



STRUCTURE & NARRATIVE

September 1-30, 2020

An Online Show

Presented by
Midcoast Maine Book Arts
and
the Camden Public Library

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Introduction

Structure & Narrative is an invitational exhibition curated by Midcoast Maine Book Arts. In lieu of a live exhibition in the currently closed Jean Picker Room at the [Camden Public Library](#), the library is graciously presenting an online exhibition. The show features work by book artists with strong connections to the midcoast region of Maine.

In an Artist’s Book, the structure or function of the traditional book is used as inspiration or a starting point to express an artist’s ideas. It can have a traditional book format, in which a story is told by turning pages, or it can use images, calligraphy, experimental bindings, and/or mixed media in a sculptural format that only references traditional book structures. Some artists make or print small editions of their work, while others create one-of-a-kind objects.

Structure & Narrative encompasses two ideas about artist’s books that viewers can consider. First, each book is a made object, something that has a material aspect, a structural component, and a nod to what a book does: inviting the viewer in. The second idea is the narrative: What is the story being told, how is it being told, and what are the aspects of narrative that a viewer can discern?

Midcoast Maine Book Arts is a collective formed to promote, encourage, and educate working and aspiring book artists in the midcoast Maine area. It seeks to exhibit the work of its members and other book artists, host workshops about artist’s books, and enlighten the general public about this art form. Midcoast Maine Book Arts meets every other month on the second Thursday at 6:30 p.m. at [Maine Media Workshops + College](#) (or on Zoom) to talk about work in progress, artist’s book news and exhibition possibilities, materials, structure, and other topics of interest. For more information, please join the [Midcoast Maine Book Arts Facebook](#) page.

Sissy Buck

SissyBuck.com

SissyEmmonsBuck@gmail.com



Summer Madness

2016

12 x 15.5" closed, opens to 12 x 31"

One of a kind, single signature, 10 pages, varying paper sizes

Paper lithographs on Rives BFK and mulberry papers

Case boards covered in Nepalese Lokta paper with mulberry paper title

Summer Madness is one of many books that I made after my mother passed away from Alzheimer's. The title takes its name from her favorite sorbet pink petunia, planted every summer in her cheerful window boxes. The title also refers to the summer before my mother passed away, when she had no recollection of her favorite petunia, of any flower, nor of where she was. A poignant summer madness for all.

The pages in this book include paper lithographs of enlargements of her handwritten plant lists, letters, and some floral sketches of mine. The chosen colors reflect some of those in her gardens, and the illegibility of the handwriting is a calligraphic mirror into the progression of Alzheimer's. Some recognizable words peer out, welcome moments of clarity.

As a printmaker and book artist, and as an antidote to digital overload, I create images that gravitate towards abstract patterns found in nature and the expressive gesture of line. Monotypes printed with local flora, trace drawing, and paper lithographs of handwriting from letters, notes, and family recipes appear in my work as a mapping of time, memory, and place. The abstractions and layers inherent in the printing process leave liminal traces between the familiar and the unknown. New images, stories, and conversations unfold.

Sissy Buck was introduced to printmaking by Art Professor Vaino Kola at Wheaton College in Norton, MA, where she received her BA in art history with a minor in studio art (1979). She continued to study printmaking at the Palo Alto Art Club, CA; the School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; Montserrat College of Art, MA ; and the DeCordova Museum School, MA.

After moving to Maine, she joined the Peregrine Press, a printmaking cooperative in Portland, where she is a past co-president. She renewed a love of book arts through courses at the Maine College of Art, the University of Southern Maine, and the USM Kate Cheney Chappell '83 Center for Book Arts. Combining printmaking and book arts was a natural and satisfying progression in her work. The creative camaraderie found in the book arts community and printmaking studio continues to inspire her. She is a member of the Monotype Guild of New England and is on the board of the USM Kate Cheney Chappell '83 Center for Book Arts, where she also facilitates a Book Arts Critique Group. Her work has been widely exhibited and is in many collections.

Rebecca Goodale

RebeccaGoodale.com
goodale@maine.edu



Euphorbe arboricle (*Tree Spurge*)

2020

Book open: 15 x 55 x 10", Scroll open: 48 x 60"

Unique book(s)

Clothbound flag book with large scroll background, reduction lino cuts

This piece is a realization of my memory of walking onto a neighborhood beach in LaNaoule, France. It was a beautiful day in March and the chartreuse and yellow spurge was glorious. I slipped into the Mediterranean and swam in what felt like a vat of chilled peppermint.

When I left there were butterflies everywhere.

Rebecca Goodale has been creating a series of artist's books about Maine's rare plants and animals for the past twenty years, and occasionally she is distracted by more-common species like the spiders and birds in her own backyard. Rebecca is also known for her many collaborative book projects and installations with other artists.

She teaches book arts and design at the University of Southern Maine. Her work is in many collections, including the Maine Women Writers Collection, Bowdoin College, Herron Art Library, and the Library of Congress.

Nan Haid

nanhaid@hotmail.com



photo: William Thuss

HOT
2015
1.75 x 12.25 x 9.25"

HOT is one of the ten visual diaries included in the ongoing NANOSECONDS series of artist's books. Inspired by Ryan Walsh's poem "WHAT'S IN MY JOURNAL," *HOT* records a sabbatical semester spent on the Crow Reservation in Montana and residencies at two artist colonies in 2005.

Nan Haid is a professor emeritus, having taught printmaking, drawing, and design for 35 years, at two colleges. She has exhibited nationally for 50 years, including several times at the National Museum of Women in the Arts, in Washington, DC. Her work is included in Keith A. Smith's *Structure of the Visual Book*, Fourth Edition.

Arlene Morris

ArleneMorris.com

admorris@gwi.net



photo: Christine Macchi

Pay Attention

2020

Detail of two inside papers

Handmade recycled paper, paint, ink, hand and machine stitching, linen and cotton thread

Unbound

12 x 11 x 2"

Sometimes I feel I'm all over the place when it comes to art. One minute I am engrossed in a painting, liking it but then needing to walk away from it. I cannot get back far enough to see it. I'm too close; it's inside of me. I keep pushing myself forward not knowing where I am going, at the same time realizing I'm just along for the ride. When I'm really into making a book, it takes over. I'm frantic to complete it. My hands and head are working like crazy; I'm excited. I'm not excited. It's a rollercoaster ride. I love a good idea and then it goes flat, but then it seems to fly and I catch it.

When art carries you away, you follow it as far as it takes you. You work without really knowing where you are going, trusting you shall discover something, hoping to learn. It's always just out of reach, but you get glimpses if you are lucky. Your heart beats faster; you try not to question yourself. The hands and mind work as one. Just keep pushing the boundaries. The secret is knowing when to let go. Stop too soon and you lose; stop too late and you lose. Sometimes things just collect in a pile; other times they make the wall or become a book.

A combination of opportunities helped to shape Arlene's early life: having to go to work out of high school (college was not an option), moving to Maine, working in a poverty law firm, and being accepted as a special student in her thirties at the University of Southern Maine. There, she spent seven years falling in love with art and gaining the confidence to make it a way of life. As the director of Spindleworks, an arts program for adults with developmental disabilities, Arlene worked with artists, sharing their enthusiasm, while keeping her own art alive. Drawing and painting in the evenings and weekends allowed her to enter shows and begin the process of becoming a full-time artist. She spent ten years in a drawing group in an old chicken barn in Bowdoinham, Maine, where she met local artists. Building an art community became important to her. For more than twenty years she has shared her studio space with Maine Fiberarts, a nonprofit arts organization. She supports the organization by volunteering to curate and hang shows. Today, Arlene can usually be found in her studio. Painting, drawing, paper assemblages, and books are her current loves.



Nonsense

2019

Closed: 12 x 7 x 1" Open: 16" circumference x 11" h

Hammered copper box, original woodcut, marbled Magnani Pesca 300 gsm paper, hand lettering, waxed linen stitching, dyed kozo hinges, wool felt liner

Cynthia Motian McGuirl

cynthiamotianmcguirl.com

dancingblanket@gmail.com

[Video of Nonsense](#)

Nonsense is a book about words and letters. The imagery is inspired by Anahit, an ancient goddess who swallowed the sun every night, passed it through her body, and released it in the morning. The form is also inspired by her: both circular and cyclic, both open and contained.

I am the granddaughter of Armenian Genocide survivors who settled in Providence, Rhode Island, in the early 20th century. I attended art school, which saved my life, moved to Maine, which saved my soul, and pursued a career as a functional hand weaver. A series of intense dreams about my ancestors led me to seek a more narrative mode of expression, which manifested as printmaking and artist's books.

Recent exhibits include *Anthology: Books and Art* at the Merryspring Arts Center in Bowdoinham, Maine, and *When Will We Ever Learn* at the Yvette Torres Gallery in Rockland, Maine. In the winter of 2020, my piece *Old Maid* was featured in the Union of Maine Visual Artists' *Maine Arts Journal*. I teach book arts and marbling at various locations and at my studio in Thomaston, Maine.

Jan Owen

JanOwenArt.com
jaowenart@gmail.com



This Life We Live

2020

12.25 x 9.25 x .75", closed; 28 pages

Sumi and walnut ink, acrylic on gold-painted, handmade paper,

with painted, woven Tyvek; signatures wrapped with colored Hollytex polyester.

Binders board covers, Coptic-stitch binding with linen thread. Cloth-covered box.

My artist's books contain words by various authors in conversations across time. I write with brushes and dip pens using ink and acrylic. The words might be layered like a palimpsest, weaving added for touch, colors and patterns for our senses, and binary code for translation. There are beauty and power in the marks and words that I want you to see.

During this pandemic spring I felt that the virtual world on my computer screen was not enough; half-seen people, paintings, photos, and objects all the same flat scale and glowing with computer light, there is no tactile sense or true sound. This book began to honor Barbara Michelena and her gallery, Craft, a jewel box of objects in Rockland. The hand and eye of the maker were evident in each piece she selected for our senses.

This book was to be about the senses and took its time in "stay home" days, which gave me more time to consider and respond to the texts. Was it the poetry of the words, the ideas, or the evoked memories? Readers used to keep commonplace books, a notebook of copied quotations, poems to be remembered. I have those. Other readers wrote marginalia in books, making hand-written notes alongside the text. I added mine. Books can become a tangible and visual layered history of writers and readers.

Jan lives in Belfast, Maine, and works as a calligraphic book artist. Her work is in the National Museum of Women in the Arts, Library of Congress, and in private and library Special Collections. Last year her work was in The Darkness and the Light exhibit at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Portland, Maine, and Tower of Babel in Venice, Italy. She was awarded an Artist Fellowship in Craft by the Maine Arts Commission in 2019.

Abbie Read

AbbieReadArtist.com

artgardn@tidewater.net

[Video of *Common, Uncommon*](#)



Common, Uncommon

2019

7.125 x 4.25 x 2.25"

Accordion structure

Paper, ink, brush pen

To create this book I made an 80-page accordion-folded structure and finished it with paste-paper covers. Inside I juxtaposed two ink drawings, which oppose each other literally, figuratively, and lyrically. On each page is a drawing of a miniature 3D sculpture constructed of found objects and thread (my go-to materials). This is paired with a drawing of a natural object, hence the title *Common, Uncommon*. Texture, line, shape, form were important components in the objects I drew. Though they are dissimilar objects, elements of one are echoed in the other, calling attention to similarities in handmade and natural processes.

Abbie Read is a visual artist working in paper collage and mixed media sculpture. Her work often makes use of artist's books, old and hand-painted papers, discarded books, and found objects. A native New Englander, she lives with her husband in Appleton, Maine.

Read has exhibited her work in Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Michigan, and abroad in Doha, Qatar, and in Hong Kong. In 2014 her work was chosen to be part of an exhibit of works in the US ambassador's residence in Qatar, as part of the State Department's Art in Embassies Program. In the fall of 2014 she traveled there to be an artist in residence as part of a cultural exchange. In 2019 several pieces were chosen to be included in another Art in Embassies exhibition, in Hong Kong. In addition to exhibiting her work at the Portland Museum of Art, the Portland Public Library, Wellesley College, the Essex Art Center, and numerous galleries within Maine, she likes to exhibit in libraries and other public spaces. Read gives workshops in altered books, bookbinding, paste paper making, gelatin printing, and abstract collage.



Diable en Boîte or Election 2020: The Big Top Circus in a Box

2020

4 x 4 x 2"

Folded book formats: Meandering Ox Plow and Lotus Fold variations

ColorPlan and Fabriano papers

Edition of 25 ("Vote Democratic" button not included)

Richard Reitz Smith

DesignAndSmith.com

RichardReitzSmith@gmail.com

Each instance I step to a creative threshold, I want to seize the opportunity softly with admiration for storytelling. Be it a painting, drawing, print, or book, each, for me, is the beginning to a story and, when viewed in succession, weaves a luscious tale. My work is evidence of the intervals discovered in the process—the documentation of a journey. My experiences have taught me to notice and appreciate symbolism. In nature, a leaf in the spring means something different from a leaf in the autumn. With subtle sophistication, textural intrigue, and visual surprise, my work emulates these murmurings and filters in memories and the discovery of greater meaning in something small, as well as something specific or personal in the universal.

Longing for that contented moment when creation meets craft, I unveil a story through exploration, introspection, and the use of implied time via sequential images, which steadily reveal a tale of relationships. Even if it is ugly and painful, I believe in beauty—its power and its poetry, because I know there is a story waiting to evolve.

This book project, *Diable en Boîte or Election 2020: The Big Top Circus in a Box*, is a composite of several concepts that examine the political environment over the past several years. There are many polarities and dualities. True or false. Blue or Red. Right or Wrong. The political parties. Their symbols: the elephant and the donkey. By playing and manipulating, these and others represent the meshing and mixing of truth and values. The country becomes a circus. The voting process a toy. A jack-in-the-box originally was called "diablo en boîte," or "devil in the box." Warning the recipient: Be careful of what's in the box. Whether it is this physical box or one on the ballot. Check with caution. The associations are manipulated. Is an elephant an elephant, or is a donkey a donkey? The word games mesh the circus with politics. Hopefully this experiential book provokes some thoughtful consideration of what is real and what is really important.

Richard Reitz Smith is an artist and designer. He expresses that through personal creative projects within the fine arts, as a painter and printmaker. Within book arts, he is a letterpress printer, as well as a maker of limited-edition books and custom presentation cases. He also works collaboratively with other artists in these arenas, lending his skills and knowledge of traditional arts.

He is chair of the Book Arts Program and studio manager at Maine Media Workshops, where he offers workshops in letterpress printing, book creation, and design. He has also taught within the University of Maine system and at other higher education institutions nationally. Richard holds degrees in painting and illustration from Carnegie Mellon University and in graphic design from Tyler School of Art, Temple University.

Sal Taylor Kydd

SalTaylorKydd.com
sal@saltaylorkydd.com



Keepsakes

2016

13 folios, 7 x 9"

Soft cover letterpress in custom case

Limited Edition of 15, signed and numbered

Includes a limited edition platinum-palladium print

Keepsakes is a limited edition, handmade artist's book. Each book contains 13 folios featuring archival pigment prints, text set in letterpress, and botanical print-transfers. The book explores how we preserve memories, and how the discoveries we make when exploring the natural world rekindle that sense of wonder we remember from childhood. It also nods to the secrets and mysteries contained within the landscape, as both a reflection of time's passing but also our collective memory.

The title poem, "Keepsakes," runs throughout the book from folio to folio, spanning the entirety of the book. This sequencing of image and text, or absence of text, or image, sets up a pacing of the material that allows the viewer to experience the book in a series of steps. Each folio can stand on its own as a keepsake or be experienced collectively with the others in the book. The book is presented in an elegant box, handmade by the artist in collaboration with Richard Reitz Smith of Camden, Maine.

My work draws strongly on the landscape, focusing on my home, family, and myself in conversation with the natural world. Lately I have found myself exploring more the fragility of that world and our place within it, the push and pull between wonder and hope on the one hand and fear and vulnerability on the other. During this time of quarantining and social distancing as a result of COVID-19, my examination of isolation and connection has become even more of a focus, as the usual scaffolding of social support that we rely on has become more tenuous and uncertain.

Originally from the UK, photographer and artist Sal Taylor Kydd earned her BA in modern languages from Manchester University in the UK and has an MFA in photography from Maine Media College. Her fine art photographs have been exhibited throughout the country and internationally, including Barcelona, San Miguel De Allende, Portland, Boston, and Los Angeles.

Sal is also a writer and poet, and has self-published a number of books combining her poetry with her photographs. Her books are in numerous private and museum collections throughout the country, including The Getty Museum and the Maine Women Writer's Collection at the University of New England. Sal's latest book, *Landfall*, produced by Datz Press, is a limited edition book of poems and photographs about the islands off the coast of Maine. Her book *Just When I Thought I Had You* is now in its second edition. Sal also teaches and is on the board of Maine Media Workshops + College in Rockport, Maine.

Joelle Webber

MermaidBindery.com

mermaidlady@gwi.net



Milkweed Seed Fairies

2020

Closed: 13.75 x 6.25 x 1"

Opened: 13.75 x 17 x 6"

Japanese tri-fold box with ribbon closure and pop-up landscape

Katie MacGregor and Virginia Sarsfield handmade papers, paste papers, Nu Pastels, decorative threads, book board, book cloth, PVA, ribbon, and wooden skewers

M*ilkweed Seed Fairies* was created with little girls in mind. The mix of colors, almost too busy to keep up with, but joyful to witness. Airy swirls repeating throughout the book, from the letter "o," to the stitching on the leaves and weeds, to the marks on the paste-paper sky. Round letters, designed with loopy ascenders and descenders, like a young girl would doodle when beginning to write.

This piece was first written years ago, as a short story, based on a beautiful afternoon of babysitting two vibrant daughters. Now re-imagined, in a more poetic style to fit into the paper landscape of the book. The debut of this artist's book with the Midcoast Maine Book Arts group is fitting, as this halcyon moment happened right here, in the midcoast of Joelle's childhood.

Joelle Webber creates artist's books that combine her almost forty years of collecting binding techniques with her love of philosophy, nature, writing, and sculpture.

Sandy Weisman

SandyWeisman.art

sandy@26splitrockcove.com

[Video of *Who Is Not a Migrant?*](#)



Who Is Not A Migrant?

2020

6" x 24" x 10"

Boxes and scrolls in cotton organdy, mulberry, bees, feather, dried garlic, skull

I've been thinking about boxes lately—what they signify—for keeping, saving, sending, storing. A box of photographs, a box of clothes, a box of food. And I've been thinking about migration a lot. Who and what migrates? A migrant takes what is needed—children, food, a change of clothes, or nothing at all.

MIGRATION is the traveling of humans, animals, fish, birds, and insects, even trees, for a less harsh environment in which to prosper.

My question then is: Who is not a migrant?

This work contains a series of eleven boxes, most of them made from a sheer but stiff cotton organdy fabric. I want the boxes to feel vulnerable and fragile—as surely the migrant must. Each box is a little wobbly or pushed-in looking, a little uncertain.

Inside many of the boxes are scrolls of language about the migration of animals, insects, birds, fish, trees, and human beings. Inside others are things saved: bees, a feather, some dried garlic, a skull. A memento mori for a former life turned into a new life, with the bittersweet memories, the shadow of death, and the understanding that this is what we all do—we are all migrants.

Sandy Weisman is a poet and visual artist. Her poetry has been included in two anthologies and in several journals, including *Salamander*, *Spillway*, *Barrow Street*, *The Maine Review*, *Off the Coast*, and *Muddy River Poetry Review*.

Sandy's artwork has been exhibited locally at the Granite Gallery in Tenant's Harbor and at Waterfall Arts in Belfast, and at locations in the Boston area. She is a member of the Midcoast Maine Book Arts group. Her artist's books include *Ontogeny* and *Book of Hours*; she is currently working with Maine Media Workshops to produce *Objects of My Desire*, a book of poems, prints, and images based on the concept of astonishment.

Sandy is the owner of 26 Split Rock Cove, a privately owned artist community that offers studios, artist living space, and workshops overlooking Mussel Ridge Channel in S. Thomaston, Maine.



The Mystery of Five

2019

Solid walnut case: 10 x 19 x 2.5"

Book dimensions, closed: 13.5 x 9 x 0.5"

Original drawings in walnut ink and mucilage on Arches watercolor paper. Text typeset in Bembo, printed letterpress on Japanese book cloth. Hawkweed ornaments from original drawings by the author. Housed in a walnut case and accompanied by a dupioni silk cloth and vintage skeleton keys bound with cotton cord.

Typography, design, and construction by Richard Reitz Smith, Camden, Maine.

Case design and construction by Christopher Merchant, Camden, Maine.

Dudley Zopp

DudleyZopp.com

dzopp@dudleyzopp.com

[Video of *The Mystery of Five*](#)

I'm a hybrid - a dedicated painter and writer, as well as an amateur naturalist and student of languages. The source of my paintings is the living earth itself - its patterns, movements, sounds, tastes, and smells. Painting, like scrying and divining, is an act through which an artist channels information and turns it back into human experience. An image is not something removed from reality and applied to the painted surface. As with icons and totems, the spirit of the landscape resides in the painting.

Books, like paintings, have been part of my life since before I learned to read. *The Mystery of Five* had its beginnings in the terrifying images that came out of the Iraq War. I was horrified by what happened at Abu Ghraib. I responded with drawings in walnut ink and mucilage, through which I hoped to understand the human body in pain. As the ink and glue flowed, the agony I sought to convey dispersed into forms that were more graceful than tortured. They reminded me of dancers. Other people see skeletons or insects.

I'd referred to those drawings as meditations, so it was clear to me that I wanted to present them as triptychs. The medieval spirituality inherent in that form led me to consider the alchemical forces in the mind that transmute pain and suffering into a state of grace. I examine that alchemy in a poem printed in yellow on the back side of the triptych. The title of book and its poem, *The Mystery of Five*, refers to the familiar mysteries of creation, preservation, and destruction, and conjoins them with the further mystery of the hidden nature of the source of life, and the final revelation that takes place when the nature of the mysteries is understood to be ourselves as part of the great web of life.

Dudley Zopp is a visual artist, writer, and linguist, whose paintings and artist's books reflect the natural world. Keeping multiple journals, and restoring habitat on her property in Lincolnville, Maine, are seasonal activities feeding directly into her paintings. Her artist's books examine our responsibilities to the earth. Dudley's paintings are included in the collections of 21C Museum Hotels, the Portland Museum, and the Bates College Museum of Art, among others. Her books are held in the Special Collections libraries of Bowdoin College, the University of Kentucky, and Yale University. Born in Lexington, Kentucky, Dudley graduated from the University of Kentucky with a BA and MA in modern foreign languages, and studied drawing and painting at the Hite Art Institute, University of Louisville. She lives in Lincolnville, Maine.

Price List

Narrative & Structure September 1-30, 2020 *An Online Show*

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Sissy Buck	<i>Summer Madness</i>	NFS
Rebecca Goodale	<i>Euphorbe arboricle (Tree Spurge)</i>	\$2600.
Nan Haid	<i>HOT</i>	NFS
Arlene Morris	<i>Pay Attention</i>	NFS
Cynthia Motian McGuirl	<i>Nonsense</i>	\$1200.
Jan Owen	<i>This Life We Live</i>	Priscilla Juvelis Books
Abbie Read	<i>Common, Uncommon</i>	NFS
Richard Reitz Smith	<i>Diable en Boîte or Election 2020: The Big Top Circus in a Box</i>	Edition of 25 \$250.
Sal Tayler Kydd	<i>Keepsakes</i>	Edition of 15 \$750.
Joelle Webber	<i>Milkweed Seed Fairies</i>	NFS
Sandy Weisman	<i>Who Is Not A Migrant?</i>	\$900.
Dudley Zopp	<i>The Mystery of Five</i>	\$2000.

Please contact the artist directly if you are interested in purchasing a book.
Exhibitors have pledged to donate 20% of sales from this exhibition to the
Camden Public Library.

Front cover image: detail **Summer Madness** by Sissy Buck
Back cover image: detail **Diable en Boîte** by Richard Reitz Smith
Avenir Next font

This catalog designed and created by Cynthia Motian McGuirl



house

donkey

