Introduction to Bookbinding

Explore, learn, build various book structures including case binding, Coptic, long stitch, Japanese stab, limp vellum and accordion.

From the Library of Alexandria to the Library of Congress, books have been mankind’s predominant repository for knowledge and communication. Continually evolving over time and geography, book structures are appreciated now more than ever for their versatility, variety, and creative potential. This workshop is an introduction to the materials, tools and techniques used in basic bookbinding structures. Working in a fully-equipped studio, participants learn the properties of materials ranging from paper to threads, adhesives, and binding boards. Using tools that have changed little over the centuries, participants begin by learning simple, non-adhesive book structures such as the accordion, Japanese stab binding, the long stitch, and Coptic.

The Ethiopian book introduces the structure of the multiple gathering codex. The model of an Ethiopian binding illustrates the persistence of early book structure and introduces us to a contemporary culture exemplified by its traditional book. To this day, books of the Ethiopian Church are bound in a way that reflects the structure and action of the papyrus book era of late Antiquity.

By the end of the week participants will explore the form most familiar today, the case binding, in which the text is folded into signatures, sewn through the fold, and finally secured to its covering boards with adhesive. This traditional German style case binding, also known as Bradel binding, is the most common bookbinding structure in use by binders in Germany. What makes the Bradel binding unique is the cover boards and spine stiffener. They are joined together with a strip of sturdy paper before covering creating a sleek and streamlined appearance.

These are all binding methods that artists, bookbinders, even book conservators use now for a wide range of purposes. Throughout the workshop students are encouraged to make variations on the structures they learn, and are exposed to principles regarding the conservation and care of books. All materials and tools are provided, but participants may bring textblocks and decorated papers if they wish.

instructor

Anastasia S. Weigle

Anastasia holds a B.A. in Natural Science Illustration with a minor in Museum Studies and a M.S.L.I.S. in Archives Management. She is currently in the doctoral program at Simmons College with a focus on user experience with physical objects. Although Anastasia’s training is in scientific illustration, she works primarily with mix media and found objects. She creates her pieces by deconstructing found objects and restructuring them into strong bold images. Her creations include book construction, painting and complex collages. All of her pieces have a distinct sculptural element, which directs the viewer’s eye through the many layers of her work. Anastasia’s art gives one the sense of observing personal conflicts, tragedies and triumphs. Anastasia’s extensive background in library sciences, archival processes and preservation, and book conservation, both technical and creative imbue her work with a sense that she is at all times aware of the convoluted process of disassembling and reassembling. Her academic skills and her artistic talents are tightly woven together into a cohesive structured body of work, which encourages the viewer to discover a piece of themselves inside her art. Anastasia currently owns “In A Bind” art studio in Old Orchard Beach working as a bookbinder, book conservator, an assemblage artist. She has taught various workshops in bookbinding, book repair, altered books and assemblage/multimedia art.

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