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 - Chapter News, Chapter Reports & Calendar Events
 - 'Standards' Reviews & Photos & Thanks
 - 'Focus on Book Arts' Conference Review by Susan Collard
- 'Clues to Binding History' by Emily K. Bell ~ series continuation
 - Contributions from Iris Nevins, Beth Lee, & Jodee Fenton
 - Book Review by Barbara Adams Hebard
 - & more ~

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

www.guildofbookworkers.org

Please visit the website to become a member. Membership is open to all interested persons and includes a print copy of this Newsletter, among many other benefits.

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FINE BINDING CORRESPONDENT	Jodee Fenton		John MacKrell

Members:

The overall theme this issue is utterly apropos to the season: this issue is about **THANKS**. Giving it, getting it, going with it. Myself, I cannot proceed without all of the articles that the correspondents send in—and here I **thank** them. I cannot proceed without working closely with Bexx and all of the Board, as well as the Chapter Chairs—and here I **thank** them. I cannot proceed without some daily exercise—and here I **thank** my trusty steed (my bike!). I am humbled by the **thanks** I have to give, as I extend it to you too—the membership—for making GBW what it is today. We *are* GBW.

The majority of the coverage is on the ‘Standards of Excellence’ Conference. The reviews of each presenter are sent in by a scholarship recipient, and all submitted thorough and interesting reviews, **THANK YOU!** I’ve also included photographs that various folks sent me. We have a “Shout Out!” to all the people who supported the conference with auction items, a notice that barely seems enough so I will reiterate here: **THANK YOU!** A highly engaging and influential group that attends ‘Standards’ are the vendors—those who advertise regularly in this publication, and who sell us the tools and materials with which we work—and to whom I also shout out a big **THANK YOU!** At one point, MP announced that both Marc Lamb of Harmatan and David Lanning of Hewit have attended our conferences for over twenty years, and they come all the way from England!! Jodee Fenton, Fine Binding Correspondent, sent in an overall review of the conference—another fine read, **THANK YOU!**

The issue is a bit more robust than normal, as I featured a review of another conference that came in from Susan Collard. Focus on Book Arts is a growing organization. And those of you who know me, know how I feel about community: the stronger one book group is, the stronger our whole community is. **Thank** you Susan for bringing attention to this fantastic effort, and I hope some of you will find the conference interesting and consider attending.

Barbara Adams Hebard returns with a review of *The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity*. Beth Lee and Iris Nevins also sent in timely material. I am fascinated by the idea of “asemic writing” that Beth touches on; she also sent in upcoming summer workshops. Iris tackles the idea of perfection, near-perfection, the humility of never quite getting there, and the pleasure of trying.

‘Clues to Binding History: a Series’ by Emily Bell returns. I **thank** her for her continuing contributions.

Member Margaret Johnson sent me a note about remembering marbler and longtime GBW member Norma Rubovitz (page 5). If you knew a wonderful member from years back, send me a note—we all like to remember those who have carried the craft well past their time here. **Thank** you, Margaret!

The words from our President, Bexx and from our incoming *Journal* Standing Committee Chair Peter Verheyen and from our steady ‘Standards’ Chair MP Bogan are where I found the theme—read their letters, following this comment.

In deepest respect for all those who make this organization what it is, *thank you*, - Lang Ingalls, Editor

LETTER FROM THE ‘STANDARDS’ CHAIR

Thank you to all who made this year’s ‘Standards of Excellence’ Seminar in Philadelphia such a success—170 attendees and 27 exhibitors! We loved being in Center City at the fabulous Loews Hotel, what a perfect location.

Thank you to the local host committee of Jennifer Rosner, Kristen Balmer, Lisa Scarpello, and Val Kremser—and all who helped them. They showed us the greatness and welcoming spirit of Philadelphia and the Delaware Valley! The tours to the Free Library, UPenn, Charles Library at Temple, and the Wagner Free Institute were great. The opening reception at University of the Arts Hamilton/Arronson Gallery was terrific—did everyone try a Tastykake?

Presentations by Rebecca Chamlee, Graham Patten, Julia Miller and Jeff Altepeter were fantastic! **Thank** you for sharing your expertise and knowledge.

Jennifer Rosner got a “Standing O” when receiving the Laura Young Award and Don Glaister brought tears to our eyes with his heartfelt acceptance of the Lifetime Achievement Award. Such well-deserved awards: cheers to you both!

Olson and McAfee as Auctioneers continue to entertain and inspire us to raise our paddles. Over \$11,000 was raised in the silent and live auctions, which will fund attendance for next year’s scholarship recipients. **Thanks** for donating great items, **thanks** for bidding on them!

Thanks and love to our vendors and exhibitors for being a part of this event and bringing such cool stuff for us to work with, and **thanks** to our sponsors and donors for their additional support!

So now: sit back, relax, let it all soak in, and *save the date* of October 15-17, 2020! We’ll see y’all in Atlanta!

– MP Bogan, GBW ‘Standards’ Chair

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Members,

I am happy to report that the annual 'Standards of Excellence' Seminar was a great success!

STANDARDS BY THE NUMBERS

4 presenters

171 attendees, including 7 scholarship recipients

29 vendors

18 sponsors, who donated a total of \$5350 to help defray conference costs

165 auction items were donated and raised a total of \$11,618 to fund scholarships for Standards 2020

I can't **thank** Standards Chair MP Bogan enough for all of her hard work in planning this amazing event. Credit also goes to Jennifer Rosner and the entire Delaware Valley Chapter for everything that they did to make this event a success. I also want to **thank** Treasurer Laura Bedford, who sacrificed most of her time at the conference to organize the auction items.

Outgoing Board members concluded their term at the close of the annual business meeting on Friday, October 25. I would once again like to **thank** Cara Schlesinger, Chris Ameduri, and Ann Frellsen for their service over the years. In that same vein, I'd like to welcome Peter Verheyen as *Journal* Standing Committee Chair, and Jay Tanner as Library Standing Committee Chair.

It was great to see so many of our members at 'Standards'. I received a lot of great feedback and advice on how we can improve GBW, and I hope to heed that advice as much as possible. If you have thoughts you'd like to share with me, please email me at president@guildofbookworkers.org.

Many **thanks**, Bexx Caswell, President, Guild of BookWorkers

LETTER FROM THE INCOMING JOURNAL CHAIR

Thank you to Cara Schlesinger and Chris Ameduri for their years of dedicated service and work publishing the Guild's *Journal*, a publication that enjoys a strong reputation for excellence in our field. Cara and Chris will continue to shepherd the 2019 *Journal* so that it gets to your mailboxes, something I am very grateful for as it will allow me to better learn the established workflows. **Thank** you both!

That a special election had to be held to fill the position of chair, with the suspension of publication the alternative concerns me greatly. I have always regarded the *Journal* as a signature GBW benefit and contribution to the field. That issues of succession and sustainability can be complex I know first hand from my experiences with *The Bonefolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder*. Ultimately, we were victims of our own success. I see making the *Journal* sustainable the primary goal, and as such will want to create pathways and incentives for members of the editorial board (and outsiders) to take on greater responsibilities, i.e. assume leadership when my term ends.

Equally important are identifying authors and topics. You, the members, play a vital role in this by sharing your work, ideas, projects, etc. in presentations, on listservs, blogs, social media. What do you want to see more of in the *Journal*? Who should the *Journal* be writing for? Are there voices and/or topics you would like to see gain more exposure? All issues of the *Journal* are also available on the Guild's website, a rich trove of writings and a starting-off point for further explorations. If you haven't yet, make sure to take a look. In addition, I would like to (re)invigorate the Guild's blog. Topics there could be developed into articles for the *Journal* as well. Remember also, one does not have to be a member to be an author. There is much we can learn from exchange with peers outside of GBW and globally.



The *Journal* can only succeed in dialog with an engaged membership. Look for regular outreach from me in the *Newsletter*, the GBW blog, and on the Guild's and other social media channels. I'll also be reaching out via Book_Arts-L, an active global community. If you have ideas, or better yet articles and similar for the *Journal* and blog, please let me know by writing to journal@guildofbookworkers.org or using the form on the Guild's website under Resources, Journal.

I look forward to hearing from you.

— Peter D. Verheyen, Editor, Guild of BookWorkers *Journal*
(journal@guildofbookworkers.org)

~ check the current events websites for updates on happenings in your area ~

CALIFORNIA

CO-CHAIRS	Marlyn Bonaventure & Rebecca Chamlee	CURRENT EVENTS	www.gbwcalforniachapter.wordpress.com
EXHIBITION - San Francisco Center for the Book	<i>through October 6</i>	'Drop Dead Gorgeous: Fine bindings of <i>La Prose</i> '	
CHAPTER EXHIBITION - Long Beach Museum of Art	<i>through January 5</i>	'The Artful Book'	
WORKSHOPS - BookArtsLA, Los Angeles	<i>ongoing</i>	www.bookartsla.org	

DELAWARE VALLEY

CHAIR	Jennifer Rosner	INSTAGRAM	search DVCGBW
BOOK FAIR - Free Library of Philadelphia	<i>December 7</i>	CURRENT EVENTS	www.dvc-gbw.org
EXHIBITION - UPenn Kislak Center	<i>through December 7</i>	'Book, Paper, Scissors' is an artists book fair, free to the public	
HOLIDAY ORIGAMI PARTY	<i>December 14</i>	'The Bibliophile as Bookbinder: the Angling Bindings of S.A. Neff, Jr.'	
BOOKBINDERS, BEER & BOWLING	<i>January 15</i>	Holiday origami with Karen Lightner, at the Cassatt House	
VALENTINE'S EXCHANGE	<i>TBA</i>	Meet at Pep Bowl, toss a heavy ball	
WORKSHOPS - Center for Book Arts Philadelphia	<i>ongoing</i>	Our annual event, details soon	
		bookbindingacademy.org	

LONE STAR

CHAIR	Kim Neiman	CURRENT EVENTS	www.gbwlonestarchapter.wordpress.com
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MIDWEST

CHAIR	Ellen Wrede	CURRENT EVENTS	www.midwestgbw.wordpress.com
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NEW ENGLAND

CHAIR	Erin Fletcher	CURRENT EVENTS	www.negbw.wordpress.com
ONLINE GALLERY	<i>currently</i>	Visit chapter website to view the Print & Paper Exchange!	
EXHIBITION - Bromer Gallery, Boston	<i>through December 16</i>	'Urban Color: the World of Leslie Gerry'	
EXHIBITION - North Bennet Street School, Boston	<i>upcoming: February 20</i>	'Drop Dead Gorgeous: Fine Bindings of <i>La Prose</i> '	
EXHIBITION - Opening Party	<i>February 21</i>	'Drop Dead Gorgeous: Fine Bindings of <i>La Prose</i> '	

NEW YORK

CHAIR	Celine Lombardi	CURRENT EVENTS	www.gbwny.wordpress.com
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NORTHWEST

CHAIR	Sarah Mottaghinejad	CURRENT EVENTS	www.gbwnw.blogspot.com
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POTOMAC

CHAIR	Beth Curren	CURRENT EVENTS	www.gbwpotomacchapter.wordpress.com
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ROCKY MOUNTAIN

CO-CHAIRS	Nicole Cottom & Emiline Twitchell	CURRENT EVENTS	www.rmcbgw.blogspot.com
WORKSHOPS - American Academy of Bookbinding, Telluride	<i>ongoing</i>	bookbindingacademy.org	
WORKSHOPS - Book Arts Program, Salt Lake City	<i>ongoing</i>	bookartsprogram.org	
WORKSHOPS - Book Arts League, Boulder	<i>ongoing</i>	bookartsleague.org	
WORKSHOPS - with Alicia Bailey, Denver	<i>ongoing</i>	http://bit.ly/aliciabaileyworkshops	
WORKSHOPS - Colorado Calligraphers, Denver	<i>ongoing</i>	coloradocalligraphers.com	
WORKSHOPS - Summit Scribes, Colorado Springs	<i>ongoing</i>	summitscribes.org	

SOUTHEAST

CHAIR	Jillian Sico	CURRENT EVENTS	www.SEGBWnews.blogspot.com
ONLINE MEMBERS SHOWCASE	<i>currently</i>	Visit chapter website!	

REMEMBERING ONE OF OUR OWN ~ Norma E. Rubovits

Submitted by long-time GBW member Margaret H. Johnson

I'm writing to talk about Norma E. Rubovits, a well-known marbler who died in 2016. Norma was a GBW member for many years and a lovely person. Check her out online. She did gorgeous vignettes, one of which I have on my wall. Three lovely little yellow and black feathery objects on a bright mustard-colored background.

Norma died in 2016 at the age of 97. Years ago I asked if I could buy one of her marblings, but, of course, she gave me this one, not taking any payment. She told me at the time she made it while both her daughter and her husband were dying, and that going down in her basement and creating these beauties was deeply consoling to her.

Norma lived in Chicago, and her marblings are in several museums.

DELAWARE VALLEY :: Chair Jennifer Rosner reports

The Delaware Valley Chapter was consumed with lots of pre-conference preparations for Standards, and then was the conference itself. Chapter members were overwhelmingly generous with their time and many members stepped in to help! Delaware Valley Chapter members thoroughly enjoyed hosting **Standards in Philadelphia** and had the lovely satisfaction of seeing guild members enjoy their time in Philadelphia.

Upcoming, we are having a **Holiday Origami Party**, and Karen Lightner has offered to show us some fun, with holiday-themed folds. Come join us for cookies, coffee and holiday cheer! Emails will go out soon to RSVP. 14 December, 1-3PM.

Also upcoming, **Bookbinders, Beer, and Bowling!** Join us for pizza, beer and bowling. Meet up at Pep Bowl and toss a big heavy ball! Emails will go out to RSVP. 15 January, 6-8PM.

Lastly, our annual **Valentine Exchange** is happening again; details in early January!

NORTHWEST :: Member Elsi Vassdal Ellis reports

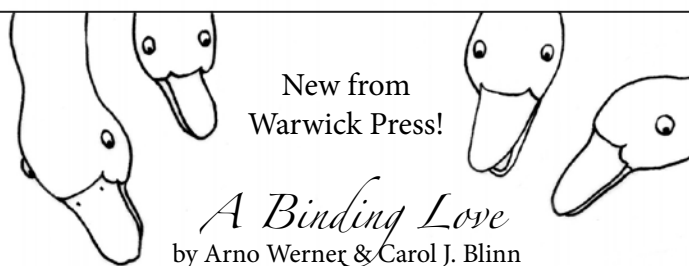
In the next newsletter there will be photos from the Northwest Chapter **Ephemera Exchange** in the Halloween theme. Boo!

NEW ENGLAND :: Chair Erin Fletcher reports

The New England Chapter held a post-Standards celebration with visiting instructors **Jim Croft** and **Brien Beidler**. A small group of members went for candlepin bowling, pizza and beers. No score was kept, which made for a fun evening of good mingling and bad bowling. (Photo below.)

In November, we hosted a workshop with **Daniel Kelm** (Wide Awake Garage) on 'Wire Edge Binding'.

We also ran a lecture at Harvard University with **Jeff Peachey**, where he spoke about his treatment on Dante's 1477 *La Commedia*.



A chronicle of the personal and professional relationship between binder Arno Werner and Carol plus an interview with Arno about his childhood in Germany.

Secrets of a Girl Printer

by Carol J. Blinn

Carol's memoir from her letterpress apprenticeship days at The Gehenna Press through to running her own printing and publishing house for the last forty-three years.

Walnut & Indigo

by Carol J. Blinn

An artist's book featuring eight samples of Japanese hand woven cloth mounted on hand sewn and hand dyed Japanese paper.

For a digital prospectus, please email carol@warwickpress.com

One Cottage Street #36 Easthampton MA 01027

IN MEMORIAM

Ellen Spears ~ November 9, 2019

A founding board member of the Canadian Bookbinders and Book artists Guild, Ellen Spears played a central role in CBBAG's successful development of its education programmes. Ellen chaired the CBBAG Education Committee for many years, helping to develop the curriculum. She almost singlehandedly produced the audio-visual materials for the CBBAG Home Study program, filming and editing the course materials, as well as the CBBAG videos for over two decades. Ellen was also past Membership Director, moving CBBAG from paper files to a computer database.

EXHIBITIONS

‘Urban Color: The World of Leslie Gerry’

BOSTON, MA

through December 16

British artist and designer Leslie Gerry trained in graphics and illustration at Sydney College of Art. The wonderful Australian light had a marked effect on his use of colour in both his design work and paintings which has remained with him to this day. His work is found in many limited edition books. At Bromer Gallery.

gallery.bromer.com

‘The Bibliophile as Bookbinder: the Angling Bindings of S.A. Neff, Jr.’

PHILADELPHIA, PA

through December 20

This exhibition is about one man’s passion for the natural world and the world of books.

library.upenn.edu

‘Word / Image / Object’

DENVER, CO

through December

At the Denver Public Library, Gates Reading Room (Fifth Floor).

The catalog for this show can be found at: bit.ly/WIO-catalog

‘Drop Dead Gorgeous:**Fine Bindings of *La Prose du Transsibérien* Re-creation’**

LOS ANGELES, CA

through January 5

This exhibition features many fine bindings of Kitty Maryatt's (Two Hands Press) years-long recreation of the famous Delaunay effort of 1913, faithfully incorporating techniques and methods that were used in the original. Showing now at UCLA Special Collections, in the Young Research Library.

‘Turning Over An Old Leaf: Contemporary Palm Leaf Work in South and Southeast Asia’

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

through January 19

For centuries, incising text and images by hand on stacks of dried palm leaves was a dominant way of making books in many parts of South and Southeast Asia. This exhibition looks at new directions in palm leaf work now that printed editions on paper have superseded most of the historical functions of palm leaf manuscripts. Contemporary examples of artworks, manuscripts, and book-like structures from India, Bali, Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), and Thailand will explore current practices of palm leaf work, alongside samples of manuscripts from the historical traditions. The works in the exhibition draw upon multiple research trips by Mary Austin and Betsy Davids.

sfc.org

LECTURES

‘Studio in a Suitcase:**Conservation with Limited Resources’**

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

December 9, 6-8:00PM

Karen Zukor of Zukor Art Conservation specializes in the repair and preservation of art and artifacts on paper—prints, drawings, watercolors, pastels, documents, maps, manuscripts, and rare books. This presentation will focus on the paper conservation and preservation work Karen has undertaken in Haiti and India, as well as some of the challenges of working outside of one’s own studio. At the San Francisco Center for the Book.

sfc.org

‘Palm Leaf Stories’

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

January 15, 6-8:00PM

An evening of storytelling by co-curators Mary Austin and Betsy Davids of the above exhibition, drawing upon the time-honored stories told through images in the exhibition's palm leaf work, as well as stories from their travels in search of this work through India, Bali, Sri Lanka, Burma (Myanmar), and Thailand. At the San Francisco Center for the Book.

sfc.org

OPPORTUNITY FOR STUDENTS

MBS 2020 Student Grants Program

The Miniature Book Society is delighted to announce this opportunity for the purpose of enabling students to pursue study in the medium of miniature books. Grants will be awarded up to a value of \$1000 per project, and may be granted to enable continuation and completion of existing projects. More information at: mbs.org.

CALL FOR ENTRY - UPCOMING

Moveable Book Society Exhibition

Upcoming! This juried exhibition will feature contemporary moveable books. It will be held in conjunction with the Moveable Book Society bi-annual conference in Denver, in October, 2020. Detailed information in the next newsletter.

PRACTITIONERS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY UNITE!

Earlier this year, GBW's New England Chapter invited members across the Guild to participate in a collaborative project. This project was inspired by the abstract and absurd "Exquisite Corpse" illustrations created by the Surrealists in the 1920s. Twenty-one members from across the country signed up to participate. The plaquettes were sold during the auction at 'Standards' and raised \$580.

The final pieces can be viewed on the NEGBW blog. The results are so fantastic and wacky—and feature a wide range of materials and techniques. **Thank** you to everyone who participated!

online viewing here: negbw.wordpress.com/2019/10/16/exquisite-corpse-project/

REBECCA CHAMLEE*The Art of Nature Printing*

Rebecca Chamlee was the first presenter for this year's 'Standards of Excellence' Seminar. She demonstrated six different ways of Nature Printing. All the resources for her presentation lay on two tables that faced the audience, one was filled with the tools and materials she used on her projects and the other displayed all sorts of books filled with leaf prints, a big journal where she would document all of her experiments and her latest artist book *Giant*. I sat in the front, not wanting to miss a single detail.

During Rebecca's daily walks, she was inspired by the seasonal changes reflected in the native plants and environments around her home in Southern California. Two and a half years ago, she began working on *Giant*, which is about a four hundred year old oak tree near her house. Looking to have more direct representation of the plants and leaves than she had previously, she began to experiment with Nature Printing.

She began with Botanical Contact Printing, also called Eco Printing. It is a process of extracting the dye from leaves and plant material into paper with heat, using a dye bath. She uses an immersion method; the paper with the leaves is bundled, put into a hot dye bath and cooked. She used an electric turkey roaster and a number of chemicals for the dye bath. These included white distilled vinegar to help the prints retain the color; iron water, to act as a color changer, darkening and making the prints more dramatic; black walnut hull powder as a dye; and alum to help the dyes from the plants adhere to the fibers of the cellulose paper. She uses Strathmore Watercolor Paper that has been soaked in an alum solution.

During the presentation, she referenced the large journal where she has documented everything—from when she began experimenting with Nature Printing up until today. The journal includes pictures, examples of prints and explanations of every process, and trial and error while developing her own recipes. At one point, she talked about the process of making *Giant*; in her journal, she documented every part of it, from the placement of the text, to the number of pages, the cost of the paper, etc. She said it may seem a little obsessive but these notes may even be more valuable to her than the edition itself because of how thoroughly they document her process. At the end of the presentation, we came up to admire and get a closer look at her work.



The journal definitely captured everyone's attention for the organized and detailed information it contained, resulting in a work of art itself.

One other great thing was how Rebecca was constantly providing us with tips on what tools and materials to use, as well as important details throughout the whole process of each method.

Next, Rebecca moved on to a traditional Japanese technique for fish printing called Gyotaku, in which Japanese fishermen did fish printings, originally developed to record their catch. Only we would witness this method with leaves instead of fish.

Her tools and materials included block printing ink, Japanese brayers and vinyl placemats as her inking surface. With her brayer, she showed us the correct way of preparing the ink to create a smooth surface. After inking the leaf on both sides, the leaf is placed inside a folded calligraphy paper. Using her fingertips, she begins rubbing (not going over the same area twice) and keeping it anchored so it does not move. She ended up with a particularly detailed print of the leaf.

Rebecca then presented different types of Monoprints. For the Direct Botanical Monoprints with Brayers, she uses black paper and block printing water-based inks because she likes to print both sides of the paper and this ink dries really well. This is one of the only processes today where you can print both sides of the paper easily because the paper does not need to be dampened. For this process, fresh leaves are best. Here she used leaves she found wandering around the city of Philadelphia, white oak and sweet gum leaves. She prefers a leaf with a lot of detail, so she always inks the underside of the leaf, where all the detail is. Then she puts the leaf ink side down on the paper, with the narrowest part of the leaf close to her and she uses the brayer like a printing press, applying pressure.

Rebecca made the process seem simple and easy. When she lifted the paper and showed everyone, people began clapping in awe, marveled by the accurate and intricate results. She recalled students in previous classes being so amazed by this process that they began calling it the magic brayer. For this process, she prefers leaves with a pointy tip, like the elm leaf, for ease of rolling with the brayer. She noted that the same leaf can be used until it falls apart. She repeated the process several times with different leaves and emphasized the importance of using the right materials to get finer details and better results.

Rebecca told a couple of side stories, which I loved and appreciated, because they gave us insight into her exploratory research process. I especially enjoyed when she recalled her visit to a friend's house in Tennessee, where she decided to collect leaves and print them with materials and

tools she bought from the local store and supermarket. She set up a working table in her friend's basement and began printing. She then talked about the varied results one may encounter when using leaves and water from different places.

In between techniques, Rebecca went to check on the turkey roaster. She would lift the bundle so we could see how the once white paper had changed color, become darker. The change of color in the paper indicates that the water is hot enough and you will probably get good results.

For the next printing technique, Rebecca took a dry leaf and painted the underside with watercolor; the paint needs to be as thick and full of pigments as possible. When the paint dries it is printed on dampened paper, utilizing a small etching press. The printing paper had been soaked in clear water for about twenty minutes, and she used blotter to dry it a bit prior to printing. This is her favorite process because of the control you have over the color, and the results are always very vibrant and beautiful.

After going through every method, the time came to unravel the bundles that had been simmering in the dye bath for approximately two hours. There was applause when she unraveled them. After the presentation, we spent some time admiring her work, impressed by the results of these Nature Printing Techniques.

Rebecca's presentation left me very interested and inspired to try these printing methods. Before leaving Philadelphia, I visited a local art store and got myself a couple of the tools and materials she recommended. Most of the methods can be practiced at home with a handful of tools, and after browsing the internet and doing some research you may encounter a world of Nature Printing techniques and variations to experiment with.

— by Nicole Rivera



GRAHAM PATTEN

The Continuously Convoluting Carousel

It's not very often a magician takes their time to unravel their wondrous creations for the benefit of "the rest of us", but Graham Patten did just that during his

presentation at this year's 'Standards of Excellence'. Patten started by walking the audience through his amazingly complicated repertoire. This set the stage to explain why anyone would ever think about expanding upon the structure known as "Jacob's Ladder" in the way Patten has. I will take the liberty to say that we were all in awe (but wildly puzzled)

when Graham proceeded to show the different "zine-line" structures that preceded what we are now dubbing *The Continuously Convoluting Carousel*. We often think of having interwoven stories under one roof by creating dos-a-dos bindings and accordions, but having 3 or 4 or 5 tales being told at once? Better yet, having the storyline continue in unexpected manners? Most of us have only dreamed it!

The amount of brain power it takes to dive into the simplified versions of this structure is a little bit daunting. First, one must think of dimensions that will allow the structure to be as fluid and linear as possible. Second, the imposition and composition of the content itself needs to be set in a way that the narrative makes sense—so that also needs to make sense. Assembling becomes the next really big and complex step. Okay, okay... Although this sounds like a lot of hard work (because it is), it was actually really fun to watch Patten go through making *The CCC*. It was really humbling to see him ponder on how to go about it next, looking at his notes to make sure things were being done correctly... Seeing the tricks up his sleeve didn't necessarily ruin the magic for me. In fact, it made me want to ask more questions, it made me want to analyze every step leading to the final product. The point is, we need workshops with Graham Patten.

On a final note, I can't help but be very intrigued in each of the multifaceted zine-like designs that came before *The CCC* as well. They have their own potential as new ways of exploring narratives without the extra stuff. I believe they could all be great tools of learning and teaching as we bring ourselves up to the task of creating our own variations of the Jacob's Ladder structure. In the end, Patten has given us the perfect example of how the book as a concept can be forever evolving if we choose to challenge it. It can lead us to magic.

— by Sephora Bergiste



Con't. on page 10

JULIA MILLER*Modeling Ambiguity:
Lessons Learned*

"My topic is old stuff." With these introductory words, Julia Miller set her audience of expert bookbinders, conservators, historians, librarians, students and all in-between at ease as we settled in for her presentation 'Modeling Ambiguity: Lessons Learned'. Members of the Guild of BookWorkers naturally gravitate towards the historical, the tactile, the old stuff, and most of us share Julia Miller's passion for learning—and in turn, educating. I must confess I am new to Julia Miller, and I now realize what I've been missing in the last few years of my budding book arts career. The good news for me is that as Julia continues discovering ambiguously new-old-very old binding techniques, I have the great thrill of tracking her progress and reading about her findings. I get to continue discovering Julia Miller.

Early on in her talk, she presented this nebulous formula for her work:

certainty + uncertainty = possible truth?

Through an exploration of what is evident and documented by bookbinding scholars (Julia included an extensive bibliography as the only printed handout for the presentation) and what is left to be imagined, Julia creates stunningly careful models of ancient codices such as the Cyprian Orations of Isocrates, the Nag Hammadi codices, the David Psalter or Mudil Codex and the Glazier Codex among others. Her models are exquisite. As we passed around each book, what impressed me most is the justice committed to the original works and her empathy for the reader or student. Research notes are carefully tipped into the models, and tabs are everywhere to tell you exactly what you are holding and viewing. Julia told us the ultimate goal with her models is to "share the information," and she succeeds.

As a novice to the ancient works mentioned in Julia's talk, I learned a lot in a short three hours all due to Julia's gift for sharing knowledge. In brief, I learned about composite papyrus boards, which take weeks to dry. I held the "skeleton" of her Nag Hammadi Codex II, which is the term for



a papyrus text-block intentionally unattached to its leather case in order to leave sewing materials exposed. Julia often leaves models unfinished in this way and encourages her students to do the same. I was fascinated by her section on "wrapping," which illuminated the various ways book edges may have been lightly covered by leather straps extending from the spine of the book's case. For example, her model of the Glazier Codex reveals a spine extension, or decorated leather strip, attached at the head of the spine. It seems the David Psalter was wrapped by extensions on all three edges and was lined with parchment, the first codex to exhibit these techniques.

Julia Miller's presentation was deeply educational and enjoyable, and I will forever remember the sublime experience of handling her models and imagining the ancient techniques she studies and shares. I personally look forward to digging deeper into her important research of old stuff.

— by Sara White, who notes:

*Big thanks to Yi Bin Liang
whom I sat beside during Julia's
talk and who graciously allowed
me to use
her delightful drawings
with this article (below).*



JEFF ALTEPETER*Metalworking
for BookWorkers*

Ever fantasize about making ornate clasps and corner pieces for your fine leather bindings rather than ordering them? Do you need a specific punch tool that you can't find elsewhere? Metalworking is a skillset you are capable of learning. Jeff Altepeter, who says he got into metalworking when he ran out of tools to collect, is head of the Bookbinding Department at North Bennett Street School. In his presentation 'Metalworking for BookWorkers' at this year's Guild conference, he aimed to demystify metalworking for bookbinders.

Instead of completing a metalworks project during his demo, Altepeter wanted to give us an idea of the essential tools, materials and basic processes in order to make metalworking accessible to those of us who have never leapt into that area of bookmaking. Some essential tools you may not already own: a jeweler's saw, a peen hammer, various files, rawhide and brass mallets, and a Dremel or flex shaft.

Nonferrous metals are the source materials for book clasps, finishing tools and furniture. Historic clasps were primarily copper alloys, but now brass (copper with zinc) and bronze (copper with tin) are common working alloys. Metals you might work with: 'dead soft' sheets of jeweler's brass for clasps and decorative pieces, solid brass for escutcheon pins, 'Brass 360' for tool blanks, and if you plan to cast, Altepeter says "ancient bronze casting grain" is safer than other bronze alloys.

Altepeter set up on stage with a few tools and after a brief presentation on some of the essentials got straight to work. He began by prepping some Brass 360 to make an Ascona Tool, which he has all of his metalworking students make. Next he had prepped some Jeweler's Brass with a clasp design and used a jeweler's saw and a vice to begin cutting, careful not to tilt the saw or use too much pressure. The blade should do the cutting for you, he says.

He sneaked in a crème brûlée torch (which isn't hot enough to do all the work you'd need it to do in metalworking, but should work for this) to heat the sample, let it cool, after which it would go into the acid bath (a vinegar mix in a small crock), then it would be polished. He then demonstrated how to use a bending jig and a pliers to curl the metal sheet in

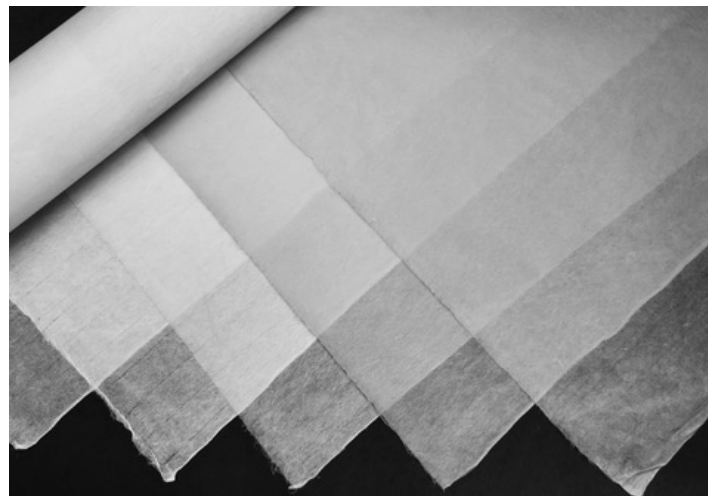
order to create the joint for the pin in a clasp.

I am a complete newbie to metalworking but between Altepeter's demos, his handouts, and the process-based samples for us to peruse on breaks, I feel I could step into a metalworking studio, and short of a lot of trial and error and breaking a few blades, I wouldn't feel completely out of my depth.

— by Libby Walkup



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After getting one's fill of the proverbial Philly Cheesesteak, the next best thing in the City of Brotherly Love was the 2019 Guild of BookWorkers 'Standards of Excellence' Conference. Fine binders had many opportunities to learn new things, experience expert presentations, see unfamiliar materials in use and be introduced to new tools for book work. On the whole, attendees were inspired by the presentations for influencing their own work as well as by the depth, creativity, and expertise brought by the presenters. Careful preparation and near perfect delivery made the two days full and rich. Thursday consisted of tours of local libraries, conservation labs, repositories and an energetic reception at the University of the Arts–Hamilton/Arronson Gallery exhibition of 'Formation'. Two days of presentations followed, by some of the most talented experts in our field. My conversations with attendees and sharing notes with Bonnie Thompson Norman after we got back to Seattle show this conference was one of the best.

Rebecca Chamlee started off on Friday morning with 'The Art of Nature Printing' and showed us how she creates extraordinary prints from commonly found organic materials like oak leaves. She showed us six ways to make these nature prints giving detailed explanations and answering questions along the way. The prints are magical and can suggest a truer organic state of being. Botanical contact printing is a process of transferring the color from plant material onto paper using a dye bath. Gytaku style printing ("fish rubbing") requires less preparation and results in a more immediate print. Direct botanical monoprints using brayers is "...playful, quick and produces exciting and often unexpected results" quotes Chamlee's handout. With a small etching press three more types of printing techniques were demonstrated. The bibliography provided includes a range of resources to support further reading.


For the fine binder, these elusive images are coaxed out of a thin layer of cells suggesting directions for cover designs, artwork for edition projects, aesthetic concepts, or

experimentation to just explore. Chamlee's use of older techniques and materials (ink gall, walnut hulls) drives home the idea that exploration in any creative pursuit can lead to amazing discoveries. Her detailed journals document her explorations of this creative process and provide direction for her.


Graham Patten presented 'The Continuously Convoluting Carousel', a Jacob's Ladder carousel book. He talked about the structure, which takes the original Jacob's Ladder idea and compounds it to create a book that opens in multiple perpendicular directions. He demonstrated how to make a simplified version and an advanced version with the caution: "Assembly order is critical at this stage!... This is the fiddly bit. Make sure you're rested and ready before diving in."

The reason for creating this book structure was based on the content of the book itself—a series of prints by Sarah Smith called "News Cycle" that showed the reactions of small groups of people to the news, perhaps a reference to the current news cycles, fake news, and other bombast in the media. In a way, Patten's title for his presentation with the alliteration of those "C words" suggests the very movement of the book structure in support of its content. He also showed us an intriguing development of this structure by

Con't. on next page



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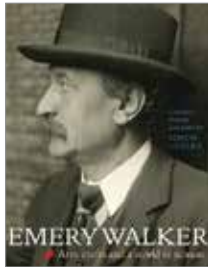
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Yi Bin Liang, which used connecting threads not just paper, glue, and boards.

Patten's handout included step-by-step instructions, variations, and a resource list of how to get more information including some high-level mathematics relating to Mobius kaleidocycles. Patten made excellent use of his powerpoint and the enhanced computer camera to help us all see exactly what he was doing. His solid foundation in conservation and historic structures is clear in his imaginative pursuit to take the concept of the book into exciting new territory. The traditional codex is turned, then turned again, then again—each time revealing more of its content.

'Modeling Ambiguity: Lessons Learned' by Julia Miller took us through some of her most recent exploration and thinking about how early books were made. The bibliography in her handout will be very useful going forward if looking for documentation about these earlier works. Miller emphasized that most of the earlier scholarship was about the content of the codex and did not contain detailed information about the structures. With an increasing number of colleagues working in the field and recognizing that more information can be extracted from these extant codices, new research projects are being conducted and

updated descriptions are being published. This much needed additional information helps scholars in a variety of ways to broaden and deepen their work.

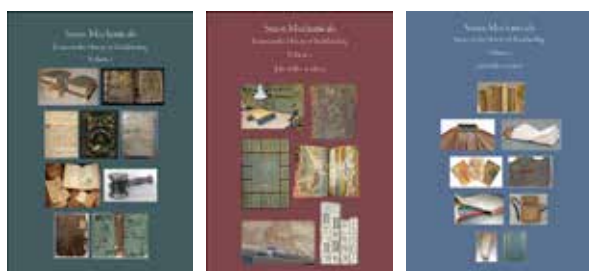
Miller did not demonstrate any of the construction methods of the codices she presented, but she had extraordinary models and detailed diagrams of them to help us understand the differences, innovations, and methods used over many decades of codex production. Attendees interested in these structures had access to very accurate and careful descriptions of them as well as the beautiful models. A number of interesting attributes of these early codices were described. Having demonstrations of methods has become a very important part of Standards presentations, but Miller showed us all that we could learn and be inspired by an intellectual understanding of the structures. Further, her bibliography covers a wide range of topics and she referred to it often in the presentation.

Jeffrey Altepeter's presentation 'Metalworking for Book Workers' demonstrated a working bench for metalworking. His calm and collegial manner instantly drew the audience in as he talked about tools, metal, methods, safety, and aesthetics. His well-planned presentation covered some basic information all the while suggesting where a book worker might want to take this. His goal to "demystify metalworking for the book worker" was definitely met. He helped us all see that metal is a very plastic material that can be manipulated successfully.

Building a tool library (even before one succumbs to tool addiction) is an important first step. Ball peen hammers, various files, drills, Jewelers saws, and various snips and nibblers are added to one's bench as they are needed. Altepeter provided online resources to locate tools. He gave us some background information about metals, their composition, historical uses in making clasps and other features for a binding. He took us through basics like cutting, drilling, casting, patinas, stamping, and finishing metal objects. He explained metal gauges, annealing, pickling, what "dead soft" is and why we need to know that.

Altepeter's perspective on "...creative control and immediacy; (his) fascination with the way design is influenced by the limitations of tools, materials and even skills..." gave a very realistic approach to using metal as a material for both tools and binding objects. He used a common clasp design to demonstrate a number of these outcomes all along the way making suggestions about how this particular technique or tool could be used.

Digital video of each presentation will be available when the editing is completed. The Guild of Book Workers website will have more details soon.



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Focus on Book Arts Conference June, 2019



Focus on Book Arts held its fourteenth biennial conference in Oregon this June, a five-day extravaganza I like to describe as “book arts summer camp”. This year we offered thirty-two different all day, two-day or three-day workshops—all were small, hands-on classes—and hosted over two hundred participants. The conference is held at Pacific University, a lovely, wooded campus just off Main Street in the city of Forest Grove. This makes for a very civilized version of summer camp: a pop-up hive of shared interests, people bustling from one event to another with nametags flapping.

For GBW members who aren't familiar with FOBA, I'd like to introduce you. First of all, we do tend to say “FOBA,” to rhyme with “soba”. In writing about the conference, I'm also hoping to think a bit about the larger book arts community: how we're connected and who we learn from. This big-little event, bursting into blossom every two years on the upper left coast, has a role in a larger ecosystem of people who are passionate about handmade books. With the help of other GBW members, I'll try to make at least a rough sketch of that role.

Who comes to FOBA, and why? Students range from expert book artists to novices, but most identify themselves as having an intermediate skill level. Nearly half have traveled from out of state to attend the conference. Margo Klass writes, “Part of what is so satisfying about teaching at FOBA is the quality of students—they bring skill, aesthetics, and eagerness to learn.” Having taught at FOBA for the first time in 2017, Margo returned this year with a whole contingent from the Northwoods Book Arts Guild (Fairbanks). She explained, “I could assure prospective students that workshops would be well taught, that the materials used would be high quality, that classmates would be well prepared, that the experience, in short, would be inspirational and pivotal in their development as an artist... In the end, we were ten strong and FOBA didn't disappoint. Upon return the group presented their work from the conference to the wider Guild membership, sharing experiences, techniques, tips, and workshop projects.”

I like the fluidity of roles in that description, as students process what they've learned by sharing knowledge with others. One of my favorite things about FOBA is its egalitarian spirit—the eagerness of experienced instructors and practitioners to continue learning. That's something I observed this year as a student in Sam Ellenport's workshop

on 'The One-Hour Clamshell Box'. Bonnie Thompson Norman, a seasoned instructor who has worked for years in a commercial bindery, also took the workshop. Sam was able to guide the whole class so that everyone had a successful experience. Bonnie commented, “I always appreciate an instructor who is knowledgeable and ready to accommodate both beginners and experienced participants alike. For me, I was particularly interested in what ‘tricks of the trade’ he might be able to offer and he definitely delivered.” We both appreciated Sam's relaxed professionalism, as well as his thoughtful candor in addressing the business side of bookbinding. And I also gained from Bonnie's presence, the questions she asked in class, and her confidence with the bench skills many of us are still working to acquire.

Workshops are certainly the heart of Focus on Book Arts. As Margo writes, though, “An important strength of FOBA is its ‘completeness’ as a conference. Surrounding the workshops (the central focus) are myriad other activities—exhibitions, lectures, vendors, artists' shows—all directly feeding the core educational experience. And then the peripheral activities that build spirit and community among participants and organizers alike—raffle, challenge book, show and tell, passport book. All of this takes tremendous effort and coordination, and it makes FOBA unique.” She also comments on the roles played by volunteers: “Somehow

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related to FOBA's success is that its staff are very present. They direct, preside, and organize, in addition to being classmates and fellow book artists. That such accomplished artists are so generous with their time is a gift to everyone."

At this point, a little history may be helpful. Like so many things we value in this world, Focus on Book Arts is something that started small and, over time, got bigger. Members of the Oregon Book Arts Guild put on a conference called "Focus on Paper" in 1993. They followed up with a few other themed biennials, eventually deciding the focus was really just on book arts. Back then, conferences had fewer days of workshops and a smaller crowd, but many of the core elements remain the same. OBAG disbanded around 2005, but the biennial continued to grow and improve, thanks to the ongoing efforts of a small local group of volunteers. In 2015, Focus on Book Arts received 501c3 status as a charitable organization.

One of the volunteers at this year's conference, Dolores Guffey, told a story that gives some insight into FOBA's legacy and achievement. Shereen LaPlantz and Robin Renshaw attended the 1995 conference, driving up from Arcata, California. On their way home, Shereen declared they should hold a book arts conference on even-numbered years. She and 17 others formed the North Redwoods Book Arts Guild that fall. "In June, 1996, we put on a very successful conference, with 200 participants," said Dolores. "And afterwards we all said 'Well, we'll never do that again.' It was too much work."

I enjoyed hearing that, especially as a sleep-deprived board member in the middle of a conference I had spent too much time on over the course of two years. In a way, I totally agree. Putting on a conference is too much work. That FOBA should still be a going concern after 26 years, an all-volunteer event with no institutional support, speaks not only to the dedication and resourcefulness of its leadership over the years, but also to a certain stubbornness.

Some of you may have heard that there was a great deal of turnover on the FOBA board after the 2017 conference. A letter went out; a meeting was held. I ended up with the role of treasurer, having asked the question, "What? You'd just have to put it all in QuickBooks?" Money was tight, and no one on the new board was willing or able to take on the position of conference director. Some of us panicked a little. We learned our jobs and got along. We discussed the possibility of drastically simplifying the event, but opted for a modest streamlining of schedule and activities. Jean Wyatt took on the crucial role of registrar, and eventually that of conference coordinator as well.

In the end, Focus on Book Arts 2019 was a great success. We received lots of helpful feedback, with a strong consensus that it was a valuable and well-run conference. Karen Hanmer claims, "This remains the best organized event I attend." Elissa Campbell was also enthusiastic: "I

had so much fun! That's why I keep coming back. FOBA feels like home to me... I can't believe how you consistently manage to produce such a fantastic event year after year." Much to my amusement, she added, "Oh, how about having one on the east coast during even numbered years?"

We did two critical things differently this year to put the conference on a stronger long-term footing. First, we had a few key volunteers take on significant responsibilities without being on the board. This was a big step for an organization that has always had a small local group do all the planning. Second, a small team analyzed conference data and attendance scenarios, setting financial goals with the support of the entire board. We trimmed expenses, reluctantly raised prices for attendees, improved publicity, and worked on fundraising. I'm proud to say the GBW Northwest Chapter stepped up as our Welcome Bag Sponsor. The end result was the first conference cycle with positive cash flow since 2013. Huzzah, huzzah!

Of course the reward for putting on a credible biennial is the desire to do it again in two years, only a little better. So please save these dates: June 23-27, 2021. We hope you will join us. I encourage you to visit our website (also listed below) and join our mailing list to receive updates. A call for workshop proposals will go out in January, 2020. We welcome both fresh and familiar faces, knowing it is the expertise and enthusiasm of our instructors that makes the conference possible.

And, if you left the 2019 conference with a smile on your face, calling out "See you in two years!" we hope you'll consider joining the team to make FOBA 2021 even better. We are actively expanding the geographical diversity of our leadership, as well as the role of teams and volunteers in the planning stages. The current board is experienced, flexible, and committed to long-term sustainability. We are seeking to build a more diverse community, expand our fellowship program, and strengthen ties to existing networks of book artists. As of this writing, the board still has two open positions. If a smaller role will better suit you, I hope you will join me in the supporting circles of FOBA volunteers.

Next Conference: June 23-27, 2021
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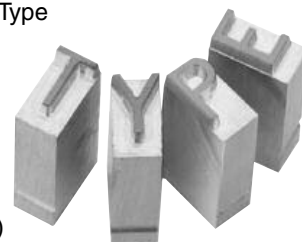
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The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity

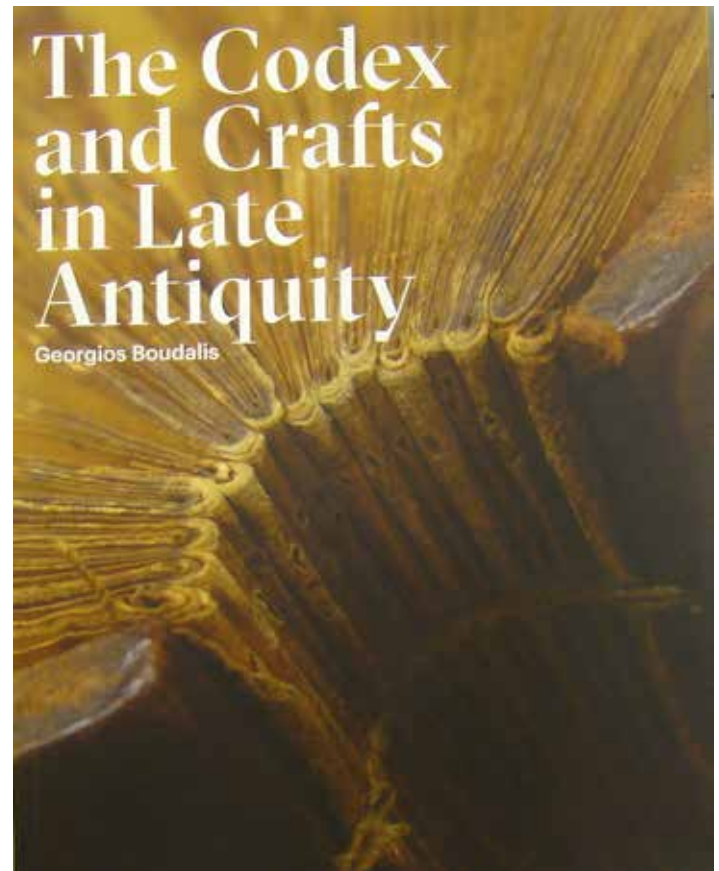
Georgios Boudalis

(NY: Bard Graduate Center, 2018)

The Codex and Crafts in Late Antiquity is a catalog which accompanied an exhibition of the same title held in New York City at Bard Graduate Center in 2018. Georgios Boudalis, Head of the Book and Paper Conservation Laboratory, Museum of Byzantine Culture, Thessaloniki, Greece, curator of the exhibition and author of the catalog, investigates the structural, technical, and decorative elements of some major types of codices—the wooden tablet codex, the single-gathering codex, and the multi-gathering codex. Other relics and iconographic evidence, and recent handmade replicas are used to examine the historic craft practices relating to the formation of these early books. The catalog describes the codex as a structure that evolved, not through newly discovered skills, but rather by using techniques already known to contemporary artisans and craftspeople in the production of everyday items. The author addresses book making in late antiquity within known craft context such as: basket and mat making, weaving and fabric making, leatherwork and shoe making. His catalog looks at the codex on the basis of structure and format, stressing that his narrative is “an account not of why it supplanted the roll form for extended written texts, but rather how it did so.”

The chapters cover the above mentioned types of codices, as well as: sewing of gatherings, boards and their attachment, spine linings, endbands, the cover and its decoration, fastenings, bookmarks and board corner straps. In short, the reader is given a very detailed description of the structure of codices from late antiquity. These focused chapters are helpfully embellished with meticulous drawings that supplement the written descriptions of complex techniques. For members of the Guild, those drawings, as well as the concentrated topics of the chapters, will enable the catalog to be used as a manual for making their own codices, an added benefit. The reader receives additional visual aid in the form of an illustrated exhibition checklist of the objects shown at the Bard Graduate Center. Those who wish to obtain more information about codices and crafts from antiquity have only to scrutinize the extensive bibliography that the author has compiled; they also will appreciate the catalog's index and footnotes.

The catalog, while scrupulously describing craft-making in late antiquity, is not a dull read. Boudalis refers to the codices as “things of the past studied as survivors in the present.” Somehow, the introduction of shoes and socks, alongside book covers made to protect manuscripts of the Gospels, vividly brings alive the presence of the humans who



either crafted or used the artifacts. That presence is further conveyed in the brief quotes that appear beneath the chapter headings; Boudalis has allowed contemporary authors to speak to the reader about the codices and, to the amusement of 21st century book artists, some of their statements reveal that bookbinders in late antiquity shared some of the frustrations currently experienced by living bookbinders.

Those of us who did not have the opportunity to see the exhibition in person can see the on-line version at this link:

bgc.bard.edu/gallery/exhibitions/80/the-codex-and-crafts-in

After viewing the exhibition, I would encourage GBW members to purchase a copy of the excellent catalog.

Barbara Adams Hebard was trained in bookbinding at the North Bennet Street School. She was Book Conservator at the Boston Athenaeum for more than 18 years and became the Conservator of the John F. Burns Library at Boston College in 2009. Ms. Hebard writes book related articles and book reviews, gives talks and presentations, exhibits her bookbindings nationally and internationally, and teaches book history classes. She is a Fellow of IIC, a Professional Associate of AIC, chairperson of the New England Conservation Association, and has served several terms as an Overseer of the North Bennet Street School.

Part 7: Board Materials

In the seventh article in the series, we will turn to the outside of the book, starting with the composition of the boards.

Now that we have, metaphorically, finished creating our textblock, we can turn to the cover of the book. There are many ways to protect the textblock from wear and tear, but most covers incorporate some kind of rigid board. Over the centuries the shape, size, thickness, and material from which boards were made varied, giving us some clues about when and where the book might have been bound. Comparing the style and materials of the cover to what we have already observed by examining the textblock can also sometimes tell us whether the book might be in its original binding, or if it has been rebound.

Identifying the material of the boards is easiest when the cover material has been damaged, exposing the surface, or, preferably, the edges of the board. Fortunately, for our purposes, this is fairly common, as the edges of the cover are subjected to significant wear and tear. Examining the edge of the board can tell us if it is a solid piece (such as a wooden board) or if it has been laminated (sheets of paper, parchment, and/or leather). In some cases, it is even possible to identify the species of wood by visual examination, which can be especially helpful for locating a binding geographically.¹ Most binders used the wood that was most commonly available where they lived.

Solid wooden boards were replaced over the centuries first by boards with a laminated structure, then with boards made from pulped materials in a thick single layer. As a result, bindings became much lighter in weight and quicker to produce. This made it possible for binders to reduce their costs and therefore make books cheaper for readers as the market expanded. The unfortunate consequence for our purposes, however, is that laminated and pulped boards do not give us as clear an indication of the location in which a book was bound as a solid wood board sometimes can.

SOLID WOOD BOARDS

In Europe, boards were almost exclusively solid wood until about 1500.² The species used can be helpful in narrowing down where the book was bound. There are occasional examples of boards made from boxwood, lime, chestnut, maple, and poplar, and a few pinewood.³ But most carolingian and romanesque bindings had thick boards made of oak, with some examples in beech or poplar.⁴ Although some authors have concluded that beech wood was the most common in Germany and Italy, while oak was more likely in England and France,⁵ the species varied in some places over time. The majority of Szirmai's sample of German carolingian bindings were bound in oak boards.⁶ The romanesque and gothic German and Swiss bindings were primarily beech boards, and he notes that Zeidler recommends beech in his 1708 binding manual.⁷ In Szirmai's sample of 91 romanesque bindings, all the English bindings had oak boards, and all the Swiss bindings from Schaffhausen (on the border with Germany) had beech boards.⁸

In the gothic period, according to Szirmai, oak continued to be the wood of choice in England and the Netherlands, whereas German and French binders had become more likely to use beech.⁹ Carvin's French 14th and 15th century bindings do have primarily beech boards, but he observes that oak was more common in books from the northern parts of the country.¹⁰ Gilissen also found mostly oak boards in books from the same time period in Brussels, though he also saw examples of beech, elm, and occasionally lime.¹¹ It is possible that, within France, the wood used varied from region to region, with oak being more common in northern France and beech more likely in the south. I would imagine that this was a matter of what was most available locally to individual binders, and depended on the climate of the region, although Gilissen believes that the density and rigidity of the wood was taken into consideration by binders.¹² He notes that oak and beech are much less susceptible to woodworm infestation than lime wood, which is often found full of holes and with an almost sponge-like texture.¹³ The only reason he sees for using lime is to make a book lighter, making it easier to transport.¹⁴

Very thin wooden boards, known as scaleboards or scaboards, have been used for inexpensive bindings as early as the 16th century.¹⁵ They were more popular in the Americas than in Europe, and were used there in the 17th and 18th centuries, possibly due to paper shortages that limited the availability of pasteboards.¹⁶

Prideaux postulates that commercial binding in the last half of the 16th century helped to discontinue the use of wooden boards because of the pressure required for stamping decorations on the covers¹⁷ (possibly in contrast to the lighter pressure used for tooling with small tools). Wooden boards, while strong, are vulnerable to cracking under pressure. In spite of this concern, Foot claims that in Germany wooden boards persisted for longer, into the 18th century, and that there was still occasional use of wooden boards in England and Germany in the 19th century.¹⁸ Marks concurs that some binders in Germany continued to use wooden boards until the 19th century.¹⁹

LAMINATED BOARDS

Laminated boards were made by pasting together either waste sheets or new sheets of paper until the desired thickness was achieved. Their history is a bit trickier to unravel than that of wooden boards. Laminated boards made from papyrus are quite ancient—think of the 6th century Coptic codices from northern Africa. In Europe, several authors have concluded that laminated paper boards didn't become more common than wooden boards until the second quarter of the 16th century.²⁰ Prideaux claims that the Venetian binder Aldus Manutius was the first European binder to stop using wooden boards, in the late 15th century.²¹ Dutton also credits Manutius with the adoption of pasteboards, and notes that pasteboards would have reduced the likeliness of bookworm infestation, compared to wooden boards.²² Toldo agrees, and also mentions that pasteboards took the impression of the heated tools much more cleanly than wooden boards,

allowing for durable gold tooling.²³

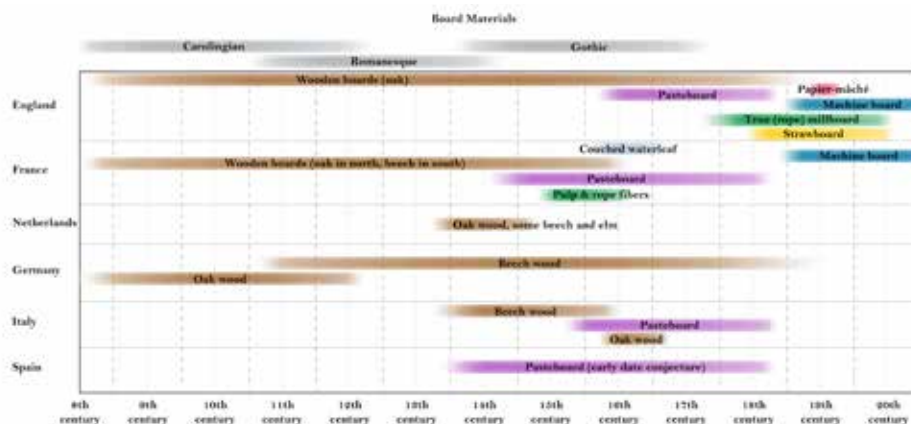
There is evidence for the use of pasteboards in Europe before Aldus Manutius, however. Szirmai points to Arabic bookbinders as the likely original source of pasteboards, conjecturing that they first came to Europe via both Italy and Spain.²⁴ He finds pasteboards in Tunisian bindings from as early as the 10th century, and notes that they had completely replaced wooden boards in Islamic bindings by the 12th century.²⁵ Although Anderson found pasteboards in her survey, they represented only a tenth of the sample, suggesting that they might only recently have been adopted.²⁶ All of her examples were Italian, which would support the idea that pasteboard adoption could have started in Italy in the 15th century.²⁷ Carvin, however, found pasteboards from as early as the second half of the 14th century in his French bindings,²⁸ suggesting that they could have come through France before being used in Italy. If that is the case, it's possible that the primary route of introduction was Spain, via its close connections to the Arabic world, and that the pasteboard travelled through Spain to France before being adopted by the rest of Europe.

Another early, if not extensively used, alternative to wooden boards in the 13th and 15th centuries was laminated leather or parchment, a probable precursor to the laminated paper boards.²⁹ Carvin observes layers of parchment among the layers of paper, in some of his sample of 14th and 15th century French bindings.³⁰ These may have been a transitional form, with binders using layers of parchment to strengthen the board because they didn't quite trust the paper to be sufficiently durable on its own. This is reminiscent of the early use of parchment guards to reinforce paper quires before sewing.

An intermediate between the laminated paper board and the modern binder's board was made from couching multiple freshly-formed sheets of paper on top of each other directly from the papermaking vat, and pressing them together to make a board.³¹ These were commonly used in France starting in the 1530's.³² In the chart I have referred to these as "couched waterleaf" boards.

LATER NON-LAMINATED BOARDS

Pasteboards continued to be used for inexpensive trade bindings in England until the late 18th century, but other types of board were adopted for finer work.³³ These other substitutes for wooden boards do not typically have clearly visible layers. Some examples are chipboard, millboard, strawboard, and rag board. Chipboard is made of mixed scraps of waste paper.³⁴ A British variety called Thames board is a low-grade, fairly soft version.³⁵ A similar board made of pulped scraps and shavings, called pulpboard, was also popular in England.³⁶ Millboard, a stiff board originally made from tarred rope remnants, can be found on books from the late 17th century through the middle of the 20th



century.³⁷ It was popular in England, especially for high-quality bindings, mostly in the 18th century.³⁸ Carvin observes a similar material, made of a thick paper pulp sometimes mixed with rope fibers, as early as the later half of the 15th century in France.³⁹ Strawboard dates from the middle of the 19th century, becoming common by the 1880's.⁴⁰ It may be the descendant of the first paper made from straw, which was made in England in 1800 by Matthias Koops, an early experimenter with alternatives to linen and cotton fibres for papermaking.⁴¹

Modern binder's boards are most likely not laminated, but are made as a single layer and are known as machine boards.⁴² They are typically made either by a Fourdrinier or cylinder paper-making machine, both of which date from the early 19th century.⁴³ Frenchman Nicolas-Louis Robert first applied for a patent for what became the Fourdrinier machine in 1798 (which was granted in 1799), but the machine was not widely used until after 1803 when it was improved by Brian Donkin for the Fourdriniers in England.⁴⁴ Joseph Bramah invented the cylinder machine in 1805 in England, where it was sometimes referred to as a "board machine".⁴⁵ Modern bookbinders and conservators continue to use binder's boards made in much the same way.

One last board variation of interest is the papier-mâché boards that appeared in the mid-19th century as a novelty item. They were meant to resemble carved wood, and were sometimes made by moulding the paper around a metal frame.⁴⁶ While not common, they are distinctive enough that if one does find an example it is probably safe to date it to the middle of the 19th century. Unfortunately, Marks does not specify where they were made, but since she is writing on behalf of the British Library we could assume that she is referring to bindings made in England.

If they are easy to examine, board materials can be quite helpful in dating a binding. Wooden boards in particular can say a lot about where and when bindings came from. There are, however, some opportunities for confusion when it comes to the species of wood used, such as the replacement of oak by beech in Germany and the variation between northern and southern France in the prevalence of oak and beech boards. Pasteboards have a somewhat complex history as well, and it isn't entirely clear whether they were adopted in

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STRUCTURAL & MATERIAL CLUES TO BINDING

HISTORY : A SERIES by Emily K. Bell (con't.)

Spain before anywhere else in Europe. It would be helpful to have some sources who examined Spanish bindings from the 13th and 14th centuries, to see if there were any pasteboards among them. When the material of the boards alone isn't enough to narrow down the time and location of a binding, the specific shaping of the board can sometimes be a helpful addition to the analysis.

In the next article, we'll discuss in detail changes in the shaping of the cover boards over time.

DATES

Carolingian: 8th-12th century

Romanesque: 11th-14th century

Gothic: 14th-17th century

Aldus Manutius, 1449-1515

Johann Gottfried Zeidler, 1655-1711; Buchbinder-Philosophie, 1708

Joseph Bramah, 1749-1814

Nicholas-Louis Robert, 1761-1828

Bryan Donkin, 1768-1855

Henry Fourdrinier, 1766-1854

Sealy Fourdrinier, 1773-1847

Matthias Koops, active 1789-1805

FOOTNOTES

¹ For an overview on how to identify wood type, see Meier, Erik. "Wood Identification Guide." The Wood Database, wood-database.com/wood-articles/wood-identification-guide/. Accessed 5 August 2019. (Try also his wood finder: wood-database.com/wood-finder/.)

^{2, 33, 37, 42, 43} Roberts, Matt T. and Don Etherington. "Binder's Board." *Bookbinding and the Conservation of Books: A Dictionary of Descriptive Terminology*, cool.conservation-us.org/don/dt/dt0299.html. Accessed 11 May 2017.

^{3, 15, 18, 29, 31-33, 36-38, 40} Foot, Mirjam M. "Bookbinding." *The Grove Encyclopedia of Materials and Techniques in Art*, edited by Gerald W. R. Ward. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008) P. 43.

^{3, 7, 8, 9} Szirmai, J. A. *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1999) P. 151 & p. 217.

⁴ *Medieval Manuscripts: Bookbinding Terms, Materials, Methods, and Models*. Special Collections Conservation, Preservation Department, Yale University Library, July 2013. travelingscriptorium.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/bookbinding-booklet.pdf, p. 20 & p. 24.

^{5, 19} Marks, Philippa J. M. *The British Library Guide to Bookbinding: History and Techniques*. (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1998) P. 36-37.

⁶ Szirmai, J. A. *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*. (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 1999) P. 103.

^{10 11, 28, 30, 39} Carvin, Denis. *La Reliure Médiévale, d'après les fonds des bibliothèques d'Aix-en-Provence, Avignon, Carpentras et Marseille*. (Arles: Centre Interrégional de Conservation des Livres, 1988) P. 23.

^{11-14, 28, 30, 39} Glissen, Léon. *La Reliure Occidentale Antérieure à 1400, d'Après les Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Royale Albert 1er à Bruxelles*. (Brepols: Turnhout, 1983) P. 24-25.

¹⁶ Middleton, Bernard C. *A History of English Craft Bookbinding Technique*. (New York and London: Hafner Publishing Company, 1963) P. 63-64.

^{17, 21} Prideaux, Sarah T. *An Historical Sketch of Bookbinding*. (London: Lawrence & Bullen, 1893) P. 47-48, p. 31.

²⁰ Roberts, Matt T. and Don Etherington. "Pasteboard." *Bookbinding and the Conservation of Books: A Dictionary of Descriptive Terminology*, cool.conservation-us.org/don/dt/dt2500.html. Accessed 11 May 2017.

²² Dutton, Meiric K. *Historical Sketch of Bookbinding as an Art*. (Norwood: Holliston Mills, 1926) P. 34.

²³ Toldo, Vittorio de. *L'Art Italien de la Reliure du Livre (XV^e-XVI^e siècle)*. Monographies d'Arts Decoratifs, 3. (Milan: Bottega di Poesia, 1924) P. 17.

²⁴ Szirmai, *Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, p. 4.

²⁵ Szirmai, *Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*, p. 55.

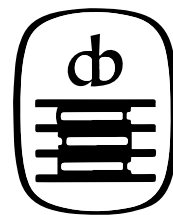
^{26, 27} Anderson, Priscilla. "Fifteenth-Century Bookbinding Structure in Italy and the Netherlands: A Survey of Manuscripts and Printed Books." *The Book and Paper Group Annual*, The American Institute for Conservation, vol. 18, 1999. cool.conservation-us.org/coolaic/sg/bpg/annual/v18/bp18-01.html.

^{34, 35} Middleton, Bernard C. *The Restoration of Leather Bindings*. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1972) P. 39.

⁴¹ Hunter, Dard. *Papermaking: The History and Technique of an Ancient Craft*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1978) P. 332.

^{43, 45} See also Roberts, Matt T. and Don Etherington. "Cylinder Machine." *Bookbinding and the Conservation of Books: A Dictionary of Descriptive Terminology*, cool.conservation-us.org/don/dt/dt0967.html. Accessed 26 May 2017.

⁴⁴ Hunter, p. 344 and 348-349.



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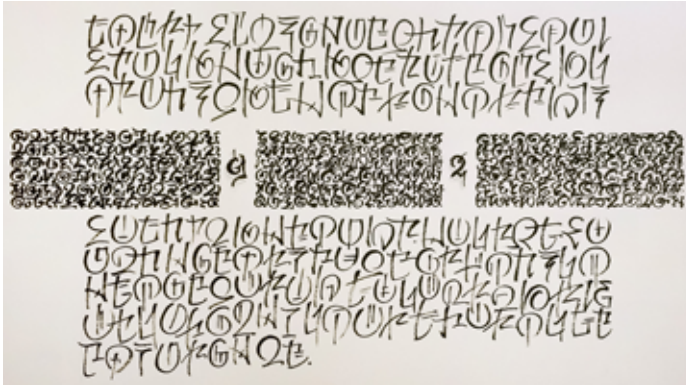
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Asemic writing and Unfamiliar Writing Systems in Japan



Asemic writing – workshop, September 2019

Montana's calligraphy guild, Big Sky Scribes, brought Andrew van der Merwe, a New Zealand calligrapher known for his beach writing, to Missoula for a weekend workshop this autumn. The first day's topic was asemic writing, writing that carries no literal meaning. I found the development of an asemic writing system both fun and mind-provoking. I had naively assumed that this would allow me to concentrate on the basics of gesture unencumbered by structure, and that no meaning equals no rules. But we humans are always searching for meaning and order, and as I worked I found myself rejecting characters—were they letters, syllables, or perhaps ideographs?—as too narrow or too complicated or too something that didn't fit in with what I realized was now a system. However, asemic writing did allow me the freedom to design layouts with no pesky copyfitting constraints. As shown here, fully justified paragraphs were a breeze when I was making it up as I went along, and I could choose the shape of a character to work with those next to it and also with those on the line above.

As these “rules” became codified, the balance between structure and gestures became clear. Though it carried no specific semantic content, the finished piece did communicate contextual meaning, because meaning is also communicated by brush stroke, layout, color, line quality, and so on.

A week later, I began a month-long trip to Japan, and soon realized that this study of asemic lettering had prepared me to look at characters I couldn't read in a new way. I had been learning Japanese for several months. It is quite difficult. There are three writing systems: two syllabaries plus kanji, which is ideographic. While I could sound out the characters of the two syllabic systems, most of the kanji were just so much asemic writing to me. And yet I kept looking for meaning, forced/freed to see everything but the literal meaning. I hazarded guesses about meanings based on all the non-literal meaning I could cull. It was interesting to

compare the way Japanese round-brush lettering and Roman flat-brush lettering are rendered in stone. Each approach reflects the character of its brush.

Kanji are more complicated figures than the syllabic characters, and they represent different sounds depending on the context. But these are not the only reasons I found kanji so much more difficult to learn. I realized, finally, that I was trying to memorize the construction of the characters as I would learn an alphabet, by breaking down the figure into strokes in a left-brained way. But these are images or representations of images, not representations of sound, and that is how they should be learned. The character for “station” looks like a building beside a train on a track. The character for “forest” looks like ...

trees. The experience was somewhat akin to doing exercises in Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain. Because of the ideographic nature of kanji and my tenuous grasp of the language, throughout the trip I teetered between understanding the marks as lettering and understanding them as images. This has given me plenty to digest and bring back to my own Western lettering practice.

On a walking tour of Tokyo, our guide explained that Japanese is a high-context language: what is explicitly said is only a small part of the complete meaning. This is possible because of Japan's relatively homogenous culture. English in the US is relatively low-context, and must be, in our melting-pot culture. I thought about this in connection with the book I've been reading, *Talking to Strangers: What We Should Know about the People We Don't Know*, by Malcolm Gladwell. I'm not sure that this book is as relevant in Japan, where context is more consistently understood. But I've also been thinking about how that affects our approach to lettering and design.

One day in Kyoto I had a kana lesson with a lovely, patient teacher. She arranged my work space for me: ink stone and stick, brush, brush rest, paper. I practiced the word *arigato* (thank you) in kana, and she guided me to keep my left hand at the bottom left corner of the paper for balance, to finish the brush strokes in a gentle manner, and to resist my tendency to choke up on the brush. I found it interesting that the layout she prescribed split the word into two vertical columns. Japanese has been written left-to-right, top-to-bottom, and even boustrophedon (back and forth, as the ox plows), and this provides more design choices than we Westerners have. The layout incorporated a red Kyoto seal. After much practice, I tried to render my very best lettering and layout on a prepared washi board. We placed and stamped the Kyoto seal, and she inserted the finished piece in an elegant tri-fold presentation folder inspired by traditional scrolls—a great memento from the lesson.

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Learning Opportunities – Summer, 2020

This summer no conference is planned in North America, but here are a number of wonderful opportunities.

- Write Right Now! is an international calligraphy conference being held in Slovenia the week of June 27 through July 1, 2020. For more information, see the website: kaligrafija.org
- Lettering Arts Guild of Red Deer hosts a conference every ten years, and ABC 2020 will be the fourth one. Planned for August 9-14, the faculty will include Gemma Black, Renee Alexander, Amity Parks, Marina Soria, Julie Wildman, Cheryl Moote, Mossimo Polello, Laurie Doctor, Holly Monroe, Cora Pearl, and Carol DuBosch. For more information, see the website: lagrd.ca/abc-2020
- Ghost Ranch is offering several book arts classes during the week of June 7-13, 2020. Annie Cicale will teach "The Painted Word"; Julie Wildman will teach "Alphabets Inspired by Nature"; Carole Pallesen will teach "Monoline Alphabets & Creating Small Treasures"; and Elizabeth McKee will teach "Paste Papers That Sing". For more information, see the website: ghostranch.org/education

THE MARBLING TRAY by Iris Nevins

Practice Makes Perfect – Well, *Almost* Perfect in Marbling!

"Practice Makes Perfect" is an old saying we hear often. Why? Because it's pretty true. The only problem is that we never quite seem to get there—to "perfect" that is! I don't know any marbler who considers themselves perfect, even after decades of marbling.

Marbling has a way of humbling you, and it happens just when you think you are pretty darned near perfect. Then the bad marbling day comes. What was it? The temperature, the humidity, the barometric pressure, the water chemistry that day, the paper, the ox-gall, the paints not behaving? It could be one or several of these things in combination. Someone once suggested even your *mood* can make things go off! Not sure about that, but I would say that if you start in a bad mood and have a good marbling day, it can really make you feel quite wonderful!

Seriously though, I have heard it said every now and then, to get really good at something, you need about 10,000 hours of practicing your art, your music, or a sport or anything else that requires skill. I am not so sure this is true for everyone. I also teach Celtic Harp, and will say that some can get very good in a year, and others, it may take five to ten years and remain not so good. So I don't believe time put in is necessarily the only factor.

Marbling, like any other art, does require practice. I recall being told to not even try to do Spanish Marbling. No one does it anymore. It's too hard, etc. This was in 1978, the year I started. More out of curiosity than anything else, I decided to try and see, why is it that it is too hard now, in the 20th century, when human beings, just like us, were able to do it a century before, without running water, electricity, and powdered seaweed. It sounded absurd. Then I tried it...and yes, it was hard! It became a vendetta almost. I was going to conquer it, I was not going to allow it to humiliate me!

So I practiced, and practiced, and practiced. It got

better and better, but with some backsliding fairly often. I learned something new each time, even on the failure days. Then about a year later I got a FULL good sheet... then about three bad ones for each good one, then there were fewer and fewer bad sheets. Did I ever get PERFECT though? No. I see every little flaw and think it could have been better. People say, "Don't beat yourself up". I answer, but that is part of the process... how do you improve, if you decide one day that you are finally perfect? Then you don't try to improve any more. Artists and musicians who beat themselves up are the ones who become the best often. They are always setting yet a higher standard. Same for marbling!

Honestly, practice can be a fun game. Approach it, rather than with frustration, with curiosity, pick things apart, see where you went wrong, try again and again. Sometimes you need to depart from proper "tradition" and rules, and find your own ways. Just because someone says you have to do something a certain way, don't limit yourself. I was self taught, it was early in the marbling revival, so I couldn't find a teacher. I just did what worked for me, by experimenting, and was told at one point I was not allowed to marble "that way". I forget what I did wrong, but whatever it was it worked and still does.

Practice makes improvement, if not perfection, and if you look hard enough, even a sheet of paper you thought was perfect, look at it again the next day, look closely, there will be a little something not so perfect. It can still be great though! I had a helper once... I used to throw so many papers in the seconds pile, due to some nearly microscopic speck or something. She would remove them when I was not there, and put them in the good papers drawers, and dare me to find the mistake again. Most of the time I couldn't. So perfectionism, well, you don't have to get too crazy with it either.

Practice your marbling, enjoy each step, expect some backsliding now and then, but get back to it. Time, and just doing something over and over, that will be the key!



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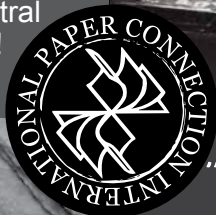
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Six bindings, some with exposed sewing, most nonadhesive. Appropriate for all levels.

AUG 6-7 Endbands Four variations

AUG 10-14 Biblio Tech A set of 10 structure models focusing on methods of board attachment

AUG 17-21 Leather Binding II

A full leather binding on raised cords

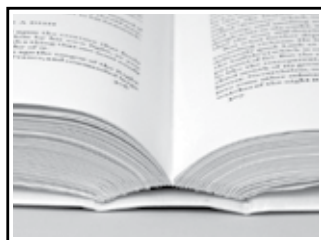
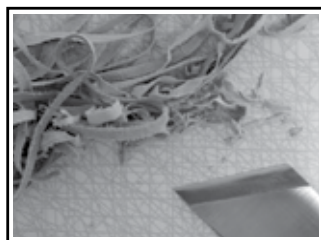
SEPT 15-18 Medieval Binding A full alum-tawed binding with brass clasps and wood boards

SEPT 22-25 Eighteenth Century Trade Binding A full leather binding with sprinkled edges, marbled endsheets, and tooling

SEPT 29-30 Basic Leather Working for Bookbinding Paring, sharpening, covering including caps and corners

OCT 1-2 Split Board Binding A sturdy half leather nineteenth century binding

FULL DESCRIPTIONS & REGISTRATION INFORMATION AT
WWW.KARENHANMER.COM



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NEWSLETTER & ADVERTISING INFORMATION

DEADLINE DATES FOR UPCOMING NEWSLETTER PUBLICATIONS

January 3 for February 2020 issue No. 248

March 6 for April 2020 issue No. 249

May 1 for June 2020 issue No. 250

July 6 (due to holiday) for August 2020 issue No. 251

September 4 for October 2020 issue No. 252

November 3 for December 2020 issue No. 253

ADVERTISEMENT INFORMATION

AD SIZE

COST PER ISSUE

1/8 Page (3½" w x 2¼" h)	\$40
1/4 Page (3½" w x 4½" h)	\$75
1/2 Page/vert (3½" w x 9½" h)	\$140
1/2 Page/horiz (7½" w x 4½" h)	\$140
Full Page (7½" w x 9½" h)	\$265

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Newsletter

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