

Book arts on the Web

An introduction to selected resources

by Cynthia L. Gregory

In today's Internet-driven world, handmade books might seem like things of the past. For book arts enthusiasts, however, the fine art of the book, in all its evolving forms from scroll to sculptural artist's book, is alive and kicking. In fact, within the last decade, interest in workshops, programs, and societies dedicated to promoting book arts has increased worldwide. Not surprising then is book arts' ever-growing presence on the Web. In the digital age, the once solitary book artist can now connect to a worldwide online community of artists and ideas.

So what exactly is *book arts*? Ask this to any group of artists or bookmakers and it is likely no two answers will be the same. In the art world, there has been ongoing discussion about what defines a book.¹ For purposes of this Webliography, book arts is "an all-encompassing term used to describe bookbinding, paper making, paper marbling, calligraphy, letterpress printing," as well as artists' books, altered books, and mail art.² The resources collected in this guide highlight a selection of book arts resources available online.

Starting points

- **Book Arts Web.** This comprehensive site should be on any book arts enthusiast's list. Its large collection of annotated links and reference information covers topics such as binding tutorials, educational opportunities, book arts organi-

zations, exhibitions, reference, and FAQs. The site is also the home of the BOOKARTS-L electronic list. *Access:* <http://www.philobiblon.com/>.



Associations and organizations

- **Bay Area Book Artists (BABA).** BABA's Web site includes membership information, a schedule of meetings, an annotated listing of Web links, and exhibits and workshop listings. In addition, the "Gallery" section provides color images of members' work. BABA, along with Foothill College, also sponsors the annual "Book Arts Jam." *Access:* <http://www.bayareabookartists.org/>.



- **Booklyn Artists Alliance.** In addition to information about the organization, the Booklyn site includes an artists section with images and descriptions of work, information about their educational outreach programs, and exhibition and publishing information useful to book artists. Booklyn also provides collection development consulting services to libraries and museums in-

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terested in developing book arts collections. Access: <http://www.booklyn.org>.

• **Canadian Bookbinders & Book Artists Guild (CBBAG).** Founded in 1983, CBBAG is a nonprofit organization with approximately 500 members worldwide. Its Web site includes information about CBBAG, workshop and exhibition opportunities, publications, a bulletin board, and links. The "Publications" section includes information about the group's newsletter as well as an index to the first ten years of the publication and precises from 1984 to 2000. Access: <http://www.cbbag.ca/>.

• **Center for the Book Arts, New York City.** Founded in 1974 by book artist Richard Minsky, the Center for the Book Arts is a nonprofit organization "dedicated to preserving the traditional crafts of bookmaking, as well as exploring and encouraging contemporary interpretations of the book as an art object." The Web site offers information about the organization's artist-in-residence program and chapbook competition, as well as center news and events, membership information, exhibition archives and publications, listings of over 100 workshop opportunities, and additional book arts links. Access: <http://www.centerforbookarts.org>.

• **Fine Press Book Association.** Founded in 1996, this UK-based association focuses on fine printing and books. The organization produces a journal, *Parentthesis*, twice a year, and while no full text is offered on the Web site, the tables of contents for recent issues are available. The site includes membership information and upcoming events. Access: <http://www.the-old-school.demon.co.uk/fpba/fpbamain.htm>.

• **The Guild of Book Workers (GBW).** The GBW is the "National Organization for all the Book Arts" and maintains many regional chapters in the United States. The guild's Web site is rich with information about guild member services, history of the organization, regional chapter listings, news, exhibits (including photos of members' work), and reference resources. Additionally, the site offers the GBW electronic list and

information about the "GBW Newsletter," lending library, and Guild Publications. Full text of the GBW Newsletter for most issues from 1994 to 2003 is available in either HTML or PDF formats. The site also offers a searchable listing of book arts workshops and instruction opportunities worldwide. Access: <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/gbw/>.

• **Miniature Book Society (MBS).** This international nonprofit organization's informative Web site provides brief background information on miniature books and offers articles, miniature book publishers and dealers' listings, MBS membership information, and details about the annual Miniature Book Conclave. Access: <http://www.mbs.org/>.



Schools, programs, and workshops

In addition to the following schools, many organizations (listed above) offer book arts educational outreach and workshop opportunities for members.

• **American Academy of Bookbinding.** The academy's Web site provides program details, admissions procedures, course listings and descriptions, diploma and credit requirements, and biographies and photos of instructors. Access: <http://www.ahaa.org/AAB.html>.

• **Columbia College Chicago Center for Book and Paper Arts.** This Web site offers information about the center's noncredit and graduate credit classes, MFA in Interdisciplinary Book and Paper Arts program, application process, events, studio space opportunities, and Web links on related topics. Access: <http://www.colum.edu/centers/bpa/home.html>.

• **Women's Studio Workshop (WSW).** WSW offers grants and residency opportunities for artists working in printmaking, papermaking, book arts, photography, and ceramics. The site provides WSW's history and mission statement, information about its Summer Arts Institute, internship opportunities, studios and facilities, exhibitions, "Art-In-Education" program, news, and how to become a member. WSW is also a large printer of artists' books, and its site includes a digital archive of books published. The archive provides color

More on book arts

An expanded version of this article can be found on the ACRL Web site at www.acrl.org/c&rlnews.

searches by keyword, author, title, holdings, printing process, and date. *Access:* <http://www.wsworkshop.org>.

Artists' books and online exhibits

• **Artists' Books Information Resource.** Jae Jennifer Rossman, special collections librarian at Yale University Library, has organized this highly informative site that investigates "presenting a more complete understanding of the term artists' books." Rossman explores the definition of "artists' books," provides history and development of them, lists physical collections throughout the United States, offers links to online group and individual artists exhibits, and provides information about artists' "Web books." *Access:* <http://www.library.yale.edu/~jwilliam/artistsbooks/index.html>.

• **Colophon Page.** This site is "a home on the Internet for the community of collectors, dealers, creators, and lovers of the fine publishing arts." Among its many features is a gallery of online exhibit space for book artists. The Colophon's Forum encourages discussion among those interested in any aspect of book arts. *Access:* <http://www.colophon.com/toc.html>.

• **Personal Visions: Artists' Books at the Millennium.** This site represents the online exhibition of artists' books from an exhibition that was on view from January 15–June 9, 2002, at the University of Delaware's Special Collections Department. Iris R. Snyder curated this exhibit, which features books from the university's artists' books collection and focuses on pieces created between 1995 and 2001. Also available is an exhibition checklist and an exploration of "What are Artists' Books?" Included are photos of the bookworks and a text-only version. *Access:* <http://www.lib.udel.edu/ud/spec/exhibits/artistsbook/index.htm>.

• **Science and the Artist's Book.** This site is an online companion to an exhibition held by Smithsonian Institution Libraries and the Washington Project for the Arts. The site offers a discussion of "What is an Artist's Book?," an exhibition checklist, and numerous JPEG and GIF images of the "bookworks." Areas of science explored include: aeronautics, architecture, astronomy, biology, mathematics, medicine, and

technology. *Access:* <http://www.sil.si.edu/Exhibitions/Science-and-the-Artists-Book/>.

Paper arts

• **Handpapermaking, Inc.** This nonprofit organization's well-organized site offers information about its history and details the organization's magazine, *Hand Papermaking*. While articles are not available online, the site does provide summaries of back, current, and upcoming issues. Additionally, the site offers a newsletter that gives general information and articles about papermaking for beginners. *Access:* <http://www.handpapermaking.org/>.

• **Redstick's Paper Arts.** This site is rich with tutorials, technique tips, and instructions on a variety of paper arts topics. *Access:* <http://www.intersurf.com/~redstic/Paper/Paperart.htm>.

Letterpress printing

• **American Printing History Association (APHA).** The APHA formed in 1974 "to encourage the study of printing history and its related arts and skills." Its Web site offers selected articles (in PDF) from the association's journal, *Printing*



History, as well as an article table of contents and an author/subject index. Also found here are listings of regional chapters, the APHA's background and history, and information on

sponsored events and programs, such as the annual APHA conference or Lieberman lecture series. *Access:* <http://www.printinghistory.org/>.

• **Briar Press: Resources for Letterpress Printers and Enthusiasts.** Briar Press offers a wealth of detailed printing information for the novice and the expert. The "Museum" section discusses types of printers and printing history, including the "Eleven Presses that Made History." Visitors to this site will also find classifieds related to printing equipment, a directory of over 500 letterpress services and organizations, an index of downloadable ornamental designs and capital letters, and an illustrated glossary of printing terms. *Access:* <http://www.briarpress.org/briarpress/>.

Journals/newsletters

• **Binder's Guild Newsletter.** Established in 1978 by Jim Dorsey, this "journal of hand book-binding practice" is issued eight times yearly and

covers topics related to bookbinding. The Web site includes subscription information. Also listed are back issues (from 1978–01) available for purchase. *Access:* <http://www.bindersguild.org>.

• **Dog Eared Magazine: A Journal of Book Arts.** This magazine's site provides a helpful



online resource guide of further information and Web links for each published issue.

Although the full text of articles is not available online, the site does feature listings of article topics, tables of contents for issues, and back issue and subscription information. *Access:* <http://www.dogearedmagazine.com>.

• **Letter Arts Review.** This publication is a magazine for calligraphers and letter artists. Its Web site does not offer full text of articles. However, the site does offer a cumulative article index, summaries and images from current issues, subscription information, and details for ordering back issues. In addition, the site features many color photos of calligraphy in its "Pic of the Week" section. *Access:* <http://www.johnnealbooks.com/lar/index.htm>.

• **The Microbibliophile.** This journal "features articles about miniature books new and old, reviews of newly published miniature books, as well as announcements about events relating to the world of the little book." The journal's Web site does not provide full text of articles, but does offer contact and subscription information. *Access:* <http://www.microbibliophile.com/>.

• **Umbrella.** The articles in this publication focus on news about and reviews of artists' books. The companion Web site to the journal offers archived articles in Adobe PDF format available from 1997 to 2001. More recent articles from 2002–03 are available selectively. *Access:* <http://colophon.com/umbrella/index.html>.



Electronic lists/discussion groups

• **BOOKARTS-L.** Sponsored by the Book Arts Web, this discussion group focuses on all book arts topics. To join this group, send the message "subscribe Book_Arts-L Your REAL Name" to listserv@listserv.syr.edu. Details available at: <http://www.philobiblon.com/>.

• **Cyberscribes: The Premier Internet Calligraphy Discussion Group.** Around since 1995, this electronic list concentrates on calligraphy-related topics. The list's Web site includes a history of the list and instructions on how to join. *Access:* <http://www.calligraph.com/cyberscribes/>.

• **GBW Listserv.** This list is sponsored by the Guild of Bookworkers (GBW) and is open to GBW members only. An FAQ, archives, and instructions for joining are available at: <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu/byform/mailling-lists/gbwlist/>.

• **LETTPRESS.** This group discusses issues related to letterpress printers and printing. To join this group, fill out the subscription form at <http://hermes.csd.unb.ca/bin/wa?SUBED1=lettpress&A=1>.

• **Yahoo! Groups—Book Arts.** Yahoo! Groups presents a diverse group of approximately 85 book arts discussion groups ranging from "alteredbooks" to "PPLetterpress." Each group's listing provides a summary and rules and instructions for joining. *Access:* http://dir.groups.yahoo.com/dir/Entertainment_Arts/Fine_Arts/Design_Arts/Book_Arts.

Notes

1. See the following discussions from the Book_Arts-L discussion list: "Definition of the Artist's Book; What is a Book; BSO's (Book Shaped Objects); Art vs. Craft" at www.philobiblon.com/whatisabook.htm and "The Whatness of Bookness, or What is a Book" at www.philobiblon.com/bookness.htm.

2. Alys Golden, *Creating Handmade Books* (New York: Sterling Publishing Co., Inc., 1998), 19. ■

("Cookeryacademia" continued from page 197)

Of course, it was to Cornell's benefit that he didn't know too much; after all, all those Jello-O pamphlets we got might have ended up at someplace like University of Pennsylvania instead.

Notes

1. See www.iacpfoundation.com/docs/culdir.pdf for the IACP document "The Selective Guide to Culinary Library Collections in the United States."

2. See digital.lib.msu.edu/cookbooks for MSU's "Feeding America: The Historic American Cookbook Project." ■