Unit 2: Papermaking and Artists’ Books

*(“Somewhere between the book as the world*

*and the world as a book are real books.” johanna drucker)*

**Unit** **Dates: 18 October – 8 December.**

**Critique in progress on 8 December, Thursday. You must have all of your books started and probably almost finished. Remember, critiques are worth points. You have until Wednesday, 13 December, BY NOON, to turn in your finished projects with Self Assessment (to me in Fibers).**

 Special materials for this unit that will have use of while in the studio (this stuff must stay in the studio)

•bone folder

•awl

•Davey board

•PVA & MC glue

•book needle

•waxed linen

•all papermaking fibers

**Unit Goals:**

•learn how to use papermaking equipment safely.

•learn how to beat cotton pulp & pull paper from various fibers.

•to learn how to compose 2D artworks while paper is in a wet state.

•understand the differences between paper fibers.

•to know what an artists’ book is in the first place.

•to acquire some knowledge of the history of artists’ books & to learn about the contemporary bookmaking arena.

•to learn basic bookbinding structures.

•to explore the idea that the book form is a metaphor for art!

**Papermaking:**

|  |
| --- |
| Paper Key:  K = Kozo  A = Abaca  C = Cotton  F = R Flax |

Exercise: Papermaking (25 points)

**Sample papers should be even and consistent in nature. They should be good examples of hand-pulled paper. They will be graded for quality.**

Prepare fibers & produce sample papers that demonstrate the following:

**1.** 1 **good** sheet each of the following: **kozo**, **cotton**(beaten in whiz mixer), **abaca**, & **R-flax** (4 hours in the Hollander beater). We’ll make vats with these 4 fibers. Everyone will get the chance to pull at least one sheet of each kind so that you understand the differences between fibers and how they react in the vat. (4 sheets total).

**2.** 4 sheets of paper that involve combining the original paper materials (K, A, C & F). Work in groups & keep notes. (i.e.: kozo/cotton at 50:50 ratio; flax/abaca at 50:50 ratio etc.)

**3**. 3 sheets of paper with various materials added, laminated, and/or collaged. This can be other paper, origami paper, gift wrapping, thread, yarn, cut up magazines, plastic, or pages from books…etc. We’ll talk about this. NO GLITTER IN THE STUDIO; NO BEADS. If you want to use plant material, you must boil it first in soda ash. So if you find something that can withstand this, you may use it.

**4**. 4 sheets of paper that illustrate a value study of a single color using aqueous pigments: work in groups.  Make 4 shades of violet for example. We’ll split up the colors so that we cover all the basic hues. Make enough for the entire class (14 people; we can split paper in half but no smaller).

**5**. 3 sheets of different flat materials couched between 2 sheets of paper. I’ll show you how to couche materials between sheets of paper. This works best if the materials are flat. Be thinking about this.

**This is a total of 18 sheets of paper**. Everything must be dried flat in the restraint dryer, labeled, then inserted in plastic sheets in your binder. **These will be collected & graded on Tuesday 1 November.**

Exercise: paper compositions (30 points)

Using the techniques above, create **6 handmade paper compositions**. They should be no smaller than approximately10X6 inches. Maybe these are a series or maybe you explore different effects with each one. **IMPORTANT: Do most of your work while the paper is in a wet state. See Powerpoint on BB for inspiration.**

***Techniques you can use:***

•couching flat materials between sheets.

•couching sheets on top of each other.

•wet collaging; dry collaging.

•add materials to the paper vat; embed materials in wet sheets.

•stencils

•wet & dry media after paper has dried.

•manipulating the paper to make it dimensional.

•pulp paint

Exercise: Learning book structures (sample books: 15 points)

**Introduction:**

Historically, books have been a means to communicate ideas. As functional objects, they were used to impart information. Today, many artists expand on the idea and concept of ‘book.’ The book as object, which might be disappearing from our culture, is used by contemporary artists as an extremely elastic and interpretative artform. Books can still impart information, but they can also be repositories of a deeply personal nature. They are vehicles used to visually communicate the artist’s ideas, feelings, opinions and experiences. Printing, letterpress, photographic techniques, drawing, and serigraphy have always been incorporated into artist’s books. Now, the list of techniques and materials is being expanded even further as the conceptual parameters of bookmaking become even more inclusive. In other words, nothing is outside the realm of fair use. Bookmaking reflects the larger trends already at work in contemporary artmaking. *Now, what can you do with the book form?*

**What we’ll do:**

•We’ll take some time to learn basic book structures (folding & binding techniques).

•We’ll take field trips to the Special Collections Room at Ellis if possible.

•You’ll produce **3 artists’ books** on your own (see Assignment below).

**Book structures, stitches, & concepts we’ll learn in class:**

**1. Pamphlet stitch**

**2.** **Accordion:** the most basic & simplest, but one with a ton of potential. (2 different types)

**3**. **Clamshell**

**4. triangle book.**

**5.** **Chain stitch within Davey board decorated covers:** The book block will be hand-sewn using a chain stitch. This is a more complicated stitch. Do not miss the day we go over this in class.

**6. Hidden room book**

***Additional book ideas to think about: (we won’t ‘learn’ these in class but they are interesting ideas to explore….)***

**7.** **Contained Book**: created for a found container that you provide (flea market, yard sale, etc.) and this can be related conceptually to that container. **OR**, make a book that is contained within a simple structure that you make. This might be as simple as a folded, heavy paper container, or a portfolio container. It might be a matchbook book! Or an Altoid’s mintbox book! A glove? A sock? No elaborate containers—make this spontaneous and keep it simple. THINK SMALL!! THINK FOUND OBJECT. You may, of course, also alter the found container. (The book within this container can be any structure that you choose.) Also, don’t forget about the medium of cloth (which includes all sorts of cool stuff like old clothes, linens, etc. that, with some alteration, could potentially make a great container for a book.)

**8. Sculptural book:** This book varies according to the idea. It will enter realm of sculpture. And as a piece of sculpture, it likely will abandon the traditional and expected form of ‘book.’

 SKETCHBOOK ASSIGNMENT (20 points)

Unit 2- artists’ books

Label your assignments with the date you worked on them. It is a good idea to get into the habit of **dating your sketchbook entries/pages**. The dates listed below are due dates, but that does not mean you have to wait to work on them. . . Please label your specific assignments so it is clear to me when they are being graded. Do not hesitate to include ideas, sketches, etc. that are not listed below. The assignments are the minimum requirement.

**October 27: Paper artist VISUAL CATALOGUE (10 or 20, see below):** Collect images of **artists who create artists’ books.** As in the past, these artists should attract your attention and appeal to your artistic aesthetic. (SEE THE IMAGE POWERPOINT FOR THIS UNIT and/or do some Web research). **YOU HAVE AN OPTION ON HOW TO SUBMIT: (1) Print and mount** color photos/images in your sketchbook (these can be small, but at least 4” square); 10 required. **OR (2) Create a Pinterest Board** that I can access to check your submissions (20 required). In either case, your selections must be labeled appropriately with **artist’s** **name, type of pulp if paper (ie: cotton or abaca** if indicated & if using handmade paper**)** AND all the media and **techniques** if indicated**. AND Write a brief** summary about what characteristics appeal to you. Is it form? Technique? Appearance? Materials? Emotional qualities…etc.

**FYI: Web search terms:**

artist’s books, artists’ books, bookarts, handmade books, one of a kind books, altered books, bookmaking.

***Disclaimer:*** *When looking at book artists on the web, view them with a discriminating eye. Not all people who engage in ‘altered’ or ‘artist’s books’ are trained artists. This is not to say that an untrained person cannot be creative. We’re interested in looking at artmaking as a formal activity with intent and content (versus those who are interested in photo albums, family trees, and cutesy stuff, yes, I had to say that). Be discriminating and avoid those with overly nostalgic sensibility! sorry….*

**November 8: PROJECT IDEA DEVELOPMENT (books) (10):** Brainstorm in your Sketchbook about the ideas, concepts and FORM AND MATERIALS you’ll explore in your project. What materials and techniques are you considering, or could consider? What kind of paper? What content are you considering? Have any specific narrative yet?

Are metaphors at play? Shape and scale are going to be significant in this project. **Do about 5 thumbnail sketches in various media if desired (conté, watercolor, pastel, pen & ink, graphite…)** detailing those possible materials, shapes, additives, finishing techniques, colors, textures….etc. I will review your idea in class this day and give you the go ahead to start working on it. **These are your ideas. I will talk to you about them and you’ll select THREE to execute.**

UNIT ASSIGNMENT: 2 Artists’ books (60 points)

**ASSIGNMENT:** After learning the structures for folding & binding books, produce **2 finished** **artists’ books using 2 different binding techniques**. You may use your handmade paper in these or use art paper (ie: Rives or Arches) or other materials (including alternative materials). Choose your books from the options above (the structures we learn in class) or execute sculptural book(s) of your own design.

**IMPORTANT**: While working on these books, think about whether or not you’ll engage a narrative. Perhaps it is only a visual narrative, but in either case, the concept of narrative must be conveyed. Subject matter & narrative are closely linked. Here’s the rule for your assigned books: ONE must have fully realized narrative. One or both might have subject matter or might simply be processed with markmaking, which ultimately *becomes* the subject matter.

**All of these books are to be finished products, thoughtfully composed and formally executed, conceptually based. Craftsmanship is important. Pace yourself: keep them small-ish if need be.  Remember, brevity is the essence of wit.**

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Handmade books are a great place to use stuff that I call *Paper & Other Ephemera*. See the list below for some ideas. And think of this stuff as just the beginning of what we call materials. In other words, alter it before you use it! Otherwise, it is in danger of being predictable!