

The Artists

Ruth Bardenstein's books explore the way in which text, image, material and structure relate. "Each work in this exhibit is a meditation on its source and is an attempt to expand its resonance in visual and tactile ways." Text and letterforms become images in themselves, melding with verbal content to create their own mysteries and truths.

Kevin Bertram has carried the thought since he was a young child that books should fly. "The form, the way books open – books want to fly and escape. Why not let them?" Hence books become birds, caught in flight.

Jean Buescher Bartlett writes, "My books are material investigations into the immaterial. They are small, precious and intimate objects meant to be provocative and sensuous in the hand, to the eye and the mind. This work is often collaborative, drawing on the expertise of calligraphers, weavers, fellow papermakers, photographers, writers and letterpress printers. In each unique book or edition I strive to integrate all of the parts into a harmonious entity."

In her eighteen years as a bookmaker, Jean has produced eighteen editions, the edition sizes ranging from 10 to 135. The latest book, she writes, "I Was On The Way Up The Stairs To See You," has been seven years in the making and she values the way in which editioning slows her down and becomes a meditation for her.

Jean is an adjunct professor at the College for Creative Studies in Detroit and is a faculty member at Hollander's School of Book and Paper Arts.

Barbara Brown has made three books for the show. They are all bound as board books in a style invented by Daniel Kelm and known as wire-edged binding. The first, "The Word On The Street," is a tribute to her daughters and the vibrancy of New York City. "Prometheus" is the first in a series on the four elements and is inspired by a poem by Jane Brown. The third is a circular binding, "On Target, Five Concentric Poems," a collaboration with poet and artist Claudette Jocelyn Stern. She prints all books digitally from original drawings, photographs or prints.

Barbara is a member of the Washington Street Gallery and a faculty member at Hollander's School of Book and Paper Arts.

Larry Cressman's pieces reflect his feeling about different aspects of what a book might be. His work expresses his interest in print and mark making, even using stitching as a means to make a mark – in the end becoming three dimensional.

Larry is an installation artist who exhibits widely. He is a professor on the faculty of the University of Michigan Residential College.

Daniel Essig, a book artist from Asheville, NC, makes exquisite coptic bindings with wooden covers, a style first found in Ethiopia or North Africa around the 4th century. He also makes books that become large sculptural pieces constructed from materials such as wood, handmade flax paper, tin, velvet, linen thread, mica, nails and fossils.

"Some people," he writes, "use my books as journals and fill them up with words. I don't write in my books. For me, the books themselves are journals - visual records of my life and work. I am interested in traces of the past – ancient binding styles, altered books, distressed finishes and found objects. I've developed my style of bookmaking by learning from mentors and absorbing the influence of treasured objects from other cultures and other times."

Daniel works out of studios located at Grovewood Gallery and Cyclone Enterprises in Asheville, NC, and is a member of Ariel Gallery, a cooperative fine art gallery.

"Bridge Book" is featured on the cover of the Penland Book of Handmade Books.

Alvey Jones is a painter, printmaker and mixed-media artist who produces limited-edition books through OpenSky Press. He began making books in order to organize and display the material and ideas generated by his "traditional" artistic activities. To date he has incorporated his texts and images in over 30 different editions.

He also tries to push the limits of what a book can be in his 3-dimensional "wall books" by using cast hydrocal, metal, wood, cork, twigs and found objects combined with prints of his original art on a wide variety of materials including papyrus, exotic papers, Shrinky Dinks, plywood, film and fabric.

Alvey is a member of the Washington Street Gallery.

Julia Miller, a book conservator for many years, has studied historical bindings extensively and has curated two exhibits of historical bindings from the University of Michigan rare-book collections.

Julia collaborates with artists from other branches of book arts to produce limited-edition bindings. Most of her own workings show the influence of the structural and decorative elements found in her beloved historical bindings. "The 'touch of the hand,'" she writes, "is a connection back to the creation, and life, of a book, and to the maker."

Julia taught at the Paper and Book Intensive in 2006; in 2007 she will teach at the Oregon College of Arts and Crafts in Portland, the Montefiascone School in Montefiascone, Italy, and the Delaware Chapter of the Guild of Bookworkers in Philadelphia. She is also a faculty member at Hollander's School of Book and Paper Arts.

Stephanie Rowden: "'Saratoga Diary' is part of a larger sculpture installation that developed from my trips to and through the town of Saratoga Springs, NY. In 2000 I was commissioned by the Tang Teaching Museum and Art Gallery at Skidmore College to create an audio portrait of Saratoga Springs, a town that has, among other things, a long history as a Victorian watering hole and as home to the oldest thoroughbred horse track in the country. Over the course of four seasons I traveled in search of lively talkers and great sounds. To my delight, I found both. As with all my projects, the many hours of voice and sounds I recorded were distilled to their most lyrical moments. The project became a kind of sonic meditation on my visits, a collection of small moments and aural keepsakes. The framed panels that comprise the project evoke the intimate experience of reading, with each opening into a world in which image and text live in the imagination, much like memory itself."

Stephanie Rowden is an installation artist with a special interest in sound. She is on the faculty at the School of Art & Design at the University of Michigan.

Pati Scobey exhibits three books in this show. Two are versions of "Deep Calls," which are entirely visual, containing layers of relief-printed images. The book format of the two has taken its inspiration from the ancient Chinese book form known as the slip book. "A Beckoning," the third, includes letterpress text with relief-printed visual images, which work to create a narrative quality. Extended, the book is approximately 8 feet long.

Pati has taught extensively at workshops around the country and is on the faculty at Hollander's School of Book and Paper Arts.

beyond words: a celebration of book arts in 2007

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