

BOOKarts

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Book Arts

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is included in CBBAG
membership.

ON THE COVER

Detail from Michael Wilcox's
binding of *The Holy Bible II*.
(See page 2.)

Facing page:

Michael Wilcox with Christine
McNair. PHOTO | ROB MCLENNAN

*En el mundo de la utopía y la
alucinación* by Ronald Guilén
Campos for the exhibit *Valises
Numériques/Valijas Digitales*.
(See page 21.)

Detail of Judy Hurst's *Redwing
Rising*. (See page 28.)

Background: Kyoseishi Natural
from the Japanese Paper Place
is a relatively thick pure kozo
sheet, coated with konnyaku
starch to give it strength,
and repeatedly crumpled to
give it softness and drape. It
can be used for book covers
after backing with a thin kozo
sheet to preserve the distinctive
texture when pasted out.

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JUDY HURST trained at Saint Martin's School of Art, London, and Manchester University, and has exhibited since the 1960s. In 2002 she left a fulfilling teaching career to concentrate on her own work. She takes inspiration from the natural world which she experiences year round as a long distance runner.

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MAUREEN PIGGINS is a Toronto artist and graphic designer with work in international collections including MOMA, New York and the Bruce Peel Special Collections Library. Her books range from accordions to more experimental pieces, while her poems have been published by gallery and online publications. She holds a BFA from OCAD University.

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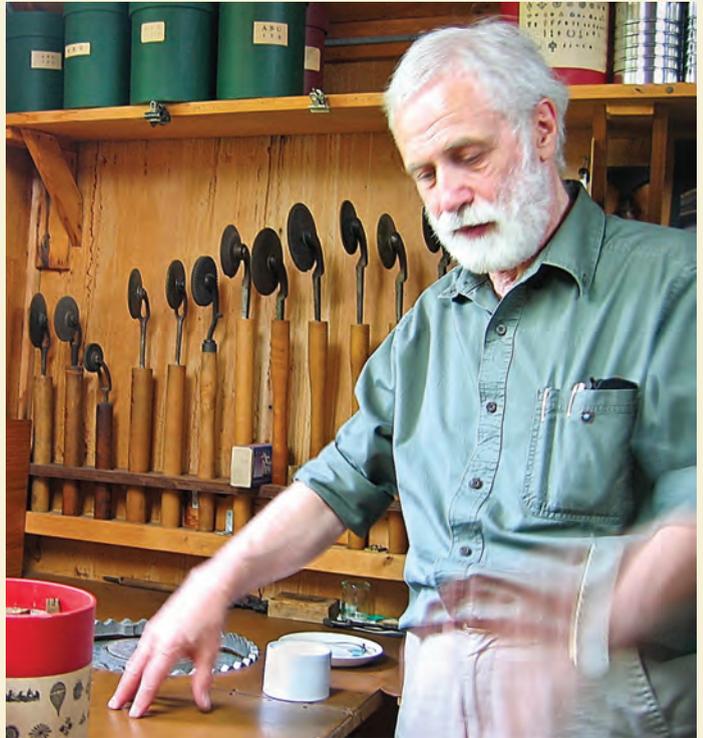
EDUCATION

35 Single Quire Binding
by Susan Mills

Michael Wilcox

A Humanistic Approach to Design Binding

by Christine McNair



The drive from Ottawa was long. My partner and I ravelled and then unravelled down pretty highway 7, looping outwards to the Kawarthas, a picturesque swath of lakes northwest of Peterborough.

We were welcomed and given a tour of the studio. My partner was interested in all the bookbinding equipment and Michael patiently explained each piece, answered questions, gestured, and demonstrated. He noted that every piece of equipment

in his studio had a story behind it, including the shed.

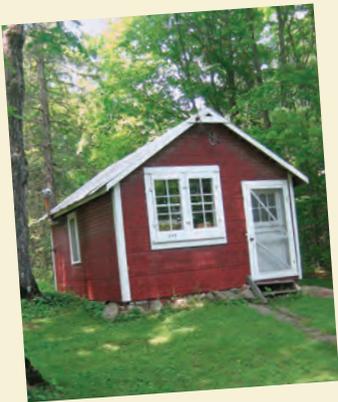
“I found an old shed; it was empty. We arrived at this house in the fall of '69, and I worked on the place all winter long. There was no heating. By the spring I had rough benches, and had managed to pick up more equipment. I bought a UK lying press and was

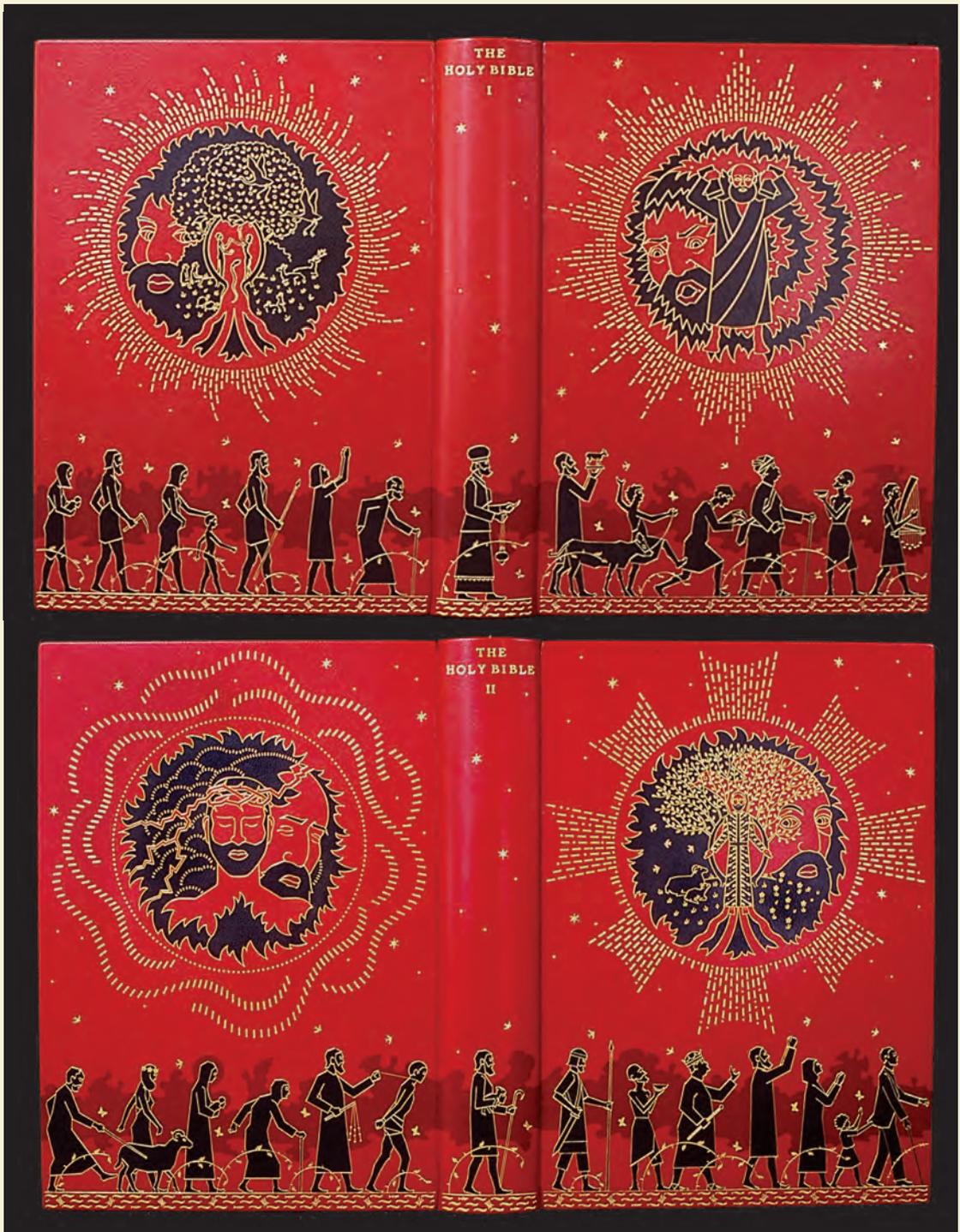
concerned about the dryness here, but was told it would be okay. Of course, it fell apart with the first winter. So I bought an American one.”

Michael Wilcox is one of Canada's most revered bookbinders, producing design bindings of an international calibre. He was honoured with the Saidye Bronfman Award in 1985, and in 2008 he was presented with the Guild of Bookworkers Lifetime Achievement Award. His work is keenly sought after by collectors worldwide.

His meticulous attention to detail is evident in each piece. More importantly, his work reflects an intellectual curiosity about the whole book, the book as an idea. He says it is important for him to “get it right” when he designs the binding, and that the design chosen reflect the character and purpose of the text. His design bindings can be considered a form of ekphrasis (responding to art with art), subtly digging into the core of the experience described and reacting to that emotional core/idea within his work.

Wendy Withrow noted in a recent *Guild of Bookworkers Newsletter* that “Wilcox's work has a





The Holy Bible (two volumes). Published and printed by The Arion Press, San Francisco, 2000. Limited to 400 numbered copies. This copy is one of 150 embellished by Thomas Ingmire. Bindings: 46.8 cm x 32.8 cm. Full red goatskin, with traditional and back-pared onlays. Tooled in gold. Bound in 2005.



Alice in Wonderland. Lewis Carroll. Engravings by Alicia Scavino. Published by Ediciones Dos Amigos, Buenos Aires, 2006. Edition limited to 25 numbered copies. Binding: 33.5 x 26.5 cm. Scarf-joined chocolate, blue, and black goatskin. Back-pared and traditional onlays in coloured leathers. Gold tooling. Eight finishing tools cut specially for this binding. Bound in 2008. The dedication in this book reads: "In memory of Alicia Scavino. The premature death of the artist has deprived us of her wonderful engravings in the last two chapters." The binding design was intended to be a memorial tribute to Scavino.

freshness to it that is a result, in part, of creating tools specifically for a binding rather than designing a binding with the tools available." At the 2008 GBW Standards Seminar in Toronto, Michael demonstrated his method of making custom finishing tools. I attended his sessions and remember being struck by the humanistic line work. On my visit, he often mentioned an interest in drawing, and I think it is reflected in his tool design. Each individual tool is handcrafted, but the lines themselves carry a certain elegance, revealing a distinctly personal artistic vision.

For the past thirty years, he has worked almost entirely on commissions for design bindings. It is only within the last twelve months that he has switched his focus to doing speculative work. Rather than taking on commissions, he is binding books for later sale. In his studio there was a Folio Society edition of *William Shakespeare: Sonnets and Poems*, in the early stages of binding. "This is a letterpress copy without

illustrations, printed in a limited edition. It came with a copy of Colin Burrow's annotated edition, published by Oxford. I read through all the poems and I read all the little notes. I made some of my own notes, and then I read another Folio book, *Shakespeare's Life and World*, as well as other things. Other people wouldn't do it, but I do it in desperation because I'm afraid I'm going to miss something."

I asked about his process when he is working through a design. "I think about these things, and you begin to get feelings about what for you is important, what impresses you. I start doodling and something emerges, but it's usually pretty rough at that stage. And then you get a feeling about something or other, you add more to it, you go back and read some more, and confirm that you've got the right ideas. You just keep working away at it."

The speculative work has allowed Michael to develop his design over a longer time frame without

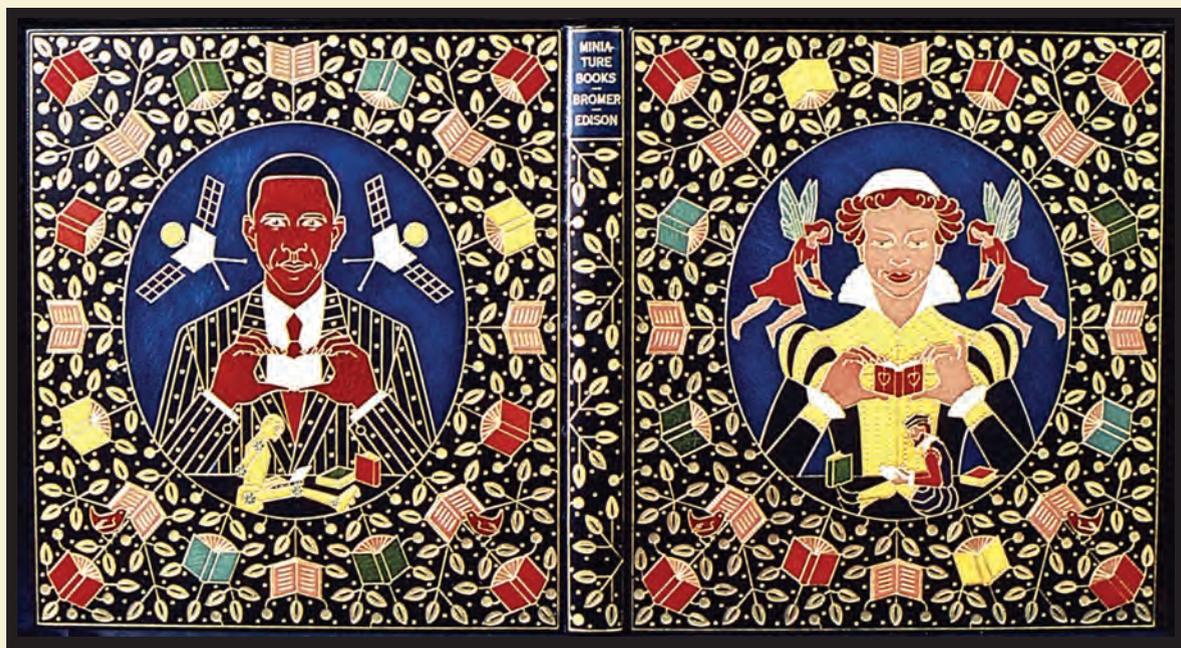


the pressure of a specific deadline. “So, the thing is becoming more and more elaborate, but I don’t care. I don’t have someone waiting and I don’t have to worry about the money quite as much. I do worry about the money, but I can put it off for a year, whereas in other times I could not. The moment everything was dry, I’d take my photos, type my notes and send it off immediately; that was always my way.”

When he first got interested in bookbinding he knew little about the trade. “I knew nothing about bookbinding but there were people in my family who

had connections to printing, and they suggested it. My dad was a building inspector and my brother was a plumber. The natural way would’ve been to go into the building trades. Although I was never a good reader, I did read a lot. I always liked books, even the feel of books. That’s why I accepted their suggestion.”

However, his first job at Everard’s in the city of Bristol, Southwestern England, turned out to be working with books meant to be written in, not read. The pre-Raphaelite façade of the Edward Everard Print



Miniature Books. Anne C. Bromer and Julian I. Edison. Published by Abrams, New York, in association with The Grolier Club, New York, 2007. Binding: 27.2 x 22.6 cm. Full black goatskin, with coloured leather onlays, and gold tooling. Three finishing tools were made specially for this binding. Bound in 2009.

Works can still be seen in Bristol, boldly announcing the company's early optimism and idealism. The influence of the Arts & Crafts Movement is clearly visible in the lettering and the stylized figures of William Morris and Gutenberg. Michael was impressed by the beauty of the façade, but by the time he started his apprenticeship that "...ideology had faded. Once inside they'd forgotten all that. They were trying to survive and make money, to move with the times."

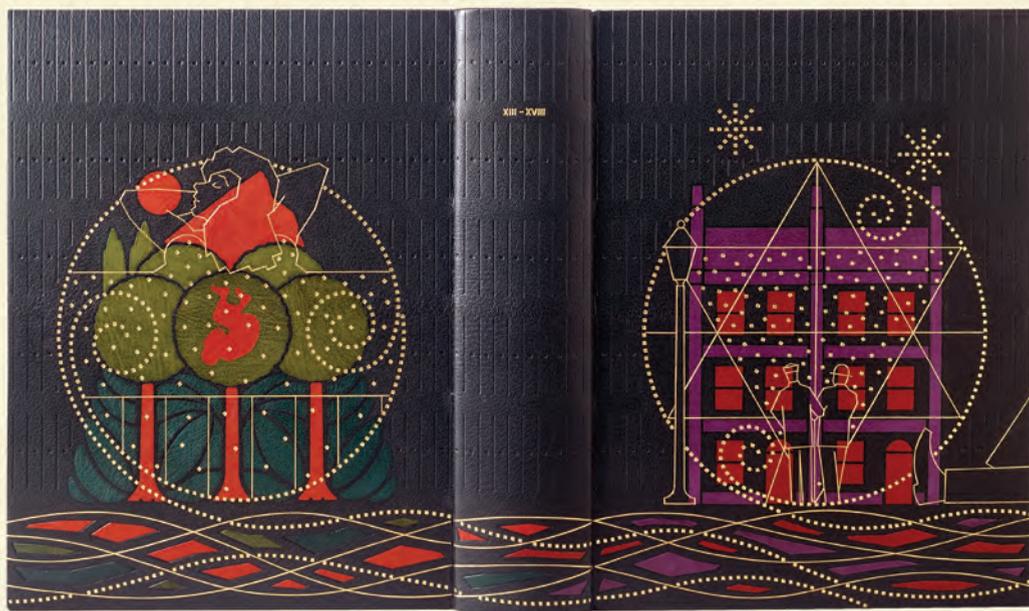
On his first day, he went up to the clocking-in machine, where he was told by a compositor, "Book-binding? Ha, that's a thing of the past." Michael notes that while bookbinding may not be prosperous, it has the advantage of being able to continue and survive, over some of the other traditional book arts. The printing works itself closed in 1967 and the building was demolished in 1970, except for the façade.

Michael was set to work on the ruling machine and other machines, but was unhappy with the mechanized work he had been given. In 1960 he transferred to George Bayntun's in Bath. Upon his arrival, the overseer scratched his head and placed him with the

forwarders instead of the finishers. Although he was disappointed at the time, he's now glad that he was placed with the forwarders. The finishers were glamourised but their specialization could be limiting.

Michael Wilcox emigrated to Canada in 1962, and he took on a mixture of temporary bookbinding jobs, including six months of working with Robert Muma. He also worked as a technician in the Department of Mammology at the Royal Ontario Museum before moving to the Kawarthas in 1967 to become a storekeeper. It wasn't until 1970 that he established his one-man workshop to bind books for antiquarian book dealers, collectors, and libraries. A five-year project with the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library followed, during which he restored a collection of science and medical books.

Upon the completion of this contract, he began working exclusively on commissions for design bindings. "I really got into design binding because people gave me work. The money wasn't any better, but at least there was one big problem solved: trying to do all the period bindings without the tools. I had been



Ulysses. James Joyce. Etchings by Robert Motherwell. Published and printed by The Arion Press, San Francisco, 1988. Limited to 175 copies. Bindings: 33.4 x 24.9 cm. Full dark green goatskin, with back-paired and traditional coloured leather onlays. Gold and blind tooling. Bound in 1991. This book was published as one volume but bound, at the commissioner's request, in two volumes.

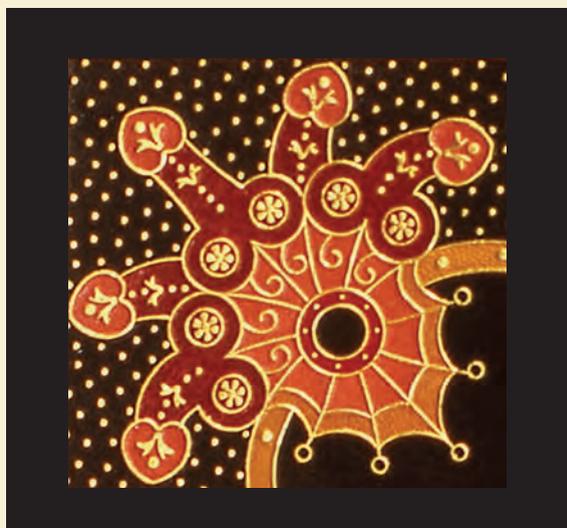
trying to make them by hand. I could forget that by going into design binding because I didn't need sixteenth century, seventeenth century, and eighteenth century tools. I could just make tools for the design bindings."

We discussed the lack of design binders in Canada and the problems of a limited market. "It seems to me that most of those who've taken up bookbinding in Canada have mainly been concerned with restoration or conservation or satisfying the needs of dealers and



Bumbooosiana. Written and illustrated by Donald Friend. Published by Richard Griffin for Gryphon Books, Australia, September 1979. Facsimile of original manuscript. Edition limited to 150 signed copies. Binding: 56.7 x 40.8 cm. Full black goatskin, with coloured leather onlays, and gold tooling. Covering done in three pieces. Five finishing tools were cut specially for this binding. Bound in 2007.

Wilcox described his design to the commissioner of the binding: *Although this binding represents a great deal of work, there isn't much – certainly nothing profound – to say about the designs I made for it. Many of Donald Friend's illustrations for his Bumbooosiana are very cleverly done in the styles of a variety of famous artists or pictorial idioms from the past. His use of this interesting method suggested to me that I should attempt a similar retrospective approach, in the hope that I might also achieve something like the carnival look of Friend's work. The manner of arranging the decoration on the spine and around the borders of the covers is derived from styles used by the eighteenth-century Derôme family of well-known French binders, particularly Jacques-Antoine and Nicolas-Denis. Instead of their usual patterns strictly suggestive of vegetation, I have made a good number of my shapes in a way that I think better relate to those objects which feature so prominently within the book. The two bawdy entertainers at the centres of the covers are a considerable departure from the flowers and parrots that*



Twenty three simple tools were needed to produce all the tooling shown in the above detail. Three of the tools were made specially for *Bumbooosiana*, and two of the tools had been made previously for other bindings.

the Derôme binders generally preferred in these locations, but I have tried to make the dancers fit into the period by ornamenting them with some of the same finishing tools and patterns that were used on the borders.

collectors. There hasn't been that strong an interest in fine bindings or design bindings. I've always found that if you're talking about a design binding with Canadians, they're very hesitant, and wondering about the cost. In the States, it's a completely different attitude; they're very aware of their huge market."

Michael doesn't feel that his work is influenced very much by other contemporary design binders. "I found that I was more influenced by the traditional fine bindings of the nineteenth and early twentieth century. I was impressed by the skill and techniques. I liked gold leaf; whereas in the eighties a lot of the design binders were turning away from it. I remember around 1985 thinking to myself: dare I push forward with this? Should I follow Edgar Mansfield or Philip Smith? I admired those people but I thought: I don't care. I'll do it my own sort of new traditional way. And it turned out. I cannot describe myself as being successful but at least I've survived."

"I really do heavily depend on the text. Perhaps I've been occasionally guilty of being a little too independent in my thinking with the design, I've made mistakes perhaps, but generally I clutch at every bit of information I can get. If I'm binding something like James Joyce's *Ulysses*, which I've bound only twice – once for a rare edition, which was absolutely plain, and a very elaborate two-volume one – I build my design based upon what they say, what they're thinking. I don't give just a pictorial effect of what they have said, but rather what they have said to stimulate me and influence my own thinking."

When asked how many speculative bindings he ideally would like to make per year, he laughs and says, "Twenty or thirty. Realistically, one or two. I need a certain amount of money to keep going here. Because I don't have any money from a business or a pension, I don't have money saved up." He's hoping as well to privately publish a book on techniques learned early in his apprenticeship. "There are so few that remember now," he explains.

His beautiful retrospective in 1998 at the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library in Toronto pulled together bindings from different periods and included his own description of each binding's creation. I asked if it was strange to see his work all in one place, to see the development from different periods of his career. "As a matter of fact, it was better than I thought. I was afraid that I would look at them and . . . when you finish a binding, all you can see is the one thing that you did wrong. But when I got these books back I'd forgotten those things, and I was less critical. They were not as bad as I thought they would be."

Michael Wilcox's determination to get it right and to visually interpret the meaning of the text gives his bindings a remarkably humanistic resonance. Traditional techniques are meshed with a fine attention to meaning. His work shines beyond its technical brilliance because it incorporates such a sympathetic understanding of the book as a whole. Compassionate and reflective, his bindings demonstrate his balanced attention to meaning, design, and craft. •



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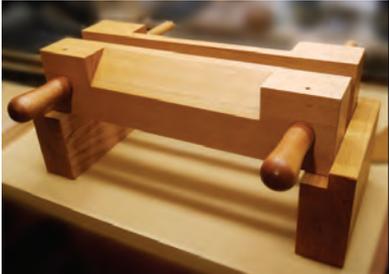


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Tomorrow's Past

In 1877 William Morris, Philip Webb, J. J. Stevenson (and others) in England founded the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, a movement to protect historic buildings from what they saw as inappropriate and insensitive renovation. Morris wrote a manifesto for SPAB¹ in which he said that his own era had failed to develop distinctive aesthetic values of its own and had become obsessed with what he called “a strange and most fatal idea,” the “Restoration” of ancient buildings: returning buildings to what was perceived to be their original state either by unnecessary replacement of worn features or by conjectural reconstruction of missing parts.² He continued:

“In early times this kind of forgery was impossible, because knowledge failed the builders, or perhaps because instinct held them back. If repairs were needed... that change was of necessity wrought in the unmistakable fashion of the time; a church of the eleventh century might be added to or altered in the twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth, sixteenth, or even the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries; but every change, whatever history it destroyed, left history in the gap, and was alive with the spirit of the deeds done midst its fashioning. The result of all this was often a building in which the many changes... were, by their very contrast, interesting and instructive and could by no possibility mislead. But those who make the changes wrought in our day under the name of Restoration, whilst professing to bring back a building to the best of its history... destroy something and supply the gap by imagining what the earlier builders should or might have done... a feeble and lifeless forgery is the final result of all the wasted labour.”

Morris's manifesto is as applicable to books as it is to buildings. His principles – to repair not restore, to complement not parody, to “put Protection in the place of Restoration” – now seem obvious and lie at the heart of all modern conservation work.³

Morris also insisted that where new work is necessary it should be frank: it should be obviously new (“wrought in the unmistakable fashion of the time”) and honest (“show no pretence of other art”). Being fearlessly frank himself, he said that the worst Restoration is “where the partly-perished work of the ancient craftsman has been made neat and smooth by the tricky hand of some unoriginal and thoughtless hack of today.” Where necessary, he said, it is better “raise another building rather than alter or enlarge the old one.”

This last stricture is, of course, not as easy or straightforward as it sounds, particularly as far as books are concerned: a new building can rise alongside the old building (or its ruins, or its foundations) leaving the old intact. When the condition of a book is untenable to the extent that it needs a new building (binding), that new building perforce replaces the old one. The site is effectively cleared by careful removal of the old stones (the remnants of the old binding, sewing thread, etc.) leaving the text block as the foundation block on which the new binding is built – the new building rises on the foundation of the old.

Even though the old stones may have been carefully removed, retained and preserved,





by Jen Lindsay

nevertheless what remained of the life of the original has been destroyed. This is of course the classic ethical dilemma encountered by all those who work with the conservation of art and artefacts.

On the rare occasion that rebuilding a book is necessary, there seem to be three main, or familiar, responses – one is to make a faithful facsimile of what is perceived (presumed) was the book’s original, historical state or, as is often demanded by the antiquarian book trade, that books are bound “to style”, that is, in the perceived bookbinding “style” of a particular period. This is easily dismissed as indefensible: making historical facsimiles can be useful as part of an evolving learning process, but not for much else.

Another response is adherence to narrow book conservation protocols, often practised in large institutions, to produce a purely protective, aesthetically neutral cover for the book, rendering its age and character indiscernible and indeterminable. This is admirably well-intentioned and certainly preferable to some other treatments, but it is nevertheless dishonest: it is an unnatural interruption of history.⁴ In Morris’s words, “... our descendants will find them useless for study and chilling to enthusiasm.” The institutions of the world will be filled with box upon box of these bland books. Future book historians will open them and think: “Did these people have no soul? What were they frightened of?”

The third response is the stylized, imitation bindings promulgated mainly by the antiquarian book trade. These are the familiar books with five raised bands on the spine, smooth gilt edges, gold-tooled spine and, usually, quarter-bound in leather with marbled sides and endpapers. These bindings are not actually imitations of anything, but are a strange hybrid of some sort of vaguely perceived historical “style” established by the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century (British) bookbinding trade. Just as those bindings were a pastiche, modern bookbinders making these types of books now are making compound pastiche. Even when superbly executed this kind of work is technically and aesthetically unjustifiable: modern knowledge and understanding has progressed beyond all that.

In reaction to this unthinking imitation of period style,⁵ and to the poor quality of some of the work, a small group of like-minded bookbinders was brought together in 2003, organized by Tracey Rowledge, Kathy Abbott and myself, to exhibit modern conservation bindings on antiquarian books.⁶ Exhibiting under the name *Tomorrow’s Past*,⁷ we proposed an alternative response: we should use modern technical, structural and aesthetic language in the treatment of antiquarian books.

Just as the seventeenth-century bookbinder didn’t hesitate to bind his books in the decorative manner of his own era, why shouldn’t we do the same? It seemed to us perfectly possible to have a modern, decorative, even beautiful, conservation binding: they don’t have to be neutral and they don’t have to imitate. They can reflect modern aesthetic values as well as being a thoughtful and skilful response to the specific needs of a book. We

are more concerned with seeking to do the best for the book, speaking to the truth of its condition, than adhering to the habits of artifice and convention.

The number of bookbinders⁸ involved with *Tomorrow's Past* has remained fairly constant – between ten and twelve binders from UK, Italy, France, the Netherlands and others as invited.⁹ All of them work professionally as bookbinders, some as teachers, and most handle work of many different types and periods in their everyday work. This fusion of experience and historical awareness with modern conservation materials, techniques and skill has produced work which is radical in its simplicity, ingenuity and truth to materials.

We are not claiming to be unique in this approach. There is much thoughtful conservation work quietly going on, but there is still a huge rump of standard practice where this does not happen. Many bookbinders feel constrained to “give the customer what they want”, or simply do not have the experience to know that anything else is possible, and by complying, they perpetuate the problem. *Tomorrow's Past* simply wants to demonstrate that other things are possible and, indeed, necessary. •

A selection of *Tomorrow's Past* work can be found at Carmencho Arregui's website www.outofbinding.com where you will also find very good instructions and diagrams on how to make various simple books.

- 1 The full text of Morris's manifesto is available online from the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings, <http://www.spab.org.uk/what-is-spab-/the-manifesto>.
- 2 “Restoration: the action or process of restoring something to an unimpaired or perfect condition; the process of carrying out alterations and repairs with the idea of restoring a building, work of art, etc., to something like its original form.” (*Oxford English Dictionary*)
- 3 Despite Morris's prescience (and some early groundwork by Douglas Cockerell, Sandy Cockerell and Roger Powell), it was not until the catastrophic flood in Florence, Italy in November 1966 that bookbinders were forced to devise protocols for dealing with damaged books and to adopt principles which developed into an ethos: what is generally now called “book conservation”.
- 4 My thanks to my friend and colleague Carmencho Arregui for making this percipient observation – I had not thought of things in those terms until she thought it.
- 5 The original seed was planted by an article written by the Hungarian/French bookbinder, Sün Evrard: “Les pages bien gardées: Some Words About an Exhibition That Did Not Take Place” in *New Bookbinder* 19 (1999): 39–47, (ISSN 0261-5363). In this article Sün talked about an exhibition she had tried to organize in Paris to bring together the skills of conservation binding and modern fine bookbinding in the rebinding of antiquarian books: “... for rebinding old books we do not need to copy or imitate. Contemporary bookbinding has enough technical and aesthetic resources of its own.”
- 6 For *Tomorrow's Past* purposes we use the term to mean books printed before 1800, which date represents the end of the hand-press (letterpress) period and the beginning of the machine-press period and, a little later, the gradual predominance of machine-made paper. Papermaking machines were introduced in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, and gradually the production of machine-made paper exceeded that of handmade paper.
- 7 “Surely it is better to create tomorrow's past than to repeat today's.” Edgar Mansfield (1907–1996), bookbinder and sculptor.
From 2003 to 2008 *Tomorrow's Past* exhibited at the Antiquarian Booksellers Association annual international book fair at Olympia in London. More recently, exhibitions have been presented at a similar international antiquarian book fair (Salon International du Livre Ancien) at the Grand Palais in Paris (2007 to 2011), at the *Society of Bookbinders* biennial conference at Warwick University (UK) (2009 and 2011), and West Dean College (UK). New venues and opportunities are always being sought.
Substantial articles about *Tomorrow's Past* include: *The Private Library*, 6th ser., 2, no. 1 (Spring 2009), (ISSN 0032-8898): the whole issue is given to *Tomorrow's Past*, with essays illustrated with b/w and colour reproductions of bindings. Copies are available from *Tomorrow's Past*, 12 Chippenham Mews, London W9 2AW for \$10.00 per copy, inclusive of post and packaging. *The Bonefolder: an e-journal for the bookbinder and book artist*, 7 (2011), <http://www.philobiblon.com/bonefolder>, features an illustrated essay by Charles Gledhill describing the principles and the work of *Tomorrow's Past*. *The Scribe: Journal of the Society of Scribes and Illuminators*, no. 90 (Summer 2011), (ISSN 0265-6221) features an illustrated essay by Jen Lindsay.
- 8 I am using the word “bookbinder” as a generic term, as it seems to me that we are all involved in the same enterprise, whatever we call ourselves. In order to describe oneself as a “book conservator” one has first to be a bookbinder, i.e., someone with good knowledge of how books are made and with the technical skill to apply that knowledge.
- 9 The most regular core of binders has been: Kathy Abbott (UK); Carmencho Arregui (Italy); Emma Coll (France); Cristina Balbiano d'Aramengo (Italy); Sün Evrard (France); Charles Gledhill (UK); Peter Jones (UK); Katinka Keus (Netherlands); Jen Lindsay (UK); Tracey Rowledge (UK); Eva Szily (France).



Virgil (translated by Dryden). London. 1808. 14.7 cm x 8.4 cm x 4.2 cm. Binder: Peter Jones.

by Peter Jones

The physical appearance of this book had an immediate initial appeal: a small, brick-shaped object with a flattened deckle forming wavy lines along the edges of the text block, accentuated and softened by an accumulation of dirt which indicated much use rather than neglect. The text block was otherwise in reasonably good shape with sound original sewing; the boards had served their purpose in protecting the text block but

were now tired, and the thin cloth spine was disintegrating. A rebind was in order.

The initial concept was to mimic the appearance of the deckle and to continue it on to the spine so that all edges became indistinguishable from each other — a visual tease. However, practical consideration as to how this might be achieved, and in particular how it would affect the opening of the book meant that it was soon, regretfully, abandoned.

- 1 Crushed deckle edges.
- 2 Original binding.
- 3 Book taken down for washing and minor repairs
- 4 Re-sewing on Pliester tapes.
- 5 Preparing to attach spine leather to outer folds of paper covers.

Conflicts of interest, requirements and intentions are not, of course, uncommon in book-binding and are best resolved by returning to the original intent driving a particular piece of work: in this case, a good and proper opening of the text block was paramount, over any

consideration of decorative treatment.

Having rejected the initial concept the search commenced for ideas and materials which would achieve a similar soft, slightly rough, unfinished appearance to complement the deckle edges while functioning as required by the physical attributes of the text block. The materials finally selected were a rough, soft, thick, but relatively lightweight, handmade paper which could be folded to allow it to be sewn on to form the boards and a soft, alum-tawed skin with an imperfect surface which I felt would soon take on sufficient patina to tone with the (now washed but still discoloured) deckle edges of the text.

The text block is small, 14.7 × 8.4 × 4.2 cm, with proportions potentially liable to hinder the opening of the book. It is thick, with pages which have little depth (fore edge to spine), weight, or flexibility to allow them to flow with the opening of the book; therefore, the spine has to do all the work to achieve a good opening. It must be very flexible in itself and unrestricted by the further processes or coverings of the binding. In the original binding this had been achieved by using a lightweight cloth which had failed over time, cracked, and begun to fall away. The more durable but heavier-weight tawed skin could be attached to the spine as a tight back but would, I judged, hamper the opening.



6 The finished binding with slip case.

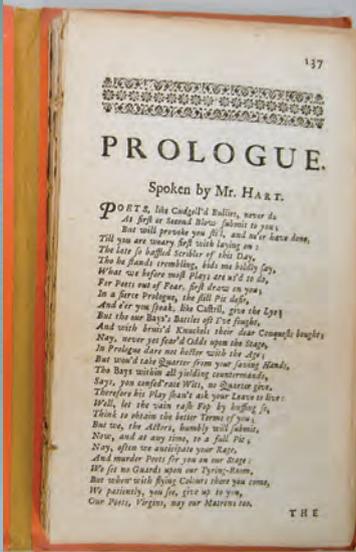
7 Freedom of opening.

A “free flying”, unattached covering would be more suited to the requirements of the text block, but the decision remained as to how to attach it so that flexing of the cover was minimized while freedom of opening was maximized.

The theory of the “quarter joint attachment” for a rigid flat spine was adopted, where the covering material attaches forward of the spine edge of the board by a distance equivalent to a quarter of the width of the spine. Practical experiments to confirm ease of opening with minimal flexing of the covering material, and how

the book might feel in the hands, proved that optimal opening could indeed be achieved with the covering material attached forward of the spine edge of the board.

Finally, having found that I had shied away from a current personal trend to be bolder with colour and juxtaposition, as a tilt in that direction and to pick up on the lines of the deckle, meandering lines were tooled on the paper sides into which fine lines of orange calf were inlaid. •



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The Country Wife by William Wycherley. 1731. 17 cm x 10.3 cm x 1.4 cm. Binder: Jen Lindsay.

by Jen Lindsay

The *Country Wife* is a bawdy comedy of manners, written by the English playwright William Wycherley and first performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, London, in 1675.

In its own time, *The Country Wife* was regarded as being outrageously sexually explicit, and is typical of the decadent naughtiness that was loosed when, following the austerity of Oliver Cromwell’s puritan Commonwealth (i.e., republic) from 1649 to 1660, monarchy was restored and Charles II became King of England, Scotland, and Ireland in 1660.

This particular edition was printed in London in 1731 but the book no longer had a binding: it was wrapped in a piece of orange card, on which the title had been written in ballpoint pen. It seems the book had at some point been removed from its binding or cut out of a volume of collected works.

The play itself is not one to which I am drawn; however, as with so many older, printed books, it had its own very particular character and sensuality — paper, impression, typography, typographical ornament — which drew me to it.

The kind of work I usually do cannot be described as “decorative”, but that is what I felt this book needed, to reflect the boisterous colour of the Restoration period, as well as the “floral” naïveté of the country wife of the title (who, once in London, did not long remain naïve!). That was the association of ideas, but translating a mental concept or image into tangible structure is of course what any kind of making is all about, as is transmitting the appropriate feeling and sensation.

One of the things that happen as you get more experienced as a maker is you begin to recognize, or understand, your own work-

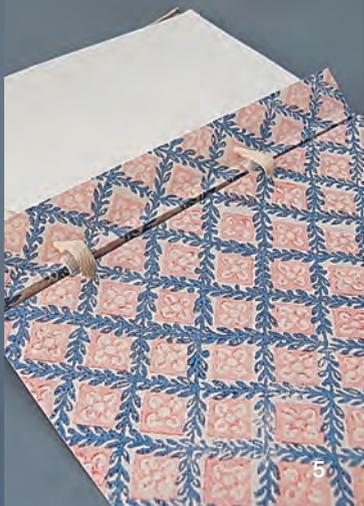
- 1 Book in its original state.
- 2 Title page, having been infilled and cut to size.
- 3 Text-block being sewn onto goatskin thongs.

ing process; that is, the necessary ritual that leads, eventually, to a resolution. For me, this involves a lot of “procrastination”, which is real procrastination combined with thinking and visualization, accompanied by short forays in the workshop to stare hard at various materials, realize that that idea won’t work, then going away to think again. It is simply a process of attrition: a process of elimination and reduction to achieve simplicity and clarity.

The book is small and light (17 × 10.3 × 1.4 cm and 90 g, in its new binding), and it needed to be kept “light” — materially light and light in spirit. In thinking about what to do, I imagined something flexible, rather than in stiff boards, so the book would be not only light but also pliable: I wanted to convey a quality of delight.



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However, before anything else could happen the text block needed some foundation work. The first and last leaves (title page and epilogue) had been cut out of the original book, cut down to a size smaller than the page size and pasted to a poor quality machine-made paper. These had to be floated off and inlaid in a neutral, toned handmade paper with matching chain lines (this same paper was used for end-papers). The new, inlaid leaves were trimmed and attached to the text block so that the imposition of the printed areas matched. All the sections were of course repaired (guarded) along the spine edge, with specific repair to enlarged sewing holes as necessary. With all the foundation work done, building could begin. (I leave it to the accompanying images to describe stages in the making process.)

After much going round in ever decreasing circles, I eventually found an offcut of hand-printed decorated paper which had just the prettiness I had in mind: a trellis of blue foliage and pink



7

quatrefoils on a base colour of neutral white/cream.¹ There was not enough of this and it was too uneven a shape to make, for example, a paper binding of some sort (an idea which, in any case, I had already dismissed). But this sort of constraint, of finding ways round or through it, concentrates the mind and can be the impetus for productive, lateral thinking (although it is also important to recognize when it's clearly a dead end).

The solution presented itself when I got out a piece of natural leather which some years ago I had pared for another purpose, but never used. The natural tone blended perfectly with the decorated paper and the pared leather

- 4 Decorated spine piece after being laced-on to sewn text-block.
- 5 Inside of binding showing lacing on of cover.
- 6 Inside of front cover, showing structure.
- 7 Finished book.

was of the right size and substance to laminate to the decorated paper to make book “boards”, with the grain of the leather oriented horizontally.

This may seem like happy coincidence, as does the fact that there was *just* enough paper and *just* enough leather; but it proves Pasteur's adage that “chance favours only the prepared mind”. •

¹ The paper was printed by Jane and John Jeffrey, England, UK.



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Q. Horatii Flacci Carmina Expurgata by Josepho Juvencio. 1784. 17.3 cm x 9.7 cm x 4.6 cm. Binder: Kathy Abbott.

by Kathy Abbott

In its day, this Italian *carta rustica* (rough paper) binding of 1784 would not have been special in any way, rather like a paper-back today. To me though, it is such a beautiful thing: simple, understated and wonderfully tactile. I have had this book for many years (a student of mine kindly gave it to me) and it had just been waiting to be repaired in some way. The sewing was broken in several places; the joint area at the head of the spine was torn; a piece of the spine was missing, and the whole cover was coming away from the binding. I loved the binding the way it was – I didn’t want to change its nature in any way by overly repairing it – but it just didn’t function as a book and was becoming more and more fragile each time I opened it.

The 2011 *Tomorrow’s Past* exhibition in Paris was approaching and I had to select a book to bind. Despite having several to

choose from, I kept thinking about my lovely *carta rustica* binding and wondering if there might be anything I could do to both conserve, and to celebrate, it.

A very good friend of mine lives in Japan and was trained by a master in the art of *urushi*: Japanese wood-lacquer technique, and also *kin-tsugi*: porcelain and pottery repair in the Japanese tradition. Basically, the latter entails infilling chips, missing areas or cracks in the porcelain or pottery with lacquer resin and real gold or silver powder. This gives the piece a new lease on life and often renders it more beautiful after the “restoration”.

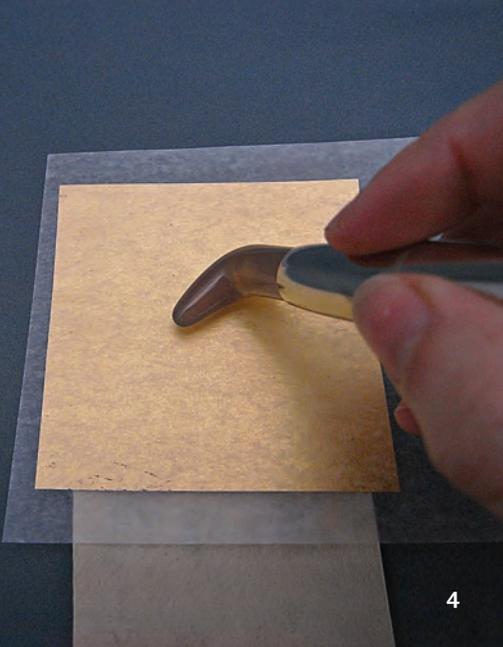
With the ethos of *kin-tsugi* restoration in mind I wondered if I could do something similar with my book. Despite the book’s fragility, the components were in quite good order. The text block was fairly sound; the text paper and the backs of the sections were in good condition, needing no

The book before any conservation:

- 1 A tear at the spine and front joint area.
- 2 The text-block broken in several places.
- 3 The book showing the broken sewing.

guarding or paper repairs. The cover paper was still strong; it was only the joints and spine in the head region that were weak and broken. Other than that, the whole book was just a little grubby. The original thongs were holding but were weak, and the only element that had really degraded was the sewing thread, which had broken in several places.

Removing the text block was easy (as there had never been any adhesive on the spine) so it was just a case of snipping the original sewing threads. I had hoped to reuse the thongs but they were very weak, and new ones were cut from a skin of alum-tawed pigskin. The whiteness of the new thongs was at odds with the original cover. Rather than “dirtying” them, I decided to dye them



The conservation:

- 4 Gilding handmade paper with Italian gold leaf, for the spine repair.
- 5 The text-block re-sewn in the original style but on new, hand dyed, alum-tawed thongs.
- 6 The completed book conservation. The new, gilded spine lining is visible at the head and also at the thong area.

dark brown (with Sellaset dyes) to the same colour as the ink on the spine of the cover, so that they would sit neutrally with the rest of the binding.

As the joints of the original cover were torn and weak, I knew that there was every likelihood that lacing-in the new thongs would damage the cover further. I decided to make a new spine piece from handmade paper for the thongs to lace into. This I gilded on one side with Italian gold leaf, which would highlight the missing areas on the spine in the spirit of *kin-tsugi* restoration.

The most challenging part of the restoration was how to insert the gilded paper underneath the



pastedowns and turn-ins, when the endpapers (pastedowns and flyleaves) were also hooked around the first and last sections, and sewn through.

Firstly, the pastedowns were lifted slightly from the covers. This was quite easy as they were only lightly tacked down. The text block was then sewn around the new thongs using the same sewing holes and two-up sewing as the original. A centimetre of the new gilded spine piece was then inserted underneath the rear pastedown and the thongs were laced through the gilded paper

and the cover. The thongs were then laid underneath the pastedown and the gilded paper, and the rear pastedown was pasted down again, using methylcellulose to minimize moisture. All fine thus far. The tricky bit came next: how to sew the final front section when the endpaper was hooked around it and, at the same time, lace the thongs through the gilded paper and the cover, and then insert the thongs underneath the endpaper, which needed to be pasted down again? With extreme difficulty, I found.

Holes were punched into the

joint area of the gilded paper to take the thongs, which were then laced through both the gilded paper and the cover and then back in and underneath the pastedown. This was then pasted down once more, again using methylcellulose. The last section and the hook of the endpaper were then sewn around the thongs using a hand-curved needle and fine pointed tweezers. This proved to be risky, as the cover could be pierced at any moment and I was, in effect, working blind.

All loose parts of the spine of the original cover were lightly pasted to the gilded paper, again using methylcellulose. No adhesive was used on any part of the text block. The book opens well and functions exactly as it would have when it was originally bound.

I have had to undertake complicated techniques such as this in my work as a book conservator; trying to stabilize what are for practical purposes perfectly sound bindings, but which might simply have broken sewing or thongs. Often, one has to work on books like this as would a surgeon, in very restricted positions. Without past experience, I could never have undertaken this repair to my book. To me this is what *Tomorrow's Past* is all about: bringing all of my knowledge and skill from conserving old or antiquarian books and combining this knowledge and skill with a simple, modern aesthetic to give dilapidated books a new lease of life. I find that extremely satisfying. •



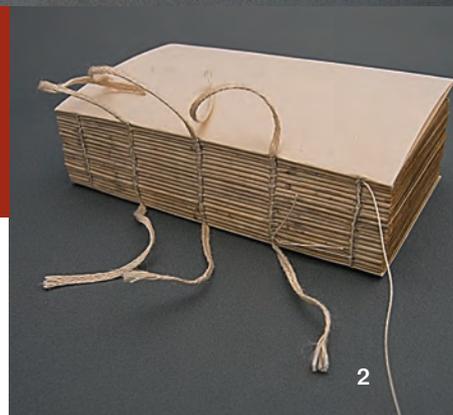
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The Odyssey of Homer and The Battle of The Frogs and Mice by Homer (translated by Alexander Pope). 1807. 7.8 cm x 12.7 cm x 2.9 cm. Binder: Tracey Rowledge.

by Tracey Rowledge

I was attracted to this book from the first moment I saw it. I liked its physicality: its size and proportions. I lived with this book for a while before I began the process of rebinding it, allowing me the necessary time to accumulate my thinking, in terms of how I wanted to respond to the structural needs of the book, whilst pursuing what I might want this binding to communicate to the reader or viewer. There are always a number of elements I want to explore when binding any given book. For this binding I wanted to draw together the way I approach fine binding with the more immediately recognizable book conservation side of my practice.

My fine bindings are conservation bindings underneath the gold-tooled leather covers, but the decisions and adaptations of processes which I've made



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- 1 Book prior to rebinding.
- 2 Text block after it has been pulled, guarded, and resewn.

will go largely unnoticed, as they are unseen and indiscernible to the person handling the book. I really wanted to construct a hand-decorated bookbinding that fit the structural needs of this book whilst allowing me to express in some way the meaning of the book.

I created a binding that I had a sense of from the outset. Even before I knew what structure I would devise for this book, I had a sense it would be bound in paper. I really like the feel of a paper cover that is mainly un-adhered, when it feels strong and protective of the text block and yet flexible at the same time. There's a beauty in this



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combination, both in look and feel, and it all comes through how the book handles when it's opened and read. It was this "feel" that I carried with me in all the decisions that I made about the structure, until I reached the point when the structure did all that I had in mind. This "feel" isn't a tangible thing, and it's something that slowly emerged through experimentation with materials and different structural ideas. It was a long process of trial and error, making a sample binding first and trying out different ways of constructing the binding before I eventually got it right.

All that remained of the original binding was one detached board, the text block was in sound

condition but the sewing thread had deteriorated. I first pulled, guarded, and resewed the book, using the original sewing stations. The text block is laced on to a double wrapper structure, using two different weights of paper with a series of folds and turn-ins that double back on themselves; the front and rear covers then become heavy enough for the depth of the text block.

The colour scheme for the decorated cover paper derives from the colours and tones of the staining and discolouration within the text block and on its edges. The decoration to the cover is a multi-layered image, which draws on my own imagery from *The Odyssey*, but also importantly,

- 3 The lacing-on of the text block to the inner and outer components of the cover.
- 4 The inner cover prior to having turn-ins folded back on themselves and attached to underside of the outer cover.
- 5 The inner cover after turn-ins have been folded back on themselves and attached to underside of the outer cover.
- 6 The doubled back part of the inner and outer covers, prior to the turn-ins of the inner cover having been turned in and over the outer cover.
- 7 The inner cover turn-ins having been turned over the outer cover, prior to them being adhered on all three turn-in edges to the facing the outer cover.
- 8 The binding completed with fore-edge ties.

draws on the history of decorated papers, so as not to jar with a rebound antiquarian book. •

Valises Numériques/Valijas Digitales



(Left) France Bélisle/Mary Montana. *Communication Interrompue*. 9.5 x 9 x 1.5 cm. (Right) Rubén Hechavarria Salvia. *Rin-Rin*. 22 x 22.5 x 2 cm.

Valises Numériques/Valijas Digitales est un projet itinérant de livres d'artistes réalisé en 2009–2010 qui réunit sept artistes de Holguín à Cuba et 20 artistes de l'Atelier de l'Île de Val-David au Québec. Centré sur « L'Art et les nouvelles technologies de communications » (ordinateurs, Internet, iPhone, MP3, etc.), ce projet d'échange cherche à rapprocher des artistes aux antipodes du développement technologique et à comprendre le rôle de ces technologies nouvelles pour les artistes d'ici et d'ailleurs. Le projet est né lors d'une résidence à l'Atelier, de deux artistes cubains intéressés à collaborer avec des artistes nord-américains.

Valises Numériques/Vlijas Digitales, (*Digital Valises*) is a travelling project of artists' books created in 2009–2010 grouping seven artists from Holguín, Cuba and 20 from Atelier de l'Île of Val-David, Quebec. Exploring "Art and the new technologies of communications" (computers, Internet, iPhone, MP3, etc.), our project attempts to establish a connection between artists from the opposite poles of technological development, and to understand the role of these new technologies for artists in different parts of the world. This exchange project began during the residency at the Atelier of two Cuban artists interested in collaborating with North American artists. •

EXHIBITION SCHEDULE

Centre d'exposition du Vieux
Presbytère de St-Bruno
Saint-Bruno de Montarville, Québec
October 9–30, 2011

Holguín, Cuba, April 2012

CATALOGUE

Valises numériques/Valijas digitales
(French, Spanish, English) \$20
art@atelier.qc.ca 819.322.6359

ATELIER DE L'ÎLE

Located in Val-David, 100 km north of Montréal, Atelier de l'Île is an artists' centre founded 35 years ago with the mission of research, creation and production of contemporary print and book arts. Every year, residencies are offered to young aspiring artists, mid-career, and mature artists. Atelier de l'Île promotes exchanges at the local, national, and international levels. Since 2003, studio members have been exploring projects concerning art and the environment and, more recently, art and new technology.

www.atelier.qc.ca



by Maureen Piggins

Made with Meaning

Content and Structure in the Book Arts

Content has always been a driving force for me in bookmaking, whether derived from existing personal work in other media or in response to curated themes. When I began making artist books in 2009, it was to consolidate work I had done concerning my mother's death from breast cancer – drawing, painting and writing that collectively found form in a 64-page, double-sided accordion book. Entitled *Echo*, the book could be displayed three ways, each representing a different aspect of grieving. It was this structure infused with meaning that led me to fall in love with the genre and continue to explore book arts more fully. I now draw upon a multi-media approach which usually incorporates some form of drawing, painting and writing with a more experimental view to format and structure. What remains integral, however, is that every element be related to content.

Both *Dementia* and *The Mica Hypothesis* were created in response to themed artist calls from the Doverodde Book Arts Festival in Doverodde, Hurup Thy, Denmark. The annual festival, held every spring at the permanent Book Arts Center of the Limfjordscentret, features an exhibition, guided nature walks, and a chance to meet book artists through talks and artist stalls.

Dementia responded to the 2011 Doverodde topic “In the air” and combines existing work with new writing in a format conceived specifically for the theme. I tend to draw upon existing work when creating artist books, and find that I naturally interpret themes through this lens. I had been developing drawings of my father at the time and found that the theme resonated with one piece in particular. My father suffered from vascular dementia, and in the last years of his life I grieved for what had been lost while

(Above) *Dementia* (centre), Doverodde Book Arts Festival, 2011. Hand bound giclée on archival paper, Japanese paper, waxed string, metal loops and eyelets, 53 cm high x 30.5 cm wide. Original poetry and art. PHOTO | LIMFJORDSCENTRET



also trying to accept the “new” person my father had become. Now, after his death, I was attempting to capture his likeness but was struggling to achieve this. The subject matter was intangible, as was the process: I waffled between depicting him before and during illness, and succeeded only when I stopped trying to illustrate either one. When I look at the piece now, I can see my father – not quite the old dad I knew, but with the same familiarity that had been mostly lost to illness.

I chose the format of a hanging blind as a symbol for both the debilitating effects of dementia on personality and memory, and as my attempt to “see” my father behind this condition – a fragmented picture of what was hidden by illness. The blind itself is formed by eight double-sided strips, one side featuring the drawing of my father, while each strip on the other side contains one line of a poem, each beginning with one of the letters in the word dementia. The poem begins, “Dementia, a blind through which I see pieces of you...”

Beside each line is a portion of another painted portrait, cut into pieces and arranged vertically at the end of each strip. The large drawing was reproduced as an archival giclée, cut into eight strips and mounted on thicker Japanese paper which was then punched, grommetted and threaded. This act of deconstructing, reassembling and rearranging also evokes the effects of the disease. A prominent early



From top left: *Dementia* – back side of the strips.

The Mica Hypothesis, hand bound, unique book, five hand-split mica panels, inkjet on mica paper, original painted central panel (acrylic). 10.16 cm high x 7.62 cm wide x 1.27 cm deep (closed).

Echo, hand bound, 64 pages, double-sided French fold accordion, giclée on Hahnemühle paper. 12.7 cm high x 10.8 cm wide x 3.8 cm deep (closed), 275 cm long (extended). Archival quality, open edition.

feature of my dad's condition was the capacity to retain social etiquette and conversation, while so many other things were lost to him; some aspects of his personality were exaggerated, while others were submerged. Identity, memory, grief and time were uncertain; they were "in the air".

The Mica Hypothesis was created solely in response to the 2009 Doverodde theme, "Island", and was not based on pre-existing work. For this topic, I drew upon a personal interest in evolution and used mica to explore an origin of life theory by National Science Foundation scientist Helen Hansma. This also involved research about Akilia Island, Greenland (the largest island, thought to hold evidence of the earliest life on Earth) as well as a study into the nature of mica and biochemistry. For this piece, unlike my other work, I began by choosing a material and then discovered content that related to the theme.

One of the things I appreciate about the Doverodde calls is that the basic themes are very

loosely defined. This allows for a wealth of interpretation that I feel results in a more interesting show overall. I try to look for exhibitions that support this openness of content and have been able to find some wonderful international venues for work. Australia has a vibrant artist book scene and has been the site of three exhibitions for *Echo*. New York has a fairly new gallery in Brooklyn and it was here that I was able to show *The Mica Hypothesis* in Central Booking's Art & Science gallery. I believe that richness of content can allow for this kind of flexibility in exhibition opportunities and ultimately results in work that is rewarding on many levels. I see artists' books as a way to bring meaning to format and to explore structural possibilities not available in other media – but in the end, they must also tell a story. •

Doverodde Book Arts Festival and Symposium 2012,
May 17–August 5, Doverodde, Hurup Thy, Denmark.
www.bookarts-doverodde.dk/
www.maureenpiggins.com



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Hand Papermaking Marks 25 Years

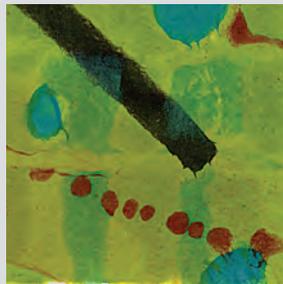
THIS UNIQUE 60-PAGE BOOKLET brings together 25 paper artists who previously appeared in *Hand Papermaking* magazine. These noteworthy contributors to the advancement of papermaking were asked to reflect on their magazine article and the evolution of their work from that year to the present and provide a 10-cm sample of handmade

paper with a description of the materials and techniques they employed. The booklet includes a preface by Tom Bannister and an essay by Michael Durgin. Each copy has a letterpress printed cover of paper commissioned from one of four distinguished mills. (See a selection of paper samples below.) •

www.handpapermaking.org/anniversary.htm



Helmut Becker paper of hand-pulled, snow-retted Saskatchewan and Ontario flax.



Beck Whitehead pulp-painted abaca paper.



Anne Vilsboll paper loaded with pigments and different binders.



Roberto Mannino Perganera (black parchment) paper, burnished with an agate stone.

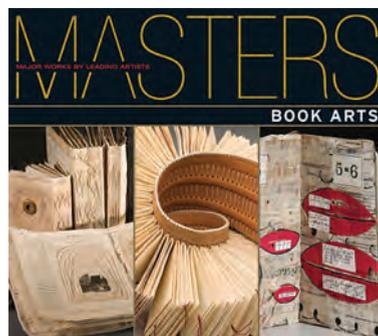
REVIEW

by Shelagh Smith

Masters: Book Arts Eileen Wallace

Lark Crafts, Asheville, North Carolina. 2011.
330 pages. Paperback.
ISBN 978 1 60059 497 7

Masters: Book Arts, Major Works by Leading Artists is one of Lark Crafts' Masters series of which there are over 35 providing an overview of different crafts, with informative text and over 400



gorgeous images in each. The publisher's purpose in the series is to show divergent approaches by

both established names in the field and up and coming artists. Like most Lark Books it is a great bargain and widely available, including from their website: www.larkcrafts.com/bookstore/?isbn=9781600594977.

This volume covers the many aspects of the book arts: private press, artists' books, bookbinding, boxmaking, and paper decorating and illustration techniques.

Curator Eileen Wallace who identified and invited the artists selected, and determined which images were to be featured, ultimately chose 43 artists from the 250 she considered: no small feat. Almost all of the artists are from the US (none from Canada alas), plus Sarah Bodman from England, Daniella Deeg, Ines von Ketelhodt, and Peter Malutzki from Germany, Adele Outteridge from Australia, and Veronika Schapers from Japan.

The curator “shaped the tone and focus of the book”. In this series they are looking for a balance of technique, subject matter, and style. All of the artists are, as is to be expected, very strong technically. There is a very wide divergence in approach, concept and techniques used.

While this volume is great fun to browse, it is well worth more extensive perusal. What I particularly appreciated is that each artist is represented by from seven to thirteen of their works and in some cases more than one view of the work is included. This hardly ever happens in publications. It is extremely valuable to be able to see a body of work for each artist. It enables the reader to see the development of an artist’s work over time, or to have a deeper understanding of the techniques they employ, or to experience the different aspects of society or culture to which they are committed.

A number of the great figures in the field are included in the volume and are marvellous to encounter again: Julie Chen, Ken Botnick, Timothy Ely, Karen

Hanmer, Daniel Kelm, Karen Kunc, Hedi Kyle, Keith Smith, Bonnie Stahlecker, Claire Van Vliet, and others. I found the book equally interesting in introducing me to works by extraordinary artists who were previously unknown to me: Brian Dettmer’s fabulous altered books which he describes as a communion with the existing material and its past creators; Shanna Leino’s miniature Coptic books in carved bone or brass; Adele Outteridge’s single see-through leaves of acrylic or acetate sewn together; Daniel Essig’s works with found objects; Beatrice Coron’s silhouettes; Laura Wait’s many media, and others. You need to see them all, though it will only whet your appetite.

This book is well worth adding to your library. •

REVIEW

by Linda M. Cunningham

Making Faces: Metal Type in the 21st Century

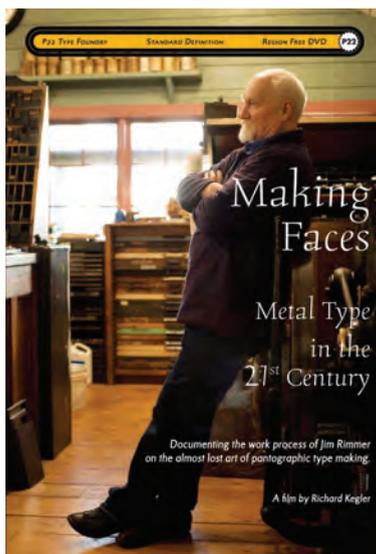
A film by Richard Kegler

Documenting the work process of Jim Rimmer on the almost lost art of pantographic type making.

<http://p22.com/products/makingfaces.html>

It’s not an exaggeration to say that the band RUSH is to Canadian music what the late (1934–2010) Jim Rimmer was to Canadian type design: iconicity, lasting creativity, and cult status.

This production takes the



word “documentary” literally: Jim Rimmer talks onscreen, Richard Kegler (president of P22 Type Foundry of Buffalo, NY) prompts from behind the camera, and the raw *cinéma vérité* style is reminiscent of an old 1950s French film.

This might put off some people, but if what you’re interested in is a bug’s eye view of the pantograph process of making type, you’ll be riveted to your chair, even with multiple viewings.

But as much fun as the 45-minute widescreen documentary is, the real riches of the DVD are to

be found in the bonus features, where the outtakes of some of the more complex processes are left in their entirety.

Also included is a silent film from the 1930s, showing American type designer Frederic Goudy, originator of the expression “a man who would letterspace lower case would steal sheep”, using the same

process, to design and cast type.

The other small addition to the packaging is one piece of cast metal type, the lower case “k” that the documentary follows from original sketch through to casting: truly a unique souvenir of the process. Although the reviewed DVD only has subtitles in English, there are currently typographers around the world,

translating it into other languages for future release.

If letterpress type, and typography design in general, excite you, you’ll find yourself repeatedly watching both the documentary and the added features. •

Note: the Jim Rimmer archive is at Simon Fraser University Special Collections: www.lib.sfu.ca/sites/default/files/8910/RimmerJ.pdf

REVIEW

by Cathryn Miller

The Gilded Page: The History and Technique of Manuscript Gilding

Kathleen P. Whitley

Oak Knoll Press and The British Library. 2010.

238 pages. Paperback.

ISBN 9 78 1 58456 241 2

The Gilded Page is a remarkable undertaking: part history, part recipe book, part instruction manual. Kathleen Whitley has taken on the history of the human attraction to shiny things and made some sense of it.

The book begins with the earliest recorded applications of gold: the archaeological records of the human fascination with all that glitters. Whitley takes us through the processes of gilding architecture, papyrus scrolls, and the painted panels that eventually lead both to the codex as a book-form and the illuminated works that we now treasure.

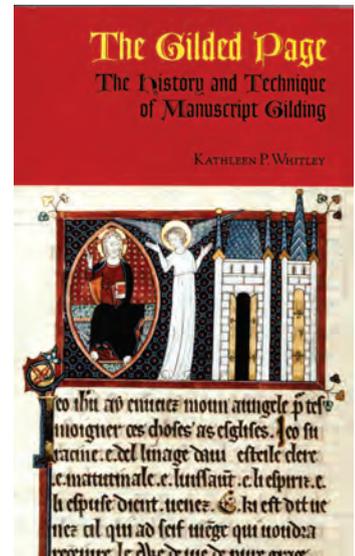
In the second part of the book,

Whitley is a sensible instructor: warning against some of the more lethal ingredients used historically, she provides instructions and recipes using both old and new materials. Whitley’s recipes for the mordants used for the application of gold (or other metals) to parchment or paper are clear and coherent. Her concern for the finished product is obvious.

The book is Smyth sewn, which is a good thing, but the production values of the book left me disappointed. Oak Knoll has done the author of this book a major disservice.

This is a second edition, and although many people may find the typos a minor annoyance, I think they show major disrespect to the author. Someone should have proofread this book.

There are colour illustrations in one inset signature: they illustrate some of the glory that is gold. The rest of the illustrations



are printed in black and white on a paper that, while moderately good for text, is less than helpful for images. Figure 5.2 on page 138 leaves me mystified: various degrees of gilding on various mordants are barely distinguishable since most of them appear black.

Despite the poor production of the book, I would recommend *The Gilded Page* to anyone who is interested in illumination and gilding. After all, if I am still dreaming about sticking gold onto everything, it must have left a positive impression. •



Illumination: A Canticle of Creatures *by Judy Hurst*



Redwing Rising

Born and bred in Durham in Northern England, the expression of the spiritual world of Celtic stories and beliefs through pattern and the symbolic use of colour is central to my life and work, as is Norman history and the architecture of Durham Cathedral.

I often work on vellum, as it gives a luminescence to colour that, for me, is one of the most powerful qualities of my work. Precious metals, including gold leaf and hallmarked gold and silver, and exotic wood are also important components of these pieces. I have had the opportunity to use discarded off-cuts and fragments of medieval oak from Durham Cathedral belfry renovations, and Frosterly marble, a local black limestone with fossils, from a quarry used in medieval times, for elements of cathedral construction. Combined with my illuminated work on vellum, the result incorporates all that I hold precious — especially our spiritual inheritance from our Celtic predecessors.

The pectoral Cross is the central focus for *The Unsung Creatures*, from which radiating “power” lines stretch from the painted surface through the



The Unsung Creatures, Durham Cathedral. 2011. 178 cm high x 120 cm wide. Full vellum calf skin, oil paint, 24 ct. gold leaf. Inset photo shows oak frame with inlays of exotic woods, silver and gold. Base supports of marble and limestone.

mounting cords to the frame; symbolic of the fact that the message in the vellum would not exist without the strength of the frame to support it.

The legends of Saint Cuthbert’s affinity with nature are well known in Northern England; therefore I have drawn inspiration from those animals, insects, and birds which I love, and which were in Northern England all those centuries ago. Apart from the dancing woodcocks in the lower part of the vellum, the medallions on the circumference portray some of “the unsung creatures” such as bees, crickets, and butterflies.

Triptych ideas have fascinated me from childhood; I have seen the pattern of “three” as both a symbol, and a part of life, for many years. For example:

morning, noon and night; birth, life and death; and within the Christian religion – Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The centre panel of *Meeting the Cross* (page 30) shows two redwings (members of the thrush family) flying towards the cross, based on the pectoral cross of Saint Cuthbert. The circular framework design is reminiscent of the rose window in Durham Cathedral, and intertwines with all aspects of the painting, stretching out to the side panels to make them an integral part of the design.

If one looks carefully at the details of this work, butterflies, plants, and other images of the Cross can be discovered. The enamel colours on the frame echo those of the panels and are secured with gold pins to



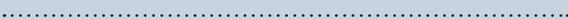
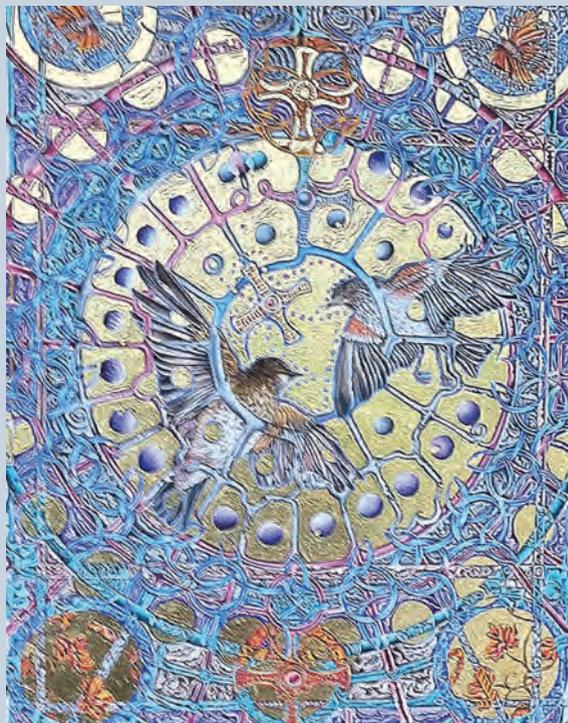
Triptych *Meeting the Cross*. 60 cm high x 40 cm wide (closed), 80 cm wide (open). Gesso board, oil paint, 24 ct. gold leaf. Oak frames inlaid with ebony, enamelled sterling silver.

the wood, and gold leaf accentuates what I consider to be important structural elements of the whole.

The reverse sides of the panels are covered with 24 ct. gold leaf, pounced with a design relating to the “hound’s tooth” pattern seen in many of Durham Cathedral’s stone arches. The work was worthwhile and important to the concept as this surface is visible when the triptych is closed. A somewhat demanding process, it took three days, and I was most relieved when it was complete!

The respect and appreciation for nature held by the Celtic Christians under the direction of Saint Cuthbert, and the visual expressions of their faith have been part of my life since my schooldays, and are a great inspiration to me. It is a natural progression to recognise the mathematical patterns inherent in the natural and spiritual world, and increasingly I need to explore these patterns which I see everywhere and which create the fabric of existence, spiritually and physically. More and more my work consists of minute detail: the viewer must search closely for the tiny patterns which define the whole structure of the composition. If a person looks at my work, recognises and enjoys the patterns, then I believe that I have made an important, almost spiritual connection, and this gives me great pleasure. •

www.judyhurst.co.uk/index.php





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par Jocelyne Aird-Bélanger

Odette Drapeau

à la recherche des textiles intelligents et des fibres du futur

ODETTE DRAPEAU EST, depuis plus de quarante ans, une artiste de la reliure constamment à la recherche de nouvelles manières de faire évoluer son métier et son art. Elle a toujours cherché à repousser les limites que s'imposent les relieurs et à être résolument en accord avec son époque.

Au cours de sa démarche d'exploration de nouvelles formes de reliure et de nouveaux matériaux, elle a déjà consacré plusieurs années de sa pratique à la reliure en cuir marin. À son retour d'Europe en 1981, elle rencontrait Madame Claudette Garnier à sa tannerie de Bonaventure en Gaspésie. Elle a choisi de travailler avec ce matériau à cause de l'extrême résistance et de la durabilité de ces cuirs qu'elle utilise

depuis plus de trente ans. « Les Cuir fins de la Mer », l'atelier de madame Garnier, a fermé ses portes depuis quelques années mais on trouve maintenant des tanneurs de cuir marin à Vancouver, en France, en Australie et en Indonésie.

Le Conseil des arts du Canada lui accordait récemment une bourse de « Recherche et Création » pour explorer l'usage des fibres et des textiles ainsi que les nouveaux matériaux dits « intelligents » pour la réalisation de reliures d'art et de création.

Elle voudrait ainsi donner aux livres, une forme et une dimension nouvelles et encourager les relieurs à penser différemment. À l'heure du livre électronique et au moment où l'industrie de la reliure est à

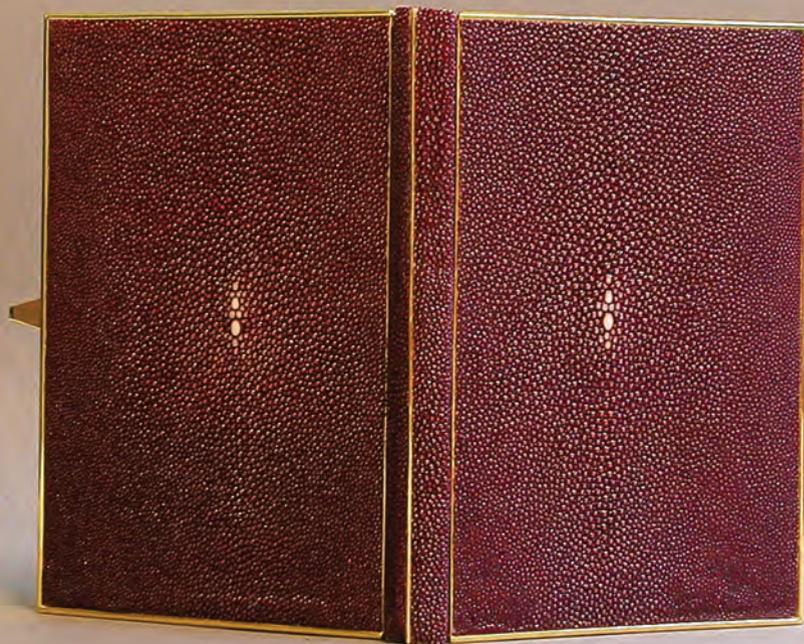


PHOTOS | LYVON BEAUDIN

À gauche: *Un coup de dé n'abolira jamais le hasard* – Mallarmé. Reliure textile – soie et organza. Reliure intégrant des diodes électroluminescentes/textile binding – silk and organza with integrated LED lights. À droite: *Au Bonheur des Dames* – Émile Zola. Reliure textile en camaïeu du noir au gris/textile binding – black to gray camaïeu or monochrome.

*Lettre à une
Musicienne –
Rainer Maria
Rilke. Reliure
en cuir marin
(Galuchat, peau
de raie)/fish skin
binding (sharkskin,
ray skin).*

PHOTO | YVON
BEAUDIN



la fine pointe de la technologie, elle croit qu'il faut revitaliser le monde de la reliure d'art en innovant avec les nouveaux matériaux et les nouvelles technologies. Son projet de recherche devrait permettre d'actualiser la pratique de la reliure d'art rappelant par le fait même que la reliure demeure une pratique éminemment contemporaine.

Dans le cadre de sa recherche sur les «textiles intelligents», Odette a déjà exploré le milieu tant au Canada qu'à l'étranger. En avril dernier, elle assistait à un cours à l'Université de Gand en Belgique sur les « Smart Textiles ». Elle découvre que l'industrie du secteur textile est résolument entrée dans le xxie siècle en s'alliant à la chimie, à la physique ou à l'électronique. Ce secteur investit des domaines insoupçonnés et les textiles nouveaux peuvent être techniques ou fonctionnels, c'est-à-dire faits de fibres de haute technologie, offrant des fonctions nouvelles tels des tenues ignifuges des pompiers, de l'isolation des bâtiments, des airbags, des vêtements antibactériens, des couettes anti acariens, etc. Les textiles interactifs ou «intelligents» sont une sous-catégorie des textiles techniques. Ils interagissent avec la personne qui les porte ou avec l'environnement en s'illuminant, ou en s'adaptant, par exemple à la température ambiante.

Au département de textiles de l'Université

Concordia à Montréal, le Studio subTela et l'institut Hexagram dirigé par Madame Barbara Layne effectuent des recherches d'un intérêt capital pour Odette Drapeau. Ces recherches sont spécialement orientées vers l'art, la création et l'installation.

Dans ce studio, des matériaux naturels sont tissés en combinaison avec des micro-ordinateurs et des senseurs afin de créer des surfaces qui reçoivent et répondent aux stimuli extérieurs. Des zones contrôlables de LED (diodes électroluminescentes) créent des motifs et des textes mobiles à travers la structure du matériel. Afin de permettre la communication en temps réel, des systèmes de transmission sans fil ont aussi été développés. On cherche à produire des textiles expressifs et intelligents en y introduisant des dispositifs électroniques à l'étape du tissage ce qui permet d'obtenir un circuit électronique flexible. Avec des senseurs miniatures et des systèmes de communications sans fil incrustés dans les fibres, on arrive à réaliser des interactions à distance.

Le CTT (Centre de transfert technologique en textiles), associé au CEGEP de Saint-Hyacinthe, détient une expertise professionnelle et technique précieuse pour approfondir ses recherches. Madame Aldjia Bégriche, membre de l'équipe CTT, lui apportera son concours pour les réalisations techniques.



The Word was Sung – Veljo Tormis. Reliure en cuir marin (peau d'anguille noire et turquoise). Fish skin binding (black and turquoise eel skin).

PHOTO | YVON BEAUDIN

Odette accumule informations, visites, expériences, rencontres et effectue nombre d'essais pour voir les liens possibles avec la reliure. On peut penser à des livres qui s'illumineraient au toucher ou encore, à des reliures sonores ou musicales, etc. Les possibilités sont innombrables et stimulantes. En plus de la cinquantaine de reliures expérimentales qu'elle s'est engagée à réaliser, elle tient un Journal de bord de sa recherche avec photos, notes, résultats d'expériences et démarches. Cela s'avérera assurément utile lors de la rédaction de son rapport de bourse au Conseil des arts du Canada et rendra possible l'info lettre à ce

sujet qu'elle se propose d'ajouter éventuellement sur son site web (www.odettedrapeau.com).

Si, en plus des techniques traditionnelles éprouvées et maîtrisées, la reliure met l'accent sur l'aspect créatif du métier et encourage l'invention et la création, Odette est persuadée qu'elle survivra au sein de la communauté des artistes en arts visuels. La reliure est une technique mais elle doit servir la création et permettre au relieur de s'exprimer dans son œuvre.

À quand l'exposition des premières reliures d'art intelligentes? •

ODETTE DRAPEAU EXPLORES SMART TEXTILES AND FIBRES OF THE FUTURE

(Translated by Jocelyne Aird-Bélanger with the assistance of Lynn Gauthier)

FOR MORE THAN FORTY YEARS, Odette Drapeau has been a bookbinder and artist constantly in search of new ways to develop her trade and art, and to expand the limits that bookbinders self-impose.

In her exploration of new forms and new materials, Odette has already dedicated several years of her practice to marine leather binding. She chose to work with this material because of its extreme durability. In 1981, she met Madame Claudette Garnier at her tannery in Bonaventure, Gaspé. Odette used Madame Garnier's fish leathers for more than thirty

years and is convinced they do not deteriorate with time. Garnier's tannery closed some years ago, but marine tanners can be found today in Vancouver, France, Australia and Indonesia.

The Canada Council for the Arts has now awarded Odette a Research and Creation grant to explore the usage of new fibres and "smart" textiles in creative and artistic bookbindings.

Her aim is to encourage bookbinders to think in new ways and remind us that bookbinding is a contemporary art. With the adoption of the electronic

book, and with the industry of bookbinding at the peak of technology, she believes that it is necessary to revitalize the world of book arts by innovating with new materials and new technologies.

Last April, she attended a course on “smart textiles” at the University of Gand in Belgium. She discovered that the textile industry has entered the twenty-first century by collaborating with the fields of chemistry, physics and electronics to create new textiles.

These new technical textiles can be used in applications such as fire-proof clothing, insulation, airbags, antibacterial clothes, and anti-dust materials. Interactive or “smart” textiles – a subcategory of technical textiles – interact with the person who wears them, or with the environment itself, by illuminating, or by adapting to ambient temperatures.

At Concordia University in Montreal, Barbara Layne is the director of Studio subTela at the Hexagram Institute, where the research areas of interactive textiles – oriented towards art – are of great interest to Odette. In Studio subTela, natural

materials are woven in combination with microcomputers and sensors to create surfaces which receive and respond to external stimuli. Controllable zones of LED (light-emitting diodes) create shapes and mobile texts through the structure of the material. To allow real-time communication, wireless transmission systems are being developed to produce intelligent textiles by introducing electronic devices at the weaving stage, permitting a flexible electronic circuit. With miniature sensors and systems of wireless communications interwoven in the fibres, remote interactions can be made.

The Centre of Technological Transfer in Textiles (CTT), at Saint-Hyacinthe’s CEGEP, is a source for unique professional and technical expertise. Madame Aldjia Bégriche, a member of the CTT team, will be helping Odette with the technical realization of her ideas.

Odette is making numerous trials to discover the possible links with bookbinding: bindings that could be illuminated by touching, or by playing music; the possibilities are endless. Besides creating up to 50 experimental bindings, she is keeping a journal of her research with photos, notes, and the results of experiments and trials. This will undoubtedly prove useful during the writing of her grant report for the Canada Council and also for the publication of an online newsletter on this subject.

Odette believes that if, besides the mastery of traditional techniques, invention and creativity in materials are encouraged, bookbinding will survive in the visual arts community. Bookbinding is a technique but it has to serve creativity and allow bookbinders to express themselves in their work.

“When,” she asks, “will an exhibition of the first “intelligent” fine bookbindings be presented?” •

At the Musée du Bas-Saint-Laurent, Rivière du Loup, October 7, 2011 – January 15, 2012 there will be an exhibition of Odette Drapeau’s retrospective and recent work featuring over 100 pieces.
Une exposition « rétrospective et œuvres récentes » de la production d’Odette Drapeau – soit une centaine d’œuvres-aura lieu au Musée du Bas St-Laurent du 7 octobre 2011 au 15 janvier 2012. www.mbsl.qc.ca



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Large single quire book, and small single quire book with stitched cover. Below: single quire Coptic book.

Single Quire Binding *by Susan Mills*

I GREW UP LOVING COMIC BOOKS – the shiny paper covers, the rough newsprint pages, the two staples exactly on the centre fold. I loved *Millie the Model*, *Betty and Veronica*, *Lois Lane*, and *Little Audrey*. I made my own comics with crayon drawings on typing paper, always struggling with the staples, always lamenting the waxy pages as unprofessional.

I also loved wall calendars, of heavier paper, folded and stapled in the same way, with a hole punched at the foredge, to be opened and hung from a nail.

This binding structure – the single quire, or signature, or section or gathering, perhaps even the chapbook or the pamphlet – remains a favourite. It works well at any size and with many materials. It feels soft in the hand.

As an artist I am drawn to single quire ledgers from northern India. The covers are fabric, quilted through a stiff paper inner lining, and bound with a single knotted tacket. I made my first model based on a historical ledger using materials close to the original. I have since made many artist books in this style, utilizing non-traditional materials and sizes.

Several years ago I decided to teach a single quire binding workshop. I often teach artists, so I like to teach historical structures, expecting that the information will percolate.

I began my workshop research, as I often do, by constructing a generic model from J.A. Szirmai's *The Archaeology of Medieval Bookbinding*. Chapter one



describes the single quire Coptic codex, based on the Nag Hammadi codices, dating from the third/fourth centuries AD. My full leather model with papyrus linings, a foredge flap and a wrapping band, ties and tackets is much like the structure I would eventually teach.

For Coptic details I contacted Michigan-based conservator Julia Miller, an expert in the Nag Hammadi codices and Coptic bindings in general. I found Julia to be amazingly generous, sending me the extensive handouts for her Nag Hammadi classes and much more. I have enjoyed following her many leads. For me, the hardest part of teaching a workshop is restructuring and compressing all this information! •

Susan Mills' next single quire Coptic binding workshop is scheduled for January 2012 at Full Tilt in New York. www.bookbindingclasses.blogspot.com

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Hello, all. I hope that you enjoyed a pleasant summer, and that the jump back into the fall routine has not been too much of a shock to the system.

I'd like to take this opportunity to update you on a few things happening at the Board/national level.

First, a quick report on the AGM that was held in Toronto on June 14. **Scott Duncan**, in his final act as Co-President, hosted the business meeting and reported on the accomplishments over the past year. **James Spyker** gave his final Treasurer's report, then followed the voting to approve the Board slate for the upcoming year. Business taken care of, the meeting turned to the presentation of certificates. Two Certificates of Completion for the CBBAG foundation courses were presented this year, to **Joan Links** and to **James MacCallum**, both of Toronto. Congratulations to Joan and James on this achievement. Two awards were

also presented to CBBAG volunteers. **Elsie Blauwhoff** was the recipient of the Volunteer of the Year Award, and **Ann Douglas** was presented with the Lifetime Achievement Award. Thank you, ladies, for all of your tireless work on behalf of CBBAG; it is appreciated. After the business meeting and presentation of awards, attendees were treated to an inspiring talk from **Tini Miura**, entitled "My World of Bibliophile Bindings", accompanied by an extensive slide show of Tini's work. Thanks go out to the Greater Toronto Area Chapter for bringing in Ms. Miura to teach a week-long course and give this presentation at the AGM, as well as to the Ryerson University School of Graphic Communications Management for hosting the evening again this year.

In speaking of the Board slate for the upcoming year, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to three new members of the Board of Directors. **Carmelina Karas** is taking over the

Treasurer's position from James Spyker. Carmelina lives in the Toronto area, and

graduated recently from the School of Graphic Communications Management at Ryerson. She was recommended to us by Board member **Art Seto** (Events). Carmelina has experience working with not-for-profit organizations, as well as working with pricing and budgeting in her current position as an estimator. **Dave Allen** runs Beddall Bookbinding Conservation and Restoration in Victoria. Dave spent years working in the high-tech industry, but has now returned to his passion for binding and repairing books, for which he studied at Sheridan College with **Yehuda Miklaf** in the 1970s. You may already be familiar with Dave as a regular participant on the Book Arts List. Dave is taking a position as Director-at-Large as he learns more about the organization. Finally, **Gabriele Lundeen** has worked with CBBAG as Volunteer Coordinator for several years. We are pleased that Gabriele has now joined the Board of Directors in this capacity. Thank you all for your desire to work with CBBAG.

I'd also like to take a moment and thank all the Board members and committee volunteers for their efforts over the past year. This structure of a "working board"



Betsy Palmer Eldridge (left) and Tini Miura at Miura's finishing workshop at the Toronto bindery. PHOTO | BARB HELANDER



Gabriele Lundeen (left) presents Ann Douglas with the CBBAG Lifetime Achievement Award. Joan Links and James MacCallum with their Certificates of Completion. PHOTOS | RANDY HELANDER

with committees has become quite productive, helped to streamline responsibilities, and ensures that more CBBAG members are getting involved with the

workings of the organization.

In closing, I am happy to report that the Board is now having its monthly meetings over the Internet via Skype, which will

significantly reduce the cost of conference calls.

Happy fall, everyone. Enjoy this issue of the magazine.

Mary McIntyre

It's coming! **Art of the Book 2013**

The Canadian Bookbinders and Book Artists Guild (CBBAG) is thrilled to announce it is in the planning stages of Art of the Book 2013, a juried exhibition of members' work.

It is not too early to begin planning your entry! Submissions are welcomed from the traditional to cutting edge design. The categories will be: Fine Binding; Papermaking; Paper Decorating; Calligraphy; Box Making; Fine Printing; and Artists' Books.

The exhibit will open in **Calgary, Alberta**, in **July 2013**. This is CBBAG's first ever opening outside Toronto! There will also be an associated conference and workshops. A full-colour printed catalogue will be produced by CBBAG and will depict selected works, plus binding descriptions and biographical statements by each artist. The show will be available to travel from January 2013 through 2014.

Up to three works per member may be submitted. The entry fee for one to three works will be \$30, and work must have been completed after January 1, 2010. (Non-members who wish to enter will have the price of a year membership added to their entry fee.)

Sincerely, *Art of the Book 2013 Committee*

- Full details and the Intent to Enter Form will be available online soon.
- To become a member of CBBAG, join online at: www.cbbag.ca/membership.html
- Questions or comments? Please contact: artofthebook2013@gmail.com

Book Arts *arts du livre* Canada

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