

Always, K.

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## The Wide Awake Garage and Garage Annex School

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THE NAME THAT I'VE CHOSEN for my studio, the Wide Awake Garage, reveals quite a bit about me and the work that I do. As a young boy, the garage was my playhouse. There I found the tools and material to create the stuff of my fantasies: rocket ships and hovercraft from recycled two-by-fours, interplanetary fuel and fireworks from household chemicals. The sense of being *wide awake* also came to me when I was young. A casual glance at the sunlight reflecting off the garage's powdery blue paint one summery Sunday afternoon struck deep to my heart the feeling of being truly alive and connected within the world.

These seminal experiences came together when my mother gave me two photographs of my grandfather taken in the early 1920s. On the back Mom had written in a young girl's hand the name of Grandpa's business: the Wide-A-Wake Garage. I loved my grandfather, and decided to name the studio in his honor. This I did out of respect, admiration, and gratitude to one who had gone before me. Historical connection has always been important to me—it tempts and teases our minds with a kind of speculation that our bodies know not to doubt.

The Garage Annex School was founded in 1991 as a direct result of these same principles operating in my studio. The Wide Awake Garage and Garage Annex School are places where playfulness, invention, creativity, exploration, awareness, and connection are nurtured. Classes combine conceptualization with hand skills. Development of problem-solving skills is often the focus. Class descriptions clearly indicate whether students should expect to produce models or finished books during the course of a workshop. For example, **next summer I will offer a five-day leather intensive** in which each participant will finish a full-leather binding with hand sewn endbands and leather joints. In a folder technique workshop that I taught recently, however, we made models with exposed parts showing the progression of layering used to build up a cloth covered folder with magnetic closure.

Our faculty presents workshops covering a wide range of styles and structures. **I teach traditional techniques such as gold tooling and leather onlay as well as offering workshops on innovative structures of my own invention, e.g. wire-edge hinging and metal binding.** I've been asked to teach an ongoing class on chemistry for book artists, which will of course be informed by the

sensibility of my newly-founded branch of chemistry: Poetic Chemistry. Our instructors, who are themselves expert at their chosen specialties, include **Peter Geraty, Suzanne Moore, Linda Lembke, and Mark Tomlinson.** Recently Peter taught classes in restoration as well as vellum binding. Suzanne taught a workshop on layering color. This fall she is teaching an in-depth exploration of book design. Next summer Suzanne will offer a new workshop called, ***Beyond the Broad Edge*** in which students will delve into the rich world of developing personal lettering styles for the visual arts. They will practice mark-making using a variety of tools and techniques. Linda designs her classes so that students leave with a beautifully packaged set of models of cut, folded and, sometimes, sewn structures. Her workshops are particularly popular with school teachers. Mark taught students how to dye vellum, and use that material for limp binding. Next spring he will offer a new workshop called, ***World Beat Bookbinding***. Peter will teach **edge gilding** next season. Other plans include workshops exploring (1) **metal binding**, (2) **coloring metal with various methods such as patination**, and (3) **thin metal over boards.**

The 1000-square-foot production studio for the Wide Awake Garage serves as classroom for the Garage Annex School. This facility includes a central bench for instructor demonstration, ample bench space for each participant (usually limited to twelve students), well-maintained equipment, a small kitchen area, a beautiful view of the Holyoke Range, and air conditioning when needed.

The Garage Annex School provides a wide range of educational opportunities in the book arts. Internships, weekend workshops, and longer intensives are offered year round. In addition, artists and publishers come to the Garage for a negotiated period of time in order to gain the support of our personnel and access to our facilities. A popular arrangement is to have two or three hours of consultation and instruction in the morning, then use the Garage facilities for the remainder of the day to work on production of your project. You may wish to do the entire production yourself, or if your time is limited you may want the help of our crew.

Individuals or groups are invited to request instruction on general techniques, or techniques specific to the requirements of proposed projects.