile at the Calligraphy Lettering Arts Society, in a recent introduction to an exhibition catalogue he was described as "having an international reputation as one of the foremost calligraphers and teachers in the western world. Outstanding both in his originality of design and in beauty of execution, his work has for many years been at the forefront of contemporary lettering art."

Peter was a skilled craftsman, a true master of his tools and materials. He was a highly creative and inventive artist, able to meld lettering and illumination in new and exciting ways. He said, "The pinnacle of a calligrapher's career is to hand letter a book." Peter Halliday was a kind and gentle man and a beloved teacher by all. I am ever grateful for his tutelage and kind support over the years.



Papyrus: the Invention of Books in the Ancient World, Irene Vallejo, translated by Charlotte Whittle, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2022.

BOOK REVIEW

Papyrus: the Invention of Books in the Ancient World

Reviewed by Barbara Adams Hebard

P^{APYRUS:} THE INVENTION of Books in the Ancient World, the much-trumpeted international bestseller, is yet another overview of the history of the book. One of the blurbs on its back cover calls it: "part cultural history, part memoir, part journey of the imagination." Vallejo certainly relies heavily on her imagination when describing historically unknown details such as the gathering of books for the now legendary library at Alexandria.

When outlining the development of libraries, books, and the process of reading, she often follows a non-linear path through time—a potentially distracting writing style. Some of the cohesion in her writing may have been lost when it was translated from its original Spanish. Still, the author confusingly returns again and again to the library at Alexandria, then doubles back to fill in information on an aspect of the materials that make up a scroll/tablet/book, or quite suddenly mingles the topic of oral tradition from different time periods and locations into her narrative almost as an after-thought.

Papyrus is actually a series of essays, many of which detail the author's own experiences in notable libraries and with particular books that she has encountered along the way. Vallejo, when mentioning titles, favors giving "book reports," talking about the plots, rather than the physical

significance a volume may have within the invention of books (the sub-title of her work). Indeed, when she re-tells the epic poem, *The Iliad*, in her own words, it seems as if she was attempting to pad out her story in order to meet an agreed upon page count that she had contracted with her publisher.

After reading a number of Vallejo's essays, this reviewer began to wonder what type of person the publisher envisioned as the potential reader of Papyrus. The meandering style, the constant speculation about the personalities of authors from ancient times (those often only known by name), and the very general way she describes the physical book support the argument that this is not a go-to definitive history of the book that craftspeople, such as members of GBW, would seek out to add to their library. This book, highly praised by renowned publications (e.g., the Wall Street Journal), is better suited to the casual reader. Those essays that explore Vallejo's personal journey as reader and library visitor were far more appealing to peruse than her forays into book history. People interested in reading Papyrus for its memoir components are encouraged to do so and may choose to acquire the book, as did your reviewer, through their local public library.

BARBARA ADAMS HEBARD was trained in bookbinding by Mark Esser at the North Bennet Street School. She is the Conservator at Boston College, both for the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies and the Ricci Institute for Chinese-Western Cultural History. She is a Fellow of The International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, a Professional Associate of The American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works and a long-time member of GBW.





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Some Thoughts on Seeing Fine and Design Bindings by Jodee Fenton

UCH CAN BE learned from studying fine and design bindings. They can be a source of inspiration for one's own work, a resource for learning about technique, or can simply provide the pleasure of communing with a work of art. Fine and design bindings can be seen either in person or in physical or digital photographs. However, there is a clear qualitative difference between seeing a physical artwork versus a photograph of a binding. Libraries, museums, private collections, studio visits, and exhibits are options for viewing bindings in person. Photographs in publications or online make it possible to see several bindings together, regardless of their physical location, and make comparisons and evaluations. To view a binding from a photograph in person, try checking the credit line, which will indicate where the book resides.

LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS. Research libraries usually have collections of fine and design bindings in their Special Collections departments. Library records provide a detailed description of a book, which might include information about the designer, the binder, and perhaps the provenance of the book. Knowing which library to search can be a challenge, so you may want to start with Worldcat, an online catalog of the holdings of most libraries in the United States and many foreign countries.

Once a museum accessions a fine or design binding into its art collections, the artist will be listed in their Registrar's Office. Searching the Registrar's records may be difficult because many of these are not available to the general public. An inquiry to their office may be needed. Museum libraries, on the other hand, have most of their collections listed in their online catalogs. Pay attention to what curators and researchers write about—they often list particular collections and their strengths.

PRIVATE CLUBS AND COLLECTIONS. The Fellowship of American Bibliophilic Societies is an umbrella organization for book collecting clubs across the United States and internationally. Book collecting clubs offer a variety of programs, which might include private collection visits. Some club members have fine and design binding collections, which they would most likely be delighted to share with other members. Some of the clubs host exhibitions and lectures about fine binding. The Grolier Club in New York City is one of the more active in its support of the book arts.

CONFERENCES, EXPOSITIONS AND EXHIBITIONS. Attending a conference, exposition or exhibition provides a unique opportunity to see new work in person and meet the artist. Although the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted these gatherings, schedules are beginning to return to normal. The CODEX Foundation, for example, began hosting gatherings again this April. Local exhibitions can be recurring, like the members' exhibit for the Hand Bookbinders of California, the American Academy of Bookbinding's Open/Set Triennial exhibit, and the Guild of Book Workers members' exhibits. Local libraries and galleries may also host exhibits.

PRINT AND ONLINE RESOURCES. Exhibition Catalogs are often produced as part of a competition and can contain

excellent photographs of bindings, as well as information about the binding and the artist. Auction and Sale Catalogs produced by Sotheby's, Christie's and Phillip J. Pirages all list extraordinary detail about the bindings for sale, often with a very good photograph. These catalogs can be searched online, usually from the company's website.

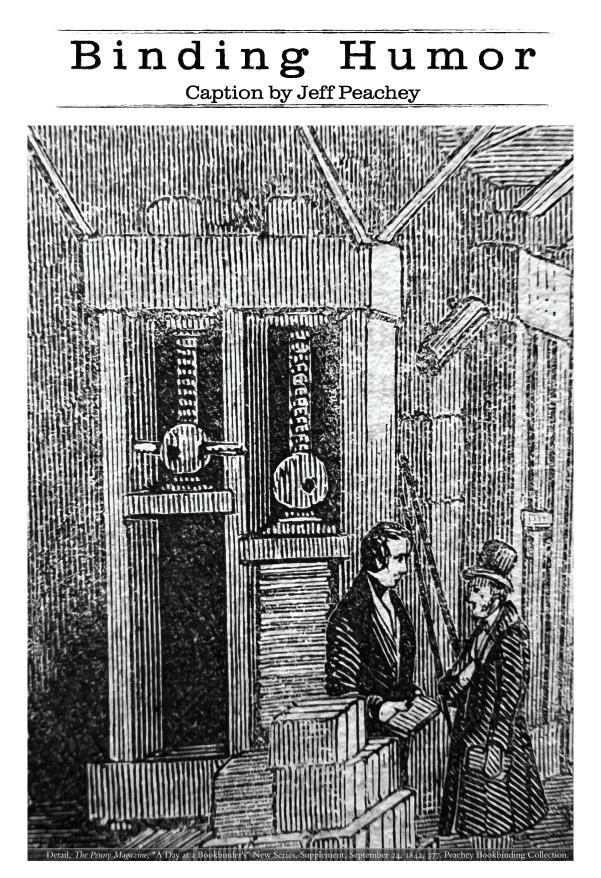
Organizations' publications are another good source for information about bindings. The Designer Bookbinders (United Kingdom) newsletter, for example, features new design bindings from its members. Every year they publish *The New Bookbinder*, with articles about and by individual binders. The Guild of Book Workers produces a Journal (mostly annually) that often features a bookbinder's work. The Society of Bookbinders (United Kingdom) publishes *Bookbinder, Journal of the Society of Bookbinders*, an annual volume that includes photographs and interviews with contemporary binders. Subscribing to these publications usually involves purchasing a membership. Check with your local library to see if they receive them, and if not, ask their acquisitions staff if they would consider adding subscriptions to their collections.

Books, monographs, collected works of a group of artists, and catalogue raisonnés, when they are available, are important resources for seeing bindings. These publications take longer to produce and probably will not have the latest trends, but they do an outstanding job of bringing together artworks by a particular artist or that were produced in a distinct era.

Many libraries have digitized huge swaths of their collections, and beautiful design bindings are attractive additions. Podcasts can be another great resource for finding out about bindings. The iBookbinding podcast, for example, offers an extensive catalog of interesting interviews with book artists. Many organizations produced a variety of online programs during the pandemic, many of which are still accessible. Check out the San Francisco Center for the Book or the Minnesota Center for Book Arts and browse through their recorded programs. Exhibitions often have recorded a "curator tour" of the books on display. Instagram sites by design binders can include well-curated selections of fine and design bindings, many of which would otherwise be challenging to find. For example, Samuel Feinstein's site includes bindings with a wide variety of gold tooling. Artists' websites also include photographs of their bindings that document the work of a single artist.

JODEE FENTON is a Diploma student at the American Academy of Bookbinding in Telluride, Colorado, where she studies with Don Glaister. She works in her home studio, Aubergine Atelier, in Seattle, Washington.





"Dear sir, I do understand that you changed your mind on the color of the leather. But please keep in mind we just covered 450 books!"

Note: the Museum of London has a very similar looking double screw standing press with rafter bracing.

When you haven't been able to letter in weeks, and you finally get back to your studio but every mark you mark you make wery mark you mark you make wery state the seems stilted and unstable and the thing you've been longing to do is now a fresh source of

> frustration and clients are waiting... then you grind your favorite ink stick, choose a favored pen nib, load it using your best loading brush a ratty, ancient hog bristle round and line up the next sheet in your used-to-be will-

> > Image courtesy of Beth Lee.

Image courtesy of Beth Lee.

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aily Practice eturning tø đ/ Beth Leé

AM ALWAYS amazed at how quickly an interruption in my daily lettering practice wreaks havoc with my lettering—and with my confidence.

After a three-week trip during which I did no lettering, I returned to a robust stack of work in the studio. A little anxious about looming deadlines, I plunged right into the work. But nothing was working. I switched to another task and got the same result. It all looked stilted, forced, lifeless. The push to get something finished and get it out the door was killing my chances.

Finally, I sat down at the slant board and began a page that did not have to be perfect. (A good thing, too, because it was very far from perfect.) The lack of pressure gave me space to gradually re-enter into the rhythm and tempo and shape of writing.

Why is it that after a break it is so hard to get back into the gestalt of writing? Makers across the creative spectrum acknowledge their fears that they will never manage to create the next thing. At that point, we must remember to step back and trust the process without seeing the result. Five pages of lettering later, I was "in": I had crossed through an invisible but seemingly impermeable curtain to a creative space.

BETH LEE is a book artist and freelance calligrapher. She holds a fine arts degree in graphic design, and has taught calligraphy and book arts for more than 30 years. Her work may be found in university and private collections around the US.

"If I don't practice one day, know it; two days, the critics know it; three days, the public knows it." –Jascha Heifetz

be-again-daily journal and Iwrite out a practice page or two of Roman minuscules, and it's rocky to start but I gradually regain the knack of loading the pen, starting and stopping the strokes. As I regain rhythm, the articu-

lated stroke, and some mus cle memory, mistakes in shape, proportion crop[#]ormore likely-simply become more apparent. But now I am gaining-regaining-confidence; I know these things

Image courtesy of Beth L

Image courtesy of Beth Lee

pages. When I switched to an unknown black laid, the tempo decreased, giving me more working time. The paper here BUGRA? is quite slow, and I'm still working out the physics: ink viscosity, load, pressure, etc. Gouache is lovely. Yes.

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WORKSHOPS FOR 2023

Image courtesy of Beth Lee.

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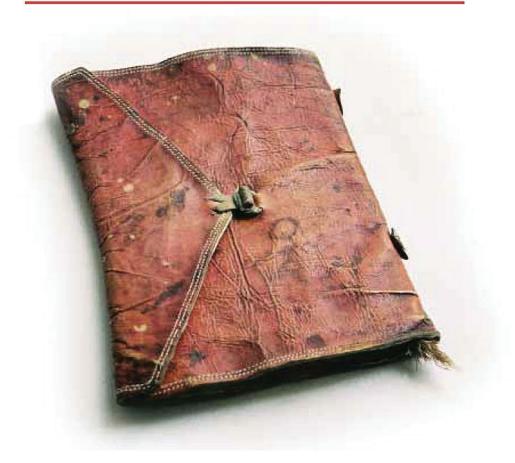
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1906

Number 182

February 2009

Book Reviews

Bookbinding: The Limp Vellum Bindings from Tallin

by Monica Langwe Berg 2006 Reviewed by Amy Lapidow

While studying bookbinding with Manne Dahlstedt in Sweden, Monica Berg became interested in historic binding structures, in particular, limp bindings. To study them more fully, she analyzed 22 bindings from the collection at the City Archives in Tallin, Estonia. Eight of these are presented in this slim volume, along with eight contemporary binders' interpretations of these structures.

The bindings shown range in dates from 1282 - 1571. Each is either directly or indirectly tacketed to the cover material. Some are constructed so that sections could be added later. Each chapter has a color photo of reproductions of the original, descriptions of the binding procedure, and clear drawings. This is not intended as a beginner's manual as it assumes a certain level of knowledge (how to form sections, knowledge of materials etc).

The gallery of modern interpretations has a color photo of each work, plus a description of the inspiration/motivation for each work. The final section has photos of the original bindings she studied in the archives..

Interspersed throughout are quotes on books and art, as well as sympathetic marginal drawings.

On the whole, a useful investigation of historic bindings.

The book is in English. If you are interested in it, contact her via her website: <u>www.langwe.se</u>. There is a picture and a description (in Swedish) in the "Foerlag Langwe Form" section. There is also contact information on the site. olick

A Book Collector

by Bridget McGraw

REACHED OUT TO Robert Bolick—a collector of artists' books and a prolific blogger—to find out how he views curating artists' books. The following interview was edited for clarity.

BRIDGET MCGRAW: What led you to curating artists' books?

ROBERT BOLICK: It started with the website Books On Books in 2012 and writing about digital publishing and the future of the book. It revived an interest in the history of books, which in turn had its roots in proofreading at a hot metal typesetting shop, working at MIT Press during Muriel Cooper's time there, and teaching a history of professional publishing course at NYU part-time. I had thought that ebooks and the web were harbingers of what was to come for the book, but as I "bookmarked" those developments in Books On Books entries, I was intrigued by some very different canaries in the coal mine: authors and book artists like Michael Joyce, Johanna Drucker, Bob Stein, Paul Soulellis, Amaranth Borsuk, and others working at the edges of the digital and print. As I started noting those artists and their works under the heading "Bookmarking Book Art," I became hooked and started collecting digital and physical book art.

BM: So, curating morphed into collecting?

RB: Well, bookmarking or reportage is not the same thing as curating a collection. And collecting is not the same thing as curating, which I think of as sharing what's collected, showing it, talking about it, comparing and connecting the pieces one with another. So that led to the heading "Books On Books Collection," which is where I do that curating.

Of course, curating online is pretty limited sharing, so I offer the collection for exhibitions here in the UK. Last year the pieces paying homage to Mallarmé's *Un Coup de Dés* were on display in Norwich, Cambridge, and Bristol (and online) to celebrate the 125th anniversary of the poem's publication. This year, there will be an exhibition at the Bodleian Libraries on "alphabets and artists' books," which will consist mostly of works I have collected. At the end of the exhibition, they

Additional Corrispondence

BM: Where do you place book arts in the wider arena of Fine Arts painting, sculpture, photography, video, and even performance art? Will we forever be lumped with ephemera & sketchbooks?

RB: "Book art, bookworks, artists' books," etc., has established a niche that overlaps Fine Arts at one edge and the Applied Arts at another. In Delft, NL, there's a bench shaped like an open book with a famous Dutch poet's poem inscribed on it. And over in The Hague, they hosted Alicia Martín's 2012 installation Biografias, a torrent of discarded books appearing to gush from a tall window of the Meermanno Museum. Book art embraces so many media, techniques, material and sizes. The Meermanno proves the point with its huge collection of miniature books housed in the same building from which Biografias gushed.

BM: Will museums like the MET ever mount a Book Arts show? Is that something you would like to see? RB: Yes and yes. MoMA mounted one called *Ecstatic Alphabets* (included works by Tauba Auerbach among others). The Royal Academy's exhibitions of Anselm Kiefer and William Kentridge were naturally weighted toward "the book." So, with major artists like them celebrating or at least using the book as medium, concept and metaphor, why not a MET Book Art exhibition?

BM: Are you familiar with the work of "Specific Object?"

RB: Yes, I've purchased from SO. BM: In addition to carrying

some pretty fancy artists' books and bookworks, he sells mass-market copies of books like Yoko Ono: Grapefruit and The Conquest of Space: Atlas for the Use of Artists and the Military by Marcel Broodthaers. Is this like selling posters of paintings?

RB: Those editions aren't quite "multiples" or "facsimiles," but I wouldn't be surprised if some of those copies attract collectors a few decades from now.

BM: What do you think about that edition work in the context of fine art? Is there a magic number that reduces the value of a piece? Or, is it the process by which a bookwork is created that gives it value? Or, something else?

RB: It can be the process, the technique (think of movable books), the concept, the context, the material, the artist/author, and the rarity (which is where the number of copies can play a role, but so can medium). Think of the works of Tom Phillips or those published by Visual Editions or William Joyce's app books that are essentially out of print unless you hang on to your "ancient" iPad with your copies of them.

ROBERT BOLICK writes about book art, the book arts, and the evolution of the book. books-on-books.com will be donated to the Bodleian. In time, all of the Books On Books Collection will go there, so I hope that in future, more hands-on sharing will happen.

The Bodleian already has works by artists like Leonard Baskin, Ben Denzer, Russell Maret, Tom Phillips, Gaylord Schanilec, and so on. The Keeper–Chris Fletcher–is even a co-sponsor for a doctoral student working on the Bodleian's copy of *Agrippa: Book of the Dead* by William Gibson, Dennis Ashbaugh and Kevin Begos. So I think the Books On Books Collection will find a good and useful home there.

BM: That's exciting! Please, tell me more about the exhibition at the Bodleian.

RB: The opening is planned for June or July 2023. The show will contain just the alphabet-related pieces; there are about 300 items in that part of the collection, and not all of those will be on display. The exhibition will include works from the Bodleian collection, such as the Dürer alphabet book on perspective and proportion, the Kennicott Bible with its animals and humans forming the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, and modern works by artists like Russell Maret.

BM: I was going to ask if you had any of his work in your collection.

RB: Russell? Yes. I have a matrix, a design plate, and the sort (piece of type) for the ampersand from *Hungry Dutch*, which will be on display. Inge Bruggeman has invited me to give a talk for the 2024 CODEX. A recap of the Bodleian exhibit will give me a chance to share after the event.

[Editor's note: Alas, the conversation veered further away from Robert's forthcoming exhibition in Oxford and became a conversation about Arion's technical setup, exquisite bindings, and a couple of San Francisco Bay Area book art events: Standards 2023 and CODEX 2024. While he does not have plans to attend Standards, RB will be at CODEX.]

BM: Where do you place the book arts in the wider arena of Fine Arts? Will we forever be lumped with ephemera and sketchbooks?

RB: Book art and the book arts are well past being lumped in with ephemera and sketchbooks. The number of exhibitions, conventions, conferences, galleries and displays that are showing book art today is large. I cannot keep up, which is one of the reasons I have turned to collecting rather than trying to keep up.

In addition to events such as CODEX and Standards, there are dozens and dozens of others in the US. There is also a fair number here in Europe such as the annual Small Book Publishers Fair in London, the annual Paris Rare Book and Graphic Arts Fair, and Professor Kestutis Vasiliunas' International Artist's Book Triennial, which travels to several countries.

BM: I am really curious about the context of fine art. There are shows and there are shows, you know...there are no blockbuster book shows yet. And, God forbid that we should ever have one. I am wondering if you don't feel that we are still sidelined. I have yet to see a themed show in a major museum that consists primarily of bookworks.

RB: Well, over here we've had one in Vienna at MAK. There was a traveling exhibition out of MAK as well. More recently, there was a zine show, which is a sub-niche that has been around for quite some time and is becoming even more active, I think. It's not something I follow too closely, although some of the items that I collect would be in this category. For instance, *Moby Dick Filets* looks like a combination of bookwork, chapbooks, and zines. Harpune Verlag, who has organized this project in Vienna, has farmed out the individual chapters of *Moby Dick* to various artists and asked them to convert them as artists' booklets.

BM: So, they are each stand-alone works?

RB: That's right, well, until you get them all together, but it's going to take a long time for that to happen, but I would say they're maybe 40% of the way through. And it's been going now for a few years. So that to me fits the definition. Another one that dances around the ephemera issue is *The Personal Library Library*. Abra Ancliffe issues—on a random basis, almost quarterly, although sometimes it's halfyearly—works that are generated from her reaction to the personal libraries of wide-ranging individuals such as Maria Mitchell and Robert Smithson. I have subscribed to it, so there is an entry about it on the Books On Books site.

Another one that sort of fits that category, which I love, is called *La Perruque*. Olivier Bertrand has agreed with a commercial printer to let him have the marginal space in the forms that always get trimmed from the magazines that this commercial printer prints. Bertrand commissions essays and type specimens that are then printed one line high the length of the forms. Each contribution is cut out from the discarded trim and comes out like a ribbon or a thin scroll. An issue of *La Perruque* consists of all these contributions wound around a sort of spindle. In French, the name *La Perruque* is a slang term that translates into the English slang term "homer" for the tool or output a workman creates on the sly at work to take home. This sort of sideline in the margins is how this magazine gets published. And, to me, that rings a lot of the usual book art bells.

BM: It brings us full circle; I hate to put words in your mouth, but when I asked about your *raison d'être*, you spoke of seeing collections beyond darkened rooms. This is making book art accessible.

RB: As much as they can be online. That's why I'm donating the collection, because it will be there with a whole load of other related works in book art and in the book arts, plural. People will be able to pull these works out, put them on the desk side by side with each other, and, I hope, enjoy them. And write about them. And be inspired to create more of the same.

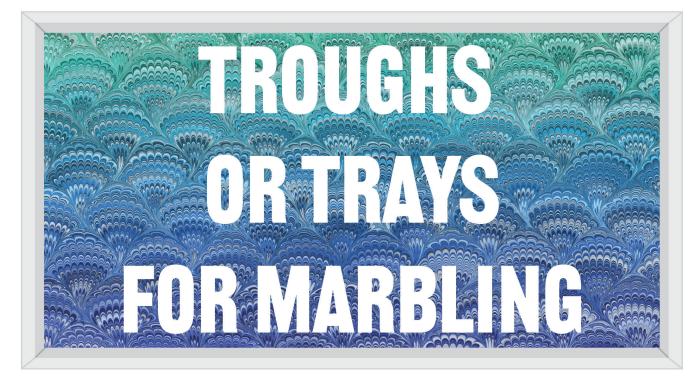
BM: Wonderful. The last Standards of Excellence was in Decatur, Georgia and Emory University has an active book arts collection in the university library. On their Instagram feed you can see young students handling bookworks for the first time. It's priceless to see the wow factor on their faces.

RB: I've had that experience here; there's a small society called the Oxford University Society of Bibliophiles that is student-run. They asked me to bring along a subset of my collection, so I brought about 25–30 items to Lincoln College. Three or four students came downstairs to help me unload the boxes from the car, and it was a delight to see them marvel at things like the dragon-scale bindings.

BM: Yes! That's a perfect place to stop. I really appreciate your time today and look forward to meeting you when you make it to the West Coast.

BRIDGET MCGRAW co-edits the GBW *Newsletter*, serves on the board of the Hand Bookbinders of California, and makes artists' books.





BY IRIS NEVINS

ROUGH, OR TRAY? I recall when I was first experimenting with marbling, and knew nothing, had no teacher, no books, save some xeroxed sheets from an old book, I called the container I marbled in, a tray. Very low brow I later found, and that it should be called a TROUGH... but I also figured "tray" was a classier term than "Tin Lasagna Pan", which is what I used for my first efforts! I had not heard the term "Trough" yet. Oddly, 45 years later, I still feel a little confused and often call what I marble in a "tray," without thinking. I have been corrected numerous times by other marblers, but it is still a tray to me. So call it what you like!

Wood, metal, or plastic. Which is best? Wood, which I tried, was on the heavy side, especially full of size, and juggling it to a sink for emptying was messy. I also could not see the colors well. One could paint it white, but I thought the paint would chip and need repainting often. So no wood for me. Metal, like a large baking dish, is pretty sturdy, but I wanted a white color, to see the paints well.

So I graduated from my lasagna pan to a white plastic photo tray. I still have some in numerous sizes, but I was really happy when I discovered the trays (Ok, sorry, TROUGHS!) molded and made by Don Guyot at Colophon Book Arts Supply, which has had several different owners since Don sold it years ago. They are light weight, durable, and WHITE! I can see the colors clearly. They have the divided area at the bottom, to drag used paints and size over, and a drain hole, so you can spill the size into a bucket when done, and dispose of it easily. Make sure when you buy or make your rakes and combs, that they fit your tray, trough, tank or vat, whatever you like to call it. I like a little play in the rakes and combs, a little shy of fitting edge to edge, maybe 1/2 to one inch on either side, shy of the trough/tray edges. Plus a little more leeway in width for bouquet combs, so they have the extra "wiggle-room" necessary to create the pattern.

Really, what you choose is personal. Try everything. Many do prefer wood, or tin, or stainless steel. My personal recommendation would be to start in a lowly lasagna pan, to see if you enjoy marbling. A good tray—or trough—can be a bit of an expense, so start with something simple. If you stick with marbling, as you progress, your preferences will start to form. A good tray, preferably with a spillover compartment and drain hole, whether plastic or wood, makes the marbling process very enjoyable. Good equipment gives good results, and inspires you to keep working and improving, and enjoying marbling.

IRIS NEVINS is a self-taught marbler, and began marbling in 1978 as a hobby. Much to her surprise, bookbinders started buying her papers, and it became her full time career. She has written four books, plus reprinted a facsimile edition of *Nicholson's Manual Of The Art Of Bookbinding*, with 18 marbled samples tipped into the marbling section.

Iris also is a Celtic Harper, and Guitarist. She plays professionally, teaches both instruments and builds harps. She also makes Ancient Style and Celtic Jewelry.



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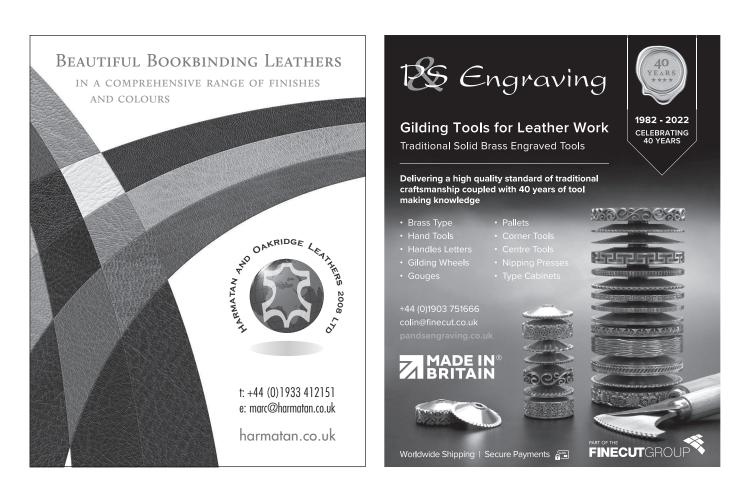
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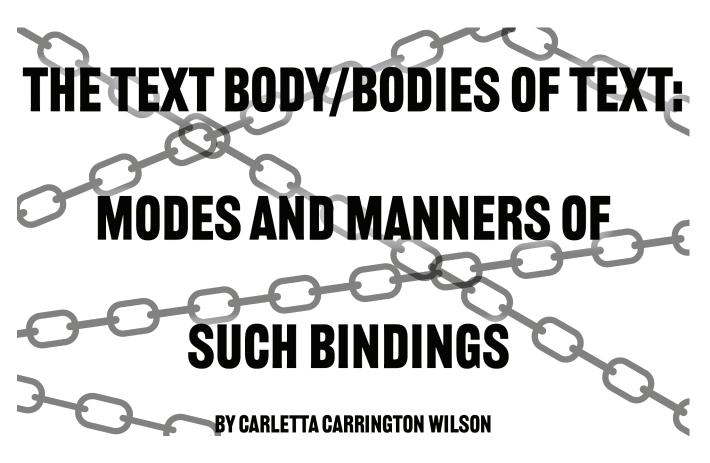
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"Is not the body a book, each age a page turning, leaf by leaf, until its last word falls silent?" From book of the bound

THE NORTHWEST CHAPTER of the Guild hosted a series of virtual gatherings titled *Getting Down to Business: Conversations on the World of Book Arts.* The last event, delivered on October 15th, 2022 via Zoom, set out to present a "long view of the world of artist's books" to enrich attendees' "perspective, including political and cultural binding of books in general, as pertaining to the history of African American print culture and artists' books.

Still, I appreciated the invitation to present to the NW Guild of Book Workers. The wonder of exquisite bindings came rushing back as I recalled my slow journey through the exhibit *WILD/Life* at the University of Puget Sound

interpretations" of book arts.

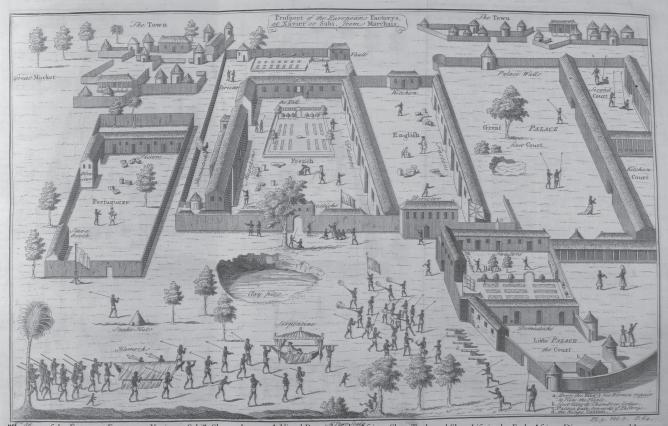
Carletta Carrington Wilson, mixed-media textile artist and poet, presented a program with Johanna Drucker, Breslauer Professor of Bibliographical Studies and Distinguished Professor in the Department of Information Studies at UCLA.

Ms. Carrington Wilson kindly agreed to let us publish her talk, which is edited for print.

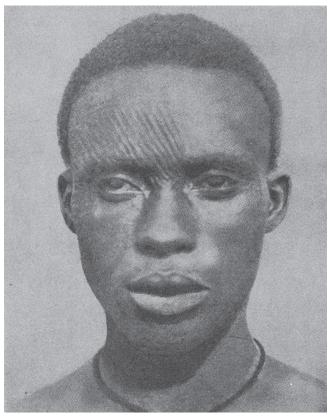
he invitation was totally unexpected and I admit that I was, at first, intimidated... wondering what I would have to say about the business of fine binding, or the



Slave Market scene on the Kambia River, Coast of Africa, [Between 1800 and 1850], Photograph. loc.gov/item/cph15301.



"Prospect of the European Factorys at Xavier or Sabi", Slavery Images: A Visual Record of the African Slave Trade and Slave Life in the Early African Diaspora, accessed January 16, 2023, slavery images.org/s/slavery images/item/2114.



Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division, The New York Public Library. "Ichi or tribal marks." New York Public Library Digital Collections. Accessed January 14, 2023. digitalcollections. nypl.org/items/510d47dc-8758-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99.

Collins Memorial Library. The idea, however, of producing a finely bound book never occurred to me, not then, not now, but that doesn't mean not ever.

This invitation provided the opportunity to explore, conceptually, ideas about text, the body as text and, thus, give new meaning to their relationship in accord with commonly used binding terminology. Paired with images from, largely, the 19th century and select works from the *book of the bound* as well as other series, I have created a contextual narrative of image and text.

My work centers on the late 15th to early 20th centuries. I define this work as the "text of textiles." In the series *book of the bound* I encased books in beautiful, ornate cloth. Altering commercially bound books, I used cloth as both binding and text, given its prominent role in the Triangular Trade, so named for the journeys of countless ships sailing from Africa to the Americas and on to Europe.

Slavery alters lives. It alters the lives of those who find themselves enslaved. Less acknowledged is how slavery alters the lives of enslavers and societies, which embrace enslavement as a way of life.

The understood role and function of an artist's book alters commonly held beliefs and ideas of the role a book, is not only meant to perform, but also how a book is "read."



At times a bookbinder will rebind a text solely to feature the work of the binding. Slavery binds lives; it binds the lives of the enslaved to their enslavers.

In my practice I have focused on making connections between captive bodies and the history that binds a body to a book.

There is a widely held belief that Africans had no written culture comparable to lettered societies. On the contrary, when Europeans encountered African peoples they were well aware that they not only possessed complex systems of graphic symbols and signs that appeared on multiple surfaces—including skin—but also, timeworn histories of Ethiopian and Islamic bindings.

They were cast into a world in which the book reigned supreme. It was the primary source of knowledge, information, and communication for a privileged few; millions were denied the ability to read, to write, to tell their side of the story.

A language, to be understood, must be codified, coded, laid out in lines, caught in the ear, etched into clay, inked upon paper, papyrus or any such surface sufficient to transmit meaning. And so it is with skin. Leathery skin, some animal's flesh transformed into an elegant or practical binding. And they exist, books bound in human skin on the shelves of certain libraries, *especially* those containing Phillis Wheatley's poems.

When did the color of an individual's skin become an entrenched language in and of itself? How did a caste of colors cast out multitudinous identities and supplant them with a hierarchy that defines, as well as defies, status, place, and intelligence?

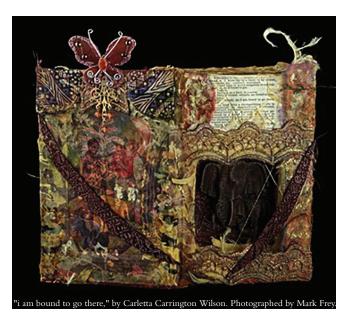
Pricked to absorb inky substances that permanently dye skin or cut open so that scar tissue forms patterns that an eye can read, a body is a moveable book. Scarification, tattoos, and burns serve as text and give meaning at a glance.



THE ILL-FAVORED SLAVE-TRADER.

"They all look jess like this fellar."

Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Jean Blackwell Hutson Research and Reference Division, The New York Public Library "The ill-favored slavetrader," New York Public Library Digital Collections, Accessed January 17, 2023. digitalCollections.mypl.org/items/510d47dff-a29d-a3d9-e040-e00a18064499.



There are marks and markings yet to be read. For there, in the beginning, the binding under which so many fell, that rude, crude, cursive, ornate, calligraphic spell, set in type, set the business of binding their bodies into motion.

Take, for instance, "the grotesque binding of bodies of work;" my title for the image "Slave Market Scene on the Kambia River, Coast of Africa."

Is it not interesting how our minds translate an image into text? We *read* the image. I cannot help but to see the whip as the calligraphic stroke of an elegant line and wonder how it felt to have that shackle's iron clasp enclosing your leg. In one searing moment, captive skin is branded, transforming an individual's body into merchandise. Here, the punctuation of possession—here, past and future—by sleight of hand, change hands. There, a caste of characters—upper and lower case, see the book, spell book of spellers and its author—witness and weapon, chronicling, giving account and accountings, not of people whose



Farm Security Administration rural rehabilitation borrower. West Carroll Parish, Louisiana. United States West Carroll Parish Louisiana, 1940, June, Photograph. loc.gov/ item/2017803148.



"i git to de end," from the *Field Notes* series, by Carletta Carrington Wilson. Photographed by Mark Frey.

lives have been irrevocably ruptured but taking stock of someone's stock.

In the stroke of a pen, whose face, foot, neck, shoulder, tooth, spine, skeleton, arm, and skin no longer belonged to them? They could not imagine the depth of the wells nor the width and length of the ragged surfaces that renamed them.

Each *abduction* was rife, yes ripe, with somber bindings as the barbed serif bent evermore sinister. For they had been inked in, inked into a text block with *signatures* full of characters and typefaces.

Was not theirs an embodied book, one of tribal markings,

scarifications, cicatrices of scars as script? Who faced, whose face was preface, the pre-face?

I was bound to go there by glossary, thesaurus, and dictionary to reconstruct from common binding terms and the uncommon history of bodies bound by texts not of their own making.

In that bondage books of bone, blood, and breath felt every biting letter's grasp as



"he larnt to write his name and to make figures," from the *Field Notes* series, by Carletta Carrington Wilson. Photographed by Mark Frey.

the spells of spellers fastened them to a field's endless rows.

Lines led, lines follow foot after foot—up and down rows of furrows. Filled in by pens, each row a note, noting how the weight of a fibrous font leaves deep muddied prints some soon to be watermarked by a flood of blood for "*dey die wid scars on dem.*"

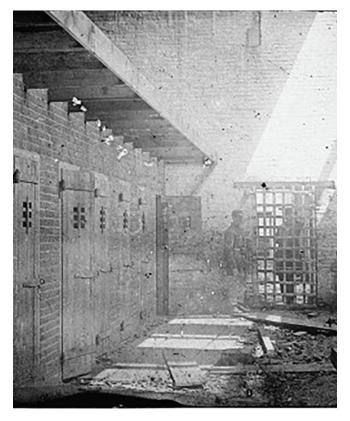
How long has this been going on? The very idea that one human possesses the



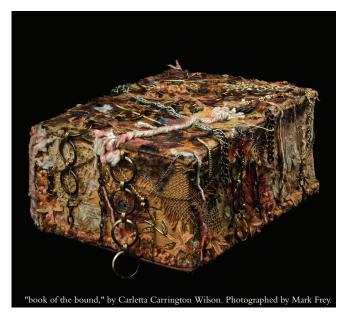
Gordon, Jako known as "Whipped Peter," shouring his scarred back at a medical examination, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, United States Baton Rouge Louisiana, 1863, [Baton Rouge, La.: Publisher not identified 2 April] Photograph. loc.gov/item/2018648117/.

right to own another person's life? Forever and a day; but there came the day when "*he larnt to write his name and to make figures*."

Myriad figures figured themselves out of the script by which one's figure becomes reconfigured into an object of



Slave Pen, Alexandria, Va. United States Alexandria Virginia, [Between 1861 and 1865] Photograph. loc.gov/item/2004682788/.



trade. Of all the types of bindings that can beset a body—be they pictorial, signed, textile, presentation, or blocked—none were so ubiquitous as the bindings of the chains.

From seacoast into ship, across docks, along dusty roads, in and out of every pen the misery of locks and keys, their incessant clinking linked them to the letter 'O.' Don't you know that the 'O' is the only letter that is a world unto itself and that our lips mirror? Each body is a world unto itself.

Centuries-long letters bound them, blocked them, barred them, kept them in the margins way beyond the end of their so-called emancipation.

Having carried them and their descendants into the typographical era, people of a certain "type," who were not considered fully human and thought to be incapable of intellectual pursuits, made themselves a reed pen, hid that forbidden pencil, grasped the poison pen and began to write themselves into history. The very language that held their bodies captive was the selfsame language by which they set their minds, hence body, free.

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Additional Resources

For further information on the work of Carletta Carrington Wilson several videos can be found online. For the *book of the bound* the author suggests viewing the Bainbridge Island Museum of Arts Open Book Tour, recorded May 25, 2019 (bit.ly/gbw-artoo6), and for information on the series "field notes," there is an interview with the author entitled *Curator's Conversation with Artist Carletta Carrington Wilson* (bit.ly/gbw-artoo7). The poem "typeface of the erased"—published by the *African American Review* Volume 52, Number 3, Fall 2019— can be found online at Project Muse under the poet's name.

CARLETTA CARRINGTON WILSON—a mixed-media textile artist and poet—has exhibited her work at CoCA, Wa Na Wari, Bainbridge Island Museum of Art. Northwest African American Museum, Onyx Gallery, University of Washington's Jacob Lawrence Gallery and the Kittredge Gallery. Her work is included in Seattle Art Museum's Dorothy Stimson Bullitt Library Book Art Collection, University of Washington Allen Library Book Art Collection, University of Puget Sound Book Art Collection, the Judith A. Hoffberg Collection of Artists Books at UCLA and Swarthmore College, McCabe Library.

In March 2023 Raven Chronicles Press is publishing her book, *Poem of Stone and Bone: The Iconography of James W. Washington Jr. in Fourteen Stanzas and Thirty-One Days.*



 On the Edge
Endbands in the Bookbinding Traditions
of the Eastern Mediterranean
Georgies Boutais
 M

 Georgies Boutais
 Endband
Endband
East

 Findband
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East

 Georgies Boutais
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 This book identifies, classifies, and describes to

New Publication Date is Mid-March 2023

On the Edge Endbands in the Bookbinding Traditions of the Eastern Mediterranean

> by Georgios Boudalis

This book identifies, classifies, and describes many of the different techniques used in manuscript books bound within different cultures in the Eastern Mediterranean from Late Antiquity until the 20th century. It is richly illustrated with full-color photographs and technical drawings explaining how these endbands were made and how they can be replicated.

352 pages • 424 illustrations • hardcover • 10 × 7 in. ISBN 9781953421111 • \$80.00 To be notified upon publication, email: thelegacypress@gmail.com

The Legacy Press http://www.thelegacypress.com/on-the-edge.html

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March 1st for the April 2023 Issue (No. 267)

May 1st for the June 2023 Issue (No. 268)

July 1st for the August 2023 Issue (No. 269)

September 1st for the October 2023 Issue (No. 270)

November 1st for the December 2023 Issue (No. 271)

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