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PROPOSAL FOR BOOKMAKING WORKSHOPS

This is a proposal for bookmaking workshops as agreed in conversation with Program Representative for Arts & Humanities. All workshops are designed for two 8-hour sections, best fitted as weekend workshops. For each workshop, students would be provided with a list of the books that would help them with particular techniques, further development or research on bookmaking ideas. At any of the workshops, I will make available for reference and reviewing my own collection of bookmaking books. Students would be also provided with a list of required materials as well as a list of shops where they can purchase the materials.

The materials described in the proposal as provided by school/teacher are materials that are very difficult to buy in small amounts (waxed linen tread, printing paper), fairly inexpensive (bookbinders chipboards) or highly specialized (pre-gel wheat starch). I am more than happy to purchase them for the workshop with the understanding of reimbursement.

BOOKMAKING FOR BIGGINERS:

Introduction to Basic Book Formats

This introduction to paper and bookbinding is for all of those who always wanted to know but never found the opportunity to try. The workshop would present basic book formats and simple ways to make them, as well as provide a basic understanding of different papers and the ways to glue them together. Although this is not intended as an artist workshop, any artist or/and artistic ideas are welcomed.

Introduction to the Papers, Tools and Glues

Where to use different types of papers, how they behave, and about paper grain, surface and weight. How to cut or tear papers for different effects. Dealing with glue: using right glue for the right job and why rubber cement is handy but can be disastrous. What "archival" means when dealing with papers, glues and history. Difference between PVC white glue and rice (starch) glue and some other handy glues and tapes for tricky projects. How to avoid wrinkles, warping and general mess when dealing with glue and paper. Introduction to a bookbinder's tools: bone folders, awls, waxed threads and how to cut the corners.

Scroll Books

One of the oldest book formats utilized for books and other documents during the centuries by many cultures. Even today the Jewish holy scripture – Torah – is used in liturgy only in the scroll form. Many different writing materials – papyrus, barks, parchment, or paper – could be easily used as the scroll. However, the scroll format could be used for many other purposes - as a way to display pictures or calligraphy, decorative wedding invitations or gift cards. There are not many technical secrets about the scroll, however it is an easy way to master glue as well as basic ribbon threading.

Materials required: white (PVC) and starch glue, art paper, stick, any kind of string, ribbon or thin rope.

Buddhist Palm Leaf Books

In the palm leaf format, individual pages of the book are threaded through with the cord and protected between two (wooden) boards. In the country of its origin (Indian subcontinent), the writing surfaces ("paper") for this books were specially prepared leafs of palms. The shape of pages and books persisted even when paper proper was used. Very much as with the Torah, the format of the book become associated with religious practices. As an artist book format, it is not used too often, although it presents itself with interesting possibilities for scrap-books or photo albums. It is an excellent way to familiarize oneself with the art of cover boards.

Materials required: starch glue, chipboard or cardboard for covers, paper for inner leafs, any kind of string, ribbon or thin rope, handmade or decorative paper for covering boards, and hole puncher.

Accordion

It is hard to say where the accordion book format originated: it is so handy that it was used by cultures as distant as Ancient Maya and China. This is one of the widely used formats for artist books since it offers almost infinite possibilities in variations of the same simple form – a paper strip folded like an accordion. On that strip, things could be glued, sown on or cut out in most creative ways. Sometimes an accordion can fold out from something so predictable as a simple pamphlet book. However, gluing pages together to create paper strip, folding them to create neat pile and attaching them to covers is more complicated than it seems.



Materials required: glue, chipboard or cardboard or thicker paper for covers, art paper or printing papers for accordion, handmade or decorative paper for cover boards.

Stab binding

This is the traditional way to bind books and notebooks in China and Japan. Because of the nature of their papers and woodblock printing techniques, pages were printed only on one side and then bound on the open edge (not in the fold as in codex). Japanese and Chinese binders created a variety of decorative ways to thread the thread through the holes. We will look at the few simplest ones and the way stab binding could be developed in something beyond simply stitching loose leaves together.



Materials required: bookbinders' awl, papers for inner pages, decorative and/or stronger papers for covers, threads or ribbons for binding.

Codex

The codex, the most exalted in illuminated manuscripts of the European Middle Ages, is today probably the best known book format. Almost any country using this format developed its own characteristic way of binding. Decoration of the covers developed in its own art form and was the object of the most passionate connoisseurship. However, this workshop would limit thread and needle work to a basic pamphlet and simple multiple section binding.



Material required: starch glue, needle and awl, threads, thicker art paper for covers, paper for inner sections, decorative paper.

Required materials for students:

Rulers, utility knife or Alpha cutters, cutting boards, glue brushes, different design decorative or handmade papers, strings, ribbons, raffia or thin ropes (preferably from natural fibers), larger amount of letter size printing papers (preferably heavier stock – 24lb) or/and art papers (watercolor papers would be too heavy, however it could be used for Buddhist palm leaf book), stronger sewing thread or linen bookbinding threads, chipboards or cardboard paper for front covers, bookbinder's awl or/and leather hole puncher.

Material provided by school:

PVC glue or white glue, starch glue (specialized pre-gel wheat starch glue that does not require cooking), quantities of printing papers (white or colors), cutting boards or something in that manner, bookbinder's chip boards, some glue brushes, linen bookbinder's thread, utility knives, metal ruler(s) or t-square, pencils, and hole puncher.

BOOKMAKING FOR BEGINNERS: Introduction to basic book formats workshop could be expanded into the series of weekend or week-night workshops dealing with specific book formats. These workshops could then focus more on helping students to develop a particular artistic idea and finding the best way to express it in a given book format.

BASIC BOOKMAKING:

Different music of accordion



Besides an introduction to the art of paper and glues, the workshop would expand on the accordion book format. Students would try their hand with design of the narrative through different accordion books: an accordion that is sown in the covers or with sections sown in the folds, an accordion with pockets, or two accordion books intertwined with each other.

BASIC BOOKMAKING:

Codex for Fun



After an introduction to paper, glues and terminology associated with parts of book, students would try two different ways to sew together books with multiple sections: one with soft and one with hard covers. The emphasis would be on easy and decorative techniques which do not require specialized book-binding skills or tools.

BASIC BOOKMAKING:

Albums and Journals



Besides of the general introduction to papers and glues, students would be introduced to visual effects of stab binding and its possibilities. After mastering simple decorative stitches for traditional Japanese stab binding with layered greeting card and invitations, students would try their hands with few easy ways to create their own photo albums or put together a daily journal.