



## **INSIDE THIS ISSUE**

**It's Been How Long Since  
You Marbled?**  
by Iris Nevins

**An Online Artists' Books  
Presentation by Ruth R.  
Rogers**  
Reviewed by Kim Norman

**A Conversation with  
Shanna Leino**  
by Bridget McGraw

**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](http://guildofbookworkers.org)

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Front Cover: *Dear Ben Brown Eyes*, 2005, elk bone, linen thread, flax paper, sinew, parchment, graphite, 2.5 x 1.75 x 1.5" (6.4 x 4.5 3.8 cm). Photograph by Walker Montgomery.

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Archer from John Gower's *Vox Clamantis* (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vox\_Clamantis, accessed 17 January 2024).

# Letter from the President

DEAR MEMBERS,

Happy New Year! We will be well into 2024 by the time you read this, but the executive board is working hard behind the scenes with many changes underway. We'll have more details coming soon!

Our next Standards of Excellence Seminar, in Providence, RI, will be a little later than it has been, so we will not get to see you in person until November. We will provide information about Standards, including the presenters, soon!

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

**NOMINATING (ELECTIONS) COMMITTEE:** Mary Uthupuru, Jesse Hunt, and John DeMerritt

**AWARD COMMITTEE:** Coleen Curry, Kim Norman, and Mary Sullivan

You can submit nominations to the Nominating Committee between February 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1. The election will take place in June, with officers beginning their terms in the fall of 2024.

Nominations for the Laura Young Award and the Lifetime Achievement Award close on June 1<sup>st</sup>, and will be awarded at Standards in November.

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

As always, please send any questions or comments to me at [president@guildofbookworkers.org](mailto:president@guildofbookworkers.org).

Cheers,

Kate Levy  
President, Guild of Book Workers  
[president@guildofbookworkers.org](mailto:president@guildofbookworkers.org)



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# Letter from the Editors

MID-WINTER GREETINGS, DEAR READERS!

Who in the book realm doesn't LOVE broadsides? We hope that you are all ready to bare your hearts to the Valentine's Day sweets we are firing at you in this issue!

First, a taste of the treats in store for you. Pam Wood and Madelyn Garrett share their love for the work and generosity of Gene Valentine, printer and broadside artist. We reached into our quiver and shot an arrow (ok, it's another broadside) from the not-so-distant past that was printed in honor of conservator, book historian, and educator Gary Frost when he was awarded the Guild's Lifetime Achievement award in 2010 (image printed in color on the back cover). Iris Nevins assures us that it is possible to love one's own work again, even when a long hiatus makes it a challenge to get

started. And our own Bridget McGraw fletches an arrow—both aimed at AI (artificial intelligence) and using AI—in a conversation with book artist and toolmaker Shanna Leino.

For those of you who love the index as much as the rest of the book (you know who you are!), we are certain you have been waiting with bated breath for someone to continue indexing the *Newsletter*. We are happy to report that we now have a volunteer to pick up where Laura Young Award winner and longtime *Newsletter* Editor, Margaret Johnson, left off. We'll keep you updated on indexing progress in subsequent issues. By the way, Margaret is turning 100 in April. If anyone would like a postal address for her to send her a card, please drop us a line and we'll share it with you (newsletter@guildofbookworkers.org).

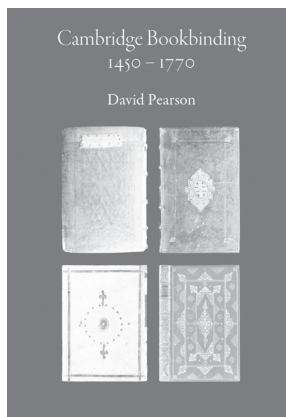
Lastly, we hope that you'll heartily express your love for the Guild and volunteer to fill one of the positions advertised in the election announcements; we on the *Newsletter* committee are especially looking for someone with basic skills in Adobe In-Design and Illustrator to help in the layout process. Cupid, draw back your bow, and let your arrow go straight to a volunteer's heart for the Guild (with profuse apologies to Sam Cooke)!

Love,  
Your intrepid co-editors



Top: Three variations of an image generated by OpenAI's text-to-image generator, DALL•E 3. An editor typed the phrase, "A bookbinder as a cupid pulling an arrow from a quiver in the style of van Gogh" (labs.openai.com). Bottom: An archer from John Gower's *Vox Clamantis* [the voice of one crying out] (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vox\_Clamantis, accessed 17 January 2024).

## Two New Bookbinding Titles Now Available!



*Cambridge Bookbinding 1450-1770*  
David Pearson



*Suave Mechanicals: Essays on the History of Bookbinding*  
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Edited by Julia Miller

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# News and Notices

## GUILD OF BOOK WORKERS ANNUAL ELECTIONS

The Guild of Book Workers cannot function without the executive board. Please consider volunteering for one of these essential board seats.

Board positions are elected annually and members serve a two-year term. Elections are held in June, with terms beginning at the end of the annual meeting at Standards. Each board member is responsible for running their standing committees and is required to attend board meetings, which are held on the third Thursday of every other month via Zoom. Specific duties and time commitments will vary, but these positions generally require 3–5 hours per week.

The following Board Positions are open to nominations:

PRESIDENT—Kate Levy is running for re-election

STANDARDS—Jennifer Pellecchia is running for re-election

EXHIBITIONS

COMMUNICATIONS

JOURNAL CO-CHAIR

NEWSLETTER CO-EDITOR—Seeking one person with graphic design experience

Read more about these positions on the Guild website: [guildofbookworkers.org/volunteer-opportunities](http://guildofbookworkers.org/volunteer-opportunities).

Please feel free to email any questions to the Election Committee Chair, Mary Uthupuru, at [mary@springleafpress.com](mailto:mary@springleafpress.com), with the subject line: GBW ELECTION.

## NOMINATIONS NOW OPEN FOR 2024 GBW AWARDS

The Awards Committee of the Guild of Book Workers is seeking written nominations for the 2024 Lifetime Achievement and Laura Young Awards.

**THE LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD**—This award recognizes significant contribution to the goals of the Guild and to the book arts field at large. Contributions may include areas such as education, professional practice, research, or mentorship as examples. 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, demonstrable service above and beyond to the Guild. Nominees must be current or former members of GBW.

All nominations must include a letter of support. Letters should be no more than 500 words (approximately one single-spaced page). Please include a brief biography of yourself and how you know the nominee. The most

effective letters of nomination are specific about the contributions, attributes, and/or achievements that you think qualify the nominee for the award. You may submit nominations via email or use the nomination form at: [gbw.formstack.com/forms/nominations](http://gbw.formstack.com/forms/nominations).

To submit directly to the committee via email, please include the following in your correspondence: your name, the name of the nominee, the award for which you are nominating, and a letter of support to one of the following committee members:

• Coleen Curry, Awards Committee Chair

[coleen.curry@gmail.com](mailto:coleen.curry@gmail.com)

• Kim Norman [kim.norman@emory.edu](mailto:kim.norman@emory.edu)

• Mary Sullivan [crowinghenbindery@gmail.com](mailto:crowinghenbindery@gmail.com)

The deadline for receipt of nominations is April 15, 2024.

Please feel free to contact committee members with any questions. More information about past award recipients may be found online: [guildofbookworkers.org/awards](http://guildofbookworkers.org/awards).

## WORKSHOPS FOR 2024

### School for Bookbinding Arts at Cat Tail Run Hand Bookbinding

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Photo courtesy of Madelyn Garrett

## *A Memory and an Appreciation of Gene Valentine*

by Madelyn Garrett and Pamela Wood

I MET GENE IN 1992. WHEN I was planning a trip to Phoenix, his sister Ann Anastasian told me I had to be sure to meet Gene, a letterpress printer in Tempe. And what a joy, walking into his studio for the first time. It was as though I had already known Gene all my life. We hit it off and started corresponding. Over time, I discovered that Gene was one of the most generous, kind, intelligent, selfless colleagues I had ever met. A true and gentle friend.

I was at same time researching possibilities of starting a book arts program through the Rare Books Division of Special Collections at the University of Utah's Marriott Library. I spoke with a great many administrators in the field about the positives and negatives of starting up such a program. I talked a lot about this with Gene. And as the planning slowly came together, I decided that in addition to small workshops and lectures, I wanted to have book arts intensives during the summer. By the time it was the turn for a letterpress intensive, it was an easy choice to ask Gene. Throughout this period, Gene taught printing workshops to students and to the general public.

In 1998, to celebrate the success of the Book Arts Program, we had a huge summer of bookmaking activities, paper making, letterpress printing, artists' books, lectures, multiple children's workshops, and an exhibition of our first traveling book exhibit, *Westward Bound*. Gene's support was immense. And it was Gene who taught the letterpress intensive.

Gene spoke to me about doing an internship with the Book Arts Program as part of his master's degree requirements. I was thrilled. He worked in the studio, organizing and sorting cases and cases of old, filthy type. He supervised Book Arts part-time interns, teaching them while doing. After organizing all of the type he worked on an inventory, finally creating a catalog of all the available type. It proved to be an invaluable tool, especially for students.

In 1996, Red Butte Press printed a reproduction of a small book illustrated by Utah artist LeConte Stewart, which had been donated by his niece Alice Telford. Gene and Alice became fast friends and together they and I produced the fine press limited edition of *A Review*. Gene

printed it on the 1946 Columbian handpress, with Alice assisting and me mostly observing the joyful collaboration. Alice, who will be 100 in 2024, still talks about her work with Gene as one of the best experiences of her life.

LeConte Stewart's son donated a never-before-printed Stewart etching to accompany the deluxe edition of the production. An offset edition of *A Review* was also produced as the 1996 Friends of the Library keepsake.

The Book Arts Program at the J. Willard Marriott Library helped develop, and was a cosponsor of, the Utah Humanities Council Great Salt Lake Book Festival. Every year the Book Arts Program offered a lecture and rare book presentation, along with children's bookmaking workshops with the Utah Calligraphic Artists and papermaking demonstrations with Gene. Every single year Gene would travel from Tempe to Salt Lake at his own expense to offer papermaking at the Festival. He provided his own paper pulp, often made from blue jeans. Children loved making paper with Gene, one of the highlights of the entire festival. This was a truly Herculean effort. Gene's generosity was monumental.

Below is a letter I sent to Gene a few months before his death, at the behest of Kristin Valentine, Gene's wife. These few snippets are only a very very small portion of all of the wonderful unremembered experiences I carry in my heart.

Dear Gene,

I remember the day I first met you. I had planned a trip to Arizona with my friend Father Santos. I had talked about the trip to your sister Ann, whom I had met through mutual friends. Ann said, "if you get to Tempe, you must visit my brother Gene. He has his own print studio and also prints for Pyracantha Press." That was enough for me. Another printer! I stepped into your home and immediately felt I had known you for years. Your beautiful greyhounds greeted me. You took me into your press room, a tidy, exciting workshop I will never forget. How could I possibly have known how my life had just changed?

I remember all of the hours you spent working in the Book Arts Studio at the Marriott Library. Mentoring James Baker, both of you sorting trays and trays of pied type. Dirty, old, pied type. You and James sat across from each other, separating typefaces, cleaning each piece, and then filling tray after tray, ready for students to use. While you were doing this, you were mentoring James. Talking to him about printing and art. I know James enjoyed working with you so much.

I was in awe. I did not think it a task that was doable. But you showed me that the best way to get an impossible job done was just to start. And keep going. I learned so much from you, Gene. You were my mentor too.

While sorting all of this type, you began the Herculean task of creating a type inventory for the Book Arts Studio.



*A Review*, by Luke Cosgrave; pictures by Le Conte Stewart, PS3505 O785 R48 1947. Written in 1917 by Irish-American thespian, Luke Cosgrave, the simple recitation poem, a gift to Utah's children, was developed from stories Cosgrave had collected while traveling through the state. *A Review* was later hand-lettered and illustrated by Utah artist LeConte Stewart, to celebrate Utah's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the Mormon settlers into the Great Salt Lake Valley. Photo provided by Madelyn Garrett.

Doing the hard work of identifying dozens of obscure typefaces. Hour after hour. Day after day. Until the tasks were finished. Sheets and sheets of photocopied information that would finally become a real reference tool. This inventory is STILL being used and added to by Marnie and her staff. Many hundreds of students have used your inventory.

Gene, you more than anyone helped me set the Book Arts Studio up to be a foundation of our Book Arts Program. Nothing was too small or too large for you to tackle. I could not have done it without you. It was your collegial support that kept me going. So often by then, I was exhausted and discouraged. You cheered me, and by your example, showed me I could keep going.

Do you remember the Great Salt Lake Book Festival? And all of the years you flew into Salt Lake to demonstrate printing and, later, papermaking? At Westminster College you helped children print keepsakes on an old tabletop Kelsey press. And later, you brought your papermaking supplies to help children (and their parents) to make paper made out of your own blue jean pulp. I remember the hundreds of sheets of paper strewn out on the marbled floors of the Salt Lake City Library's atrium. I remember all of the happy children walking away with their handmade paper. They would never think of paper the same.

You were ALWAYS there. You NEVER said, "no, I'm sorry, I can't make the trip up from Tempe to Salt Lake City." I do not remember one time you did not support me and the Book Arts Program. I was always thrilled for your help. I was always grateful and always, over and over, said, "thank you." But not enough. It would have been impossible to say, "thank you" enough times.

I love you, Gene. I love your generous nature and your big heart. You have made my life so much richer. Thank you, thank you, my dearest friend.

Madelyn



MADELYN GARRETT is a retired University of Utah rare book curator and working book artist who creates one-of-a-kind books. Madelyn has lectured extensively on the history of the book; 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-of-the-book program for Utah's children. She was a professional associate of the American Institute for Conservation and remains a long-time member of the Guild of Book Workers.



**G**ENE VALENTINE TAUGHT rhetoric, linguistics and history of the book at Arizona State University for 23 years before retiring to become full-time printer and papermaker for Almond Tree Press and Paper Mill in Tempe, AZ. [publicservice.asu.edu/gene-valentine]

I have a BFA in printmaking. My intense focus on details hasn't stopped to this day. There are many things that the discipline taught me. The biggest, how to see. A print holds many visual secrets.

Now, as I look at my copy of the Centennial Lecture Series fine press broadside by Gene Valentine my love for fine print rekindles. What makes this print so special? It is classic, elegant, and yet still playful.



My print number 28 of 125 by Gene Valentine. This was produced at his Almond Tree Press, using handset Garamond type. The text excerpt is from "The Buried Mirror" © Carlos Fuentes, 1992, and the linocut relief images were designed by Karla Elling. The limited-edition broadside is from the Centennial Lecture Series of Arizona State University. Photo provided by Pamela Wood.

With extraordinary attention to detail through placement and color, one's eye is held with the first look. The typeface, in my opinion, is the heart and soul of a broadside. Here Gene selected what I consider the "Little black dress" of typefaces: Garamond. Exceptionally legible, timeless, and spaced to perfection. No widows or auto set openings. The setting of type, well done, is the hallmark of typographic excellence.

The ink coverage is flawless, in all colors. Even the quote is timeless, and wants the viewer to read it. The pull into it is wonderful.

I visited Gene's print studio once, and the memorable philosophy that it expressed to me was to stay focused, but always have fun.

Work produced so well never grows old, and the spirit lives forever.

PAMELA WOOD is a full-time fine bookbinder located in Tempe, AZ. Her work can be seen at [rarehare.com](http://rarehare.com).



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# IT'S BEEN

# HOW LONG

# SINCE YOU MARBLED?

BY IRIS NEVINS

**I** THINK IT MUST BE true of all of us, whether in regard to marbling or other work or hobbies we have had. We take a break sometimes, or sometimes, as in my case, the break “took me”...literally. A bad accident, and a shoulder broken in three places, and every soft tissue in the arm torn up, which was more painful than the fractures. Of course, being a righty...it was my right arm. Add to that a nice head wound and concussion.

The only thing good about this accident was that it was a few weeks before lockdowns came in 2020. At least the timing was perfect for the extended break from marbling I would be taking. I hope if you have ever taken a two or more year break from marbling, it was by choice, and not because of an accident. Maybe life intervened, and you had to do other things, and had no time to marble for a good while.

In my case, covid slowed down, or totally stopped most of my customers from working. I always tried to keep 800-1000 sheets of ready-made paper in stock, and thankfully had many papers sitting there. I could not raise my arm very much for over a year. It took eight months of PT, and then I could raise it to hang the papers, but due to a rotator cuff tear, and displaced shoulder (not quite bad enough for surgery)...it hurt on the way down. I still have issues with the lowering, but can manage now slowly. It was just not possible to marble for about two years though.

My customers were wonderful, and graciously accepted papers from stock only, no custom orders. However, there came that fateful day, when I ran out of stock! I had to get going again, with the help of aspirin before and after working. I felt a bit lost at first, and wondered if I could marble anymore. Even though I had marbled since 1978 without any long breaks, I felt a bit worried.

So let's say, you need to (or want to) get back to marbling after, let's say about two or more years, as I did. Don't be surprised if you have forgotten a few things. I actually had forgotten how to make some of the paints. The proportions of ingredients can be different for different colors or types of pigment. People sometimes ask for “the paint formula,” which is like asking for “the cookie recipe” as though all are made the same. There are little differences from one to the next. I forgot some of them! It took a few failures, and re-tries, but it all came back.

I never wrote these down, it was so automatic, I did it so often, I didn't need to write them down. Possibly the head injury had a little to do with forgetting, but there were really no major lasting effects. I combine words and phrases together by accident though, some of them have been hysterically funny. I think the forgetting was more to do with being out of practice though.

If you took a long break, have you maybe forgotten what the size should feel like when it is ripe for marbling? I did...

should it be a little thicker, or thinner? Nothing felt quite right. It was very strange.

Have you forgotten how to do any of your patterns? Those I didn't really forget, but there were certain subtleties I had forgotten about. One was the Stormont pattern, a fine lacy pattern done with a little turpentine in your top color.

WHY...WHY was it not working? The "Lace" had holes that were way too big. I tried a little less turpentine, then a little more, but nothing was right. I had always done these so well and easily. What did I forget? I realized my can of Pure Gum Spirits Of Turpentine was at least three years old. Replacing it was not exactly in the forefront of my mind while recovering. It was one ingredient that had to be fairly fresh, no older than six months, to achieve the fine lacy look for this pattern.

I found also that I worked much slower in the beginning. It really was not only due to my arm, which is about as healed as it will be, but rather, I was a little unsure of myself. Gradually though, the good pace I used to have, came back. I had more goofs than I care to admit, but the "seconds" drawer had also been depleted, so they found a home there, awaiting adoption, or a second life as gift wrap.

So if you get back to marbling after a long hiatus, don't ever think you can't marble anymore. Expect to be slowed down, and expect to have to re-familiarize yourself with your materials and techniques. Expect to have a fair number of bad sheets too. Practice makes...well...almost perfect. There is no perfect for the perfectionist, is there?

I always "winged it" with marbling. I never took notes, had no patience for it. You'd call it playing by ear if it were compared to music. This works if you are doing something all the time, but not after a break of several years. Now I see the value in at least a few minimal notes being written down.

I have promised myself to write up some notes, though hope a break never "takes me" again...but you never know.

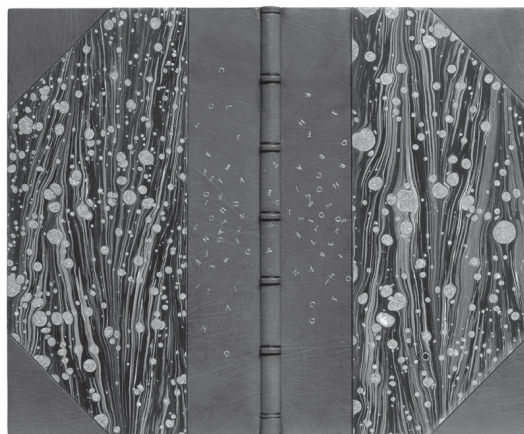
Have I done it...in the year since I started marbling again? Well...not yet...but it's on the to-do list! Now, where did I put that list?

Really...a few notes will help a lot after a long break, so make sure to write things down you think you might forget.

Don't worry...it will be like riding a bicycle, it will all come back.

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.



## KAREN HANMER BOOK ARTS

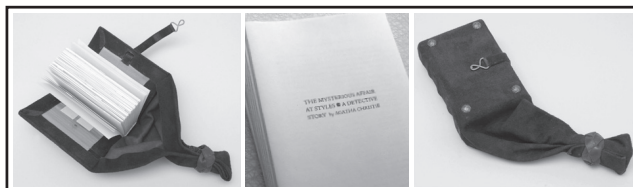
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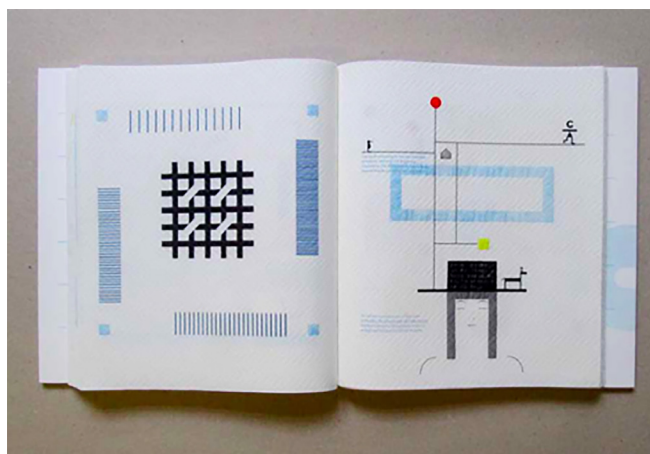
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# An Online Artists' Books Presentation by Ruth R. Rogers

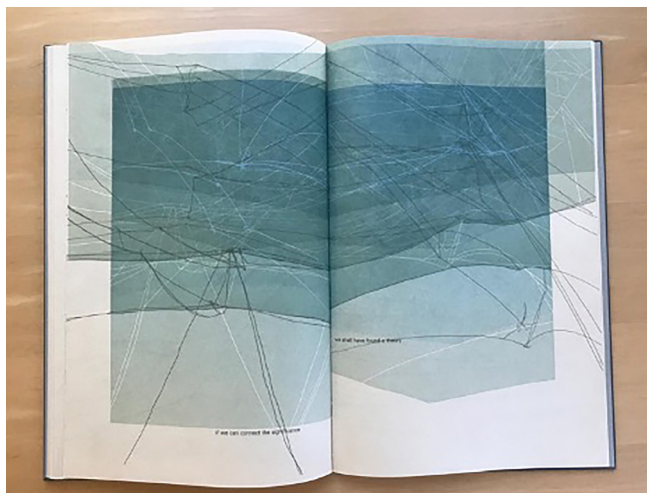
Reviewed by Kim Norman

SARAH BRYANT, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR of letterpress printing & artist books at the University of Alabama, invited Ruth R. Rogers to deliver an online presentation entitled *Mutable Form and Enigmatic Meaning: The Language of Artists' Books*. The video link to the lecture, which was delivered on November 3, 2023, is [vimeo.com/888789583](https://vimeo.com/888789583).

Ruth R. Rogers compares the ways that artists' books communicate their meaning to learning a new language. She described the most memorable books as not *servicing* readers but rather inviting and provoking us to understand the books through multiple, non-textual attributes. Rogers' lecture centered on eight books to deconstruct the



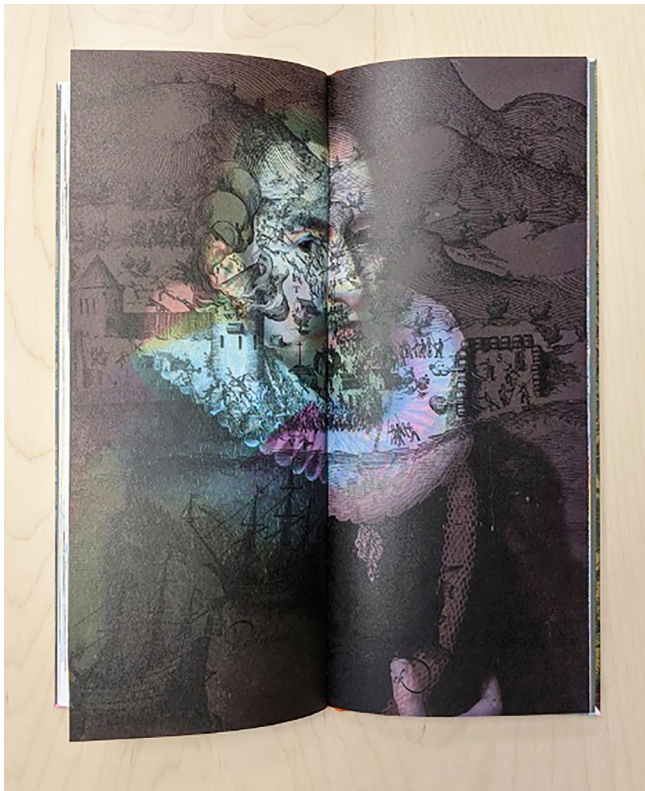
Romano Hänni. *Es ist bitter, die Heimat zu verlassen, (It is bitter to leave your home)*, Basel, Switzerland, 2017.



Sara Langworthy. *On Physical Lines* (text excerpts by James Clerk Maxwell), Iowa City, Iowa, 2015.

many languages that bookmakers use to convey meaning, including weight, substance, spatial orientation, distortion, abstraction, and expectation.

As an educator and curator in an academic institution, Rogers encourages students to interrogate how the book communicates, a counter to some readers' tendencies to casually flip pages and snap photos. Her goal is to provide a pathway into critical engagement with each artist's book by using examples and close analysis of how it interacts with the reader.



Clifton Meador, VOC, Boone, NC: Studio of Exhaustion, 2022.

Ruth R. Rogers is the Curator of Special Collections at Wellesley College, where she specializes in the evolution of the book as material culture, visual communication, and artistic form. As visiting lecturer in the Art Department, Rogers teaches a hands-on intensive seminar, *History of the Book from Manuscript to Print*. She hosts courses throughout the curriculum in the area of book studies, an interdisciplinary approach spanning centuries and media.

Rogers is also a frequent juror for exhibitions and awards in book arts and wrote nine essays in the recently published *Materialia Lumina* exhibition catalog (2022), sponsored by the CODEX Foundation. In her public lectures and writing, Rogers advocates for the critical reading of international, contemporary artists' books in teaching and research. With a grant from the Delmas Foundation and support from the CODEX Foundation, she convened a collecting seminar at Wellesley College in 2023 for academic librarians intended to articulate standards and creative approaches for building institutional collections with artists' books.

This summer, she will co-teach a California Rare Book School (CalRBS) class with the CODEX Foundation's Executive Director, Inge Bruggeman called *Artists' Books in Education: Strategies for Institutional Libraries*. Registration is open through the CalRBS website: [bit.ly/gbw-arto14](https://bit.ly/gbw-arto14).

KIM NORMAN is the Director of Preservation and Digitization Services at Emory Libraries in Atlanta, Georgia where she also has had a long career in book and paper

conservation. She is an active Professional Associate of AIC, Co-Chair of ALA/PAIG, and has served in the past as the GBW-Southeast Chapter Chair.



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*A Conversation with*

# Shanna Leino

*by Bridget McGraw*

**H**ELLO AND WELCOME TO the Zoom room. In my holiday season muddle, I was struggling to write intelligible questions, so I thought that Notion, my so-called productivity app, could flex its AI (artificial intelligence) muscles to generate some questions. First, I asked it to write three interview questions for an artist, then three questions for a toolmaker, three for a rock star, and three for a book artist. I'll begin with the 12<sup>th</sup> question that it engendered.

SHANNA LEINO: Okay! Not that I'm interviewing you, but this does lead me to questions. I appreciate how you're integrating the new frontier into your work when most of us have to be dragged along like complete Luddites, even though I doodled once with AI images.

BRIDGET MCGRAW: Ah ha! I saw your Christmas greeting on Instagram, which inspired me to use this tool.

SL: Another Guild member, Henry Hébert, had posted AI-generated pictures of what a group of book conservators and the library crowd would look like having a birthday party. It was bananas! It looked like a circus roundup having a celebration.

He used DreamStudio [software], and I thought, "Why not? I've got to try it." You can type in any wild idea you have, and it'll make a series of images. Mine was clearly too vanilla: a woman and a dog on a Great Lake beach.

BM: It all makes sense now.

SL: If you scroll back to Henry's birthday party post, and zoom in, you'll see why Dream Studio is so compelling if

you're into demented imagery. My AI experience generated a woman with a spare arm reaching out of a knee, and a big smile with an extra set of teeth on a beach with a dog. Spot on!

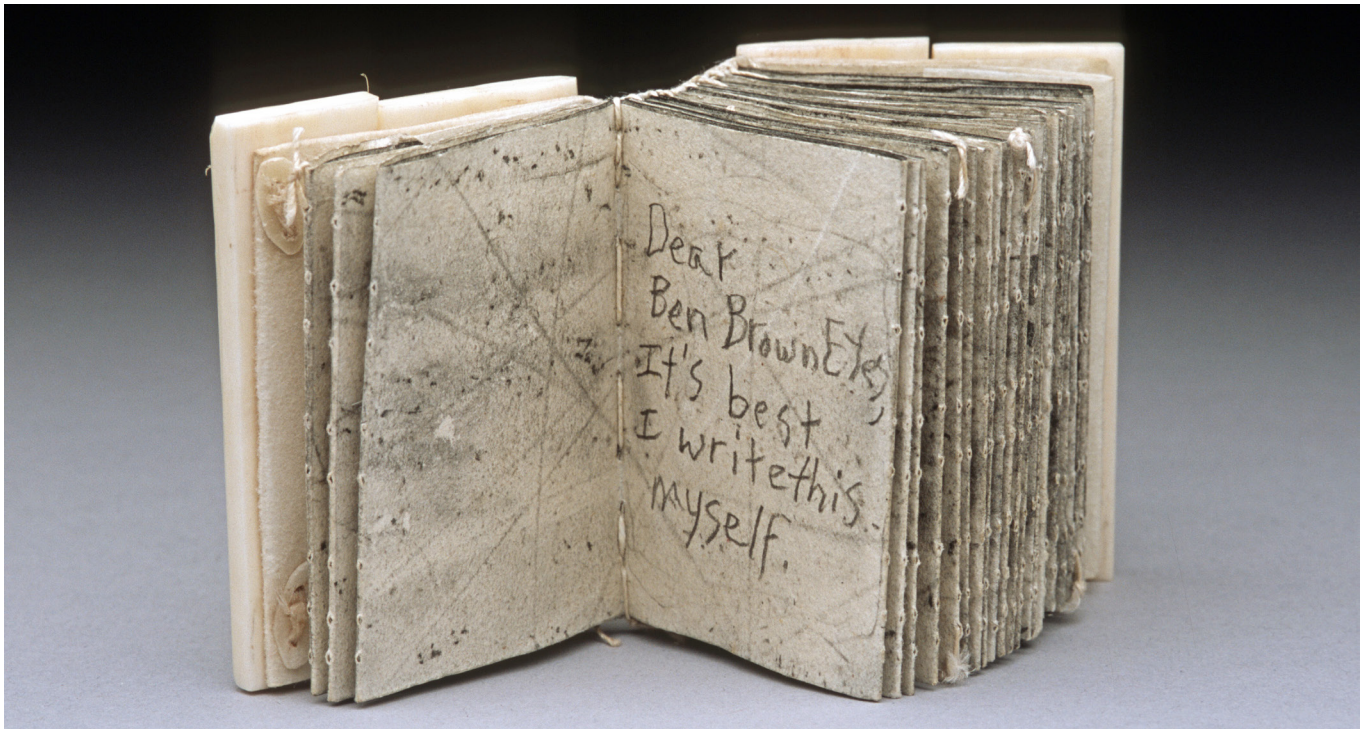
BM: [Chuckling] Ok, so, let's begin with the third question generated by Notion for a book artist. Could you discuss a particular project or book that holds a special place in your artistic journey? And what makes it memorable or significant to you?

SL: A published book or one that I made myself?

BM: How about an artists' book (from a book artist who recently had pieces at the esteemed Seager Gray Gallery)?

SL: These days I don't have so much time to do my own book work, as I've migrated more into tool making. I find it takes so much time and patience to nurture an idea and to chase it down through all the uncomfortable stages of letting go of production mind and getting back into art mind. So at this moment, I would pick a book that symbolizes that sense of the absolute glee found when you're in flow and in a place of maximum artistic freedom.

I would choose *Dear Ben Brown Eyes*, an early artist book that I made as a student at The University of Iowa Center for the Book (UICB). It is a tiny, one of a kind book, that has elk bone covers (a nod to Jim Croft for all he'd taught me about the material and how to work it), University of Iowa flax paper, and parchment I'd made at Jim's, with vague but sad text from a letter found in an abandoned house in Kentucky. Reflecting now, I can see that this



*Dear Ben Brown Eyes*, 2005, elk bone, linen thread, flax paper, sinew, parchment, graphite, 2.5 x 1.75 x 1.5" (6.4 x 4.5 3.8 cm). Photograph by Walker Montgomery.

little book marks a special place in my artistic journey. It represents exploration, freedom in development, and a convergence of my blossoming love for various materials, skills, and learning from people who have continued to matter a lot to me.

BM: That was such a humane answer from a robotic question.

SL: Yes, they're just dying to know.

BM: How do you think about sales? In particular, selling your artists books versus your tools? Perhaps there is no "versus" in that question, but your website has two portals: Home and Shop, with your artists books on the home side of the site.

SL: Sales make the world go 'round. I have far more experience selling my tools through my site than I do

books, mostly because I have been in toolmaker mode and not producing that many artists' books since I launched the website. I appreciate having my book work represented by the Seager Gray Gallery.

In terms of selling tools, it has been the most wonderful experience for me to have an outlet through which I can reach our small pond of interested people anywhere in the world, while maintaining maximum flexibility and freedom. I feel an incredible sense of gratitude to have this method of connecting with people and for having such a supportive and responsive audience. It has been, and continues to be, such a privilege to follow my passion and intuition in my work, put that work up on a website, and get it out there to the world—all on my own from my small studio. At the end of the day though, I'm not a sales person/planner/strategizer, I'm an artist. If I could spend ALL my time making art, that would be the dream.

BM: It must be rewarding when a tool sells out so quickly, like the lovely decorated Peachey tools.

SL: Yes, it is. That's a combination of technology, in this case a fun collaboration, and being able to reach the most wonderful audience.

BM: So true! I'm wondering about your artists books, like the ones that you created while you were the Fiskars Village Artist in Residence, or that you sell at an art gallery. How do you go about pricing?

SL: There's no elaborate structure for that whatsoever. The books I make are almost always one-of-a-kind. To me unique pieces capture a piece of the maker in time. I always



*Dear Ben Brown Eyes*, 2005, elk bone, linen thread, flax paper, sinew, parchment, graphite, 2.5 x 1.75 x 1.5" (6.4 x 4.5 3.8 cm). Photograph by Walker Montgomery.



miss them when they leave. Pricing these works is very subjective, and if they're sold through a gallery, a commission has to be factored in.

BM: Of course.

Your relationship with the natural world seems significant from what I know about you, mostly on your Instagram account. Would you say a little more about that and how you learned about the natural world? Where did you learn about the environment and how do you consciously apply it to your work?

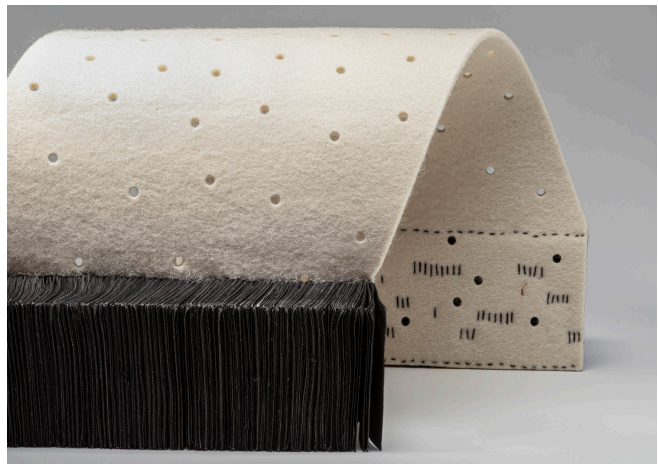
SL: I grew up in a small town in New Hampshire, where I went to a quirky little kids school. We spent a lot of time outside rooting around in the New Hampshire woods. My childhood home also had direct access to land to roam, which surely nurtured my interest in exploring the outdoors. In terms of applying natural materials to my work, there are so many that appeal to me and that work well together with the skills that I have. They're basic skills from across multiple areas like metal smithing, woodworking, metal shop, and jewelry making. I always return to wood, metals (steel, brass, gold), leather, parchment, fibers, rocks in their natural form, and bone, of course. The subtle traits and characteristics of natural materials have huge appeal to me. I have a current fixation with wrapping parchment around smooth stones from Lake Michigan. For no good reason, they're just "objects." They have an inherent appeal to me, can't stop making them!

BM: We who buy your work are happy that you keep making them!

How did you find your way to Iowa?

SL: I went to a small private high school in New Hampshire, which had a different approach from standard public schools, where I was introduced to book arts. From there, I wanted to go to a college that focused on book arts. I got into RISD [Rhode Island School of Design], my first choice. But they did not offer ample financial aid, and I didn't feel like I could shoulder that financial burden. So I went to Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, Nova Scotia. It was more of a conceptual art school, and I wanted to make work that was lumped in more with craft (a dirty word at art school), but I learned basic skills across many mediums: metals, wood, printmaking, photography, etc., which has benefited me tremendously. When I was eligible to study abroad, I chose Iowa because I wanted to be with "Book People!" The University of Iowa Center for the Book stood out as the mecca of book arts in my mind, as did the Guild of Book Workers. This is embarrassing to admit, but way back when I was in high school, I pictured the New York City address of the Guild to be this bustling megashop with people doing all kinds of book work. I even wrote a letter (by hand) on paper to see if I could come visit to see all this action myself!

BM: Did they reply?



*Sorrow Looks Back*, 2019, wool felt, paper, linen thread, 11 x 5 x 4" (27.9 x 12.7 x 10.1 cm). Photograph by Robert Hensleigh.

SL: I don't remember, but I didn't take any affront whatsoever. I just remember that it stood out in my mind as a destination. Iowa City had the same feel.

BM: Good to know that the Guild sparked your imagination and here you are now, a prime vendor at Standards and an exemplary book artist.

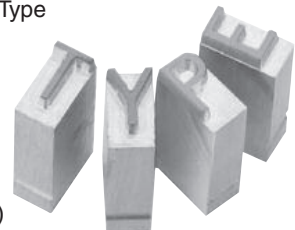
Even though I'd like to talk to you for many more hours, I'm consoled that I'll see you at Standards in Rhode Island next year. Thank you for your time, Shanna.

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

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*March 1st* for the April 2024 Issue (No. 273)

*May 1st* for the June 2024 Issue (No. 274)

*July 1st* for the August 2024 Issue (No. 275)

*September 1st* for the October 2024 Issue (No. 276)

*November 1st* for the December 2024 Issue (No. 277)

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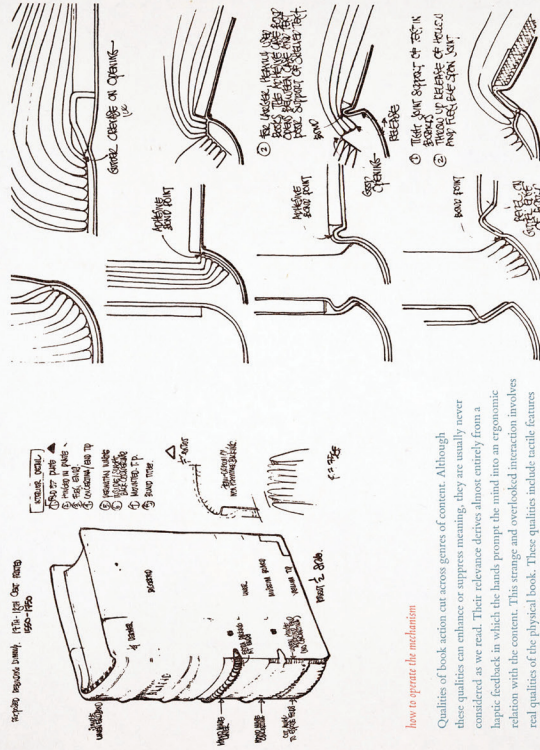
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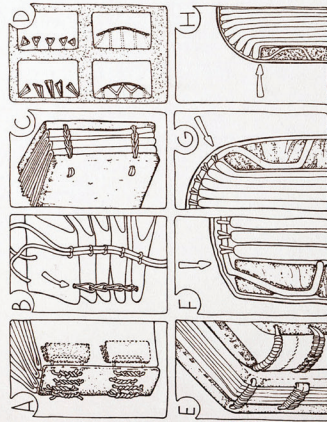
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“This is the attribute of haptic communication in which manipulation of the mechanical format conveys additional meaning without distracting comprehension of content. Primate dexterity and a deeply embedded capacity for hands to prompt the mind are fully optimized by the codex mechanism.”

—Gary Frost



This booklets was printed for Gary Frost in honor of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Guild of Book Workers, October 2010. To his (see expert) diagrams, we employed two handbooks: *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler and *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler. The booklets was printed for Gary Frost in honor of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Guild of Book Workers, October 2010. To his (see expert) diagrams, we employed two handbooks: *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler and *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler. The booklets was printed for Gary Frost in honor of the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Guild of Book Workers, October 2010. To his (see expert) diagrams, we employed two handbooks: *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler and *How to Read a Book* by Mortimer Adler.