



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

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Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

## ABC LA Conference Notes

### *Table of Contents*

<i>Keynote Address by artist Raymond Pettibon</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Session 1. 'Zines and Scenes: Artists' Publishing in Chinatown</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Session 2. What did you do with the gum? Dealing with problem artists' books</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Session 3. Teaching with Artists' Books, Strategies for Collaboration</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Session 4. Cataloging Artists' Books: What's the Problem?</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Session 5. Bound Together: Building Common Vocabularies to Describe Artists' Books</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Session 6. Cataloging Artists' Books</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Session 7. Do you read me? A brief history of the Artist and the Book in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century</i>	<i>15</i>
<i>Session 8. Sauce for the Goose: Marketing and Acquisitions</i>	<i>16</i>
<i>Session 9. Physical and Virtual Access to Artists' Books</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Session 10. Experience Counts: 100+ Years of Book Arts Education</i>	<i>20</i>
<i>Session 11: You Made It, We Love It, Now What? Preservation and Conservation of Artists' Books</i>	<i>21</i>
<i>Session 12. "Why Doesn't Anyone Know about These Books?" Bringing the Artists' Book to a Wider Audience</i>	<i>22</i>
<i>Session 13. Books in my Baggage: Reminiscences by Judith A. Hoffberg</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Session 14. Catch-22: Exhibiting Artists' Books</i>	<i>23</i>
<i>Closing Session. A Conversation among Artists Who Have Turned to the Book</i>	<i>24</i>



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

**Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005**  
**Keynote Address by artist Raymond Pettibon**

Saturday May 21, 2005 1:30-2:30 pm

Speaker: Raymond Pettibon

Recorder: Santos R. Vásquez

Summary: Introduction of Raymond Pettibon. Born in Tucson Arizona lives in Hermosa Beach, Economics major at UCLA began making cartoons for the school paper at UCLA, Pettibon is known for his artwork in the punk rock scene in Southern California.

Raymond Pettibon begins his address by talking about and explaining what he does and has done in relation to artists books, fanzines, and works on paper. While he talks he shows slides of his drawings – which appear to be incidental to his talk, as if they were “background” images. He makes a connection with high art and low art, between minimal and conceptual art with that of fanzines and comics. He states that it wasn't until the 1960's that “drawings” and comics were on the same level as those high art forms; the parallelism of their “de-materialization”. He points out that prior to the 60's, original work (drawings) were often thrashed, they weren't valued. He also makes a point about the division of labor and low pay diffusing and devaluing the autonomy of the artist during this time period that “Drawing was considered something beneath, only for children's books.” At the same there were barriers in the art world. One needed institutional support to be accepted and one had to most likely make sculpture or painting.

Conversely, Pettibon begins to talk about the importance of fanzines. Emphasizing their low costs and accessibility, pointing out that anyone can make them and one doesn't need institutional support. He mentions that there is a little economical distress – but that the money is usually made back. He makes an interesting point about how fanzines are counter to the actual original drawings themselves; a weaker production value but at the same time there is an importance or value placed on the publication of an artwork, that “The work is not valid until it becomes published.”

Pettibon also mentions that fanzines were a different form of documentation, which is important. He makes a point about “zines”, “saving ourselves from 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> generations of painting genres” – that is was something new and fresh. He adds importantly that artists of his generation won over previous generations that tried to limit the flow of artists – basically breaking with this structure of occlusion.

He goes on to state that “zines” and journals were part of a dismissive attitude. That even paper itself was part of the “cult of materials”; pointing out that journals and fanzines are part of this – the cheapness of materials. He makes a connection here with porn, saying that fanzines were basically competing with porn. He states that “zines”



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

along with baseball cards, and porn were often kept in garages or basements and eventually thrown out but now are considered valuable.

Someone asks a question about how he operates in regards to the text or writing he uses with his images. He basically says he does it as he goes along, similar to how some people write poetry. Lastly, Pettibon makes a connection with comic book hero Superman and journalism and the newsroom. He mentions something about dealing with unpopular topics then and the “yellow journalism” of now and how the newsroom has changed.

### **Session 1. 'Zines and Scenes: Artists' Publishing in Chinatown**

Saturday May 21, 2005 3:00-4:30 pm

Moderator: Lynda Bunting

Speakers:

Peter Frank, writer

Mark Von Schlegell, Pruess Press

Joel Mesler, Pruess Press

Adam James, artist

Wendy Yao, OOGA BOOGA; Raymond Pettibon, artist

Recorder: Santos R. Vásquez

Summary:

Moderator Lynda Bunting asked a series of questions about artists' books especially in relation to the recent publishing in Chinatown. The questions were open and not directed towards any one individual.

Question: *Why do artists' books and 'zines interest you?*

Adam James: For him the book is incidental to his works on paper. He doesn't start with the idea of making a book – that it makes him uptight to do so. His books work well with short attention spans.

Joel Mesler: I need people to make “things” so we can exist (Pruess Press).

Raymond Pettibon: It is a way of communication. There is a synchronization of motives and reasons why. That it is an evolution and progression.

Mark Von Schlegell: I got tired of the “endless morass of nonsense” in art writing. There also was a problem of trying to get paid by the publishers and a general disregard and disrespect for what the writer does – from the more established publishers. We



## ARTISTS' BOOKS

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

### Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

wanted to do something akin to “old school socialism”, to be more open, to be more working class within the art community. We wanted to do things on our own terms.

Wendy Yao: I want to be able to distribute “other” information, a little different from the usual – something more flexible and open ended.

Peter Frank: “I am the ghost of artists’ books past”... Historically the high point of artists’ books that took place in the 1970’s, “the silver age,” when an artists’ book had the potential to be anything. The advent of the Internet freed writing and printing from lexical obligations, therefore, freeing up the possibilities (again) of what the artists’ book could be. The Internet is able to distribute books and information in high capitalist form but also permits people to act locally in low capitalist form.

Question: *How do artists see their work in books in relation to their entire oeuvre?*

Adam James: There is a resurgence in drawing(s).

Peter Frank: Sketchbooks are the own most gratifying books, they are a direct impulse, a direct connection. Also they are an issue or distribution of one’s ideas.

Mark Von Schlegell: The low cost of production enables them to disseminate their books to more people at a low cost.

Question: *How important is craft in art book production?*

Mark Von Schlegell: It’s not about craft or what’s current in craft.

Peter Frank: Craft is not an issue or non-issue. It depends on what you want to communicate, whether you want to consider a certain aesthetic or not and if so, for whom?

Question: *How are issues of design played out?*

Adam James: Design for me is a way of eliminating problems.

Joel Mesler: It was important to have a space separate from art.

Mark Von Schlegell: Designers have an interpretive function similar to a painter. This can also cause problems.

Joel Mesler: Designers have egos also.



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

Peter Frank: Books and 'zines are artworks in themselves. They want to look the best or say the most.

Question: *How are artists' books and 'zines different now?*

Peter Frank: By the end of the 1970s artists' books became so uncool. Since the 90's and the Internet distribution is different.

Wendy Yao: The punk scene I knew was different from the one Raymond knew, it was the 90's.

Raymond Pettibon: Punk was really great, it was very different then. It wasn't all encompassing then.

Question: *How do you distribute artists' books and 'zines?*

Joel Mesler: Only when you ask for them (Pruess Press).

Mark Von Schlegell: When people come by...to make it completely hard to get.

Wendy Yao: At our website you can order from any where in the world.

Question: *How do you select?*

Wendy Yao: It's an intuitive decision. There's an inter-connectedness to what's all around.

Mark Von Schlegell: It's intuitive... Music is also a catalyst for other works and books.

Peter Frank: It's very similar to the Berliner structure.

Wendy Yao: I like to sell things artists or designers are making but on a small level.

Question: *What is the relationship between music and artists' books and 'zines?*

Raymond Pettibon: Before it wasn't so "arty".

Peter Frank: The 60's enabled the flow of visual, sonic and the verbal. There were publications embracing music like Something Else Press. There were people like John

Question: *What are your favorite 'zines and why?*

Mark Von Schlegell: Triny Dalton, the Unicorn 'zines, Torah and other older 'zines.

Adam James: Ballerinas

Peter Frank: File, It Is, Zapp Comics.

Wendy Yao: The Rambler, Search and Destroy

Raymond Pettibon: Mark Gonzales, Slash magazine.

Mark Von Schlegell: Science Fiction First, Comics...

Question: *Can you speculate about the future in regards to the Internet?*

Mark Von Schlegell: There isn't anymore Internet – nothing really interesting at least... The Internet isn't a good record of material or information. 'Zines were a good record on the local level.

Adam James: I prefer the tangible.

Peter Frank: I have a question, what is the relationship of (artists') books to libraries? How will it be catalogued and recorded?

Joel Mesler: Once we know someone like MOCA buys something, we know it will be catalogued.

Lynda Bunting: We do collect your books and other artists' books. We do it the best way we can – for what our budget can cover. We use standardized cataloguing rules. Sometimes it's a judgment call on what to catalogue because we can't catalogue everything... But we care very much.



## **ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

### **Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005**

#### **Session 2. What did you do with the gum? Dealing with problem artists' books**

Sunday, May 22, 2005 9-10:10am

Speakers: Open discussion

Recorder: Trish Rose, University of CA, San Diego

#### **Summary:**

Issues surrounding artists' books include: use problems (i.e. how does the book work?); size issues (how to store); materials – some are very fragile, deteriorating and even toxic (possibly damaging to the other books.)

All participants agreed that policy setting is key. Daniel Starr felt the question to ask was “if we can't preserve it and make it accessible should we be collecting it?”

Questions to ask oneself – “What is the responsible thing?” both for the works and the rest of the collection. Other policy issues should include the costs of preservation in terms of human labor and equipment (e.g. temperature maintenance).

Issues of artists' intent came up – would artists want their ephemera preserved infinitely? Judith Hoffberg felt it was important to establish contact with contemporary artists in order to understand intent, deal with deterioration, and understand if packaging is integral to work. Many artists don't know how to properly package their work for shipping and the community felt they needed to educate these artists on these issues.

For preservation and access, the audience wondered if digital images will resolve some of the problems. Some felt it will make books more accessible by helping people determine if the item will be of use to them before seeing it in person.

#### **Session 3. Teaching with Artists' Books, Strategies for Collaboration**

Sunday, May 22, 9-10:30 am

Moderator: Rachel Bers, Printed Matter Inc.

Recorder: Joan Benedetti, Librarian/Cataloger (Ret.), L.A. County Museum of Art

#### **Summary:**

Rachel Bers began the discussion by talking about Printed Matter Inc. (<http://printedmatter.org>), an artists' books store in New York City (in Chelsea), where she works as Programming and Web Content Manager. Printed Matter is a nonprofit organization founded in 1976 and dedicated to the promotion of publications made by



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

artists. They have stock of 15,000 books by 5,000 artists from all over the world, especially the U.S. and Europe. They deal only in editions of 100 or more. They receive around 50 submissions every week; about 30-40% are accepted. A committee of four juries the submissions. They also handle items “engaged with the history of artists’ books.” In general they do not carry exhibition catalogs, but will sometimes take a catalog which is, in fact, an artists’ book made by an artist for a one-person show. They do not have a library or a physical archive, but they have an online catalog, which functions as a virtual archive. All publications they have ever carried are kept in the catalog in perpetuity, so it has research value aside from its catalog function.

Education is basic to what Printed Matter does. They have classes and lectures on the history of artists’ books and the history of books in general. When there are artists in residence, the artists generate relevant programs. E.g., the creators of the annual queer feminist art journal *LTTR* will be in residence this summer working on the next issue of the journal. A series of events, lectures, performances and other *LTTR* activities at Printed Matter will revolve around and result in the production of *LTTR #4: "Do You Wish to Direct Me?"* They also have an “Emerging Artists” exhibition series.

Printed Matter staff does consultations with librarians who want to develop collections. “Curated lists” (available on the website) list artists’ books by many different topics, e.g., conceptualism, Fluxus, social justice, etc. You can also search the catalog by binding, publication year, book type (flip book, mail art, folded book, etc.), and many other categories. Catalog entries have thumbnail images of the cover. Rachel told of the experience of Max Schumann, Printed Matter’s manager, taking a lecture/demonstration regarding artists’ books to a class in the library at Middlebury College. As a result, the librarian decided to let each student choose a book to buy for the library.

Rachel asked the group if students and/or faculty influence library collection development in schools? At CSU Northridge some graduate art students are interested in artists’ books as a form. At San Jose State graduate students work for special collections and have encouraged artists’ books to be bought. Two teachers, one from the English Department and one from the Art Department, are especially interested.

Rachel asked if students respond to historic or topical approaches—is anyone watching how people “look” at artists’ books? Someone said studio artists tend to want practical information; art history students are more interested the history and theoretical parameters. Students/viewers must be given time to interact with the whole book; actually handle books. The issue of the use of gloves was mentioned. Jim Findlay from the Bienes Center in Broward County, Florida, said that, in showing kids artists’ books, using gloves had the effect of making them view it as a “special experience”; it was actually more fun for them.

Marcia Moore, who teaches the making of artists’ books at New Roads, a private K-12 school in Santa Monica, says that kids who are otherwise “art-phobic” respond to these



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

classes. One needs to work with other teachers, not isolate oneself. She has a collection of artists' books that are intended for handling by the students. They must wash their hands but do not use gloves. Different ages will have different interests. Teenagers tend to be more interested in graphic novels, 'zines, and internet art.

Jim Findlay said that developing collections of locally produced artists' books was the wave of the future. This is how one's institution can best make a unique contribution. A library can be more strictly regional in scope if there are other survey collections nearby to which patrons can be referred, or from which items may be borrowed. If not, then one may feel the need to develop a more broad-based collection. The Bienes Center offers an annual \$2000 artists' book prize just for Florida artists. The Center gets to keep the winning book and mounts an exhibition of most of the other submitted books. Jim then sends a letter to all the exhibiting artists asking if they will donate their book and one fourth to one third actually do.

Artists' books are of interest outside the art field. At Stanford a doctoral student in English was doing their dissertation on literary criticism of artists' books. A Yale professor in American Studies is especially interested in Chicano artists' books. Peggy Keeran from the U. of Denver reported that some faculty got a grant to purchase artists' books for the library. Librarians and others responsible for collection development must be very pro-active in promoting interest in artists' books. Take every opportunity to talk about them, show them, allow people to have full, interactive experience with them.

### **Session 4. Cataloging Artists' Books: What's the Problem?**

Sunday, May 22, 2005 10:45am-12:15pm

Moderator: Nancy Norris, Assistant Head, Monographic Cataloging UCLA Library Cataloging & Metadata Center

#### Panelists:

Daniel Starr, Manager of Bibliographic Operations at Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art;

R. Arvid Nelsen, Coordinator of Technical Services, Original Cataloger, and Classical Studies Librarian, Mandeville Special Collections Library, University of California, San Diego

Recorder: Trish Rose, University of CA, San Diego

#### Summary:

Starr covered a wide range of issues including: titles (legibility, lack of titles, or a reference title as in a Xerox book). He pointed out one can often look to rules for rare books and manuscripts as guides. Better to use and adapt existing rules than create new



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

ones. The idea of editions is different from traditional books in that it's about documenting presentation differences rather than content. Keep in mind catalogers do not need to do the work of a curator or scholar in creating the record. Binding information – record only if it's important to your audience. Make liberal use of quotes if transcribing from item. Topical subjects – can provide access to audiences beyond those who traditionally want to access artists' books. Of note, Daniel felt all artists books can potentially be cataloged in AACR2 and MARC21 by merging some of the rules for books (AACR2) and artworks (Cataloging Cultural Objects, CCO).

Nelsen is heavily involved in the [Rare Books and Manuscripts Section \(RBMS\)](#) of the Association of College and Research Libraries ([ACRL](#)) and informed the audience about a seminar on cataloging artists' books that will be held in Austin in 2006. He felt current cataloging standards do not properly address issues with cataloging artists' books. He laid out a set of questions to ask oneself before cataloging: 1) what is an artists' book? – identify the range; 2) distinguish between books and artworks – publication/distribution will be different; 3) genre and access points – these need to be distinguished better in LCSH; 4) form clear and precise description – keep it simple, use intuition, can put into summary note rather than in description.

Keep in mind:

When artists' books are also published as exhibition catalogs.

You can bend the rules if you know what you are doing, for instance it's legitimate to hybridize Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) terms when perfect descriptor is not available as long as you're using existing standard thesauri to formulate the terms in 655.

- How to identify pages vs. illustration which appear similar.
- Local artists are available for answering questions
- Book dealers descriptions are useful but non-standardized
- When artists' books are also published as exhibition catalogs you can bend the rules if you know what you are doing, for instance it's legitimate to hybridize Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT) terms when perfect descriptor is not available as long as you're using existing standard thesauri to formulate the terms in 655.

Question from audience – AACR2 Chapter on objects and realia – need to make it more clear what constitutes publication because this will guide how it's cataloged



## ARTISTS' BOOKS

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

### Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

#### Session 5. Bound Together: Building Common Vocabularies to Describe Artists' Books

Sunday, May 22, 2-3:30 pm

Moderator: Heather Cleary, Visual Resources Librarian, Otis College of Art and Design

Recorder: Joan Benedetti, Librarian/Cataloger (Ret.), L.A. County Museum of Art

#### Summary:

Heather Cleary, who moderated this session, stated at the outset that she had requested vocabulary lists to discuss, but had received very few. She would, therefore, focus on what Otis does and then open the session up for discussion of other practices.

The Millard Sheets Library at Otis is committed to digitization. They are in the process of creating a digital image collection and encouraging faculty to use them in the classroom. Part of this digital effort has been a Getty-funded grant to catalog and digitize their collection of over 2,000 artists' books. The collection was begun in the seventies by the former librarian, Joan Hugo. Although some of the older books are now worth a lot more, they rarely purchase anything that costs more than \$20. They do have more valuable items that have been donated, but their collection does not include any fine press books. They collect mostly California artists.

The Otis Artists' Book Image Database can be seen on the library website in 3 different databases: the initial test site (<http://artbook.library.otis.edu>); through a public collection using MDID2 software (<http://did.library.otis.edu>); and through a future site using ContentDM (<http://content.library.otis.edu>). Content DM, an OCLC product, is a media access management system which allows books to be cataloged as a whole and then to have separate records for individual pages. The record for each artists' book may have up to 8 views: some may show a different view from the cover or show the book unfolded or show individual pages. The cataloger uses MARC tags (especially 563, 595, and 655) but the tags do not show on the screen. The cataloger doesn't always know what processes have been used in the creation of the book and must seek help from other librarians, faculty, or the artist.

Photography of the artists' books can take time, but images are essential to the cataloging record, especially for art students who "do not read." The views shown on the database are intended only to be references to the actual books, which can be seen and handled (while wearing cotton gloves) in the library. There is a copyright statement on the website that informs artists that images will be removed if they object. The images are not high-resolution images and are therefore not suitable for copying for re-publication.



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

Heather said that Elizabeth Spatz catalogs the artists' books (under the direction of Cathy Chambers). Students at Otis have a special interest in the technical aspects and structures of the books and want to know binding terms. In order to better serve their students and faculty, Otis adds technique and binding terms to the records. Otis uses MARC field 563 for binding terms rather than field 655. Heather then demonstrated the three sites holding the Otis Library Artists' Books Image Database.

At this point, the discussion was opened up to the audience. Many different communities of searchers (faculty, students, artists, librarians) need descriptive and subject terms, but there is little standardization. "Artists' books" and "mail art" are AAT (Art and Architecture Thesaurus) and LC (Library of Congress) authorized terms. But more specific terms are needed as well. There was a brief discussion of how one can submit terms to both LC and the AAT. It was thought by the group that ARLIS should create a funnel (preferably the ARLIS/NA Artists' Books Round Table) to determine how to better influence the establishment of authoritative headings in LCSH and AAT. (It was apparent that there were audience-members who were not aware of ARLIS/NA's work to date in this area and were not familiar either with LC or AAT terminology.) In their internal cataloging authority files, Otis shows the source of their established terminology: SAIC (School of the Art Institute—in other words the late Fred Hillbruner), Printed Matter, Yale, WSW (Women's Studio Workshop), and Minsky (Richard Minsky, founder of the Center for Book Arts). Heather stated that she felt that even after standards have been established that the onus will still be on individual libraries to provide cross-walks for the terminology of different communities.

Discussion of Binding Terms: Some think mostly curators use them; others say students are interested in seeing like techniques. R. Arvid Nelson, Coordinator of Technical Services/Original Cataloging/Classical Studies Librarian, UC San Diego, mentioned that the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of ALA has created six thesauri and made them available through ALA (<http://www.ala.org/ala/acrlbucket/rbmsthes/rbmsthesaurihome.htm>), but they will appear as free searchable Web documents by this summer. He suggested that catalogers forward vocabulary suggestions to RBMS for inclusion in future thesauri. Everyone was very interested in Daniel's remark that he uses AAT terms creatively, such as putting two valid terms together in one heading. This seems to have convinced several catalogers to use AAT as they would not have to use cumbersome process of submitting new terms to AAT. AAT staff is very small; an LC-like editorial board would be more appropriate. Arvid suggested that an official body like ARLIS, perhaps CAC, get involved with this. Trish said one could build an "überlist" and make crosswalks between terms, then it wouldn't matter what term was input.



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

**Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005**  
**Session 6. Cataloging Artists' Books**

Sunday, May 22, 3:45-5:15 pm

Moderator: Daniel Starr, Manager of Bibliographic Operations at Thomas J. Watson Library, The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Recorder: Joan Benedetti, Librarian/Cataloger (Ret.), L.A. County Museum of Art

**Summary:**

Daniel stated that the discussion group would be run in the same manner that Sherman Clarke runs the ARLIS/NA Cataloging Problems Discussion Group at their annual conference: chairs are arranged in a circle and each person attending is called upon to either make a comment or ask a question of the group. [The recorder was not always able to identify participants.]

Sylvia Choi from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago stated that sometimes different issues of serial artists' books have different formats; do you catalog them individually? R. Arvid Nelsen, Coordinator of Technical Services/Original Cataloger/Classical Studies Librarian, University of California, San Diego, stated that he analyzes the different volumes. Other libraries provide a record for the periodical title and separate records for each issue. Nelsen also stated that he disapproved of the practice of providing 700s for every possible function. He subsumes "artist" under "printer." Daniel Starr then asked what about when the role of the artist is to produce his or her own exhibition catalog? Starr will put the artist's name in 245 #c. A cataloger from UC Santa Barbara stated that the main entry can be an artist/illustrator even if there is also a separate writer if the artist is considered to be the principal person responsible for the book. Nelsen said that the object itself can sometimes "tell" you who should be listed as the main entry, e.g., if you have evidence that the artist is an established artist.

There was discussion of the use of delimiter x Specimen in the 650. Arvid and Daniel both prefer using the 655--genre field. The amount of specificity should be greater once there are more than 100 or so artists' book records. You can subdivide by year and by country. There commenced a discussion as to what a geographic subdivision of artists' books means and whether or not to break down "United States" further by state or city. How do you determine "where an artist is from"? Is it his birthplace or where he did most of his work? Some artists reside in more than one place or have done important early work in one place and later moved. Is it important to document the artistic activity of a particular place? Is this the place to do that?

According to Daniel Starr, it is "better to provide too much information rather than too little." He feels that copy catalogers should not delete tags unless they are blatantly wrong. Add LC headings if necessary, but don't take away unauthorized headings. (This



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

step alone can reduce the backlog considerably. At the Met, by discontinuing this procedure, they were able to reduce their backlog from 20,000 to 5,000.) Better to add more rather than delete any.

Jim Findlay, from the Bienes Center for the Literary Arts in Broward County, Florida, said he wants his cataloger to make very detailed records of artists' books. Can one use descriptions from a dealer's catalog? Susan Moon, from the University of California, Santa Barbara said she likes to see this kind of description cut and pasted into a note. You can even include biographical information for local artists in a note. Quotes should be used if text is from a dealer or artist. LC is now sometimes linking records to URLs for Table of Contents (from Blackwell's) or dealer information.

Jim Findlay wondered how one can get a private institution to use national standards. Answer: it ensures more consistency; local solutions end with the loss of that person; consistency both for staff and users is helpful. It was suggested that seeking Grant-funded help to achieve this.

In discussion about faculty/curator needs, it was remarked that "faculty/curators can be a moving target." Nevertheless, one should consult with them, encourage them to comment on what their searching priorities are, but also let them know: "We can do anything; we just can't do everything." Think of what your "added value" is. Daniel said the best value is not having more than a half a year's backlog. Consider if everything one traditionally has done is still necessary in an online catalog. E.g., the practice of including the artist's name in a 600 field (in addition to the 100 or 700 field) may not be necessary in an OPAC where a global search of the record is possible. (The split card catalog—subjects in one catalog, descriptive headings in another--may be the origin of this practice.) R. Arvid Nelsen: 600 tags are *about*, not *by*. Daniel agreed saying using the artist's name as a subject heading is misleading unless the work is biographical or is an exhibition catalog. Artists' books should be treated more like belles-lettres; there is no 600 for the author. What about topical subject headings? This seems to be a "museums versus academia" debate. In Daniel's experience, only use topical headings to help a serious user to find art, not text. Use of "Artists' books" as a genre heading (655) would help here. Trish Rose, UCSD said her library has 1200 or so artists' books and most have the topical (650) rather than the genre (655). They are working to re-index.

Some final remarks by Daniel reminded everyone that AACR2r does just fine for cataloging artists' books. It is not necessary to jump to other standards. AACR2 was developed in the late 1970s and there has not been that much else to use since then. He expects that AACR3 will reflect every tool now available. Why use AACR3 to catalog serious works of art? Arvid asked why not use Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Books (DCRB) to catalog artists' books? This idea should be tested. DCRB would be good for expanded information.



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

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## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

Daniel asked the group what they would like to see in an artists' book manual.

According to the group, it must be practical, technical; should include vocabulary with definitions, truly descriptive scope notes, images of different types; samples of MARC records. Vocabulary lists are not helpful enough for catalogers; they help mostly collectors and dealers. These books are created to push the boundaries. They are challenging to catalog.

### **Session 7. Do you read me? A brief history of the Artist and the Book in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century**

Monday, May 23, 2005 9:30-10:15am

Speakers:

Jennifer Schaffner, University of California, Los Angeles

Joyce Pellerano Ludmer, Getty Research Institute

Marcia Reed, Getty Research Institute

Recorder: Krista Ivy, Rivera Library, University of California, Riverside

Summary:

Jennifer Schaffner, Head of Reader Services of the William Andrews Clark Memorial Library welcomed the conference attendees and thanked the Southern California chapter of ARLIS/NA for hosting and arranging this wonderful conference. Joyce Pellerano Ludmer, Bibliographer and Curator of the Research Library at the Getty Research Institute introduced Marcia Reed, Head of Collection Development of the Research Library at the Getty Research Institute. Marcia Reed began by stating that instead of discussing or focusing on the art of artists' books, she was going to discuss the act of reading or experiencing the textual nature of artists' books. Artists' books are an acquired taste. Initially drawn to the physical nature and visuality, they stimulate the reader to return to the past and experience what Reed refers to as the "cutting edge of reading."

The way the majority of people experience artists' books is not by reading them, but by catching a glimpse of them mounted on a gallery wall or pedestal. For Reed, reading an artists' book involves physical interaction with the book and its content. The nature of each book drives the experience of reading, for example, Dieter Roth's book with urine and cheese encased in plastic could produce an unpleasant experience. For some books, the format is intentionally distracting to read, such as Susan King's *Women and Cars* that has multiple overlays. The text and art compete for the readers' attention. There are even books that deny being read. In Buzz Spector's *Passage*, mutilated pages repeat the same word on each page. Another example is Marcel Broodthaers 1990 work where the pages have been gessoed together. In contrast to these two works, there are books that are dense in content, such as Robinson Jeffers *Granite and Cypress* from 1975, which reads like a book of collected poems. Reed discussed the relevance of numerous other artists



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

*Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating*

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

including Rachel Rosenthal and Daniel Martinez, Raymond Pettibon, Ed Ruscha, John Eric Broaddus, Sonia Delaunay, Keith Smith, Mirosław Bałka, Aleksandr Rodchenko, and Marcel Duchamp.

### **Session 8. Sauce for the Goose: Marketing and Acquisitions**

Monday, May 23, 2005, 10:30-Noon

Moderator:

Susan Moon, University of California, Santa Barbara

Speakers:

Marshall Weber, Booklyn

Carolee Campbell, Ninja Press

Bill Stewart, Vamp & Tramp, Booksellers, LLC

Nancy Pistorius, University of New Mexico

Recorder: Maureen Burns, University of California, Irvine

Summary:

Overall, this session focused on the question of how artists and dealers market artists' books to libraries and how that might affect the acquisitions process. The moderator, Susan Moon, led the discussion by asking a series of pointed questions with answers varying depending on the perspective of artist, curator, publisher, and librarian— all represented by the panelists.

The first query was focused on how the panelists find artists. It was noted that the dealers are a close knit group and there is no shortage of artists, since book art is a trendy medium. The dealers use a wide variety strategies to find artists and artists also find them, including: unsolicited suggestions, artists contacting them, approaching known artists, meeting new artists on the street, finding them through community programs, and university faculty or specialists in the area suggesting artists.

Regarding how the artists are selected by dealers and libraries, there was also a range of techniques reported. As a non-profit organization, Booklyn represents sixty artists and uses a competitive, filtering process in which 21<sup>st</sup> century books are reviewed by a curatorial committee and a number of criteria are considered before adoption, such as: book form, integration of text and image, subject matter, multi- or inter-disciplinarily, and balance to name a few. Vamp and Tramp is a team of two who more subjectively select books based on their visual, tactile, and intellectual appeal, described by Stewart as the “‘Wow’ experience.” For all, the work itself is the organizing principle and the biggest influence in selection. Purchasing artist books for a teaching collection, Pistorius



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

looks at literary content, imagery, and structure as well as providing as broad a stylistic range as possible to university patrons.

There was associated discussion about the public service aspect of the dealers' work in not only disseminating the art, but bringing artists, librarians, and museum curators together and thereby promoting creativity, supporting artists, reaching underserved audiences, and encouraging freedom of expression.

Moon then asked how libraries might make their artist book collections more visible in their institutions and communities. Pistorius mentioned that the University of New Mexico Libraries have changing exhibitions where artist books are prominently displayed in major thoroughfares for patrons and visitors to see. Faculty teaching incorporate the study of artist books in their lectures, thereby familiarizing a wide range of students with a new genre and encouraging them to return to the library to see more. An active community of book artists and state book arts groups who have conferences also help disseminate information about their book arts collections. Other panelists affirmed that there are similar book arts groups in most states.

Discussion continued by focusing on how to distinguish what you want to buy and sell when there is such a plethora of artist books available. Stewart reiterated that for Vamp and Tramp it is personal and selfish, but elaborated it is not so much theory as practicality, i.e., how to facilitate movement from artist to librarian to end user. Campbell suggested that Ninja also strives for dissemination and works towards this goal by researching the scope of collections, visiting potential buyers, and developing standing orders with private collectors and institutions. Weber suggested it depends on the dealers' marketing goal. At Booklyn, they focus on public libraries, teaching collections, and other institutions before marketing to personal collectors. For university libraries, budgetary constraints and obtaining a wide range of material for teaching purposes is at the core. It was noted that it is easier to obtain funds for fine press books than the less understood artist books.

The discussion then turned to working with the book artists. Campbell stressed that it is necessary to nurture new artists and said she advises them to initially focus on the craft of making books and study what has been done before. The artist's first exhibition is important, but after that they should be able to rely on the dealer to spread the word about their work. Other panelists mentioned that it is equally important to be critical and reject work if necessary. One can be kind about rejection suggesting artists revisit dealers after continuing to develop their work. All panelists emphasized how important it is to be honest. Weber suggested being explicit about why the work is not acceptable and how important it is to establishing a dialog with the artist. Pistorius indicated that there are many reasons why libraries reject materials, but it is usually dependent on funding, the costs of similar items, and fiscal cycles. It was noted that for most universities, acquisition funds have to be spent out by late Spring and the new budgets arrive in the Summer or Fall. As a result, there are times of the year when purchases are just not



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

possible. Weber mentioned that Booklyn works in collaboration with institutions to develop payment plans and will buy, hold, and wait for funding to provide as much flexibility as possible for such academic buyers. The others affirmed that they allow institutions to reserve artist books or create standing orders.

The importance of exhibiting artist books at conferences and book fairs was the next topic of discussion. Campbell mentioned that there aren't many, but the ones that exist are important, such as Oak Knoll's book fair (<http://www.oakknoll.com/>). All the panelists emphasized the great importance of the interaction between dealers and librarians as well as the benefit of being able to handle the books and enjoy the associated dialog about them. Weber highly recommended attending Frankfurt's book fair (<http://www.frankfurt-book-fair.com/>) as a fabulous opportunity to meet thousands of exhibitors and see millions of books; they have a special area for artist books with amazing exhibits. The technology is there for using digital images or multimedia facsimiles and such creative solutions for viewing artist books should be encouraged, but the panel concluded—there is nothing like the human interaction and thrill of handling the books themselves.

### **Session 9. Physical and Virtual Access to Artists' Books**

Monday, May 23, 2005 1-2:30pm

#### Speakers:

Judith Herschman, University of California, Los Angeles  
Kelley Wolfe Bachli, Scripps College  
Stanley Strauss, Cerritos Public Library  
Karin Lanzoni, Getty Research Institute  
Heather Cleary, Otis College of Arts and Design

Recorder: Krista Ivy, University of California, Riverside

#### Summary:

Judith Herschman of the Arts Library at the University of California, Los Angeles introduced the panel participants and gave a brief introduction to the challenges faced by institutions when promoting or allowing for the physical and virtual access of artists' book collections.

Kelley Wolfe Bachli, reference librarian at Denison Library of Scripps College discussed access issues facing academic libraries that support book arts programs. The biggest issue facing access of artists' books is "how do students find them in the library?" Browsing is not an option, since artists' books are not housed in public access areas. For the inexperienced student catalog searching is not effective either. She feels her role as a librarian is to educate students about the collections at Denison Library and how they can



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

access and use the books. She accomplishes this primarily through library instruction. Numerous instructors regularly bring classes to visit the library for an orientation to the book arts collection. During the instruction session, students are encouraged to experience the books by touching and reading them. Other ways the Denison Library is promoting and encouraging the use of their book arts collection is by exhibitions, guest speakers and community outreach. Annually Denison Library invites a local 6<sup>th</sup> grade class to visit the library and Scripps College Press. During the visit, the students learn about book arts and produce a book for the class.

Heather Cleary, Visual Resources Librarian at the Otis College of Art and Design, discussed the trials and tribulations of the development and creation of the Artists' Books Image Database (<http://artbook.library.otis.edu/>) at Otis. Initially a grant was received to determine if an artists' book image database was needed. Then once a need was determined, they proceeded with photographing and cataloging the collection of 3,000 artists' books. This project is funded by grants from the Getty. In addition to the Artists' Books Image Database, the Otis Digital Image Database (OtisDID) which allows students and faculty to search across collections to create slide lectures, has increased the use and knowledge of the artists' books collection. The database is currently incomplete and in-progress, but ultimately, Cleary feels that as long as artists' books collections, replete with images, are made available online, access is not an issue. A formal launch of the new site for the project will happen later this summer.

Stanley Strauss, the Public Services Librarian at Cerritos Public Library, presented "Access to Artists' Books in a Public Library Setting." This presentation focused on the various ways that the Cerritos Public Library (CPL), an "experience library," promotes and encourages the use of the CPL's artists' book collection. He believes that artists' books are experienced in three different manners; visually, physically and intellectually. At the CPL they design activities to encourage these different ways of experience. Some of the more common ways of exposing the patrons to the collection is through exhibition – a portion of the collection is always on display in the library. They also accommodate class visits at the CPL, where students can interact with the works in a hands-on environment. Future plans are to offer an artists' book open house (having all 170 artists' books on display), offer a book structure workshop, and offer an artist lead workshop on the creation of an artist book. For Strauss, he sees the collection as a community resource, an integral part of the library, a customer service component, and a teaching tool.

As Head of the Special Collections Reading Room at the Getty Research Institute, Karin Lanzoni's presentation focused on access issues surrounding the physical environment in a museum setting. More than 2000 artists' books have circulated in the last 2 years at the Getty. The primary users of the artists' book collection at the Getty are graduate students, curators, art historians, and Getty scholars. Lanzoni went on to address the Getty's access policies including the use of foam and acrylic holders for the artists' books, security, and proximity of staff. Known in the Los Angeles area for their extensive artists' book collection, the Getty's Seminar Room is used by a variety of visiting classes from local



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

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## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

institutions including California Institute of Arts, University of California, Los Angeles, University of Southern California, and Scripps College.

### Session 10. Experience Counts: 100+ Years of Book Arts Education

Monday, May 23, 2005 2:45-4:15pm

#### Speakers:

Kitty Maryatt, Scripps College

Steve Woodall, San Francisco Center for the Book

Gloria Kondrup, Art Center College of Design

Genie Shenk, San Diego Mesa College

Recorder: Krista Ivy, University of California, Riverside

#### Summary:

Kitty Maryatt, Director of the Scripps College Press introduced the panel participants and presented her experiences as a book arts educator. Kitty has been the Director of the Scripps College Press, a teaching press since 1986. Each semester typography students collaborate to produce one book. The students decide on the concept, text, stories and images and then create an edition of 60 copies. Each student receives a copy and the rest are sold to libraries and collectors. She highlighted some of the books published by the press, including *Clockwork* (1997), *Mutatis Mutandis* (1996), *Square<sup>2</sup>* (2003), and *Dorothy Drake and the Scripps College Press* (1992). The press has published 38 books to date.

Gloria Kondrup, Director of Archetype Press at Art Center College of Design discussed the problems currently facing college presses. When she was appointed Director of Archetype Press, she was faced with the dire future of the press being eliminated. She is responsible for reinvigorating the program and convincing the administration that the press is worth supporting. The book arts program recently moved into a new 4,000 square foot space on the South Campus. The new facility includes numerous presses and 2,400-plus drawers of rare American and European metal foundry type, wood type, and ornaments. The type collection is the treasure of the program. Each term Art Center offers 4-5 book arts courses where each class produces a collaborative book. Kondrup coined this as the 'fast, furious, and out of control' approach to fine letterpress printing. Some of the books she illustrated were *Thing-a-ma-jigs* and *Aesop Fables*. Kondrup considers the process and content to be the most important aspect of the collaborative book making process.

As founder of the book arts program at San Diego Mesa College, Genie Shenk summarized the programs 15 year history and development. Through her perseverance and enthusiasm for the medium, she has developed a highly successful book arts



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

program. Students come to her large courses from a variety of backgrounds. However, each student is required to learn to set type and crank the press for the collaborative book project each class produces. The success of the program at SDMC is partially attributable to Genie Shenk's own success as a book artist and her involvement in the book arts community. Her excitement about the medium has carried through to a number of her students who themselves have gone into the field of book arts as instructors, artists, publishers, and collectors.

Steve Woodall, the Director of the San Francisco Center for the Book (SFCB) discussed the history and development of this very successful non-profit organization. The SFCB opened in 1996 and has become one of the most active book arts organizations in the United States. The center was modeled after two organizations, the Center for Book Arts in New York and the Minnesota Center for Book Arts in Minneapolis. Recently the SFCB moved into a larger space and currently has a mailing list of 13,000 people. The letterpress workshops that the center offers is the heart of the institution. They can not offer enough classes to keep up with the demand. In their first year they offered 12 workshops. The center now offers more than 275 classes per year with a total of 2,000 students. One of the more innovative events the center has undertaken is the Steamroller Print fundraiser. This annual event involves artists using a steamroller as a printing press to produce an edition of large scale linoleum block prints that are later sold to benefit the center.

Richard Minsky, Director of the Center for Book Arts in New York briefly discussed the Center's development. He feels the success of the Center is based upon the fact that the gallery and workshops function in the same space. People come into the center off the street and get excited about creating an artists' book.

### **Session 11: You Made It, We Love It, Now What? Preservation and Conservation of Artists' Books**

Tuesday, May 24, 2005 9:00-10:15

#### Speakers:

Mary Sackett, Getty Research Institute  
Kristen St. John, UCLA

Recorder: Lois White, Getty Research Institute

#### Summary:

Mary Sackett stressed that there is a need for a conservator to preserve the original format of a work so that it remains the same as that which the artist intended. The use of interleaving material may aid in this effort, but it is important to use the proper kind, e.g.,



## ARTISTS' BOOKS

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

### Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

Permalife for paper and Silversafe for photographs or blueprints. Mary showed samples of a variety of papers and briefly discussed their properties.

Kristen St. John spoke about the preservation and conservation challenges found in the artists' book collections at UCLA, addressing four main issues: What is the object made of? How should it be shelved? How will it be used? How will it age? To illustrate some challenges of materials, Kristen showed slides of *The Book of Hair* by Joni Lee Mabe, which exhibits a shedding problem and *Seed Library* by George Gessert. The latter requires the use of the accompanying seeds to complete the work, but UCLA chose to preserve it in its original state. Since Takashi Murakami's *Peter Norton Family Christmas Project 2000* is not in a book format, UCLA chose to keep it in its original housing. Artists' books may come with use instructions, especially when they consist of several parts. However there may be other challenges such as when dealing with Richard Olson's *Perfect Bind* (bound on all four sides) or *Stone Stones Water* by Anne Rubicam Witten (the housing would have to be destroyed in order to view). A major challenge of aging is preserving items made of unstable materials, such as sound recordings.

#### **Session 12. "Why Doesn't Anyone Know about These Books?" Bringing the Artists' Book to a Wider Audience**

Tuesday, May 24, 2005 10:30-12:00

##### Speakers:

Michael Carabetta, Creative Director, Chronicle Books

Barbara Hodgson, Author and Book Designer

Lorraine Wild, Lorraine Wild Design and Publisher, Greybull Press

Jane Brown, National Accounts Director, D.A.P./ Distributed Art Publishers, and Director, D.A.P. West

Moderator: Victoria Steele, UCLA

Recorder: Lois White, Getty Research Institute

##### Summary:

Michael Carabetta spoke about the genesis of a work from artists' book to trade publication and also showed slides of artists' books and Chronicle trade books. Barbara Hodgson told the story of her first artists' book with Chronicle and subsequent projects such as *The Sensualist: A Novel* and *The Lives of Shadows*. She stressed that it was important for the text to be as compelling as the design in order to attract publishers' interest.



## ARTISTS' BOOKS

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

### Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

Barbara Hodgson talked about her experiences in trying to attract publishers to the artists' book genre. She stressed the importance of writing in addition to the construction and appearance of the book.

Lorraine Wild spoke of her experience as a designer working with Richard Tuttle on the forthcoming *The Art of Richard Tuttle*.

Jane Brown defined an artists' book as what is produced when an artist uses the book form to create an original work of art. What is important is the artistic vision, not that an artist created the book.

#### **Session 13. Books in my Baggage: Reminiscences by Judith A. Hoffberg**

Tuesday, May 24, 2005 12:05-12:30

Speaker: Judith A. Hoffberg

Recorder: Lois White, Getty Research Institute

Summary: Judith Hoffberg spoke of her involvement with artists' books, from this art form's early days to the present. Many artists' books were reasonably priced and she was able to build up an impressive collection, which now resides at UCLA. She sees an artists' book as a one-to-one interactive experience. She also told the story of how she was one of the founding members of ARLIS/NA.

Please note: An audio copy of Judith Hoffberg's full talk will be available at the GRI Research Library.

#### **Session 14. Catch-22: Exhibiting Artists' Books**

Tuesday, May 24, 2005 2:00-3:45

Speakers:

Jackie Dooley, University of California at Irvine

Judy Harvey Sahak, Scripps College

Bruce Whiteman, Clark Library, UCLA

Sue Ann Robinson, Long Beach Museum of Art

Moderator: Joyce Pellerano Ludmer, Getty Research Institute

Recorder: Lois White, Getty Research Institute



**ARTISTS' BOOKS**

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

## Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

### Summary:

Jackie Dooley's talk centered on an exhibit, curated by Renée and Judd Hubert, called 'A Throw of the Dice: Artists Inspired by a Visual Text' which showed various editions of Mallarmé's poem and artists' responses to it.

Judy Harvey Sahak spoke of artists' books exhibitions at Scripps, which reflect the college curriculum. One of the main issues they have to contend with is the size of the items they would like to display versus the size of the display cases.

Bruce Whiteman pointed out the major problem that many artists' books are made to be handled, which is not possible when the books are locked away in cases.

Sue Ann Robinson made a plea as a museum professional and artist that curators need to provide the space and time for viewers of an exhibition to experience the works as fully as possible.

### **Closing Session. A Conversation among Artists Who Have Turned to the Book**

Tuesday, May 24, 2005 4:00-5:30

#### Speakers:

Julie Chen, Artist, Flying Fish Press

Susan King, Artist

Harry Reese, Artist and Head, Visual Arts Dept., University of California at Santa Barbara

Moderator: Susan Allen, Getty Research Institute

Recorder: Lois White, Getty Research Institute

#### Summary:

Opening comments and introductions of the panelists were made by Joyce Pellerano Ludmer.

Julie Chen showed slides of her work, which demonstrate her belief that structure can express content. She mentioned that she tries to do something book-related every day.

In response to the moderator's request that each artist talk about their own favorite work, Susan E. King spoke about and showed slides of her Queen of Wands. Harry Reese told of how little formal training he had concerning such crafts as making paper, but how he learned through experimentation. And he talked about the favorite of all his own work, Arplines.



## ARTISTS' BOOKS

Creating • Collecting • Cataloging • Conserving • Collaborating

### Artists' Books Conference Los Angeles, May 21-24, 2005

Ed Hamilton of Hamilton Press was also scheduled to give a talk and participate in the artists' panel but was caught in the traffic snarl that hit most of west Los Angeles and Santa Monica/Venice. He is expected to present his talk at a future date at the Getty Research Institute.

Before participants retired to the opening reception for the exhibition 'The Artist Turns to the Book,' curated by Joyce Pellerano Ludmer, there was a brief discussion of the creative process, led by the moderator.

*The whole program for the Conference Getty Day was audio taped and will be available at the GRI Research Library. And the final Artists' Panel was videotaped, a copy of which will also be available for viewing at the GRI RL.*