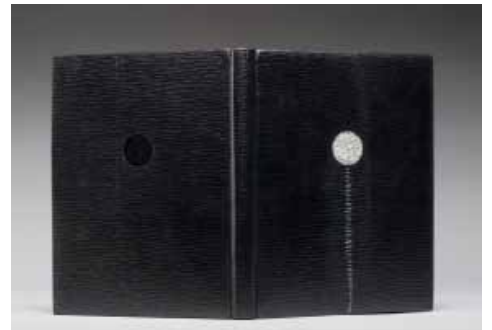
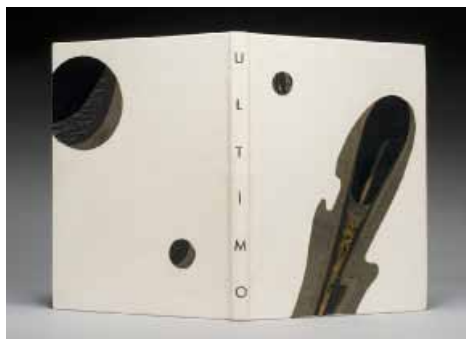




## Marking Time



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Cover art: Books from the *Marking Time* Exhibition. See legend on page 31 for artists' credits.

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# President's Column

I'm just back from the 2009 Seminar in Standards of Excellence in Hand Bookbinding, which was overseen by Chris McAfee. The conference was organized by Judy Houghteling with the help of Margaret Johnson. Both of these people need no introduction; they have volunteered their time to the GBW in many different roles over many years. Any event has its glitches, but this conference was remarkably well managed. Many members attending Standards told me that they thought this was a wonderfully organized conference. This is a testament to Judy and Margaret's efforts, and to the many members of the Hand Bookbinders of California and the California Chapter of GBW who contributed to the success of this conference.

The venue was wonderful: the Hotel Kabuki in Japantown, a lovely boutique-style hotel with a great array of restaurants in easy walking distance. The tours, ably organized by Sandra Gold and John DeMerit, gave us a chance to explore the many interesting book-related sites of San Francisco and the East Bay. The opening reception at the San Francisco Public Library gave us the opportunity to view the *Marking Time* exhibition, curated by Karen Hanmer. The Friday evening viewing of the George Hecksher collection of modern design bindings was simply thrilling. The stunning quality of the workmanship on display, combined with the beautiful venue, contributed to create an event that will not be soon forgotten.

This conference featured an all-California team of presenters: Tom Conroy, Tatiana Ginzburg, Carolee Campbell and Dominic Riley (OK, I know what you're thinking, but I consider Dominic an honorary Californian). Their presentations fulfilled the central mission of Standards: to show masters of the craft at work, with plenty of opportunity for those in the audience to ask questions, or to argue. The conference ended with the Saturday night banquet, and the auction hosted by Bill Drendel. It was a memorable few days.

All in all, this Standards was a great success. I commend all those who contributed to making it so.

James Reid-Cunningham

GBW President

# GBW Exhibition

*Marking Time* travels to the University of Washington Seattle December 7-February 19.



Local exhibitors Coleen Curry, Jody Alexander and Debbie Kogan gave a gallery talk at the San Francisco Public Library on September 6. SFPL was also host to a reception for the Guild's Standards of Excellence Seminar on October 28.

The exhibition is online at [www.guildofbookworkers.org](http://www.guildofbookworkers.org), along with a complete tour schedule and catalog order information. The catalog is also available unbound, in sheets.

Several Guild regional chapters are in the early planning stages for their own exhibitions. Watch for details in future chapter newsletters or on chapter web pages or blogs.

Karen Hanmer

Exhibition Chair

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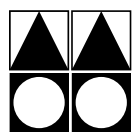
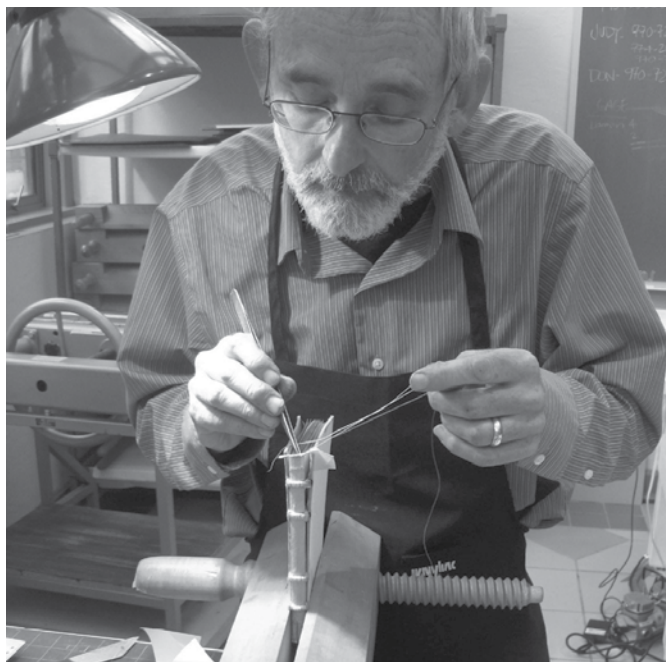
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## In Memoriam

It's with sadness that I report the death of my friend and colleague, Ursula Hofer. She died on September 15 after a short battle with brain cancer.

Ursula was a Swiss trained binder who worked in the studio of Carolyn Horton for several years after coming to the US. I met her there & in 1981 we founded Sky Meadow Bindery located first in Suffern, NY & then in Olivebridge, NY. A memorial service for Ursula was held at her house in Woodstock, NY in a yurt on the property. Ursula was active in a spiritual community there. The service included songs & ecumenical reading & ended with the singing of "Happy Trails."

I'm planning to continue the bindery - sort of, but want to downsize & divest the studio of things we didn't use much. At the moment I'm thinking of decorative brass tools, maybe 200-300, including hand tools, pallets, fillets, rolls etc. and we also have many skins of various leathers in assorted colors.

Let me know if anyone has an interest in any of this.

Louise Kuflik  
Sky Meadow Bindery

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# Library Report

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The Guild of Book Workers Library now has the following Presentations from the Dallas 2007 Standards of Excellence Seminar available for library loan. Videos are loaned in DVD format unless VHS is requested. Information and instructions for library loans can be found on the GBW website at: [www.guildofbookworkers.org/resources/library.php](http://www.guildofbookworkers.org/resources/library.php)

The videos are also available for sale using the video order form on the GBW website: [www.guildofbookworkers.org/resources/videos\\_standards/videoorder.pdf](http://www.guildofbookworkers.org/resources/videos_standards/videoorder.pdf) ( The 2006 Centennial set is on a separate order form, [www.guildofbookworkers.org/resources/videos\\_centennial/gbw100videoorder.pdf](http://www.guildofbookworkers.org/resources/videos_centennial/gbw100videoorder.pdf) )

## **2007 GBW Standards Presentations, Dallas TX**

### **Gold Leaf Tooling on Leather, with Stuart Brockman**

A demonstration of methods and skills for gold leaf tooling of labels on goatskin, the use of line fillets and patterned rolls on boards and board edges, lettering a convex spine and the use of pallets and center tools.

Stuart Brockman trained with his father James in the UK. He has led workshops and lectured in the UK, Canada, Finland, and the USA.

### **Plain-Jane Restoration — Making Books Functional, with Catherine Burkhard**

This presentation shows basic, yet quality restoration techniques for books with personal value, where cost-effective restoration is called for.

Catherine Burkhard is a bookbinder and calligrapher and has been an instructor in both fields. She works in her Books'n Letters Studio in Dallas, TX where she is a professional crafts person and instructor.

### **Original Binding Structures and Decorations, with Roberta Lavadour**

A demonstration focusing on original binding structures and book decoration inspired by the Cowboy and Indian heritage of Eastern Oregon.

Roberta Lavadour publishes her artist's books at the Mission Creek Press in Eastern Oregon. Her work has been widely exhibited and resides in collections around the world.

### **Practical Strategies for Editions, with Kitty Maryatt**

This session focuses on designing a student letterpress edition of 100 copies. It demonstrates a variety of materials both traditional and non-traditional and use of jigs for repetitive tasks.

Kitty Maryatt is Director of the Scripps College Press and Assistant Professor of Arts at Scripps. She owns Two Hands Press in Playa Vista, CA where she designs and prints books and bindings for clients.

### **Creating Medieval Stationer's Binding Structures: Lacing Patterns, Tacketing Methods, and Leather Making, with Chela Metzger**

Stationers bindings are completed showing lacing and tacketing, and closures with loops, ties or buttons. The unique history of blank books and concerns for conserving them are discussed.

Chela Metzger is a bookbinder and Conservator currently teaching book history and book conservations at the University of Texas at Austin.

### **Design Principles and the Book, with Keith Owens**

This presentation introduces foundational design and color principles and their use in innovative book design. Visuals illustrate the application of these principles in book design.

Keith Owens is an assistant professor of communication design at the University of North Texas School of Visual Arts and also teaches at Texas Tech. He is a designer of custom books, albums and boxes., and Education chair of AIGA Dallas Ft Worth chapter.

### **Behind the Design, with Priscilla Spitler**

This presentation shows the designer binding process of overall cover design, from concept to thumbnail sketch, to laying out a final blueprint for leather onlay.

Priscilla Spitler studied printmaking at CA College of Arts and Crafts, bookbinding at London College of Printing and design binding at University of Texas. She worked as an edition binder, and now has her own Hands On Bookbinding studio moving to Truth or Consequences, NM.

Jane Meggers, GBW Library



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## The Conservation Corner

### A Greener Alternative to Blotters (That Also Saves You Some Green)

The recent trend to move toward everything green, combined with the current economic climate, has us all shifting some of the ways in which we do everyday things. This can be applied to the conservation lab as well, especially when the solution is something that actually makes our work lives easier.

Increasing frustration with the cost of using blotters for almost any- and everything, as well as its short life, prompted our lab to find an alternative material for use in procedures such as drying and humidification. This is not to say that blotters can be fully replaced in the lab, as we continue to use them often...just not quite as much as before. Now we have moved to using white terrycloth for many treatment steps as an alternative to blotters that tended to deteriorate fairly quickly after being wetted.


Towels can be fully wet, wrung out, and used in humidity chambers or humidity packs. They hold moisture well, and can be dried easily by laying flat, hanging, or throwing them in the clothes dryer for a few minutes. Towels are much easier to handle than blotter paper when fully wet, and are stronger as well. They are also handy for air-drying objects, and can be used in combination with blotters when drying beneath weight.

Towels have additional advantages over blotters: They do not cockle or tear. They are easier to store because they can be folded or hung. They are significantly less expensive, and easier to purchase should you need them right away. If and when towels absorb degradation products from treated objects, they can be washed and re-used for a very long life in your lab.

We make sure the towels we buy are white (or unbleached) and 100% cotton. You may choose a smooth or textured weave depending on the intended purpose. They are easy to find in several sizes at stores like Target or Ikea. If a large amount of material is needed, you can purchase terrycloth from a fabric store and hem the edges.

Tish Brewer

*The Center for Art Conservation*



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# Calendar of Events

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## EXHIBITIONS

**Currently and through December 11, 2009:** *The Elizabeth Perkins Prothro Bible Collection*, The Bridwell Library, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX. The 58 highlights from the collection include Medieval and Renaissance Bibles, Bibles of the Reformation, the first English Bibles, early American Bibles, 19th century missionary Bibles, and 20th century limited editions. Free, open to public, during Library hours. 214.768.3483. >[www.smu.edu/bridwell](http://www.smu.edu/bridwell)<

**Currently and through December 30, 2009:** *Show and Bestow*, The Ruth Hughes Collection of Artists' Books. Free Library of Philadelphia, 1901 Vine St., Philadelphia, PA.

**Currently and through December 31, 2009:** *Minding Bindings: Book Care and Repair*, Albuquerque Special Collections Library, Albuquerque, NM, 423 Central NE, Tues-Sat, 10 a.m.-6:00 p.m., 505.848.1376. Exhibit addresses why and how bindings fail, how they may be repaired, and how to avert problems through careful handling and storage. Contact: Alan Shalette >[alshal@aol.com](mailto:alshal@aol.com)<

**Currently and through December 31, 2009:** *A Fixed Rule of Design: the Book Art of Bertha Stuart*, Boston Public Library, Rare Books and Manuscripts Department, Boston, MA, Mon.-Fri., 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Free of charge, free exhibition checklist available. For directions to the BPL: ><http://www.bpl.org/general/directions.htm><

**Currently and through July 31, 2010:** The Designer Bookbinders exhibition, *Bound for Success*, the first international competition sponsored by Designer Bookbinders, a UK based, international organization devoted to the craft of fine binding >[www.designerbookbinders.org.uk](http://www.designerbookbinders.org.uk)<. The juried exhibition features 117 winning bindings from binders in 21 countries. Entrants all bound the same text, *Water*, designed and printed by Incline Press.

**Currently through Dec 13:** Boston Public Library

**Feb 12-Mar 6, 2010:** Bonhams & Butterfields, San Francisco

**May 19-Jul 31, 2010:** Grolier Club, New York

A printed exhibition catalog accompanies exhibition, featuring a photograph and description of each of the 240 bindings submitted for the competition -- available at each venue, or from >[www.designerbookbinders.org.uk](http://www.designerbookbinders.org.uk)< or >[www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)< or >[www.press.uchicago.edu](http://www.press.uchicago.edu)<

**Currently and through March 2011:** Guild of Book Workers' traveling exhibition of 50 works with a theme of *Marking Time*. At University of Washington, Seattle, WA, December 7-February 19, 2010, then to University of Utah Marriott Library, Salt Lake City, UT, March 56-April 23, 2010. Catalog available. Information and order form at: ><http://www.guildofbookworkers.org/gallery/markingtime/><

**December 5, 2009-January 10, 2010:** *The Assignment*, a juried exhibition of book arts organized in conjunction with the

meeting of the College Book Art Association, Portland, OR at 23 Sandy Gallery, Portland. To illuminate the conference's focus on book arts teaching practice and pedagogy, the exhibition will feature work created by member artists generated directly from course assignments or from those assignments we generate for ourselves. Work accepted into the show will be exhibited alongside a written description of the assignment.

**December 5, 2009-January 31, 2010:** The Designer Bookbinders (England) Bookbinding Competition Exhibition. The John Rylands Library, Deansgate, Manchester, with hours on Monday 12-5, Tues-Saturday 10-5, and Sunday 12-5. Closed December 25, 2009-January 3, 2010.

**December 11-January 22, 2010:** *The Feminine Touch: Women and the Work of the Book*

An exhibition focusing on the conjunction of women and bookmaking ><http://bookartsprogram.org><

**January 29-February 26, 2010:** Exhibition - 18th Century European Performance Arts, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, ><http://bookartsprogram.org><

**February 12-December 1, 2010:** *Rebound, Recycled, Repurposed, Reused*, a juried show of altered bookworks. >[www.abecedariangallery.com](http://www.abecedariangallery.com)<

**April 1-May, 2010:** *Artists Bookworks Cornucopia*, a juried show of artists' bookworks. See "Call for Entries". >[www.abecedariangallery.com](http://www.abecedariangallery.com)<

**May 14-June 25, 2010:** *Bye-Bye Codex*, a national exhibition juried by Hedi Kyle, at Creative Arts Workshop, New Haven, CT. Call 203.562.4927 or email >[sandy@creativeartsworkshop.org](mailto:sandy@creativeartsworkshop.org)<.

*Continued next page*

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## CALL FOR ENTRIES

**By January 20, 2010**, entries for *Artists Bookworks Cornucopia*, a juried show of artists' bookworks. >[www.abecedariangallery.com](http://www.abecedariangallery.com)<

**By February 19, 2010**, entries for *Innovative Structures: Books Beyond the Codex*. A show of artists' books juried by Hedi Kyle; Dates: May 14-June 25, 2010. For prospectus call Tricia at Creative Arts Workshop, 203.562.4927 or email >[tricia@creativeartsworkshop.org](mailto:tricia@creativeartsworkshop.org)<

## WORKSHOPS, LECTURES & OTHER EVENTS

**January 9, 2010-March 2, 2010:** Designer Bookbinders in England offer lectures at The Art Workers Guild, 6 Queen Square, London WC1 (nearest underground stations: Holborn and Russell Square), as follows:

**Jan 9:** Four lectures....

*The Legacy of Calligrapher Edward Johnston* with Gerald Fleuss, 10.30 am

*Extreme Bookbinding Again: A second voyage to Ethiopia* with Lester Capon, 12 noon

*The Peter Waters I Knew* with George Kirkpatrick, 2:00 pm

*Everything in the world exists to end up in a book* with Sue Doggett, 3:30 pm

**Feb 2:** *The Trade in Bindings* with Edward Bayntun-Coward, 6:30 p.m.

**Mar 2:** Two lectures....

*A Bookbinder's Approach to Book Arts: How I incorporate design binding techniques in book arts* with Eri Funazaki, 6:30 p.m.

*A Bookbinder's Journey: From student days to post-fellowship* with Dominic Riley. Admission for members £5, non-members £7, students £2.50 per lecture. >[www.designerbookbinders.org.uk](http://www.designerbookbinders.org.uk)< >[lectures@designerbookbinders.org.uk](mailto:lectures@designerbookbinders.org.uk)<

**Beginning January 1, 2010:** at J. Willard Marriott, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT, ><http://bookartsprogram.org>< or >[bookartsprogram@utah.edu](mailto:bookartsprogram@utah.edu)< or 801.585.9191:

**Jan 1-Apr 27:** Artists' Books with Chris McAfee and Marnie Powers-Torrey

**Feb 27:** Art, Printing and the Politic of the Poster with David Wolske and Becky Williams Thomas

**Mar 20:** Educator Workshop - folded books, portfolios, and boxes with Antonia Nelson

**Beginning January 3, 2010:** Classes at John C. Campbell Folk School, One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC, 828.837.2775, x196, >[marketing@folkschool.org](mailto:marketing@folkschool.org)<, >[www.folkschool.org](http://www.folkschool.org)<, as follows:

**Jan 3-9:** Botanical Books: Traditions Old & New with Annie Cicale & Redenta Soprano

**Jan 17-22:** Wooden Books - Coptic Variations with Dan Essig

**Jan 22-24:** Mica Books with Dan Essig (*weekend*)

## Special Events

### FROM THE CHAPTERS

#### Lone Star Chapter:

An exhibition is being planned for 2010. Check the next Chapter Newsletter (winter issue) for details.

#### New England Chapter:

Check the Chapter's Blog and/or the GBW Web site for information.

#### Potomac Chapter:

*Annual Holiday Party and Election Results* – Folger Shakespeare Library, Thursday, December 10, 5:30 p.m. Fun, food, drinks, a review of the past year's activities and a sneak peak at what is being planned for 2010. Results of the recent election for Chapter officers will be announced.



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Contact: >[www.ahhaa.org](http://www.ahhaa.org)< or contact AAB program coordinator, Judy Kohin at 970.729.8649.

## The Book Arts Program at the J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah

See information in the “Exhibitions” and in the “Workshops, Lectures” sections.

For more information on all events, contact Amber Heaton at >[amber.heaton@utah.edu](mailto:amber.heaton@utah.edu)<; 801.585.9191 • >[www.lib.utah.edu/rare/BAP\\_Page/BAP.html](http://www.lib.utah.edu/rare/BAP_Page/BAP.html)<

## John C. Campbell Folk School

One Folk School Road, Brasstown, NC, 828.837.2775, x196  
See classes offered for early 2010 in the “Workshop, Lectures” section

>[marketing@folkschool.org](mailto:marketing@folkschool.org)< • >[www.folkschool.org](http://www.folkschool.org)<

## The Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild

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## The Center for Book Arts New York City

212.481.0295 • >[www.centerforbookarts.org](http://www.centerforbookarts.org)<

## Center for the Book - San Francisco, CA

415.565.0545 • >[www.sfcbook.org](http://www.sfcbook.org)<

## Creative Arts Workshop - New Haven, CT

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One Cottage Street #5, Room - 503 Easthampton, MA 01027

The Garage Annex offers workshops in traditional and non-traditional book arts,

printmaking, and the conservation of books.

>[contact@garageannexschool.com](mailto:contact@garageannexschool.com)<

>[www.garageannexschool.com](http://www.garageannexschool.com)<

## Green Heron Book Arts

503.357.7263 or email >[bookkits@aol.com](mailto:bookkits@aol.com)<

## Hollander's Workshops

Visit >[www.hollanders.com](http://www.hollanders.com)< for the full schedule of workshops in Ann Arbor, MI.

Hollander's also partners with the American Academy of Bookbinding and hosts their workshops. Contact >[staff@ahhaa.org](mailto:staff@ahhaa.org)< for AAB information.

## North Bennet Street School

Check ><http://www.nbss.org/workshops/schedule.asp>< for current and future

bookbinding classes or call 617.227.0155 x102

## Old Way

Workshops with Jim Croft, Santa ID

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## Oregon College of Art & Craft

Portland, Oregon - for latest schedule, see >[www.ocac.edu](http://www.ocac.edu)<

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145 West 26 Street, NY, NY 10001 • >[paperdragonbooks.com](http://paperdragonbooks.com)<

## Penland School of Crafts

For more information and complete listing of courses:

828.765.2359 • >[www.penland.org](http://www.penland.org)<

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## School for Formal Bookbinding

Ongoing instruction (see “Workshops, Lectures” Section) in the German tradition

learned from Fritz and Trudi Eberhardt.

For detailed descriptions of all the classes, tuition, and housing information, visit:

>[www.donrashfinebookbinder.com](http://www.donrashfinebookbinder.com)< or call 570.821.7050.

## Seattle Center for Book Arts

>[www.seattlebookarts.org/classes/class\\_2008q2\\_paper.html](http://www.seattlebookarts.org/classes/class_2008q2_paper.html)<

## Studio-on-the-Square, NYC

Intima Press & Studio-on-the-Square, 32 Union Square East, #310, NYC.

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## The University of Alabama

### MFA in The Book Arts Program

in the School of Library and Information Studies,

>[www.bookarts.ua.edu](http://www.bookarts.ua.edu)<

## Wells Book Arts Institute Classes and Workshops

>[www.wells.edu/bkarts/info.htm](http://www.wells.edu/bkarts/info.htm)<

## Women's Studio Workshop

For a complete listing of upcoming workshops, see >[www.wsworkshop.org](http://www.wsworkshop.org)< or call 845.658.9133.

Catherine Burkhard  
as of 11-4-09

# Remembering Standards and San Francisco



President Jim Reid-Cunningham and Monique Lallier present Betsy Palmer Eldridge with the *Lifetime Achievement Award*



Don Etherington and Monique Lallier present American Academy of Bookbinding certificate to Coleen Curry, Muir Beach, CA (right) and Conservation certificates to Sophia Bogle, Ashland, OR (left) and Ruth Strach, North Scituate, Rhode Island (not in attendance)



Banquet Auctioneer  
Bill Drendel



*Laura Young Award* for Peter Veheyen (not in attendance).  
Nancy Leavitt letters the *Laura Young* and *Lifetime Achievement* awards every year. The portfolios housing the awards were designed by North Bennet Street School students Ken Gilbert and Johanna Smick



"1000 Cranes" decorated the banquet hall, contributed by Hand Bookbinders of California, co-sponsors of Standards 2009



Our videographer, Andy Small, owner of The Video Center, Iowa City, Iowa

# 2009 Standard of Excellence Presentations



## The Art and Science of Cloth Rebacking *with Dominic Riley*

Speed, efficiency, entertainment, and amusement are not words we typically associate with cloth rebacks. But from the wool cap to the stocking feet, they're all things we had in presenter Dominic Riley. Mr. Riley had us at hello by showing us all a clip of the documentary film he's made about Bernard Middleton. I had to exercise serious restraint by not picking up a copy in the vendor room, where several of the vendors offered it for sale.

By way of introducing the cloth reback, Mr. Riley explained to us that his style of book repair is equally informed by restoration, in which one tries to restore a book's condition to what it was when it left the maker's shop, and conservation. He also shared with us that in checking over the past five years' invoices, he estimated that he's executed about 800 cloth rebacks, or two per week. This came through quite well as the great ease and confidence as he worked. In fact, as he started in with the actual repair, I remember thinking, "He's going to demonstrate this entire repair in under three hours?" His handout for us is eleven pages long—plenty material to get through.

But it was accomplished rather tidily and with just enough time to spare on a clip from the documentary about Maureen Duke he's made, a slide show of his own design bindings of late, and the many amusing asides about French polishing, lumpy paste, Friday night bindings, the unusual reading habits of Tom Conroy, and the bookbinder to H.M.Q. (or "Maj," short for Her Majesty, as she is colloquially called).

At the break, Karen Hanmer pointed out to me that Dominic's handouts are usually pretty comprehensive, and did I really need to be taking all those notes?? But in spite of myself, I ended up taking a full twelve pages of notes—consist-

ing mainly of anecdotes, asides, and opinions not mentioned in the handout. Many thanks to Dominic Riley for an engaging presentation well worth the time.

Review by Juliayn Coleman



## Kusakisomegami – Dyeing Japanese Paper with Natural Dyes *with Tatiana Ginsburg*

Artist and papermaker Tatiana Ginsburg, currently a visiting artist at Mount Holyoke College, spent two years in Japan learning traditional methods of dyeing Japanese paper. Her talk described the history of dyed paper in Japan, with a demonstration of extracting and applying natural dyes and pigments to Japanese paper.

We tend to think of Japanese paper as being pure, and indeed white paper is used as a symbol of purity in Japan. Tatiana explained that traditional dyes add symbolic meaning to the paper to which they are applied. Originally, dyed papers were made for copying sutras. The earliest existing example of dyed paper is yellow with dye made from bark that acts as an insect repellent. Dye colors for these special papers were chosen either for their practical properties (such as the yellow insect repellent), the medicinal properties of the dyestuff, or the colors' religious significance. Paper used for calligraphic poetry was sometimes chosen because the color referred to the subject matter. Very expensive colors were reserved, as in the West, for coloring fiber used by the upper echelons of society.

The two traditional methods Tatiana demonstrated were dip dyeing and brush dyeing. The basic procedure she described as "dye-mordant-dye"—meaning first the dye is applied (brushed on or by dipping the sheet in the bath); then the

*Continued next page*

mordant is applied in the same manner, followed by another application of dye. Mordants adhere the dye to the fiber but are volatile compounds (of alum or iron), which may react to other materials if unbonded molecules are left in the paper after drying. Repeated application of color captures the free molecules. Tatiana demonstrated the use of two different mordants, liquid iron and rock alum. Mordants alter the color of the dye and should be chosen for the resulting color. For her demonstration, Tatiana used logwood, which makes a soft red. The iron mordant turned the color brown, and the alum made the red brighter. The paper is secured between two slats, wider than the sheet, with binding clips. The slats are held as the paper is drawn through the bath or while the dye is applied with a soft brush to both sides of the paper. The slats also allow the paper to be hung to dry easily.

Tatiana emphasized that dyes can be extracted from commonly available materials, including pomegranate skins, goldenrod, walnut shells, onion skin, clove, sweet gum pods, tea, turmeric, lotus leaf (found in Chinese food stores), tomato stalks, and chestnut hulls. Plant dyestuffs are stronger when dry, so plants should be dried before extracting the color. The weight of dyestuff should be at least half the weight of the fiber. To extract the dye, cover the dyestuff with water in a nonreactive pot and simmer 20 to 30 minutes. Strain the extracted dye with a colander, then strain again with a fine mesh (linen or muslin) and repeat the extraction with the same dyestuff. Mix the two extractions together, as each extraction can be a different strength, and the second one may be stronger. Use the dye when it has cooled to room temperature.

*Funori*, a size made from seaweed that is similar to methyl cellulose (available from Hiromi, *funori* is preferred by Japanese conservators), can also be added to the dye bath. This is recommended especially for brush dyeing, as the size will reduce pilling.

Tatiana also demonstrated the use of *konnyaku* powder, a size that makes paper soft and flexible like fabric yet strong enough to be made into pillows, seat cushions, or large bags for rice. Prepared *konnyaku* is brushed on both sides of the paper. The paper is crumpled into a ball, then uncrumpled over and over until it dries. The crumpling action strengthens the paper.

For more information on Tatiana's work, visit [www.tatianaginsberg.org](http://www.tatianaginsberg.org) or see <http://www.gbwny.org/news/2008/10/> for a more detailed description of the dying process.

Review by Clare Manias



## Methods of Approach

### *with Carolee Campbell/Ninja Press Review*

“How does one start to make a book?” Carolee Campbell asks, after reading “The Intimate Stranger”, a prose poem written by Breyten Breytenbach. The poem is beautiful and the book it’s housed in is equally so. As Carolee opens the binding to the room you can see that each page is different – some are cut at sharp angles, others feature hand-painted windows or letterpressed symbols. She explains the journey through her work – research done on the content, how materials are chosen, the meaning behind the designs.

As a presenter for the 28<sup>th</sup> Standards of Excellence seminar, Carolee has come prepared. She walks us through photographs of Ninja Press, of which she is the sole proprietor, and of the work she has done. Her first book, completed in 1984 during the press’ inaugural year, is both shown and passed around. “Close to the Bone”, a poem by Betty Andrews, features a bone print that Carolee cut from a linoleum block. She explains how it was done and invites us to look at both the block and the bone the design was modeled after.

In addition to her first project, Carolee came to the conference with several of her other works. “El Sol y Los de Abajo”, a poem written by José Montoya, is letterpress printed on a single sheet, folded accordion-style and mounted in a case printed with the poet’s drawings. “The Architectures 1-7”, written by Nathaniel Tarn, is bound in a brass case. The brass has been heated to create a beautiful color effect on the covers. Several of the pages feature multi-colored wood-block illustrations, something that required more letterpress pulls than any other project she’s done.

“The Real World of Manuel Cordova” is perhaps the most impressive piece. This poem, written by W.S. Merwin, is printed on kakishibu, a persimmon-washed handmade paper from Japan. It is bound accordion-style, and with 43 14-line stanzas is 15 feet long when open. The text of the poem runs along the pattern of a winding river, printed along the left side for the entire length of the sheet. Carolee goes into great detail



about the work involved in this particular project – it is clear that the research was extensive, and as a result the book truly conveys some of the feeling and experience in the content.

Carolee doesn't take commissions, so the choice of work is entirely up to her. While there are no specific requirements as to what she prints, she works almost exclusively with poetry, explaining that it's "a great armature to hang a book on". She also says that making a book of poetry is "...a digestive process, something that I didn't get as a reader". It's clear from the way she speaks that her relationships with the poets she's printed are important to her, and that she is deeply inspired by their work.

She also takes influence from her personal experiences. Her love of the outdoors is clear in many of her materials, and in the attention to landscapes and maps in her work. Her studies in kudo (Japanese fencing) and Eastern philosophies show through in bindings such as "Burn Down the Zendo", a poem by Michael Hannon.

As she has extensive experience with photography, this is also an element in some of her work. Bruce Whiteman's "XXIV Short Love Poems" features three cyanotypes, a 19<sup>th</sup> century photographic process. It was her work with photography that initially led her to bookbinding – the search for a new way to present prints brought her to the book and with the book she has stayed.

She ended her presentation by talking about her latest project, Nathaniel Tarn's "The Persephones". Each of the ten poems is printed on a single folio, all of which are housed in a vellum case. The folios are each hand-painted and on the exterior, appear to look something like a galaxy. Carolee explained that this was a simple effect to achieve using sumi ink and salt, and proceeded to demonstrate exactly how she'd done it. She also made mention of the fact that this was the first time she had done something like this and commented that her work was changing. "I'm less interested in similarities than I am in differences," she said "and I don't know how that's going to play out." Carolee is an adept bookbinder, printer and designer and however her work changes, I'll certainly be excited to see what comes next.

Review by Athena Moore

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NOTE: Standards Sessions reviews were graciously written by the four scholarship recipients from this year's applicants.

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## Tool Repair with Tom Conroy

"With something made for use, the loss of its usability is loss of its primary importance." from *Usefully Conflicting Principles of Repair* prepared by Tom Conroy.

On the surface, Tom Conroy's presentation on Tool Repair supplied attendees with many useful techniques for maintaining and repairing tools. However, on a deeper level, Conroy's presentation imparted the sense that we all have the ability to be self-sufficient in our craft. Conroy has an admirable respect for the well crafted and very little tolerance for anything less. I left his presentation feeling that Conroy carries a real sense of pride in craftsmanship, both in his own work and the work of others.

Along with this sense of pride, Conroy seems to hold a deeply felt responsibility to share his knowledge. His generosity with knowledge was revealed as we filed into the sunlight-filled conference room, turned wood and metal working shop. Conroy informed us that he had eight hours of essential material to fit into our three hour time slot. Ideally, we would cover choosing and using wood and metal tools as well as the care and maintenance of individual tools. This would include knowing how and from what materials your tools are made, as well as how to recondition neglected tools. The essentials also covered routine maintenance, such as resetting finishing tools in their handles, serving cracked ferrules on glue brushes and choosing the proper adhesive for a repair. Conroy could have easily given an extensive workshop over the course of a few days. We covered a lot of material but it was obviously only scratching the surface (how to remove rust mechanically).

Conroy's disdain for misinformation and its suppliers was apparent as he dispelled myths throughout his presentation. Referring to a finishing press made of plywood, Conroy commented that some tools just were not worth fixing. He said that if the press was made of plywood for any reason besides being extremely cheap, it was probably because the maker

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# The Campbell-Logan Bindery, Inc.



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*Continued from page 13*

inaccurately assumed that plywood was a good choice since it is dimensionally stable. Being dimensionally stable means that the plywood does not expand and contract. However, plywood does warp, which renders the press unusable and not worth fixing. Conroy explained that a well-made finishing press allows for solid wood to expand and contract without affecting its usability.

Safety was another important focus for Conroy. He demonstrated the proper way to handle tools during use and emphasized the advantages of using non-toxic chemicals and adhesives. In sharing his technique for palette reshaping and sharpening, Conroy stressed the importance of using a handle on a file. Files are often sold without a handle, making it necessary to add your own. Some of the suggestions for making a handle included using a wooden dowel rod from the hardware store or even shaping fallen branches from your neighborhood. The handle gives you control over the angle of filing and can prevent injuries to your hands.

Conroy demonstrated the use of FDA food grade citric acid for rust removal on a spoke shave. Simply allowing the tool to soak in a solution of two tablespoons of citric acid to one pint of water allowed the immovable screws to loosen and much of the surface rust to dissipate. Conroy also discussed the use of electrolysis for rust removal and warned about the potential dangers of this method. For cleaning old tools, oftentimes with a little elbow grease, a non-toxic solution works as well as a strong toxic chemical. When a toxic substance is necessary, Conroy recommended proper safety precautions, such as thick rubber gloves and adequate ventilation.

He also spoke about the many poisons in PVA, expressing a preference for non-flexible hot glue. The 251-gram strength which is good for edition binding can also be used for woodworking when repairing tools. The 390-gram glue that is suitable for working on one book does not have a long enough open time for working wood – the higher the glue's gram strength, the shorter the open working time. Conroy also warned against the use of rabbit skin glue which he said was weak, brittle and aggressive.

In addition to the information presented, Conroy also supplied a three page annotated bibliography on hand tool repair and a four page guide to sources for supplies. The third handout was titled "*Usefully Conflicting Principals of Repair*" which encouraged careful consideration when doing a repair. The handouts alone are extraordinary resources for approaching tool repair.

Conroy's sensibility for workmanship belongs to a bygone generation of men and women who bought fine quality tools as the standard at the local hardware store. In a sea of shoddily made tools, Conroy is trying to teach us all how to stay afloat – where to find tools that work well and are built to last a lifetime and how to keep them that way. I am looking forward to purchasing the video of Conroy's presentation, I imagine there is much more knowledge to acquire by watching it a few more times.

Review by Amy LeePard

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# *A Life in Bookbinding*

## *Interview with Dob Rash*

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*Conducted by Craig Fansler, Preservation Librarian,  
Z. Smith Reynolds Library, Wake Forest University, July 2009*

**CF:** How did you get involved in the conservation and preservation of library materials and bookbinding specifically?

**DR:** I actually started out wanting to be a fine press printer. I got interested in that stuff in college. I was a failed art major, and I was also doing calligraphy at the time. When I was looking for the calligraphy books, I found the books on printing and paper. I didn't really do much then, but my first wife, Pamela and I bought a table top printing press after we got married in '76. In 1978 I got a call from a good friend of mine who was living over in New Jersey and he said "There's a place called Haverford College and they are looking for a Bindery Assistant." And I went "Hmm. That sounds pretty cool." So I found out where it was; it was only about a 45 minute drive from where we were in Wilmington, DE. I was working construction at the time. I took the day off, drove up and talked to the Human Resources person and she sent me over to the library. There were a couple of other guys there to apply for the job. While I had done a lot of reading about binding, my only experience was that I had once covered a book very, very badly for a Halloween costume. Dave Fraser, the Associate Librarian who was interviewing everybody, took us all down to the bindery. They had bought a small commercial bindery; they had a big guillotine, a big iron job backer, a sewing frame. They didn't have a board shear at the time. And I was like jumping up and down because there was all this stuff I had read about - I was really excited. Then he took us around the corner where they had a small print shop with a Chandler & Price clamshell press and a Washington handpress.

When Dave took me up to his office to talk about the job and said, "Do you have any questions?" I said "No". Then he told the salary, which was really, really low.

**CF:** Probably pitiful.

**DR:** At the time, in 1978, working construction as a laborer, and getting laid off maybe two months in the winter, I was making like \$9,000 a year. Haverford was offering \$7200.

**CF:** Laughing

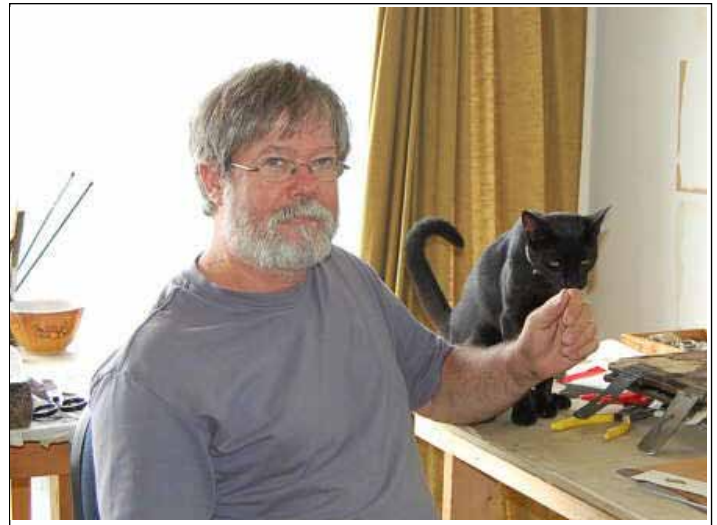
**DR:** For a full time job.

**CF:** Which gave you pause, probably.

**DR:** Well, not a whole lot. But Pam was running a riding stable and we had 10 horses. So I went home and said this is pretty cool but it's not much money. And she said, "Go ahead."

**CF:** That's a great wife.

**DR:** Yes, she really was. About a week later, I got a letter that said if I wanted the job, I could have it. So I left the world of construction and started at Haverford. At that time it was a low



Don Rash & Bookie in the bindery

level repair shop. What had happened was, they had taken two of the secretaries and said: "You are going to fix the books." They sent them to Fred Shihadeh who was right up the road in Ardmore and he taught them a few things and they came back and did simple repairs and put hard covers on paperbacks. The reason they had hired me was these two women had both quit. So I'd go in and in the mornings Dave Fraser would show me everything they had shown him. The Assistant's job was only part-time, so I got the Binders job... I was like the boss of the bindery (laughing). Then they hired a part-time person to be the Assistant who was a really nice guy - he was a minister of a local church. In the afternoon, I was supposed to teach him what I had learned in the morning. It wasn't a total disaster, but talk about the blind leading the blind... and then when the semester started, the seniors who had been working there for four years weren't too pleased with me because I didn't know squat. Then, about a year later, Trudi offered a class at Montgomery Community College called "Fun with Paper and Cardboard".

**CF:** Laughing

**DR:** I called their daughter, who was working with them at the time, and asked what it was like and she said "It's really great if you are serious because it's the stuff they had learned at the beginning of their careers". So we thought we'd try it and it was fabulous... it was all the things you need to know, like how to hold a knife, how to measure, how to use a folder, how to cut...

**CF:** "Fun with paper and cardboard" (Laughing)

**DR:** Trudi's idea was that she would run that class twice and hopefully have enough students to make a book binding class. But the administration wasn't really interested in that so they cancelled the next session. Pam called her and said "Look, we've got

*Continued next page*

this studio that is a lovely space. If we did everything, if we got the students, and paid you what you wanted, would you be willing to come and teach on weekends?" She was pretty wary, but said "I'll drive down there and see, but if it's more than an hour drive, I'm not going to do it". So, she drove down to Haverford and wasn't totally offended, so she agreed to give it a try. Then, the next four or five years, she came eight Saturdays a semester and we scared up enough people to make up the class and it was just fantastic. At the end of that period, there were four of us left: Pam, me, and Bruce (who took my place at Haverford), and Jane Aaron (who was a librarian at Swarthmore, who's now retired). Jennifer Rosner, who's now the Conservator at the Library Company of PA was another student. The last couple of semesters of classes, we went out to their place on Saturday mornings and Fritz taught us the stuff that he did: leather binding, tooling, designing, that kind of thing. We took a few workshops as well... and by that time, we were ready to move on. I left Haverford in 1986 and we moved up to Lake Harmony PA where Pam's parents sold us their little cottage. That was the end of my Haverford career, but it was a great place to work. Well, I suspect Wake Forest University is a bigger university, but...

**CF:** It's actually very similar. It's a small, private university. I used to live near Haverford, in Springfield, Delaware County, so I kind of have a feel for the area, but I have never set foot on the campus. I kind of know from being in academia that Wake Forest and Haverford are quite similar.

**DR:** For me, that the years at Haverford were great. The library had a non-hierarchical organizational structure and all the people that worked there were really great... it was special.

**CF:** I don't want to get into my library, but I feel the same way about my library. I really would like you to talk about Fritz and Trudi because I know how much of an impact they had not only on your career, but also your personal life to some extent. And you played a tape of Fritz when you were up there and I was taken aback by the whole thing. It was quite amazing to hear him talking about his philosophy and outlook, not only about book binding, which was amazing.

**DR:** That's one of the best descriptions of the process and mindset that Fritz. He was one of a kind.

**CF:** He was comical as well.

**DR:** Oh yeah, but it didn't really come through in the long interview that The Guild published. Because of his physical problems, he had a lot of ambivalences. He knew he was good, yet he was the type of person who couldn't go out and sell himself... it just wasn't a part of his personality. That tension really made it hard for him because he felt that the world should look at him and say "This guy knows his stuff" and that people would pay good money for it. (laughing) And people almost never want to pay good money for this because that's just the way bookbinding is. In the end, it left him sort of bitter, which is a shame because he didn't need to be. He never made a lot of money... The funny thing was that when we first got to know him, it felt like he was much more recognized in the calligraphy community because he was a fine calligrapher.

**CF:** That's interesting...

**DR:** I'm not sure how to explain it, it just felt that way to me. You've seen his work and you know what kind of work he did...

**CF:** The one heavily tooled leather binding that you showed me was... incredible.

**DR:** It's just kind of hard to describe. (Both laughing). He was a great guy who wasn't always easy to love. He didn't edit anything that came out of his mouth, which was one of the reasons why there were a lot of relationships that ended and never continued. You kind of had to be willing to put up with the stuff he had to say, which could sometimes be hurtful because it wasn't important in the larger picture...

**CF:** You had to take him as he was. If you wanted to learn what you needed, you needed to learn from him.

**DR:** Exactly. The other good thing about them was that while they didn't suffer fools, if they felt that you were serious, there wasn't anything they wouldn't do... and that was such a big thing. If they felt you had your head screwed on straight... they treated you like an equal, even though none of us were their equals, by any stretch of the imagination. It was a big gift that they gave, treating us like fellow professionals.

**CF:** That's the thing that needed to happen in order for real teaching and learning to take place. They treated us like equals, leveling the playing field so you could really work together.

**DR:** Trudi was a really good binder at her own right, but she was also the wife and housekeeper. Even though she and Fritz were both working in the shop, she also had to take care of the kids and the house. I don't think she had resented it, but had things been different, she would have had a more significant body of work than she did.

**CF:** By virtue of the fact that she was taking care of the kids, it limited her production, right?

**DR:** Exactly, at least of the stuff that had to be done outside of the regular working hours. Fritz would go to the shop and practice his tooling, which is how you get good. But, she was a great teacher. They were a great couple of people.

**CF:** Maybe we should go chronologically by asking what kind of work you did at the bindery at Lake Harmony.

**DR:** When I told the people at Haverford that I was going to be moving on, Bruce (who had been taking the classes with Trudi) was interested in the position. I went to the head librarian and said "What if I dropped down to half time the last year I was here and Bruce could come in the remaining half time?" and he said "Oh yeah, that's a great idea." (laughing). And we had been freelancing for a couple of years, doing stuff for faculty members and some work for the Philadelphia dealers. The other thing that happened while we were at Haverford was that we were able to meet Barney Taylor, who was out in Lewisburg, where Bucknell University is. He originally trained as a painter and then got interested in books and typography. He was good friend with John Anderson, a great typographer who introduced us. Barney had retired and set up his press, The Press of Appletree Alley. His

first two editions were bound by someone else, but he had gotten some negative feedback about those bindings, so Anderson recommended that he talk to us. In 1984, we did our first edition for him. He did two editions a year, which was nice because it gave us a steady flow of work. His editions ran about 125 copies and he didn't have them all bound at once so we would do 50-60 copies at the beginning. As he sold them, we would bind more. So it was a really nice situation for all of us.

**CF:** I guess you also got the experience of doing edition binding, where you were producing multiple copies of the same work and striving for consistency.

**DR:** Yes indeed. One of my favorite things about working with Barney was that he was really receptive to our input. I'm not sure how it is these days but it used to be that the printer basically told the binder what he wanted and the binder would have to do it. There were occasionally technical glitches because the printer would want to use a certain paper, but the binder would say that they're not sure if it's going to work and the printer says he wants to use this specific paper. (Laughing) Our first edition binding job was actually for Henry Morris, which was a huge disaster all around. The final product wasn't too bad, but I don't even want to talk about it because we made so many mistakes that it became a horror story. (Laughing) Barney was a great guy to work with. We moved up to Lake Harmony after the end of the academic year in 1986. That October, Pam found out that she had breast cancer. Her parents and my parents were very supportive, so we were able to sort of keep working. The doctors gave her radiation and chemotherapy and she went for a couple more years, and then it came back. There was breast cancer, then liver cancer, then they found spots all over her spine. She died in early January in 1989. I had to decide what I was going to do. I started to get inquiries from the Wilkes-Barre and I ended up renting a space over in Wyoming PA, which is about three miles of where we're living now. It was very inexpensive and it was a great space. The cottage, on the other hand, was 20 feet square and a story and a half. We had lived and worked there so it was a little cramped even with just one person. Of course I didn't have nearly as much stuff as I had back then as I do now. I had a Kensol and a table model Kutrimmer and that was it. It was kind of nice to move up to Wyoming so that I could spread out. I was there for eight years. In 1994, Elaine and I got married. A couple of years later, the building that's now my shop came up for sale and we were able to buy it. It has always been a real mix of work. I bound stuff for Barney for about 20 years. It was a good working relationship. I was really lucky to find a person who was willing to look at my contributions to the final product and actually take it into value. His books were always fairly similar as far as the typography and the size, having a standard page size and his preferred papers. They were generally less than 60 pages. Once those were taken into consideration, we could do pretty much anything we wanted with the binding. The bindings were generally cloth or cloth and paper, because he was trying to keep the prices reasonable. We used our own marbled papers and paste papers for several editions. Barney had a couple of different series; one of them was the Bucknell poetry series. Bucknell would bring in a major poet to be poet-in-residence every year. One of the perks that they got was an edition of whatever they wanted printed, so Barney worked with some major figures in contem-

*Continued on page 19*



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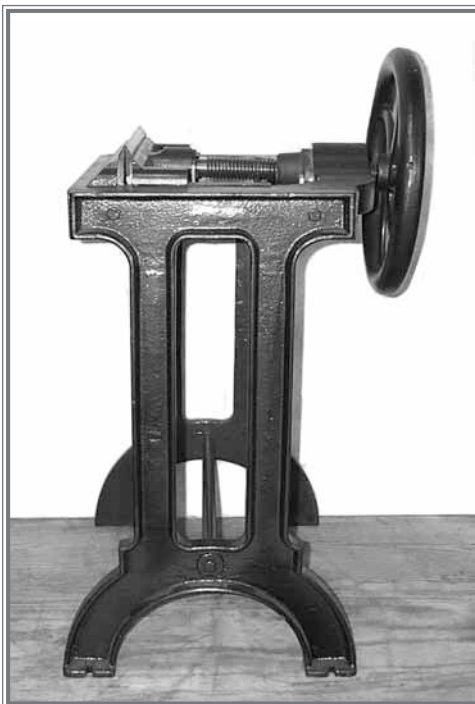
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porary poetry. He also printed other material for the Bucknell library.

**CF:** Did you do the printing and the binding for him?

**DR:** No, he did the typography, the printing, and sometimes he would do the illustrations himself. For certain texts he would ask somebody whose work he felt was appropriate to do the illustrations. If he wanted a cover utilizing images by the illustrator, he'd print it and we'd use it in the binding. I did some calligraphy for him occasionally. If you look at the whole body of work, for anybody, that's a good rate of production. He had a Vandercook #4, a hand-cranked proof press with automatic inking.

**CF:** I thinking it from your side of it and it was 20 years of doing edition binding. That's a long time to hone your skills.

**DR:** It was a really great thing because after a hundred or so tape bindings, you start to get a feel for it. Sam Ellenport has talked about this, which is one of the big advantages they have at North Bennet Street. They spend two years at the bench. It's the one thing you can't get from a regular classroom experience. Once you learn it, you just have to do it, do it, and do it. After a while, that muscle memory starts to work. I know this is an analogy used a lot, but it's like practicing scales. You have to do it until it becomes part of you. After that, it becomes part of your method of work.

**CF:** When you got to Wyoming and the Wilkes-Barre area, how long was it from doing the binding and the piecemeal, letter press printing to opening the school?

**DR:** It was actually quite a while later. This was the third year that I formally taught (2009). I always thought it would be fun to teach and would have liked to be teaching around academia somewhere. A couple of times when I made overtures to local institutions, the response was a little lukewarm. I'm not so sure when I really started to think about starting a school, but when we bought the shop building here, there was a second and third floor apartment. I had the idea that maybe someone would come here and want to study. About five years ago I taught a one week full binding workshop in the summer down at UArts (the University of the Arts) for the Delaware Valley Guild chapter. Then, Denise Carbone, who teaches at UArts and is the Conservator at the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia asked me to go down and teach an edition binding class. Some of the grad students asked if I took interns and I said, "I can't afford to pay anybody". Over the course of the following summer, four people came. They stayed at the apartment and helped me at the shop. I really enjoyed it... and that got me thinking about teaching because I couldn't think of anyone who is self-employed and can afford to pay others to learn.

**CF:** No (laughing) Seems like it should be the opposite.

**DR:** Exactly. So I looked at what other schools were doing and I started to think about the financial considerations of teaching on a regular basis. Another precipitating factor was when a house around the corner came for up sale and I said to Elaine, "That's a three bedroom house; with that plus the apartment we could house five people". One of the problems with going somewhere

to study is not the cost of the course, but the cost of staying. So we wound up buying that house with the idea that we could provide inexpensive housing for students. For the curriculum, I really wanted to pass on the core techniques and aesthetic values that I learned from Fritz and Trudi. While there are a lot of places that teach simple artists' book structures, there aren't many that approach the craft in a more rigorous manner. Unfortunately, Fritz and Trudi didn't have a lot of students to carry on their legacy. In the end, there are, I think, only four of us working in the field. It's a real shame they didn't have more students.

**CF:** So you felt like you were almost the sole person to carry on the legacy.

**DR:** Well, Bruce is teaching at Haverford and Jennifer is passing on her knowledge at the Library Company. I don't know if Jane is teaching. But that's it. I've always felt that what we learned from them is really worth passing on. The other part of it is I'm hoping that the school will bring in enough money that I can back off the bread and butter kind of book repair that I've been doing for all these years. I'm starting to lack the energy to do my own work outside of work hours. I think that, like many who reach this age, I'm starting to feel the press of time just a little bit. There's stuff I want to do. I feel that if I continue to do family Bibles and that kind of work, I'll never get the chance to do the work I really want to do. My ultimate goal is to have the school be the financial underpinning of the rest of the other things that I do.

**CF:** You said there were things you want to do. What would some of those things be?

**DR:** I really want to get back into printing. My best of all possible worlds would be: printing and binding one edition a year, doing a couple of design bindings a year, and teaching in the school. That would be my retirement plan - teach more and do fewer family Bibles. I really like teaching.

**CF:** I think there is really an energy that grows out of having people around you. Everybody kind of feeds off each other and things rise to a higher level.

**DR:** Yes. I remember the first Introduction to Leather Binding class. We started paring leather and it was all new to them, you know, we got the knives sharpened and they were kind of struggling. We quit a 5 and I went home. They said "Do you mind if we stay?" I said "No, that's the whole idea." I walked back at 11 o'clock that night and the lights are blazing and they were still at it. Now, they were beat the next day, but they were into it. That's exactly what I was hoping for. They did some nice work.

**CF:** I see you're on the editorial board for *The Bonefolder*.

**DR:** Yes, Peter was very generous in letting me participate. It's been a very cool thing. This is the sixth year and it comes out twice a year, an absolutely free and extremely high quality book arts publication. Peter's amazing in doing that; it just blows my mind. He does the lion's share of the work.

**CF:** Yes, I use *The Bonefolder* and the Book arts Web all the time. It's a great resource.

*Continued next page*

**DR:** It was Peter's brainchild and from the get-go it was obvious it was fulfilling a need. The only thing even close is *The New Bookbinder*, and the fact *The Bonefolder* is coming out under *Creative Commons* is great. It's a good thing for the field.

**CF:** What is your philosophy of bookbinding and how do you look at the field?

**DR:** As I see it, it's kind of a dichotomy. There are two sub-groups with their approaches to "The Book." There are people who approach it from a literary background and those who approach it from a visual arts background. I definitely come from the literary background because I grew up reading books like a mad thing; I always had my nose in a book. So, when I approach a book, I think, like Fritz has said, that as binders, we're like members of a quartet, rather than the soloist in an orchestra. Our job is to contribute our best work to an ensemble piece. Everybody is contributing: everybody from the author to the editor to the typographer, the printer, the papermaker and the binder. You have to keep your ego in check a little bit.

**CF:** You're echoing Fritz's philosophy in saying it's a symphony. That is a beautiful idea that all these people are working together in concert to create this work of art.

**DR:** Exactly. So there's a tension between artist's books and the kind of binding I do.

**CF:** So, you're trying to draw a comparison between artist's books and fine binding?

**DR:** Yes.

**CF:** One is where the focus is on the literary side and the content, and the artist's book is more focused on the visual appearance.

**DR:** Yes-although, I have a piece by Karen Hanmer and what she's done will just blow you away. What she's done is taken these two disparate concepts - based on a letter of one of the Wright Brothers interspersed with the text of a Cole Porter song. She did the whole thing as a flag book. I look at that and I go, "Oh my God." I mean, A. I couldn't have thought of it and B. I couldn't have executed it. You look at some of this stuff and it is really pretty cool; not only the level of execution but the level of conceptualization is really high. Really smart people are making artists' books. But again, my interests lie elsewhere. I hate to say it, but I think there's a strong possibility that I'm more of a technician than anything else. I like drawing. I like making art. And occasionally art happens to you. But, a binding for me is just a different thing. A binding is something really special that hopefully is done to a special text. For me, that kind of takes it into the next realm. I know a lot of people don't see it that way, and that's OK, too. We can call it craft. That's OK, and craft is not a dying thing. Craft is something that continually renews itself. In our society craft is too often thought of as something that people used to do. Fritz's argument and my contention is



Courtesy Don Rash

that craft is a living thing, and craft lives in whatever time it is in. The craft we do today, even though it is built on the foundation of previous craft workers- our craft should be "of today." It will continue on into the future and future workers will make their own craft of their own time, but growing out of previous work. When people would

say "bookbinding is a dying art", that used to make Fritz crazy. I just kind of go, "No, no." Binding is a contemporary craft, it's just one that has a miniscule audience. That's partly because it's just damned expensive to do. It's easier for people to justify paying \$4000 for a piece of furniture, like a contemporary chair, or a really nice sideboard or a table than it is to justify \$4000 for a binding on a good book. That's not anything that's going to change, unfortunately. I should say that as information becomes more ephemeral, that is to say digital, I think that the aesthetic and artifactual value of the physical book will come to the forefront. We'll see. Something I've talked to Joshua Heller about and I think we agree on is that fine binding is a really subtle thing. You have to know what you're looking at, and you have to know what to look for to determine how successful it is. The old chestnut about looking at the headcaps is true. A connoisseur will not only judge the whole imagery of a design binding, but also look at the headcaps, at the endbands, the way it opens, the corners, will look at the box...

**CF:** It's the totality of the piece.

**DR:** Exactly. As Fritz said in his talk at Temple University back in 1978, there is nothing unimportant in what we do. There is no unimportant part and there is no unimportant operation. When somebody who is not informed looks at a binding, they are thinking in terms of a trade hardback. To appreciate these things, you have to have certain knowledge of the history of the book and of the structure of the book itself. I think that's one of the reasons why we don't have a big audience. It's always been the purview of a fairly small group of collectors and people who appreciate this particular sort of work. Whatever audience we have is by its nature going to be a small one.

# Book Review

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## Code (X) + 1 - Monograph Series

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This is not a book review, but more precisely a collection-of-monographs review. The publisher aptly calls them a series of *feuilletons*. Each is designed and printed in an edition of 500 on a Heidelberg cylinder press, with paper covers printed from sundry antique wood and metal type, and inner pages set in typeface Quadraat.

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Probably a few of you out there are bibliophiles. You should not miss these monographs for the excellent writing as much the houses in which they live. Or what Gerard Manley Hopkins calls in a very different, but related, context, “the achieve of, the mastery of the thing.”

Each essay is a delight. The packaging equally delightful. Each, as the name implies, by a different poet-philosopher-typographer-printer. Each a reminder of how these roles should blend to create appropriate frames for their pictures. Anyone who loves what books should be and sometimes are will love this series.

The first monograph is *Why There Are Pages and Why They Must Turn* by Robert Bringhurst:

“In cultures possessing fluent scripts, paper, and printing, books have acquired a stable material form. Those quiet, reliable, portable, legible objects are the benchmark incarnation of the book for most of us now, yet we know that, to be real, a book

must be more than a physical object.

What makes the tangible form of a book rewarding is that it stands for an intangible reality alive in the heart and mind.”



*ART : definition five (and other writings)* by Peter Rutledge Koch is the second. “The great collections at the Museum of Modern Art and the Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco are filled with what are loosely referred to as “artist’s books” but a great many of the books are more or less ordinary books with art in them. The books of Volland

and Kahnweiler are containers of art. Erase the pages and what remains is an entirely ordinary but blank book. Contemporary art with its more comprehensive and sophisticated approach to physical and formal properties requires the book itself (full and present in all its particularness) to measure up. This change in perspective has matured greatly in the last thirty years.”

Third in the series is *each new book* by Alan Loney : “There is no doubt that fine press books propose a value for their material existence per se. This value could be seen as a replacement/rejection of the ‘spiritual’ value of the ‘sacred’ object. This is not merely the slip of my prejudices showing (tho I do not deny it is that) but also the whole undergarment in contrast to the invisible threads by which the ‘sacred’ has bound communities together over against other communities. The chosen book is the chosen community, even in the avant garde. The question remains – how do I value the book without rendering it ‘sacred’ – even if the sacred is read simply as ‘a thing apart’”

Copies are available for \$35 each or \$100 for all three.

Review by Sandy Cohen

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## DVD Review

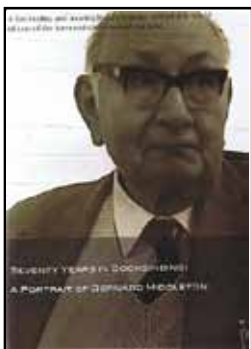
### Seventy Years in Bookbinding - A Portrait of Bernard Middleton

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Bernard C. Middleton is a remarkable craftsman, skilled restorer, writer and teacher. In this DVD, Mr. Middleton reminisces about his career which began at the Central School of Arts & Crafts in 1938. He demonstrates a few of his techniques and secrets, but far fewer than there ought to be; too much of the time is taken up by the interviewer, who, most unfortunately, does most of the talking. Though the DVD is worthwhile it could have been far more worthwhile if Mr. Middleton himself were allowed more of the allotted time.

This is a region-free disc which will work on any system.

Review by Sandy Cohen



# Travels in Bookbinding –

## NBSS Bookbinders Visit the UK

by Bexx Caswell

The trip was entirely student run, and everyone pitched in to help raise money for the journey. I led the planning efforts for the expedition, with assistance from classmate Amelia Sorensen ('10), and instructor Jeff Altepeter. Thanks to our tireless fundraising efforts, we were able to cover the cost of airfare for all of the students that chose to attend. The trip proved to be a truly delightful and enriching experience which brought me closer to my classmates and my craft. I found the trip so inspiring, that it only seemed fair to share our experiences with the Guild community.

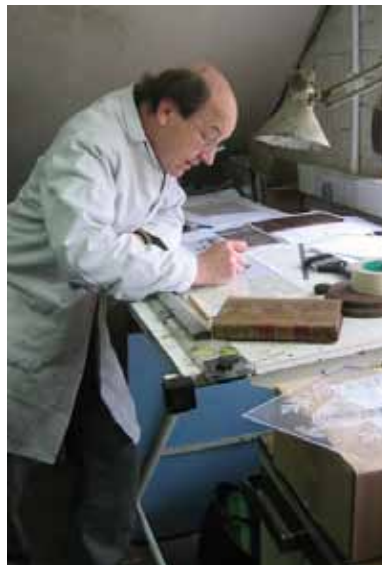
While many of us arrived in London a few days early to see the sights, our trip officially began on Monday, March 30, with a visit the special collections at the British Library. Phillippa Marks, Curator of Bookbindings, set out a truly fabulous selection for us. The array of books on display perfectly touched upon the styles emphasized in our curriculum, as well as many of our personal interests. Handouts were provided on each binding, and Mrs. Marks and her staff were very helpful in answering all of our questions.

Of the numerous beautiful bindings we saw that day, several stand out. Of special note was a binding by William Anthony, who can be considered the grandfather of the North Bennet Street instruction<sup>1</sup>. Another favorite included an exquisite binding of *The Coronation of Edward the Seventh* by Douglas Cockerell, whose beauty lay in its precision and simplicity. On the opposite end of the spectrum was the infamous *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* produced by Sangorski and Sutcliffe – by far the most 'dazzling' binding of the bunch!

We finished our morning with a visit to the public exhibition at the British Library Centre for Conservation. The exhibit was a fantastic education and outreach tool, which included a display on book repair techniques, samples of the materials used in conservation, and a fabulous interactive video.

After lunch we headed down the street to the Wellcome Library, where we were met by Head of Conservation and Collection Care, Gillian Boal, and Rare Books Librarian, Julianne Simpson. After a quick tour of the library, we were ushered into the Conservation lab, where Mrs. Simpson showed us a small selection from their collection, complete with handouts. After examining these bindings, we received a tour of their gorgeous new conservation lab. We all left thoroughly impressed by their space, state of the art equipment, and friendly staff.

On Tuesday morning we met at Victoria Station, and boarded a train to Brighton, where we visited P & S Engraving. For those who don't know about P & S, they are one of only a handful of companies still manufacturing quality finishing tools for bookbinders. Their catalogue includes rolls, pallets, decorative tools,



*Brian Skilton of P & S Engraving demonstrates the engraving process*

and a nice selection of brass type. Roy and Brian began their careers in the 1960's as apprentices at a shop just down the road from their current location. In those days, almost all of the work was done by hand, a somewhat slow and grueling process. Much of that work is now done by machine, but that doesn't mean it requires less attention, precision, or skill.

Roy, Brian, and Phil showed us the entire process necessary to create a decorative tool or piece of type, starting with the original artwork, on through the final engraving. Having recently made several of my own finishing tools by hand, I found their process quite impressive!

After the tour, several students split from the group and headed out to Chichester to visit West Dean College. Head of the Book and Library Materials Conservation Program, David Dorning, gave them a tour of the campus and book conservation facilities. Anne McClain ('10) commented that David's "enthusiasm for the program was infectious", and those who attended the tour found the gorgeous campus and well equipped book lab enticing. Johanna Smick ('10) was also impressed by the program's approach to teaching. She remarked that "one aspect of the school that seems to strengthen the student's work is the integration of graduate and undergraduate students in a small class setting. From David's experience this seems to push the undergraduates to a higher standard and simultaneously have the graduate students rise to the occasion". She went on to say that by the end of the tour, they were all "secretly hoping our next visit would be through enrollment". At least one of us will have that wish granted - Katie Smith ('09) will be starting at West Dean in the fall. Many thanks to Eva Laporte for her assistance in arranging the visit, and to the folks at West Dean, who were kind enough to provide transportation from Brighton to Chichester.

Meanwhile, Roy, Brian, and Phil took those who remained out to a delicious lunch at the Red Lion Inn, a charming pub which dates back to 1700's – complete with low ceilings and a fire in the hearth. We had just enough time for a quick drive by the Brighton seaside and a glimpse at the Royal Pavilion and Gardens, before it was time to board the train back to London.





*Athena Moore ('10) loves the leather she picked out at Harmatan!*

On Wednesday we traveled by train to Harmatan and Oakridge Leather in Northamptonshire. Once at the tannery, we received introductory remarks from Marc Lamb. Before heading off to tour the tannery, we perused a display of books bound in Harmatan leathers, including bindings executed by Bernard Middleton and Paul Delrue.

While officially retired from the business, Marc's father Malcolm Lamb was on hand to assist with the tour and provided some interesting history about the tanning business. Malcolm founded Harmatan after spending more than two decades in Nigeria. He is incredibly knowledgeable when it comes to leather tanning processes, and the relationships he formed with Nigerian goat farmers is a key element in the quality leathers that Harmatan produces.

Marc and Malcolm were wonderful tour guides, explaining the entire process of tanning, drying, dyeing, and polishing the leather. It was incredibly interesting to see how bookbinding leather is made, and made me feel more connected to the materials I use.

After the tour, the staff at Harmatan treated us to a quick lunch at the Griffin Pub before we boarded the train back to London. We wasted no time as we scurried over to Bernard Middleton's home in Clapham.

When we arrived, Bernard Middleton and his apprentice Flora Ginn greeted us at the door, and served us juice and snacks before showing us Mr. Middleton's workshop and vast collection of bookbinding tools. He then laid out a selection of fine bindings executed by himself and Mrs. Ginn – a truly awe inspiring experience. Next, he displayed selections from his collection of trade bindings produced by firms such as Sangorski and Sutcliffe, Cockerell, and Zaehnsdorf. When I spotted an embroidered binding on the shelf, he was kind enough to let me handle it. He patiently answered our questions, and smiled as we oohed and aahhed over everything he had to show us.

We then headed upstairs, where Mr. Middleton showed us Roger Powell's teaching models, many of which echo the curriculum taught at NBSS. As we neared the end of our visit, Mr. Middleton offered copies of his books for sale, and was gracious enough to sign them for us (Mr. Middleton, if you're reading this, I hope your wrist has recovered!). Mr. Middleton displayed great patience and generosity by allowing us to visit his home,

and we are all incredibly grateful for the 3 hours we spent talking to him about his bindings and the history of our craft.

On Thursday morning we made a brief visit to Shepherd's in Rochester Row, where we were met by Alison Strachan. We took a brief tour of their conservation and fine binding facilities, picking up several useful tips along the way. Although many trade binderies have turned to mechanization or fallen by the wayside, Shepherd's was a beacon of hope for those of us who still see hand bookbinding as a vibrant and relevant profession. We would have loved to stay longer, but had to cut our visit short in order to arrive at Lisa von Clemm's by 11:30.

Lisa was kind enough to organize a visit to the Wormsley Library for us, with friends and fellow Designer Bookbinders Flora Ginn, Clare Prince, Julia Dummett serving as volunteer



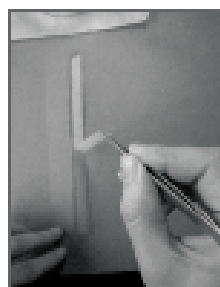
*NBSS Bookbinders with Bernard Middleton. Left to right, top to bottom: Anne McClain ('10), Bernard Middleton, MJ Long ('10), Aude Gabory ('09), Katherine Westermann ('09), Jeff Altepeter (Instructor), Athena Moore ('10), Linda Fisher ('10), Valerie Fendt ('10), Amelia Sorensen ('10), Johanna Smick ('10).*

*Continued next page*

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chauffeurs. On the way out to the Getty estate, we stopped for lunch at a charming countryside pub, and several of my classmates sampled the Ploughman's lunch, which I'm told is a tasty example of British pub fare.

When we arrived at the Wormsley, we were met by librarian of the collection, Bryan Maggs. Mr. Maggs (or Mr. Bryan as he is fondly known) is also proprietor of the Maggs Bros. Rare Books, one London's premier antiquarian booksellers. Mr. Maggs set out a large selection of books from the collection which included books with elaborate fore-edge paintings, two Kelmscott Chaucers, several bindings by Sybil Pye, numerous embroidered bindings, some fantastic fine bindings by Paul Bonet, and a volume of the Trevelyan Miscellany. As we moved about the room oohing and aaahing in admiration, I found one first year student as she stood agape in front of a piece of the Gutenberg Bible.

After working our way through the large number of bindings on display, Mr. Maggs very kindly pulled books off the shelves on request, and very patiently answered all of our questions. When I mentioned to Lisa how excited I was to see so many embroidered bindings, she prompted Mr. Maggs to open a display case housing an embroidered Anne Boleyn manuscript. She promptly reached into the case and began stroking one of the pages, cooing "Ooo, Anne Boleyn!"

After our visit, we drove back to Lisa's home, where we had the opportunity to chat over cocktails before she treated us to a viewing of fine bindings from her personal collection. These bindings included some of Phillip Smith's early work, a binding by NBSS alumna Alegria Barclay ('07), and several of her own bindings. I would once again like to extend our thanks to Lisa for her hospitality, and the assistance she provided in scheduling visits to Bernard Middleton, the Wormsley Library, and the Designer Bookbinder's meeting. Lisa has been a long time friend of the Bookbinding program at NBSS, and recently retired from the school's Board of Directors after many years of service. Without her support, much of the trip would not have been possible.

On Friday morning, we began the day with a visit to the Paper, Book and Paintings Conservation Lab at the Victoria and Albert Museum. Senior Book Conservator Jane Rutherford showed us some nice samples from the collection and explained how the lab staff works to prevent damage when preparing items for exhibit. The lab processes materials for about 40 exhibitions a year, so she was very well versed on this topic! We then moved on to the paintings conservation area, where a 14<sup>th</sup> century altarpiece was being treated. Although this kind of work falls outside the scope of our curriculum, learning about the treatment process was incredibly fascinating and we all buzzed with excitement as we moved onto the paper conservation area. There, we were shown a diverse sampling of items treated in the lab, including portrait miniatures, a textile design book with brilliant color illustrations (sadly, many of the colors employed corrosive pigments), and large scale drawings in need of mending and rehousing.

After lunch and a quick walk around the Victoria and Albert Museum, we met up with Frances Warrell at the National Art



Aude Gabory, Anne McClain, Jeff Altepeter (Instructor), Valerie Fendt help sort our train tickets.

Library. Ms. Warrell laid out a fantastic display of bindings for us, including the original covering for a 15<sup>th</sup> c. Per-

sian binding done in vellum with leather onlays, some exquisite embroidered bindings, and a fine example of an art deco binding executed by George Canapé. We also took a quick tour of the library facilities, which houses about 2 million items relating to the museum's collection. After leaving the library we visited an exhibit celebrating the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Booker Prize for Fiction, which included fine bindings by six Designer Bookbinders Fellows.

Several of us were very eager to visit Maggs Bros. before they closed for the weekend, so we raced over to Berkeley Square at top speed. Although we arrived shortly before closing, the staff was very friendly and accommodating. They pulled out all the stops, showing us several fantastic fine bindings. While most of their stock was way out of my price range, I did manage to pick up a 2 volume set of Pickering Classics before we departed.

On Saturday I made a too brief trip to Portobello Road, where I scoured the stalls for interesting books. I managed to find a real gem – a pocket sized stiff board vellum binding whose cover had later been embroidered by the owner. There were quite a few other interesting books for sale scattered around the market, including an unsigned fine binding, and several palm leaf books.

I was having so much fun in Portobello Road, that I lost track of time and was considerably late to the Designer Bookbinder's meeting at the Art Worker's Guild. Fortunately, I heard most of Maureen Duke's talk, which was followed by a brief talk about the NBSS program by instructor, Jeff Altepeter. Jeff gave a short history of the school, the development of the program, and the details of our curriculum. (By the way Jeff, you still owe me a drink for calling on me to stand up and rattle off our UK itinerary on the fly!). After the meeting, we headed *en masse* to Shepherd's retail shop in Bloomington, where we all enjoyed shopping for decorative paper, tools, vellum, and exotic skins.

At the Designer Bookbinders meeting, Mark Cockram invited us to visit him at Studio 5 on the following day. I wasn't able to attend, but those who did were treated to a tour of his studio, where he has space for both printing and binding. Mark demonstrated his board attachment technique, and several of the second year students experimented with this method when they returned home. One of the attendees remarked that "it was exciting to see Mark's thoughtful and creative problem solving", and described the visit as "a nice balance with the more historic and traditional bookbinding we focused on through much of the trip".

After an intense week of traveling, we returned to Boston exhausted, but richer for the experience. The United Kingdom has a great deal to offer in the way of both modern and historical bookbinding history and techniques, and it would have been easy to spend at least another week exploring more libraries, binderies, and museums. Although planning and raising money for the trip took a great deal of time, the experience proved itself worthy of the effort.

I must thank a number of people, without whom the trip would not have been possible:

Many thanks to everyone who hosted us on journey; Miguel Gómez-Ibáñez, Executive Director, North Bennet Street School; Ken Craggs and the NBSS Gallery; Mark Andersson, former NBSS Bookbinding instructor; Alegria Barclay, NBSS class of 2007; and Cathy and Maria in the NBSS Business Office.

*Bexx Caswell graduated from the North Bennet Street School in 2009, and received an M.S. in Library Science from Simmons College in 2006. This past summer she served at the Lennox Foundation Preservation Intern at Iowa State University. Bexx can be found online at [www.bexxcaswell.com](http://www.bexxcaswell.com)*

#### Endnotes:

- <sup>1</sup> The first and second instructors at NBSS, Mark Esser and Sally Key respectively, both apprenticed with Bill Anthony. The third instructor, Mark Andersson, studied under Mark Esser, and current instructor Jeff Altepeter studied at NBSS under Sally Key and Mark Andersson.

## Apply for the Carolyn Horton Fund Award

This award, administered by the Foundation of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (FAIC), is offered annually to support continuing education or training for professional book and paper conservators. You must be a member of AIC's Book and Paper Group in order to qualify. The amount of the award varies with need. Funds may be applied to attendance at professional meetings, seminars, workshops, and other educational events.

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## The Marbling Tray

by Iris Nevins

### *Paper again...and again ...and again!*

Well some good and bad news about paper. I ordered samples from Monadnock after hearing they were acid free but didn't use calcium carbonate. I have literally given up trying to talk to paper companies about the problem. Most haven't a clue what marbling is or what we need. Even if they did, we are too small a number to cater too, so, the best and easiest approach is to just try them. Well, the Monadnock papers didn't work at all. I am no longer surprised. It's the norm.

Also, encouraging news, if you can learn to handle them properly, are the French Company's "Construction" paper line. This is nothing like the construction paper kids use in school, but feels and looks like a good book paper. I tried the colors in the swatch book, and they marbled! Quite well, and in fact in many cases if the colors were not overused, alum was not needed. My reds did dribble a bit, so I would stick with alum on them, Timidly, I ordered a pack of 100 sheets in the "Whitewash" color, an off white. 19 X 25 long grain, 70 pound text weight. Perfect, wonderful. Well, their 70 feels like others' 60. They are acid free, but rendered acid free, how, I do not know. For now the mission is to just see what works, not try to talk to technicians at paper companies. It could be a sizing too that allows the paints to stick. I sort of suspect it is sized to accept ink jet color, and ink jet papers of good quality need NO ALUM! The bad news, is the fibers of the French paper must be pretty short. If you hang them when wet, they tear off the line, almost every time. They certainly will not withstand marbling and then rinsing. If you can avoid rinsing and drape them over plastic pipe, you could well be in business with this paper! If you drape over a clothesline, the two halves stick together and leave a harsh fold line though. Forget clothespins, period. But they work, that is great news.

As for ink-jet paper, I have yet to find one reasonably priced in at least a 17 X 22, which is the minimum size I would offer to customers ordering marbled paper. Even that I think is too small, but it does work. Chinecole ink jet paper is available in that size from Atlantic Papers, but if you are doing large volumes of marbling it can get fairly expensive. For play-marbling with kids and such, the 8 1/2 X 11 premium quality ink jet papers from somewhere like Staples are cheap and work great, without alum! Be aware though only one side usually is coated with the sizing that accepts the colors. It will be stickier on your tongue than the other side!

To be continued

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## ***Telling an old book by its smell: Aroma hints at ways of preserving treasured documents***

WASHINGTON, DC, Nov. 10, 2009 — Scientists may not be able to tell a good book by its cover, but they now can tell the condition of an old book by its odor. In a report published in the American Chemical Society's *Analytical Chemistry*, a semi-monthly journal, they describe development of a new test that can measure the degradation of old books and precious historical documents on the basis of their aroma. The non-destructive "sniff" test could help libraries and museums preserve a range of prized paper-based objects, some of which are degrading rapidly due to advancing age, the scientists say.

Matija Strlič and colleagues note in the new study that the well-known musty smell of an old book, as readers leaf through the pages, is the result of hundreds of so-called volatile organic compounds (VOCs) released into the air from the paper.

"The aroma of an old book is familiar to every user of a traditional library," the report notes. "A combination of grassy notes with a tang of acids and a hint of vanilla



over an underlying mustiness, this unmistakable smell is as much a part of the book as its contents. It is the result of the several hundred VOCs off-gassing from paper and the object in general. The particular blend of compounds is a result of a network of degradation pathways and is dependent on the original composition of the object including paper substrate, applied media, and binding."

Those substances hold clues to the paper's condition, they say. Conventional methods for analyzing library and archival materials involve removing samples of the document and then testing them with traditional laboratory equipment. But this approach involves damage to the document.

The new technique — an approach called "material degradationomics" — analyzes the gases emitted by old books and documents without altering the documents themselves. The scientists used it to "sniff" 72 historical papers from the 19th and 20th centuries. Some of the papers contained rosin (pine tar) and wood fiber, which are the most rapidly degrading types of paper found in old books. The scientists identified 15 VOCs that seem good candidates as markers to track the degradation of paper in order to optimize their preservation. The method also could help preserve other historic artifacts, they add.

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*Ed. Note: Appreciation to member Sandy Cohen for obtaining permission to reprint this article.*

# A priest, a yuppie and a sports fan walk into a book art exhibition...

Minnesota Center for Book Arts' gallery is a very public space. Artists and visitors walk through it to get into our studios; pedestrians and motorists on Minneapolis' busy Washington Avenue get good views of exhibitions through our large windows; curious coffee drinkers from the nearby cafe wander in; and occasionally one of our new condo neighbors stops by on their way to yoga. We even get Vikings fans checking out shows on their way to football games at the nearby Metrodome. Beyond our normal school tour groups and workshop participants, we estimate that about a thousand people visit our gallery each month. Needless to say, not all of these are book artists.

When I was asked to write about *Marking Time*, the most recent Guild of Book Workers traveling exhibition that began its tour at MCBA, I was unsure of what approach to take. Provide a formal critique of individual works? Reflect on the exhibition as a whole and how it represents the current state-of-the-art? Categorize the books and discuss their historical influences? While these are all legitimate methods, I would like to take a more egalitarian approach and present several "crowd pleasers" from the exhibition – works that have been popular with those who have never written a colophon – and analyze these using a personal four-part framework for evaluating artists' books.

\* \* \* \* \*

Rutherford Witthus' *Crumpling a Thin Sheet*, a reprint of a scientific article from *Physical Review Letters*, is an artist book tour-de-force and has captivated viewers with its large scale, unique page design, interesting typography, and seductive photographs – chiaroscuro images of manipulated sheets of paper that literally



become centerfolds. While any of these individual elements may intrigue a visitor, it is their unification that interests me. All of the elements come together in this book, with content supported by both its form and materials. Successful artists' books possess an almost seamless integration of text, binding, imagery, and media. Witthus' work is a wonderful example of a first standard: all components of a book and creative choices made during its production should reinforce and facilitate the communication of its content.

Jana Pullman's exquisite binding for *The Dreamtime* by Charles P. Mountford has amazed visitors with its simple beauty and elegance. Many are surprised to learn that the evocative imagery is achieved through leatherwork. Pullman uses dyed, pared and feathered onlays along with blind tooling to create a beautiful landscape inspired by one of the book's illustrations. The painterly outcome is remarkable. This piece exemplifies a second stan-



dard: the demand for quality craftsmanship. To most effectively communicate content to viewers and readers, it is necessary for artists to hone their skills and strive for flawless presentation.

Jeffrey Altepeter's *12711* has generated much discussion in the gallery. At first glance, it is a striking example of a Gothic historical binding. Upon closer inspection, viewers notice the "12711" printed in a dot-matrix format on the leather cover. Finally, after reading the identification tag, they realize that the numbers are the identification code tattooed on the live pig by



the farmer. Suddenly a 500-year-old book structure is jarringly made a contemporary object. When I evaluate artists' books, I look for evidence that the maker is familiar with artist book history and the general history of books. Like any art form, it is critical to know the foundations upon which new work is created. Altepeter's book clearly demonstrates this. Not only does *12711* physically reflect centuries of binding traditions, it also conceptually follows in the footsteps of Marcel Duchamp, Dieter Roth and other artists interested in juxtaposing material and message.

the farmer. Suddenly a 500-year-old book structure is jarringly made a contemporary object. When I evaluate artists' books, I look for evidence that the maker is familiar with artist book history and the general history of books. Like any art form, it is critical to know the foundations upon which new work is created. Altepeter's book clearly demonstrates this. Not only does *12711* physically reflect centuries of binding



A fourth work, Jody Alexander's *Date Due: It's Not A Popularity Contest*, has been very popular and is illustrative of a final standard. The work, composed of date due pockets from withdrawn library books has delighted visitors to the gallery through its unique binding structure and use of alternative materials. For those old enough to remember black and red stamped "due dates," it also triggers a bit of melancholy – a yearning for the simpler pre-magnetic strip days. A large part of this work's success is due to its use of the book format. This may seem like an

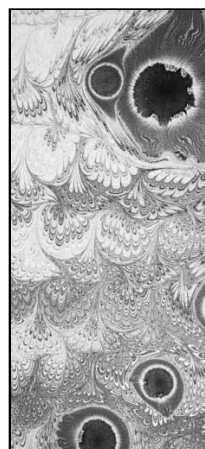


incredibly obvious statement, but it is very important. Successful artists' books fully utilize the benefits of the format: sequencing, interaction, and the development of content over time. In essence, they demonstrate that no other art form – sculpture, painting, drawing, etc. – can communicate the content as effectively. With such themes as time, choice, history and order, Alexander's format choice is spot on.

So, can the average Joe or Jane pick the winners? The answer is "yes," but in all fairness, the deck was exceedingly stacked in this exhibition. There really are no wrong choices. As to be expected of a Guild of Book Workers production, the quality of the work included in the show is high. A vast majority of the artists were successful in unifying form, content and materials; displaying fine craftsmanship; demonstrating their knowledge of book art history and traditions; and, most importantly, validating the use of the book format as the best means to communicate their ideas. In addition, they amused, educated, and inspired a diverse set of MCBA visitors. Perhaps they even prompted a few text-messaging, espresso-drinking, duly ordained armchair quarterbacks to further explore the art form we love.

by Jeff Rathermel, Artistic Director, Minnesota Center for Book Arts

## Membership Report December 2009



### *FINE HAND MARBLED PAPER & GRAPHICS*

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***Deadline for the  
February 2010 Newsletter - January 5, 2010***

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# A “Literary Garage”

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Historian David McCullough visits with Kansas City Public Library Executive Director Crosby Kemper in front of the Library's downtown parking garage  
Photo Credit: Don Ipock, 2007

Ed. Note: This fantastic building, published in the Association of Book Crafts, Inc, New Zeland, came to the attention of Secretary Catherine Burkhard. Permission was granted from the Kansas City Library to publish these photos.

The façade on the front of the Kansas City Public Library's Parking Garage in downtown Kansas City, called the Community Bookshelf, showcases titles reflecting local readers' eclectic interests. Twenty-three book spines make up this colossal bookshelf. Located across the street from Central Library, it covers a city block with each spine measuring approximately 9 by 25 feet. The entire wall is fabricated from signboard mylar. The titles range from *Fahrenheit 451* to *The Collected Poems of Langston Hughes* and from *To Kill a Mocking Bird* to *Charlotte's Web*. The Kansas City Public Library Board of Trustees selected the titles to adorn one of the most visible and unique aspects of the Library District.

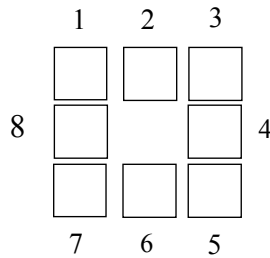


Front facade of the Kansas City Public Library parking garage,  
Photo Credits: Mike Sinclair, 2008



# Marking Time

## Artists' Credits



- 1 Karen Hanmer  
*Celestial Navigation*, 17 x 14.5 x 1.5 inches, created 2008
- 2 Todd Pattison  
*Little Library*, 7.5 x 4.75 x 1.5 inches, created 2009
- 3 Susan Collard  
*A Short Course in Recollection*, 10 x 7 x 4 inches, created 2009
- 4 Bridget O'Malley  
*One Bridge, One River, One Year*, 9.25 x 6 8 inches, created 2009
- 5 Monique Lallier  
*A History of the Moon*, 8 x 6 x 0.5 inches, created 2008
- 6 Sarah Smith  
*The Fire Extinguisher Family Reunion*, 9.5 x 5 x 0.25, created 2009
- 7 Peter Verheyen  
*Ultimo*, 10 x 7.5 x 0.75 inches, created 1995–2009
- 8 Don Etherington  
*Twelve Centuries of Bookbindings*, 12.25 x 9 x 1.25 inches, created 2009



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newsletter@guildofbookworkers.org

### Deadline for the February 2010 Issue:

**January 5, 2010**

### Items for the Calendar should be sent to:

Catherine Burkhard / 6660 Santa Anita Drive, Dallas, TX 75214

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