

The Art of Book Making



An introduction to bookbinding

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Take one piece of paper and a pair of scissors, and you have the tools to create a book. Add a needle and thread, a pot of glue, and a brush and you can make a variety of structures. Tell a family story, rubber-stamp a poem, use photographs in sequence, and the book becomes vibrant and alive. Even if you want to make a hardcover book, you must start by folding paper.

This is an introduction to bookbinding structures. I include simple structures and compound structures that are combinations of one or more simple ones. I also include a few complex and more elaborate bindings. I emphasize working with archival materials that will remain strong and that will not yellow over time.

Think of the books you create using these directions as your samples. At first they will be blank. When you feel comfortable doing your own binding or when you feel inspired, you can start to “work from the inside, out.” This can mean finding or creating words and images first, then binding them into a book, or finding out what is inside yourself that needs to be expressed and working out how to express it clearly and appropriately. While any of the structures can be used to tell any story, ideally the binding and materials should relate to and enhance the contents, helping to make the meaning clear. Contents, helping to make the meaning clear. For my art-by-mail series, *The Hand Correspondence*, I put three books into three handmade envelopes and mailed them to buyers.

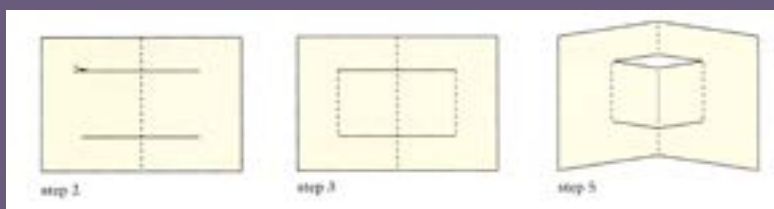
The stamps and buyers’ names became part of the art, which was about communication.

When pages are bound into a permanent structure, the sequence also becomes fixed. Fiction, non-fiction, and series of images that clearly have a narrative are most easily read in bound form. You may find that a certain structure suggests specific contents.

On-of-a-kind objects are considered valuable, and therefore their creation tends to produce fear in the beginner. In our culture we are afraid to be beginners, afraid of making mistakes. Put aside this fear if you can, and let your hands work for you. The more mistakes you make, the more you learn.

When you decide to create a book, as a gift or for practice, make more than one.

How to make a Pop-Up Book



1. Start with a square. On the valley fold measure a 2' square, exactly at the center
2. Cut along the top and bottom lines
3. Score the side lines with a bone folder



They Ran Out, 1991, letterpress, linoleum cuts, pop-up with accordions