

## From the Curators

ERIC ENSLEY, MLS, PhD (he/him)

Curator of Rare Books & Maps, Special Collections & Archives, University of Iowa Libraries

It is a privilege to be able to create an exhibition like this for the University of Iowa Libraries. I don't intend this in the pat way that the phrase is sometimes used in circumstances like these. The University of Iowa is a very special place, particularly when it comes to the study of books and the words they contain, and I can think of few places where the combination of materials, expertise, and interest would allow us to create a meeting of past and present like this. To wit: this is, of course, a City of Literature, and the Iowa Writers' Workshop is just down the road a bit. And then there is the University of Iowa Center for the Book, one of the few centers of its kind in the country



devoted to the craft of making and the study of books. This center, and university, is filled with an outsized group of students and faculty who want to study these objects from all angles, from harvesting plants to making paper to studying various editions of works by the Brontës. We have expert librarians and museum professionals to help fill and make beautiful this space. Dare I say, our Special Collections & Archives has some of the best and deepest collections of any public university in the country, along with the staff to make sense of it and make it available to the public. We might easily not have any one of these qualities, but we are fortunate at the University of Iowa to have them all, and that makes this exhibition experience possible and a privilege to present it to you.

This exhibition was born in the classroom. While in graduate school, I concocted a class to encourage first-year students to ask, "What is a book?" I've continued to teach this class many times. People love to think in comparisons, and some of the best conversations in the classroom came about from putting a contemporary artist's book alongside a historical book—here past meets present and students are invited to think about how current artists, writers, and makers are in conversation, agreement, tension, or even a knock-down-drag-out fight with past artists, makers, and writers. In my early years teaching the course, thousands of miles away, I used the artist books of Emily Martin often, and I can't express how fulfilling it is to have her co-curating this exhibition with me today. Her witty, funny, sometimes sad, but always poignant takes on classic texts from the past laid the foundation for what you see before you.

I hope you'll take your visit to this exhibition as a time to contemplate connections and tensions between the past and present. As the saying goes, history may not repeat itself, but it does rhyme. I hope this array of items from long ago and near today will invite you to reflect on our place in the present and what we share and don't share with those from the past.



### EMILY MARTIN, MFA (she/her)

Adjunct Assistant Professor, Bookbinding and Book Arts, University of Iowa Center for the Book

I would like to thank Eric Ensley for inviting me to join him on this curatorial adventure. From the very beginning of our exhibit planning, we wanted our selections to weave through time and place, highlighting the connections and distinctions between the books and other objects. Our plan to have a lively conversation among the books, past and present, is a direct result of our many conversations about the overlaps of book history, book structure, teaching, artists' books, and much more. I am very pleased that working with Eric as not only a librarian but also as an historian has broadened my knowledge of how to use the collections personally and as a

teacher. I have taught introductory bookbinding classes and artists' books classes at the University of Iowa Center for the Book as an adjunct assistant professor since 1998 and I have always used Special Collections & Archives holdings in my classes. It is invaluable for students to be able to see examples of the same type of books they are making, from the 16th century through to current artists' books.

I have been a studio artist for more than 40 years and, as my work has developed, I have been very grateful for the many resources available to me here in Iowa City, a City of Literature. Living here has brought me into regular contact with writers, sculptors, printers, scholars, and craftspeople of all kinds, all of which filters into my own work. In my studio practice, my artists' books often involve movable or sculptural components, as can be seen in this exhibit, and I know that many people do not realize that movables were found in books as early as the 13th century. In my recent artist books, I have been working with the 16th century plays of William Shakespeare and the 19th century plays of Oscar Wilde as read with my 21st century eyes. Looking at books contemporary to those playwrights' times informs my approach to making books in current times.

While researching the collections with Eric, I was amazed time and again by the breadth of the materials available to anyone who ventures into the Special Collections Reading Room. I hope this exhibit helps people see how books of the past inform books of the present and into the future. I am delighted we are able to present this wonderful selection of books. I think of our choices of books as akin to wine pairings, making for a feast for the eyes.

## GUIDE TO OBJECTS ON DISPLAY

All items are from Special Collections & Archives at the University of Iowa Libraries.

#### PUTTING PEN TO PARCHMENT

From Eric: Though this part of the exhibit may appear to be simply a comparison between two modern artistic interpretations of medieval making practices with a much older medieval manuscript, the reality is much more complex. In libraries and museums, modern makers and their skills are often called upon to repair antiquarian materials. The 15th-century Psalter was repaired by conservator and master binder Bill Anthony in 1985. Anthony rebound the book in a historically accurate medieval binding and repaired the first folio with a parchment sewing, which is visible on the right-hand side of the leaf.

- 1. Sheepskin Palimpsest, 2022. Madison Bennett. x-Collection.
- 2. Nest of Patience, 2012. Cheryl Jacobsen. x-Collection FOLIO Oblong [N7433.4 B34 N477 2012].
- 3. Collection of parchment samples made at the Pergamena Parchment Workshop, 2022. Madison Bennett.
- 4. *Psalterium cum Antiphonis*, late 15th century. Rebound and treated in the University of Iowa Libraries Conservation Lab by William Anthony in 1985. Medieval Manuscripts [xMMs.Ps3].

#### THE ARRIVAL OF PAPER

- 5. Mould and deckle with paper sample from Hayle Mill near Maidstone, Kent, England, 1902. Special Collections & Archives. x-Collection [FLAT FOLIO TS1118.M66 H36 1902].
- 6. *Un Libro: Body and Words from a Carer of Books*. Mariá Carolina Ceballos. Iowa City: Canto Press, University of Iowa Center for the Book, 2020. x-Collection [N47433.4.C3699 U5 2020].
- 7. Canalización ancestral de Borikén. Jocmarys Viruet Feliciano. Bajadero, Puerto Rico, 2022. x-Collection.

#### PLANTS AND PAPER

- 8. Waka poetry on paper decorated with silver and gold leaf. Undated. Tim Barrett Collection [msc0937].
- 9. Anonymous account of Islamic battles. Persian, ca. 16th or 17th century. xMs [xMs.A56ac].
- 10. Ad Herennium. Pseudo-Cicero. Italy, 14th century. Medieval Manuscripts [xMMs.Misc1].

From Eric: This copy of Ad Herennium is a truly extraordinary part of the University of Iowa's medieval manuscript collection. The most frequently surviving medieval books are often the most important or most beautiful, since people are often inclined to preserve those objects for their appeal or use. However, "ugly" books like these are rarer survivors though they tell us a lot about early peoples. This manuscript contains the Ad Herrenium, a common medieval university text students would emulate when writing letters. This book likely belonged to such a student, who has doodled throughout the pages and used paper, a cheaper material than parchment, to write the text. Like a modern trapper keeper, the student has wrapped the text in a tough leather document, likely a charter that contained business details that were no longer needed.

#### PROTECTING YOUR BOOK

- 11. Tafari codex: ancient Ethiopian psalter. Northern Ethiopia, ca. 1600.
- 12. Acta Colloquij Montis Belligartensis: quod habitum est, anno Christi 1586 [...]. Colloquium Mompelgartense, et al. Tübingen: Gruppenbach, 1587. x-Collection [VAULT BR304 .A5].
- 13. Lectures of William Morris. London: Longmans & Co, 1901. Printed at Chiswick Press. Binding by Edith Diehl, 1906. x-Collection.

From Eric: Edith Diehl was one of the first woman master bookbinders and responsible for writing *Bookbinding, its Background and Technique* (1946), which made its study available to a generation of new makers and artisans. Diehl was masterful in her ability to operate in a number of styles, having apprenticed with many major binding firms, including Sangorski & Sutcliffe. Close by in the exhibit, you will find a copy of *Of Gardens* bound by that renowned firm that bears stylistic similarities to Diehl's binding.

#### PROTECTING YOUR BOOK IN STYLE

- 14. *Oevres*. Giselle Simón. Iowa City, 2017. x-Collection [N7433.4.S5475 O49 2017]. From the artist: "Responding to Oe[u]vres Diverses (1885)."
- 15. Oeuvres. M. de Fontanelle. Paris: Bastien, 1790. x-Collection [PQ1797 .F7 1790].
- 16. Of Gardens: An Essay. Francis Bacon. Manuscript and illuminations by Alberto Sangorski. London: Sangorski & Sutcliffe, 1904. xMs [FOLIO xMs B1280].
- 17. *The Aleppo Citadel: The Tell Tells All*. Elsi Vassdal Ellis. Bellingham, Washington, 2015. x-Collection [N7433.4.E347 A5466 2015].
- 18. Hereditary = Hereditario ; عثارو [Warathi] = Hereditary. Marwan Alferaehy and Marisol Ardon. Washington, D.C.: Bitter Sun Press, 2015. x-Collection [N7433.4.A422 H37 2015].
- 19. *Cat's Cradle*. Julie Chen and Barbara Tetenbaum. Berkeley, Calif.: Flying Fish Press, 2013. x-Collection [N7433.4.C53 C37 2013].

*Silent Souls*. Gina Genis, 1993. The Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry [CC-10396-10599], Special Collections & Archives.

Sleeping Mind. Gina Genis, 1993. The Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry [CC-10397-10600], Special Collections & Archives.

### Books as a Journey

- 20. Sentinella. Daniel Essig. Asheville, North Carolina: Daniel Essig, 2013. x-Collection FOLIO Oblong [N7433.4.E88 S45 2013].
- 21. A Book Can Take You Anywhere. Emily Martin. Iowa City: Naughty Dog Press, 2012. x-Collection [N7433.4.M364 B665 2012].

#### THE ART OF MOVABLE BOOKS

From Emily: Movables have been used in books for centuries and are in regular use for all sorts of reasons to this day. These three modern artists' books, *Subject/Object/Verb* by Ellen Knudson, *Oscar Wilde: In Earnest and Out* by Emily Martin, and *Lunar Volvelle* by Monica Ong paired with the historical example of *Nouae quaestiones sphaerae*, a study of astronomy, demonstrate the range of this simple movable device. Elsewhere in this exhibition, Casey Gardner's artist book *Body of Inquiry* makes use of the other early movable style: the lift flap. In the 16th century, lift flaps were used in medical books to facilitate the study of human anatomy.

- 22. *Lunar Volvelle*. Monica Ong. Trumbull, Connecticut : Proxima Vera, 2021. Letterpress printing: Boxcar Press, Syracuse, NY. x-Collection [xN7433.4 O546 L86 2021].
- 23. Oscar Wilde: In Earnest and Out. Emily Martin. Iowa City: Naughty Dog Press, 2020. x-Collection FOLIO [N7433.4.M364 O83 2020].
- 24. Subject/Verb/Object. Ellen Knudson. Gainesville, Florida: Crooked Letter Press, 2012. x-Collection FLAT FOLIO [N7433.4.K6175 S835 2012].
- 25. Nouae quaestiones sphaerae (New Questions of the Sphere). Sebastianus Theodoricus. Wittenberg: Johann Krafft, 1564. x-Collection. [pictured below]



#### OLD BOOKS INSPIRING NEW BOOKS

- 26. *Tangential*. Helen Hiebert. Red Cliff, Colorado: Helen Hiebert Studio, 2017. x-Collection [FOLIO N7433.4.H543 T36 2017].
- 27. Qvinto libro degli Elementi d'Evclide: ovvero Scienza vniversale delle proporzioni spiegata colla dottrina del Galileo. (Fourth book of the Elements of Euclid: or universal science of proportions explained with Galileo's doctrine.) Vincenzio Viviani. Firenze: Al-la Gondotta, 1674. x-Collection [QA31.V6].

#### Encoded Meaning in the Page

From Eric: In a 2016 interview when asked why he made *A Humument*, Tom Phillips responded: "It's inexhaustible when you find a big text that's full of words to find other things in it." Phillips spent nearly fifty years devoting himself to finding new meanings in those words. The 9th-century monk Rabanus Maurus, whose In Honorem Sanctae Crucis is also shown here, devoted his life to writing words in praise of Christ. Like Phillips, Maurus devoted himself to the word, even picturing himself kneeling before the cross in the final text-image of the book.

From Emily: Tom Phillips' A Humument pioneered the use of erasures by using an 1896 Victorian novel to demonstrate hidden possibility within a page of text. Phillips made a number of versions of A Humument and they became a part of the Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry, which is now a part of the holdings of the University of Iowa Libraries Special Collections & Archives. Concrete poetry is defined as poetry in which the meaning or effect is presented partly or fully by visual means.

- 28. Plates from *A Humument*. (Left:) Third Revision, ca. 1998. (Right:) Fifth Revision, ca. 2012. Tom Phillips. London, United Kingdom. The Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry.
- 29. Magnencij Rabani Mauri De Laudib[us] sancte Crucis opus. erudicione versu prosaq[ue] mirificum. Rabanus Maurus. Pforzheim: Thomas Anshelm, 1503. x-Collection FOLIO [VAULT PA8330.H8 A6].

#### FACES FROM THE PAST

30. Stara Kniha (Old Book). Jan Sobota. Dallas: Jan Sobota, 1980-1998. x-Collection.

#### Ancient Texts Made Anew

31. Sanctae Hildegardis Circulus Sapientiae = Hildegard von Bingen 1098-1179, Circle of Wisdom. Introduction and Notes by Elizabeth Thompson, English translation by W.R. Johnson. Newark, Vermont: Janus Press, 2001. x-Collection [FOLIO N7433.4.V3648 C57 2001].

Selections from *The Spheres*. Carlos Macià, 1993. The Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry [CC-06389-6506], Special Collections & Archives.

#### PAGE LAYOUT FOR A CAUSE

From Emily: Sonia Farmer received her MFA in book arts from the University of Iowa Center for the Book in 2019. Farmer, a Bahamian, uses the series of seven poems by Trinidadian writer Shivanee Ramlochan in her artist book *The Red Thread Cycle*. She uses the simple but evocative design choice of a red thread to illustrate the shared connection between seven Caribbean women who were victims of sexual assault.

- 32. Collection of Tracings and Drawings from Medieval Manuscripts and Architecture, late 19th century.
- 33. *The Red Thread Cycle*. Sonia Farmer. Bahamas: Sonia Farmer, 2019. x-Collection [N7433.4.F367 R44 2019].
- 34. *Golden Lotus*. Colette Fu. Rosendale, N.Y.: Women's Studio Workshop, 2022. x-Collection [N7433.4.F8 G62 2022].

#### PAGE LAYOUT FOR FUNCTIONALITY

35. Ladies Typographic Union calendar. Iowa City: University of Iowa Center for the Book, 2010. x-Collection [N7433.3.L33].



42. Found/Recovered.

- 36. Calendarium historicum conscriptum / a Paulo Ebero Kitthingensi et recens ante obitum ab eodem recognitum plurimisq[ue] locis auctum. Paul Eber, et al. Wittenberg: Johannes Crato, 1571. x-Collection [VAULT D11 .E24 1571].
- 37. Alt und neuer Schreib- Haus- und Kunst-Kalender: nebnst dem römischen, auch beygehörigem Prognostico und anderen mit zu nöthigen Sachen (Old and New Writing- Home and Art Calendars: In addition to the Roman, also related Prognostico and other necessary things). Stephanus Furhman. Frankfurt: B.C. Wust, 1668. x-Collection [VAULT AY851 .F8 1669].

#### Ordering Information

- 38. Two Essays on the Decretum of Gratian. Hellmut Lehmann-Haupt and Charles McCurry. Together with an Original Leaf Printed on Vellum by Peter Schoeffer at Mainz in 1472. Los Angeles: Zeitlin & Ver Brugge, 1971. x-Collection Super [FOLIO Z232.S36 L42].
- 39. Body of Inquiry: A Triptych Opening to a Corporeal Codex. Casey Gardner. Berkeley, Calif.: Set in Motion Press, 2011. x-Collection FOLIO [N7433.4.G3577 B63 2011].
- 40. Ces presentes heures a lusaige de Ro[m]me fure[n]t acheuez le xvi [...] (These present hours in the use of Rome.) Catholic Church. Paris: Philippe Pigouchet for Simon Vostre, 1498. Incunabula [BX2080 .V67 1498].

## LETTERING OUT OF TIME

- 41. A Noble Fragment: Being a Leaf of the Gutenberg Bible 1450-1455 / with a Bibliographical Essay by A. Edward Newton. New York: Gabriel Wells, 1921. Incunabula [Folio BS75 1921].
- 42. Found/Recovered. Papermaker Radha Pandey and calligrapher Cheryl Jacobsen, 2016. x-Collection [N7433.4. P2554 F57 2016]. [pictured at left]
- 43. Early printed leaf. Thomas Aquinas. Incunabula, 1474.

#### WHAT WE WRITE WITH

From Eric: Today we tend to think of reading and writing as linked skills, but until the modern era, it was possible that someone could read but not write or write and not read. The reason for this was that writing was a separate skill that was taught; additionally, a large portion of writing was done by copying from another copy of the same text. Likewise, today we tend to think of a person as having one type of handwriting, perhaps two if they can write in cursive. In the medieval and early modern periods, scribes had to be able to write in many hands, hence the need for books like the manual presented in this part of the exhibit. Different types of hands connoted different levels of seriousness, formality, and sometimes even the perceived sex of the writer as women in the early modern period were trained to write in particular styles.

- 44. A Diary of Days. Amelia Bird. Iowa City, 2010. x-Collection [N7433.4.B522 D53 2010].
- 45. Medical and Cookery Receipt Book. England, 1780-1820. Szathmary Culinary Manuscripts [En36 msc0533].
- 46. Compendio del gran volume dell'arte del bene et leggiadramente scriuere tutte le sorti di lettere et caratteri : con le lor regole, misure, & essempi (Compendium of the great volume of the art of good and graceful writing of all sorts of letters and characters: with their rules, measures, & examples). Giovanni Battista Palatino. Venice: Appresso Aluise Sessa, 1588. x-Collection.

#### ALL BOOKS COME TO AN END

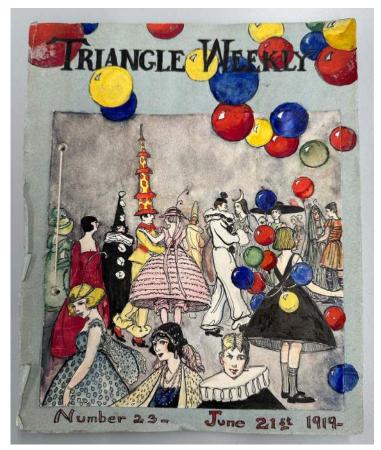
- 47. A Geniza: a poem of fragmented fragments pertaining to Edmond Jabès, Uum Kalsoum, Leila Mourad and other former and current citizens of Cairo, Egypt. Raphael Rubinstein. New York: Granary Books, 2015. x-Collection Oblong FOLIO [N7433.4.R82 G4 2015].
- 48. Conradi Gesneri medici Tigurini Historia animalium lib (History of the Animals). Vol. 4. Tiguri/Zürich: Apud Christ. Froschoverum, 1551. x-Collection Super FOLIO [VAULT QL41 .G37].

#### Written by Hand

From Eric: Sadly, many modern makers go unnamed or unacknowledged. Ida Bogue lived a largely quiet life in Dorset, England with no immediate family, though she did have extended family that would come visit during the summer. She passed her time by making books like *The Loiterers* and painting large watercolor landscapes. Everything contained in the book, from the binding to the watercolors and text, was handmade by her. She occasionally gave these modern manuscripts as gifts to family and friends. Today, we know of six that exist. One appeared on an episode of *Antiques Roadshow* in England, while another was gifted to the

Royal Family. Similarly, little is known of the student authors of *Triangle Weekly*, though we hope researchers will approach the many issues of the magazine with an eye to recovering something about its talented makers.

- 49. Letter concerning the death of cardinal and book collector Marco Barbo, addressed to Benedetto Superanzio. 2 March, 1491. MsL.
- Signet seal ring with the emblem of Our Lady of Walsingham. England, ca. 1450.
   Bronze Medieval seal matrix, ca. 14th century.
- 51. *The Triangle Weekly*, no. 23. Unidentified publisher, June 1919. x-Collection.
- 52. *The Loiterers*. Ida Bogue. Sunnybrae, Weymouth: Ida Bogue, 1943. xMs [B647lo]
- 53. Marwick magic scroll 37. Ethiopia: unidentified creator, ca. 18th-19th c. xMs [Ms 355ma]
- 54. *Enigmatic Talismans*. Islam Aly. Cedar Falls, Iowa: Islam Aly, 2016. x-Collection [N7433.4.A523 E654 2016].

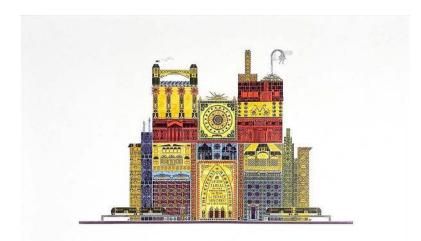


51. The Triangle Weekly.

#### PRINTED BY TYPE

- 55. *Liber chronicarium*. Hartmann Schedel. Nuremberg: Anton Koberger, 1493. Incunabula [FOLIO D17 .S35].
- 56. *Apollinaire, chez lui*. Guillaume Apollinaire. London: Galerie Apollinaire, 1947. The Ruth and Marvin Sackner Archive of Concrete and Visual Poetry [FOLIO PQ2601.P6 A738 1947].
- 57. *The City is My Religion: A Typographic Memoir*. Jennifer Farrell. Chicago: Starshaped Press, 2020. x-Collection Oblong [FOLIO N7433.4.F3677 C58 2020].

From Emily: Jennifer Farrell uses movable type, and movable ornaments to make her images. In Farrell's letterpress shop she has a large collection of historical fonts and ornaments (decorative elements) that can be combined and recombined to make limitless imagery. For her artist book *The City Is My Religion*, many, many, individual pieces of lead ornaments are combined to create the cityscape of Chicago and nine other images.



57. The City is My Religion: A Typographic Memoir.

#### Paper as Art

Paper forms the basis of many books, but it can also be created as an art object in itself. Drawing on some of the ancient East Asian papermaking techniques discussed elsewhere in this exhibition, local and international artists have created the large paper panels on display in the gallery. They include:

Taki Paper Mill, "Moamoa," 100% kozo base with wood pulp design on top

Taki Paper Mill, "Moamoa," 47% kozo, 47% wood pulp, 6% Mitsumata fiber

Taki Paper Mill, "Circles," 100% kozo base with wood pulp design on top

Igarashi Paper Mill, "Suminagashi / Japanese Marbling," 70% wood pulp, 30% hemp (two pieces)

Igarashi Paper Mill, "Burdock Root Paper," 40% kozo, 5% hemp, 5% burdock root fiber, 5% black bark kozo

Igarashi Paper Mill, untitled, 25% kozo, 25% hemp, 50% wood pulp

Igarashi Paper Mill, untitled, 25% kozo, 25% hemp, 50% wood pulp

Igarashi Paper Mill, "Creative Madder," 25% kozo, 25% hemp, 50% wood pulp

Taki Paper Mill, "Splash Edge," 80% kozo, 20% wood pulp

Nicholas Cladis, "Ura (Iowa)," 100% kozo

Nicholas Cladis, "Ura (Echizen)," 100% kozo

Paper works are all from Special Collections & Archives, University of Iowa Libraries, and were all made in 2023.



Igarishi Paper Mill, "Burdock Root Paper."



Nicholas Cladis, "Ura (Iowa)."

#### **CREDITS**

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# Making the Book, Past and Present

January 16 - June 28, 2024

Find videos and more resources for this exhibition on the Main Library Gallery website.

Main Library Gallery 125 W. Washington St. lowa City, IA 52242 lib.uiowa.edu/gallery

