

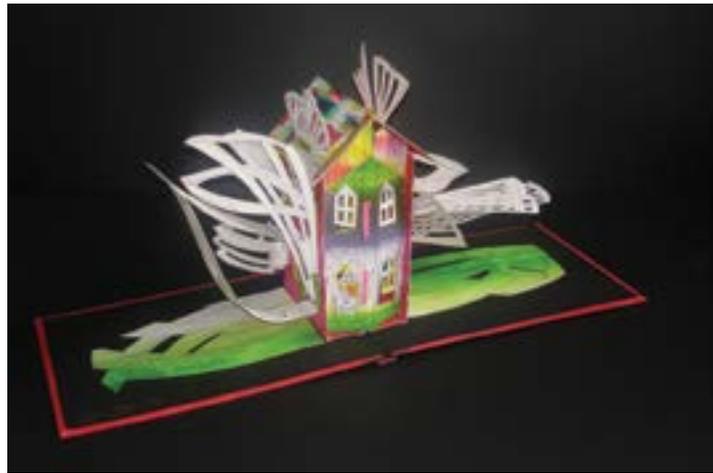


Mr Punch  
occupies the puppeteer's right hand

# OUTSIDE THE MARGINS

# BOOK ARTS & THE COLLECTION OF BETTY AND EDGAR SWEREN

Janet Maher



Paul Johnson, pop-up house book

## OUTSIDE THE MARGINS

Artists' Books from the Collection of  
Betty & Edgar Sweren

Julio Fine Arts Gallery  
February 15 – April 3, 2016

&

Contemporary Artists' Books

Loyola-Notre Dame Library  
February 22 – April 3, 2016

# BOOK ARTS & THE COLLECTION OF BETTY AND EDGAR SWEREN

*Whence did the wondrous, mystic art arise, of painting speech and speaking to the eyes? That we, by tracing magic lines are taught how to embody and color thought?*

William Massey, *The Origin and Progress of English Letter*, London 1763

The Julio Fine Arts Gallery and the Fine Arts Department wish to thank Betty and Edgar Sweren for their generous loan of the artists' books presented in *Outside the Margins*. Over the course of the last year I have had the very great pleasure of working with Betty Sweren and witnessing her passion for this art form and her extensive knowledge of the art and artists whose work she and Dr. Sweren have collected. Betty studied with renowned calligraphers Donald Jackson, Sheila Waters and with master papermaker, Richard Hungerford, with whom she made her book, *The Snake*. At Pyramid Atlantic she became familiar with all aspects of bookmaking. *The Snake* is in the collections of rare book libraries at the National Gallery of Art, the Walters Art Museum, the National Museum for Women in the Arts, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and many universities.

Thanks to Janet Maher for her enthusiasm for artists' books which ignited my interest in this project.

Kim Banister, Gallery Director  
Julio Fine Arts Gallery

Cover art from *The Left-handed Punch* by Ron King

Humans trace an artistic history from hidden caves filled with images, pictographs and hieroglyphs, carvings and formations of clay, stone, ivory, precious metals and architecture, and images and words on sheets of papyrus, animal skins, silk and paper. Our predecessors beautified their surroundings, communicated across cultures and preserved existing knowledge for posterity. The finesse of writing evolved, leading to the invention of wooden, then metal, type and the skill of block, letterpress and other forms of printing. The book, from scroll to codex, had come fully into its own by the middle of the first century CE. By the early twenty-first century the book has acquired a vast history, replete with innovators, masters, and an ever-expanding body of practitioners who have taken the form to extraordinary levels.

Whether the focus was the content, image or physicality of the book, it increasingly became a vehicle for artistic expression. Given the turmoil of wars, natural devastations and the fragility of the materials used to create them, it is a marvel that so many ancient examples of the book still exist throughout the world.

Contemporary book artists take their inspiration from what has come before, imbuing their bookworks with the spirit of the present while they invent new techniques. An engagement on the part of the viewer that is similar to reading, or a mere metaphor to the concept of common book structure may be the only vestiges remaining in some contemporary artist bookworks. While the outer artistic reaches of that which can constitute a book continues to broaden in our interdisciplinary digital



*The Book of Betty: Eight to Celebrate Eighty* made by Suzanne Moore, poetry by Betty Sweren

age, references to ancient practices also continue to thrive, as evidenced by Loyola University's exhibition *Outside the Margins, Artists' Books From the Betty & Edgar Sweren Collection*.

With the Sweren collection, the accompanying exhibition of books by regional artists, *Contemporary Artists' Books*, at the Loyola/Notre Dame Library Gallery, and a lecture and two workshops by the illustrious Paul Johnson, Loyola University Maryland has a unique opportunity to introduce the community to a world of creativity in an art form that continues to surpass and reinvent itself, exciting its audiences, generation after generation.



## THE SWERENS

Arts and Crafts era designer William Morris famously stated “have nothing in your houses that you do not know to be useful, or believe to be beautiful.”<sup>i</sup> Through their phenomenal collection of art, crafts and artifacts Dr. Edgar Sweren and his wife, Betty, have extended this way of living to include an extra component—and *without which you have developed a friendship with the maker*. Perhaps it is their open-hearted spirits, driven by Betty's passion to learn one art form after another through personal instruction, that have created a life in which relationships and patronage of the arts have become a seamless whole. The Swerens' warm and inviting home is simultaneously a museum in which two-and three-dimensional artworks of all kinds, including those by such luminaries as George Nakashima and Dale Chihuly, coexist with photographs of family and friends that represent a lifetime of shared experiences.

We are fortunate that Betty and Edgar have shared selections from their collection of approximately 900 artist books and bookworks. To choose from such a wealth of the finest examples of the form was daunting, however, these exhibited touch upon a wide range of book arts history, each containing unique characteristics. It would be a disservice not to also place them in context with the personal connections that entwine the artists with the Swerens.

In the late 1960s Betty offered to help Edgar prepare for his orthodontic board examination by writing labels on the many patient records he had to submit. Since Betty had no training in lettering skills, she looked for a quick way to improve before starting such an important project, and discovered the world of book arts through the “learn calligraphy” manuals she found. Intrigued by the creative possibilities of “beautiful writing” and its place in the wider field of making books, Betty decided to seek more formal instruction and was fortunate to meet the highly regarded English calligrapher Sheila Waters,

who had recently moved to Bethesda, Maryland. Waters was planning to conduct private classes in her home. Betty studied traditional calligraphic forms with her and joined the Society of Scribes and Illuminators. Through that organization she applied and was accepted in the first American workshop conducted at the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1973 by world-renowned English calligrapher Donald Jackson (now, of *Saint John's Bible* fame). There she was introduced to Jackson's more dynamic and contemporary way of “painting speech” and formed the nucleus of an enduring friendship between the Sweren and Jackson families.

Around this time, artist Helen Frederick arrived in Baltimore and was setting up a studio at the former Crown, Cork and Seal building, where she would teach papermaking and printmaking. (Now called the Cork Factory, this Station North area six-story building was the first artist-owned loft and studio combination in Baltimore, the current residents having formed a collective limited partnership.) Frederick also taught classes at the Maryland Institute College of Art while she established her then fledgling studio, to be named Pyramid Atlantic. After her first papermaking experience with Frederick, Betty was “hooked.” She signed on as an avid student and volunteer board member. Her experience in fund-raising was invaluable, and Betty soon became president of the Pyramid Atlantic Board of Directors, as the studio attained non-profit status. For three years after Frederick moved the business to Tacoma Park, Maryland, Betty was able to keep the Baltimore studio open for local artists.

Pyramid Atlantic then moved to Riverdale in the 1990s and finally to Silver Spring in 2004, where Frederick turned over the reigns on her creation. For about three decades Helen Frederick balanced two interconnected roles, founding and artistic director of Pyramid Atlantic Art Center and Professor of Art at George Mason University, where she continues to be involved in all things book, paper, and print. Frederick, with the help of many loyal friends, volunteers and supporters, established Pyramid as an



Betty Sweren in her library with *The Book of Betty: Eight to Celebrate Eighty* made by Suzanne Moore

important center for collaborative learning and teaching. Through memberships, newsletters, fundraisers and exhibitions, those interested in printmaking, book arts, papermaking and other related special topics came to learn about the place, whether they lived in the area or not. A visiting artist program, internships, and regular schedule of workshops fostered a creative hub of activity. Artists and craftsmen who were traveling for other reasons often stopped in to see what was going on, sometimes returning to offer their own workshops.

As a regular workshop participant, member artist and primary board member, Betty met everyone who worked at Pyramid, continuing to establish friendships. Altogether, Betty remained connected to Pyramid Atlantic for about twenty years. Through Pyramid she also became involved with the National Museum of Women in the Arts, helping to choose the annual Library Fellows Award which supported one artist's book to be printed in an edition and sold through the museum. (With the retirement of Curator of Book Arts, Krystyna Wasserman, this program went into hiatus in 2012.)

The Swerens began serious book collecting in 1975 with their first purchase from Charlene Garry, founder of England's Basilisk Press. It was a facsimile of William Morris's 1896 Kelmscott Press publication, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, featuring tipped-in images by Edward Burne-Jones, with Morris designed fabric on the cover. Produced as a fine product in keeping with the highest level of paper, printing and book craftsmanship, the Arts and Crafts style pages merged text with ornamentation, perfection in every detail. The facsimile includes a companion publication explaining particulars about the project, the two books housed in a protective case. The overall appearance is akin to the type of book associated with the early *livres d'artistes*. The Swerens' set is number 75 of only 500 produced for sale. Garry continued to send the Swerens information about available publications through her press and book catalogue, which introduced them to John Crombie's light-hearted Kickshaws Press, and beautiful work produced by Rampant Lions Press. Sadly, Basilisk Press closed in the late 1980s.

When Joshua Heller Rare Books, Inc. established business in Washington, D.C., the Swerens met Josh and Phyllis Heller and were so impressed by their knowledge and dedication that they became the principal source for the Swerens' artist book purchases. The Hellers and Swerens developed a close friendship, often sharing dinners together when the artists the Hellers represented came to town for visits. Paul Johnson, Ken Campbell, Ron King, Clare Van Vliet, Carol Schwartzott, Susan Allix and calligrapher Suzanne Moore, along with many of the other artists in this exhibition likewise joined the Swerens' growing list of friends. Numerous shared instances of being houseguests during travel, and extended visits on either side of the Atlantic Ocean deepened these bonds.

While the Swerens continued to purchase works, they reached out to the Baltimore community by sharing their book collection through exhibitions, tours and field trips. When Will Noel, Curator of Manuscripts and Rare Books at the Walters Art Museum, asked to show works from the Swerens collection for an exhibition entitled "The Artful Book" (2002), Betty sought assistance with organizing and cataloguing the items chosen for this special contemporary show. The show proved to be so popular that the Walters extended the run an extra month. Recent Maryland Institute College of Art graduate Jodi Hoover, former intern at Pyramid Atlantic, took on the job of cataloguing the works for the Walters exhibition. She discovered more and more books throughout the house in surprise places, a sheer "treasure trove." This regular work continued almost another five years, and Hoover is fondly considered "Curator in Charge" of the Swerens collection. She assists in myriad ways, cataloging all the archival material for the couple's art collection. Hoover assists Betty in hosting groups that come to see the books in the Swerens' home library, expertly handling and moving them for viewing and adding details to the rich interconnected stories that accompany each one.



Kelmscott Press, *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*

## ◆ SOME EARLY BOOK ARTS HISTORY AND "FIRSTS"

An anonymous 87-year old benefactor from Macedonia brought to public awareness what is considered by some to be the oldest book in the world, dating to about 600 BCE. Comprised of six thin gold sheets bound with ring fasteners, weighing just over twenty-four carats, this artifact was donated in 2003 to the National Museum of History, Sofia, Bulgaria. The book contains images and text in the now-defunct language of Etruscan. It was found in western Bulgaria near the Struma River, in a tomb revealed during excavation for a canal.

In ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome early books were made from the papyrus plant, which can grow to sixteen feet high. Once the woody outer layer of the top of a stalk was removed, the inside, which oozed a liquid gum, was sliced into even strips. These were soaked in water for a few days, allowing the strips to become pliable. They were then laid slightly overlapping each other in a row, with another layer placed in

the opposite direction on top. Pressed together, the two layers were left to dry, thus naturally becoming “glued” together. Sheets could easily be rolled into scrolls for storage.

Legend surrounds a glorious library and center of culture and learning created by the Egyptian king Ptolemy II in the early third century BCE. Based upon one that had existed in Athens, Ptolemy’s library and museum of Alexandria was an architectural feat, containing areas for lectures, dining, walking through gardens and gathering to share the wealth of Egyptian, Greek, Middle Eastern and Indian classical texts, poetry, plays, scholarship and histories of all kinds that were amassed there. In 235 BCE Ptolemy III created a second library, called the Temple of Serapeum. Together, the libraries were thought to have contained from 300,000 to 700,000 scrolls, yet by the mid-seventh century CE they were gone. (Considered to have been among the seven wonders of the ancient world, the center of learning in Alexandria may have been destroyed in four stages from 48 BCE forward; however, there is no proof for any of the hypotheses regarding its loss. Some credit accidental destruction during the Roman Civil Wars, others point to a Christian mob in 391 CE, while there are those who consider simply the neglect and decay from weather and insects over the centuries.)

In addition to rolled papyrus texts, the Greeks and Romans used waxed wooden tablets tied together or held in place with hinges for some of their recordings. The Romans are credited with creating the form of the western-style book as we know it. By about 300 CE they began to fold a papyrus sheet in half, making a folio. Several of these were stacked in a group and folded together, forming a *quire* (also known as a *signature*), which, when stitched through the shared centers, functioned as a book. This turn-the-page structure came to be called a *codex*. The stitching of several quires, with the front and back covers incorporated into the sewing from the beginning and at the end was known as *coptic*, named for the early Christian Egyptian language. These bindings revealed chains of stitches along the spine. The Coptic Museum, Cairo, and the Morgan Library and Museum, New York hold the earliest collections of bound codices, the *Nag Hammadi*, discovered in Egypt and dating from the early fourth century.

When Christianity came to the Druidic land of the Irish in the fifth century, poets, historians and storytellers worked with monks to create an Irish alphabet from Latin. Scribes in the monasteries brought a formerly oral tradition into written form as they preserved Irish scholarship and lore. Monks began to transcribe all the texts they could find. They began the tradition of the illuminated manuscript, beginning chapters with a large decorated letter. Interlacing ornamentation that occurred throughout these pages also became a highly developed form of decorative expression in other ceremonial objects and jewelry.

Saint Columcille (Colum, Columba, 521-597 CE), founder of hundreds of churches and monasteries

throughout Ireland (and that of Iona, Scotland), was a highly productive scribe throughout his life. More than 300 books are attributed to him. Ireland’s oldest book, a collection of psalms called *An Cathach*, dating to c. 600 A.D. or earlier, remains associated with Columcille, perhaps having been created in honor of him after his death. With their massive intertwining embellishments and illustrations setting an exquisite standard, both *The Book of Durrow* (c. 675/680 CE) and the *Book of Kells* (c. 790 CE) are attributed to Columcille’s monks. To Northumbria-born (near the monastery of Lindisfarne, between northwest England and southern Scotland) Saint Cuthbert is credited with what was once thought to be the oldest existing Western book, the *Stonyhurst Gospel*, now called the *Saint Cuthbert Gospel* (c. 698 CE or later). The covers were decorated with interlaced raised cords beneath its leather, its Celtic style decoration revealing earlier Irish-influenced aesthetics. The *Saint Cuthbert Gospel* is in the collection of the British Library.

The pages of ancient Western manuscripts and books were made of vellum—laboriously scraped and prepared skins of young animals. Covers were a combination of wood and leather in different styles and for different purposes. Books carried frequently were sometimes made with long leather “tails” that could be wrapped over one’s belt, allowing the book to dangle at one’s side. Other covers were engraved in exemplary leather and metal work over wooden boards and embedded with rare gemstones. Some were housed within ornate and bejeweled boxes (*shrines*). The early books that remain from many cultures were protected, hidden, stolen and repossessed at great cost and loss of life. Books were among the trophies of war in the eighth century CE claimed by the Vikings who began raiding monasteries, where a country’s wealth was concentrated.

Although papermaking had begun earlier in China, the Emperor’s papermaker, Ts’ai Lun, developed the best way to pass on knowledge about the process, codifying the system in 105 CE. Within 300 years paper was also being made and used in India. Wooden type had been invented in China by about 650 CE, and Buddhist scrolls were also being mass produced. By 800 CE papermaking had reached the Islamic regions. Noted author and historian, Bamber Gascoigne, attributed Korea as the country that produced the first printed work on paper, a one-page Buddhist sutra, 750 CE.<sup>iii</sup>

The sacred Mogao Caves or Caves of the Thousand Buddhas in Dunhuang, China dating to 366 CE, were comprised of 600 interior temples covered with many carvings and paintings on the walls and on silk, along with more than 10,000 manuscripts. Considered the earliest printed book, *The Diamond Sutra*, by Wang Chieh, dated 11 May 868 CE, was found in a hidden underground library there in 1899. Meticulously carved wood block characters and images covered just over sixteen feet of scrolled paper made from seven strips, evidence of the invention of repeatable typographic and imagery printing.

The oldest complete Torah scroll, held in the collection of the University of Bologna, Italy, was carbon-dated to 1155-1225 CE. The Hebrew text was written in the manner of the Babylonians and had not followed twelfth century rules about the re-copying of sacred Jewish scrolls. Those clues lead to further research into the scroll, miss-dated since 1889. An invaluable discovery near Temple Mount, in old Jerusalem, revealed in 2013 an earlier Jewish prayer book, from c. 840 CE. This will be displayed in Washington, D.C., in a new Museum of the Bible, due to be completed in 2017.

Although the art of the book continued to flourish in every culture, it was not until about 1250 CE that Europeans became aware of China's printed money and playing cards, and began to learn to make paper. Printing with type continued to develop using calligraphic forms made with fired clay and glue. In mid-eleventh century China, Pi Sheng was actively printing in this way. Buddhist teachings called the *Jikji*, were printed with metal type in Korea in 1377.

Many western printers experimented with creating and printing with metal moveable type. After many years of experimentation, metalsmith Johannes Gutenberg (c. 1398-1468, Mainz, Germany), successfully made the best alloys to produce type that could withstand longer printing runs than anyone else had. He also adapted the printing press to successfully print this type, and formulated the best ink to use that would be neither too sticky nor dry too quickly. This consistency of technical means enabled him to produce his c. 1454 or 1455 publication of the forty-two line *Gutenberg Bible*. The run of the two-volume Latin text was about 135 fine Italian paper copies with about forty-five made in the tradition manner, using calfskin vellum, all traditionally bound. Some owners had their copies modified with additional color and handwork after the fact. Forty-eight versions of the *Gutenberg Bible*, some only fragments, exist today. Knowledge of papermaking having finally arrived into Western Europe, combined with this advancement in printing, made possible a rapid and widespread use of printing on paper as others learned Gutenberg's methods.



The Ransom Center's copy of the *Gutenberg Bible*

## THE SAINT JOHN'S BIBLE

Through the generosity of two families, Loyola University Maryland is fortunate to own one of the 299 full-sized signed and numbered printed facsimiles produced of the *Saint John's Bible*, the Heritage Edition. (The family of Nicholas B. Mangione donated the bible. The family of Julie Kline Rybczynski financed a permanent presentation and exhibition space for it in the Loyola/Notre Dame Library. Viewing of the pages is possible by appointment.)

Begun in 1998, the *Saint John's Bible*, its facsimilies, trade reproductions and fine art prints of selected images are the result of a complex multi-million dollar project. The contemporary fully handmade bible incorporating the ancient traditions is the only one created this way since the fifteenth century. It was envisioned by internationally recognized master calligrapher and scribe for the House of Lords (and Queen Elizabeth II), Englishman Donald Jackson. He directed a group of twenty-three professional scribes, artists and assistants in producing an Old and New Testament bible that is intended to be consistent with the beliefs of all Christians. The work, made under the generous auspices of the Benedictine Saint John's Abbey and University community, in Collegeville, Minnesota, is so exquisite that it has been praised as "America's *Book of Kells*."<sup>iv</sup>

Jackson designed a new calligraphic script (Jacksonian) for the project and directed five additional professional calligraphers to work on the pages with him. Some came to his scriptorium in Wales where he and his wife have lived for many years. Others, including American Suzanne Moore, worked at long distance in their own studios. Among the team, Thomas Ingmire and Moore were significant contributors as illuminators. Chris Tomlin was hired for his specialty in drawing creatures of the natural world.

Ancient and traditional processes involved the hand-cutting and preparing of different type of birds' feathers for writing quills, hand-ground minerals to create some of the paints, prepared Italian calfskin from an English parchment company in business since the 1860s, precious metal gilding in the illuminations and illustrations, and the incorporation of nineteenth century inks that Jackson had purchased many years earlier. Artists were allowed freedom to creatively interpret historic imagery and



The *St. John's Bible* at Loyola-Notre Dame Library

to include contemporary content, such as Indian bedspreads, viruses, geological forms, imagery native to Minnesota, satellite images from outer space and visual references to humans' destructive actions on earth. Each page spread reveals calligraphy and art combinations designed to be viewed as harmonious compositions.

The text of each page took as much as thirteen hours to scribe. The bible is organized into the sections, *Pentateuch, Historical Books, Wisdom Books, Psalms, Prophets, Gospels & Acts, and Letters & Revelation*, resulting in seven separate volumes, each two feet tall and three feet wide (opened). In addition to the original and the Heritage Edition, which was printed as closely as possible to replicate the precious materials used in the original, twelve special versions, *Apostles*, were made for specific major institutions, such as the Vatican.

Since 2005 the as-yet-unbound original bible has been traveling internationally for exhibitions in which upright pages are displayed between glass as open folios, allowing viewers to see both fronts and backs (recto/verso) of each. The many materials and processes used are also displayed and explained. Upon its return, the bible's permanent home will be in a new gallery within the Hill Museum & Manuscript Gallery at Saint John's, due to open next year. Welsh oak boards will be used for the covers of the original bible when it is bound. The spine will be covered in goatskin, and the books will close with stainless steel fasteners.

The Heritage Edition of the Saint John's Bible represents the best lithographic fine art printing ever produced, even to the extent of using ultraviolet light in the process to prevent any fading. The work contains 1,150 pages and 160 individualized illuminations on heavyweight uncoated cotton paper. Each copy is hand-bound in red embossed leather, detailed with gold foil, and held together with a silver clasp. A clamshell box contains and protects each set, the volumes of which individually weigh as much as thirty-five pounds.

Pope Francis has announced that Donald Jackson will be receiving a Papal Knighthood for this project. Ceremonies will be held next June at Westminster Cathedral, London.



## AN ABBREVIATED ARTISTS' BOOK TIMELINE TO THE PRESENT<sup>v</sup>

The works of William Blake (1757-1827, London, England) may be regarded as the first artist's books, in which images and texts were conceived in harmony and pages were linked in sequence to create a visual experience. Blake was not only the artist; he also designed and invented a relief-etching process to allow him to print his pages. His wife, Mary Catherine Boucher, helped in the laborious hand inking and printing and applied hand coloring afterwards, making each print unique.

With the advent of his 1818 "chemical printing," for which Aloys Senefelder is credited as the inventor of stone lithography, a revolution in the graphic arts began. Professional master printers were eager to collaborate with artists in order to explore the possibilities of the new medium. Toulouse Lautrec and his contemporaries exemplified the new tradition of the artist-printer collaboration. Artists created imagery without needing to understand the print process, and master printers did whatever was necessary to technically ensure a successful print. This type of collaboration, resurrected at the end of the 1950s by pioneer, June Wayne, who founded the training facility, Tamarind Lithography Workshop, in Los Angeles (later, Tamarind Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico), continues today.

In addition to the burgeoning art of editioned prints, publishing projects available to wealthy collectors featured combinations of well-known writers and artists. France's art dealer Ambroise Vollard (1866-1939), in support of the works of artists he promoted into prominence, produced *livres de peintures* or *livres d'artistes*, which took the concept of illustration to new heights. When the poet Apollinaire was paired with artist Andre Duran, or Max Jacob with Juan Gris, for example, the layout of the words and accompanying art were conceived in book format, the artist often creating in response to the text, and the imagery often spanning two open pages. Complex printing on fine paper, masterfully bound *livres d'artistes* included many of the major artists and sculptors of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The contemporary *Saint John's Bible* might also be considered in this context, serving, perhaps, as the most elaborate and expensive *livre d'artiste* ever produced.

With the influence of Surrealism and Dada, manifestos challenging hierarchies and conventions, the increasing popularity of collage and chance, a new tributary within the stream of book arts history emerged in the early twentieth century. Marcel Duchamp's (1887-1968) *Green Box* (1934) in which he amassed ninety-four elements of ephemera related to the ideas that influenced his 1915-1923 creation, *The Bride Stripped Bare By Her Bachelors, Even (The Large Glass)* became a touchstone to a more illusive



Claire Van Vliet, *Circulus Sapiente (Circle of Wisdom)*

means to making art. While Duchamp likely was not concerned how his *Green Box* would be received, generations later it was embraced within what was becoming a new genre—*artists' books*. Despite being a direct translation of the French phrase, the concept was entirely different in these books, made to be egalitarian and experimental. Was it necessary to bind pages together in order to create a book? Could a box or any other type of container be considered a book? What if a viewer was invited to piece a concept together as if “reading” it? Must there be a regular sequence from left to right or any direction in viewing? Many such questions arose as the genre became more inventive and its audience more accepting.

Enter Pop Art of the 1950s, Happenings, performances, protests and poetry of the 1960s, and the Feminist Art Movement of the 1970s. Each added to the mix of materials not previously sanctioned as “OK to use” in “High” art. A rejection of materialism and bureaucracy, the urge to focus upon ideas instead of the creation of expensive objects (or objects at all), and to engage as

many people as possible came to the fore. Using more common printing processes such as offset, or hand manipulated quick copy machines, post-modern artists' books, pamphlets, stickers and ephemera were produced in massive quantities and made available cheaply or given away to the public at large. Like leaflets and flyers produced by political activists, this type of art activity was much about spreading messages democratically, addressing challenging issues, ultimately blurring the boundaries between art making and the art of life. The practice of *Mail Art* likewise emerged, in which practitioners would make art that challenged the concept of what could be sent with attached postage through what we now call “snail mail.”

While experimentation and rule breaking took hold, the disciplined crafts and traditions associated with bookmaking also continued along apace. Masters such as Canadian Claire Van Vliet founded her Janus Press in San Diego, California, in 1955, relocating to Vermont in 1966. A multi-talented book designer, printmaker and papermaker (including inventive pulp-painting), former college professor, one of Van Vliet's distinctions is her preference for using only interwoven and interlocking methods to contain the pages of her books. Intricately designed and constructed, they contain no stitching or gluing. She

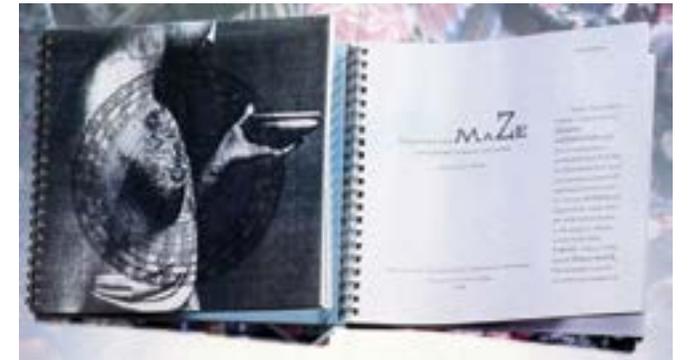
collaborates with other artists (such as papermaker Kathryn Clark, of Twinrocker Papers and printmaker Ruth Fine) and well-known writers (such as Seamus Heaney and Denise Levertov). In 1989 she received a MacArthur Fellowship for her leadership in this field.

Increasingly, more artists began to see the book as an alternative exhibition space. In 1966 Mel Bochner presented drawings copied on a Xerox machine compiled in loose-leaf notebooks for a show at the School of the Visual Arts in New York. The Museum of Modern Art produced a book from questionnaire responses by artists (*Information*, 1970).

Crafts and skills relegated to the realm of hobbies or “women's work” actively came into use. Today there is hardly anything that could not be considered as viable as traditional art materials with which to create. Art that invited participation and generally shook things up, and new groups of artists defined that transition. Several were involved in a movement called Fluxus (1959-1978). Among these were: Dieter Roth's (Diter Rot) experimenting with book forms in the 1950s and early 1960s; Allan Kaprow (“the James Dean of the art world”<sup>vi</sup>), leader of spontaneous Happenings, George Maciunas, John Cage, Dick Higgins (Something Else Press), Alison Knowles, Merce Cunningham and others. Andy Warhol and the phenomenon of and productions within his Factory spanned two decades in which he took Fluxus' “intermedia” experimentations to entirely new dimensions. The existence of Miriam Shapiro and Judy Chicago's Feminist Art Program at Cal Arts (1971), followed by Judy Chicago, Sheila DeBretteville and Arlene Raven's Feminist Art Workshop in Los Angeles (1973), wherein personal experience, large group collaboration, women-oriented and civic issues-oriented content ruled, further challenged the boundaries of what could be considered Art. The continuous endeavors of artists who emerged from these branches of the Duchampian root questioned the High Art dialogue in new ways and demanded a seat at the table. Artist's books were heralded in, full steam ahead.

Susan E. King, an early fan of Judy Chicago, left New Mexico for the Feminist Studio Workshop and founded her own Paradise Press after training at the Women's Graphic Center in Los Angeles. King's books are among those of noted importance in the early history of contemporary book arts.

In 1974, Art Metropole was begun in Canada. It



Susan King, *Treading the Maze*, 1993

still serves as an outlet for and archive of artists' books and related materials. Ulises Carrión and his friend, Aart van Barneveld, established a bookshop in Amsterdam called Other Books and So in 1975 (through 1978) that sold books by artists. That year The Center for Book Arts was founded in New York by Richard Minsky to preserve the crafts of bookmaking. It remains a vital teaching center for students and professionals.

In 1976 teacher, book and performance artist, Martha Wilson, began Franklin Furnace in New York City. It became the home of more than 13,500 works by more than 500 artists. Nearby, Printed Matter was established six months later as a selective publisher of artists' books and an outlet for artists to sell their affordable books printed in editions. It remains the primary retail space for artists' books in the United States today.

Although Franklin Furnace initially also sold artist books, Wilson transferred her retail stock to Printed Matter, effectively separating the two as archive-exhibition-performance space and bookstore, respectively. In 1993 the collection of Franklin Furnace was sold to the Museum of Modern Art, which allowed the purchase of the building. Wilson remains as the Founding Director of this important place "On A Mission To Make The World Safe for Avant-Garde Art."<sup>vii</sup>

The highly influential Nexus Press, founded in 1977 in Alabama with Michael Goodman as its first director, emerged as an extension of a photography cooperative and performance venue that had begun in 1973. The press produced a wealth of cutting-edge artists books through 2003, when it closed.

During the eighties, book arts became a quickly growing art form. Through a litany of book professionals, professors and centers concepts and skills were passed on to those who, in turn, became recognized for their mastery in various aspects of the book. An enormous contemporary tree has become established with branches of teachers that extend beyond measure as book arts and artist books have become a given within the art world.<sup>viii</sup>

Primary among them is Hedi Kyle, inventor of many structures that have been commonly taught in bookmaking workshops for decades. From 1986 to 2003 Kyle was Head Conservator of the American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, after much previous work in books and preservation in New York. With expert in historic papermaking, Timothy Barrett, Kyle began the Paper and Book Intensive (PBI) in 1983. PBI has continued every summer since, taking place in a different location as students and professionals come together for two weeks to participate in courses taught by many of the best teachers, conservators and book artists in the world. A rich exchange of ideas, techniques and camaraderie occurs among the groups that work together, share meals and relax between focused daily activities. Through

PBI life-long working friendships have become established among an ever-increasing network. Awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2009 as an "internationally recognized master craftsman and paper historian who is preserving and enhancing the art of hand-papermaking through his work as a practitioner, scholar, and teacher,"<sup>ix</sup> Barrett is the founding director of Center for the Book, University of Iowa.

One of Kyle's great students is Hoboken-based boxmaker Barbara Mauriello. She has been a regular teacher in many locations over the past twenty years, including at PBI and the Center for Book Arts, where she first learned about book arts and is on the faculty. Trained as a painter, Mauriello brings expressive color into her book and box projects, produced for clients through Granden Press, where she works with printer Barbara Henry.

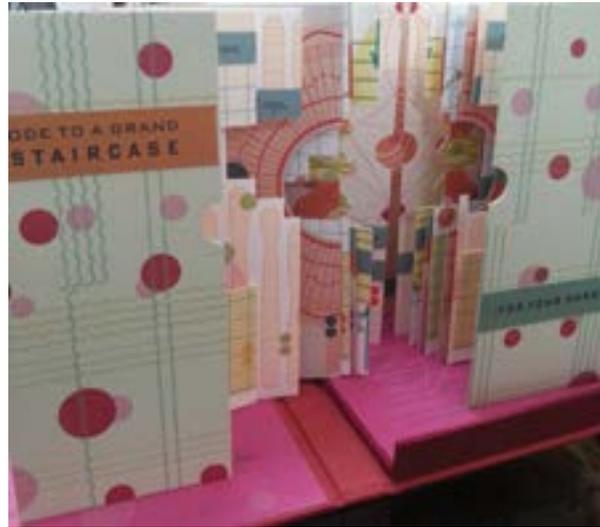
Producing books through her Triangular Press since 1979, Barbara Tetenbaum is the Department Head of Book Arts at Oregon College of Art and Craft, Portland. Also a regular teacher at PBI, Tetenbaum was one of the lucky students of Walter Hamady, proprietor of Perishable Press, teacher of papermaking, letterpress printmaking and bookmaking for more than thirty years at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. An expert in letterpress printing, Tetenbaum has achieved a distinguished career. She has received several honors and grants and regularly exhibits her book productions. Among her presentations was a TED Talk entitled, *The Artist Book as a Space for Women's Voices and Women's Work*. Tetenbaum's and many other book artists' works are sold through Vamp & Tramp, Booksellers, LLC, based in Birmingham, Alabama.

Between October 1994 and January 1995 the Museum of Modern Art, New York, exhibited an historic collection of 140 *livres d'artistes* and classics that explained the evolution of the illustrated book. Curated, with a large catalogue by MOMA's Riva Castleman, *A Century of Artists Books* featured the many modern



Hedi Kyle, *Alphabet*, flag book, c.1990

artists who participated in projects involving the book, leading to the birth of the artist's book, which was based upon ideas. In this exhibition Edward Ruscha's 1963 photographic sequence of the *Twentysix Gasoline Stations* that he passed when traveling from his home in California to his parents' in Oklahoma, conceived and produced as a book, served as an example of what was to come.



Juli Chen and Barbara Tetenbaum, *Ode to a Grand Staircase (For Four Hands)*, 2001

With the publication of Joan Lyon's *Artists' Books: A Critical Anthology and Sourcebook*, in 1985 the first book addressing the topic of book arts formed the foundation for future scholarship. Two decades earlier Dick Higgins had stated, "A book, in its purest form, is a phenomenon of space and time and dimensionality that is unique unto itself. Every time we turn the page, the previous page passes into our past and we are confronted by a new world."<sup>x</sup> Still, throughout the eighties book arts seemed unknown except to artists and interested arts professionals making, collecting and writing about them. Explanations continued to be necessary, even after Lyon's book had seemed to define the form once and for all. This publication, however, introduced many as yet unfamiliar artists who were helping to invent the possibilities within the genre. The photographs spoke volumes to artists eager to see what

others were doing. Among those represented were Keith Smith and other former students of the Visual Studies Workshop, New York.

Since 1967 Smith had been making single copy artist books, numbering them in sequence as he attempted with each to solve a different problem he had posed for himself. With his *Structure of the Visual Book*, (1984) he offered the first "how-to" book about the form, perhaps generating more excitement with this book than any other he had produced. His now eight books-about-books, as he calls them (two reissued with additions, another in five volumes), are essential texts for anyone wishing to advance into more complex skills, which, ironically, lead one back to early ancient practices. Award-winning Smith has become an indelible name in the world of book arts.

Susan Allix has been creating deluxe intaglio and relief prints, drawing and collage and inlay combinations within the form of the book since 1973. Her masterful design, the hand-setting and printing of her own type and creation of astounding mixed media covers and boxes, has earned Allix praise as Great Britain's premiere book artist. Each of her publications are uniquely creative examples of precision craftsmanship.

That Daniel E. Kelm was once a chemistry professor is no surprise upon observing the perfection of

his intricate constructions, books and bindings. His invention of wire edge binding allowed the pages of a book to move in several directions, creating alternate visual possibilities when fully opened. His Wide Awake Garage studio has been in existence since 1983 in Easthampton, Massachusetts. He has been teaching in his Garage Annex School for Book Arts, sharing his knowledge widely since 1990, and produced an extraordinary book in collaboration with Suzanne Moore in 1991 (*A Maze in Book*).

Book artists discovered award-winning Englishman Paul Johnson whose 1992 publication, *A Book of One's Own*, connected childrens' literacy development to visual skills that could be strengthened through artmaking, specifically books. While serving a much greater purpose on behalf of children, book artists could incorporate his creative, clearly explained structures into their sophisticated ideas at a time when pop-up instructional books were limited and far-between. Now an internationally recognized teacher and exhibiting artist whose wildly colorful, inventive and increasingly complexly constructed works are in major collections, Johnson is the author of fifteen "how-to" pop-up books. His influence abounds as a teacher and book artist.

Professor, curator and book artist, Carol Barton, may carry the mantle of pop-up master in the United States, as she has become recognized in her own right for her work in paper engineering. Among her many individual artist books is her series of "how-to" books. *The Pocket Paper Engineer* has been published in three volumes, with additional pop-out packages replicating the pages, should you not want to actually cut and fold your copies of the books.

Trained as a sculptor in the late 1970s, Susan Share's work transitioned to books when she trained in book restoration in New York, taught in major schools and museums and worked as an artist over the next twenty years developing her unique hybrid concepts. Since the late 1990s she has been known as an extraordinary performance book artist. The complexity of her inventive structures evolved to full-body costumes that would flutter and unfold, becoming transformed through her movements. Since 1997 Share has lived in Anchorage, Alaska.

Working on a smaller scale, Julie Chen also embraced the interactive and broadly three-



Carol Barton, *Tunnel Map*, 1986



Juli Chen, *Listening*, 1992

dimensional potential of the book, in uniquely subtle and refined executions. One of her books was possible to wear like a crown. Chen's Flying Fish Press, begun in 1987, continues to publish editions of 25 to 100 copies of book projects that she produces at the highest level of craft in harmony with contemporary ideas. All are perfect combinations of design and skill. Chen works with both letterpress printmaking and cutting edge technical processes, inventing entirely new structures with each project, usually incorporating a box of some kind. Densely packed with imagery and illusive suggestions,

packaged as tour de force constructions, each book is a jewel awaiting the exploration of every detail. Two books (2011, 2013) were collaborations with Barb Tetenbaum. A teacher of book arts at Mills College, California, Chen was featured in the PBS documentary, *Craft in America*, in 2009.

From the time that she studied printing at California College of Arts and Crafts (1972), home of seminal book arts teacher, Betsy Davids, through her masters degree in Visual Studies (1982) and doctorate in Interdisciplinary Studies (1986), Johanna Drucker has been both an active book artist and a brilliant scholar. Her writing is profoundly deep, philosophical, full of groundbreaking discoveries and insights. She is amazingly prolific in all regards. *Her Century of Artist Books* (1995), published a decade after Lyons', established her as the definitive voice about book arts and artist books. Amazon.com described the book, reprinted in 2004, as "the seminal full-length study of the development of artists' books as a twentieth-century art form." Currently Drucker is the Inaugural Breslauer Professor of Bibliographical Studies in the Information Studies department, UCLA. She has created an online repository of facsimiles, metadata and criticism, *Artists' Books Online*.

Experimental offset printer, Brad Freeman, was resident printer at Pyramid Atlantic for many years. His growing interest in book arts grew through connections he made at Pyramid and at Nexus Press, where he was director of productions for a year before becoming director of the press (from early 2001 to April 2003). He continued to push the boundaries of creative possibilities in digital and offset printing. With Johanna Drucker, Freeman founded *Journal of Book Arts (JAB)*, first published in 1994. As editor, he currently produces *JAB* through Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts, where he coordinates the studio.

From 1994 on, Syracuse University librarian Peter Verheyen was a unifying force as he gathered book artists and supportive materials related to book arts together online. His listserv, *Book\_Arts-L* and his web site, *Book Arts Web*, was a labor of love and enormous gift to the community. It is archived and still active. In 2008 the College Book Art Association was created by active book artists, bringing such organizational work to a professional membership level. Biannual conferences are held, a newsletter and journal is produced, exhibition and publishing opportunities are available, and members have access to shared pedagogical materials and links to wide-ranging resources.

Book arts and artists' books have become vital aspects within the digital age as graphic designers and students of Communication have adopted long-standing practices of book artists, which enliven their own productions. Social media and the sharing of online images have brought the work of book artists to everyone, including hobbyists, scrapbookers and do-it-yourselfers. Those who prefer to deconstruct and transform already existing books have exploded the concept of the *altered book*.<sup>xi</sup> Artists have introduced a style involving intricate carving that releases letters, words, and lines of text from printed materials with which to weave, construct and install works that continue to extend the reaches of references to the book. With a more sculptural emphasis, pages are folded, sawed, carved, soaked, drawn upon, and media is amassed into units of workable material to construct into installations.

No longer does it seem that definitions are required. Can a room be a book? Can a book exist virtually? Dick Higgins' early assertion has proven to be true, "Every time we turn the page, the previous page passes into our past and we are confronted by a new world." That a page is even necessary anymore has also passed into our past. Every art form in our current world continues to expand, one achievement surpassing another, continually setting the stage for new possibilities. Book Arts have widely arrived into contemporary art practice at this most exciting time in our multimedia, multicultural, multi-possibility world.

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Loyola University Maryland  
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Janet Maher's bookworks from the 80s and 90s have been exhibited widely and are in several university and other public collections, including the Franklin Furnace Collection, Museum of Modern Art; National Museum of Women in the Arts Library and Research Center, Washington, D.C.; Tate Gallery, London, England; Joan Flasch Artists' Book Collection, School of the Art Institute of Chicago.



## Notes:

- <sup>i</sup> William Morris Society brochure, <http://www.morrisociety.org/about/WilliamMorrisSocietyUSBrochure.pdf>
- <sup>ii</sup> For a deep history about early Irish books see Michael Slavin's *The Ancient Books of Ireland*, Wolfhound Press and McGill-Queens University Press, Canada and North America, 2005.
- <sup>iii</sup> See Gascoigne, Bamber. "History of Printing" HistoryWorld. From 2001, ongoing. <http://www.historyworld.net/wrldhis/PlainTextHistories.asp?historyid=ab78>
- <sup>iv</sup> Newsweek Staff, Newsweek. "America's *Book of Kells*". March 5, 2000. <http://www.newsweek.com/americas-book-kells-156629>
- <sup>v</sup> Much background information is drawn and expanded from my previous publication, *An Introduction to the Book Arts and Their Community*, My Million Monkeys Press. January, 1994
- <sup>vi</sup> Beaven, Kirstie, "Performance Art 101: The Happening, Allan Kaprow," Tate. 30 May 2012. <http://www.tate.org.uk/context-comment/blogs/performance-art-101-happening-allan-kaprow>
- <sup>vii</sup> Indie Philanthropy Initiative. Franklin Furnace, 2016. <http://indiephilanthropy.org/stories/franklin-furnace-making-the-world-safe-for-avant-garde-art/>
- <sup>viii</sup> For selected examples of artists' books, see my Pinterest board: <https://www.pinterest.com/circlegarden/book-arts/>
- <sup>ix</sup> MacArthur Foundation. "MacArthur Fellows Program, Meet the Class of 2009," Timothy Barrett. January 26, 2009. <https://www.macfound.org/fellows/47/>
- <sup>x</sup> Siglio, uncommon books at the intersection of art and literature. "Dick Higgins: A Book is... A Phenomenon of Space and Time and Dimensionality." October 15, 2014. <http://sigliopress.com/phenomenon-space-time-dimensionality/>
- <sup>xi</sup> For selected examples of altered books, see my Pinterest board: <https://www.pinterest.com/circlegarden/altered-books/>

## *Outside the Margins: Artists' Books from Betty and Edgar Sweren Collection*

- Ronald King, *The Left-handed Punch*, Roy Fisher (Poet), Guilford: Circle Press, 1986
- Julie Chen and Barbara Tetenbaum, *Ode to a Grand Staircase (For Four Hands)*, Berkeley, CA: Flying Fish Press, 2001
- Julie Chen, *The Veil*, Berkeley, CA: Flying Fish Press, 2002
- Susan Joy Share, *Ton's of Every Kind*, unique object, date unknown
- Claire Van Vliet, *Aunt Sallie's Lament*, Newark, VT: Janus Press, 2004, edition of 150; the altered version; and trade publication
- Claire Van Vliet, *Circulus Sapiente (Circle of Wisdom)*, Newark, VT: Janus Press, edition of 120, 2001
- Carol Schwartzott, *Haiku Two*, pair of flag books, Freeville, NY, edition of 50
- Carol Schwartzott, *The Old Bamboo Hewer*, Freeville, NY, edition of 10, 2000
- Hedi Kyle, *Alphabet*, edition of 65, c.1990
- John Crombie, *Gloom and Bloom*, Kickshaws Press, Paris, 1992 and boxed edition by Jill Oriane Tarlau
- Susan Allix, *The Beach: A Short Story*, London, England: Allix, edition of 18, 1989
- Susan Allix, *The Day Dream*, 12 verses by Alfred Lord Tennyson, London, England: Allix, edition of 17, 1995
- Betty Sweren, *The Snake*, published by the artist, edition of 30, 1995
- Ken Campbell, *Father's Garden*, edition of 50, 1989
- Ken Campbell, *Tilt*, edition of 80, 1988
- Suzanne Moore, *The Book of Betty, Eight to Celebrate Eighty*, unique object, guache and gold on vellum, kozo and vintage Saunders sheets, 2013
- Jan Owen, *Garden Library*, mixed media sculptural book, edition of 10, 1996
- Jan Owen, *There is a Field*, acrylic on paper with gold leaf and painted, woven Tyvek, 2005
- Angela Lorenz, *Pandora's Box*, Bologna, Italy, edition of 15, 1992
- Paul Johnson, *The Tree House of Time*, 180-degree pop-up tree house, hand bound, first edition, edition of 50, 2003
- *Exquisite Corpse*, Silver Buckle press with Barbara Tetenbaum and multiple artists, Madison, WI: Silver Buckle Press, 1992
- Jodi Hoover, *The Darts of Love*, text by Miriam DesHarnais, Baltimore: Purple Goldfish Press, edition of 15, 2012



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