

LOW

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE
JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2021

THE ART OF THE BOOK

Inside

Aramont Library: In Pursuit of Perfection

Digging the Medieval in Our Digital Age

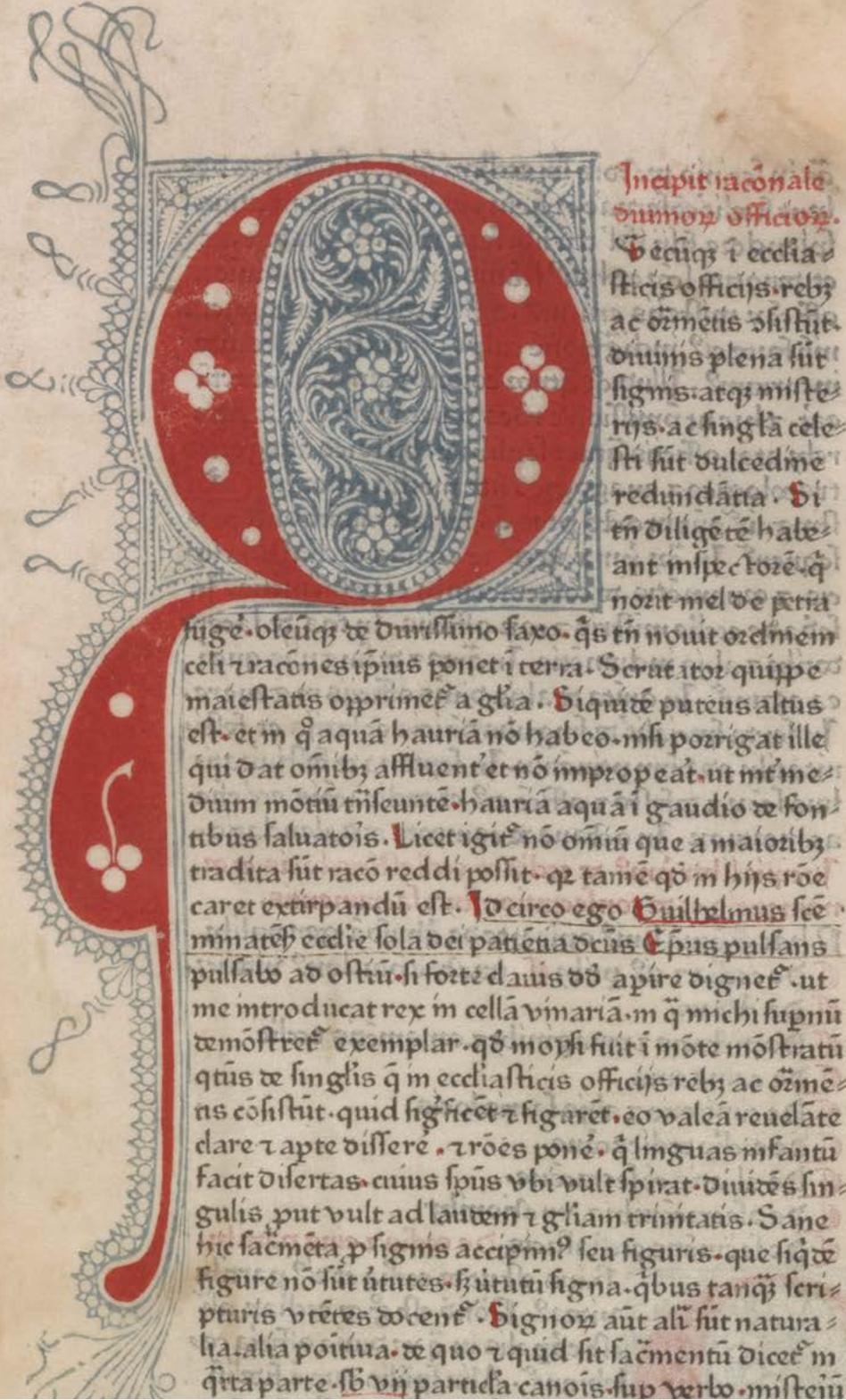
Plus

Designing a Mystery

Perry at Edo Bay

A Gem for the Pocket





etia a scolasticis detrahendū. Iux̄ il
hes. **Vn. s. Aug.** Non iridebūt h̄
quos. **Amistres** r̄ mistros ecclie. u
et solocentis deū muocae. ul' eadē
nō intellige. p̄turbateq; distingi
gēda nō sūt. s; q̄a sūt pie a sciētib;
aut sacerdotē scire debeat. i scōa p̄
sacerdote diceē. **Porro** nō videtur
eis sūt reb; atq; officijs. figurati
recesserit. r̄ est tēpus hodie verita
tud ap̄tae. **Sed** licet reueā figure
apparuit recesserit. tñ adhuc n̄
quā nō videm? p̄pter q̄ vnt' ecclie
vestimēta eā dida intelligim? ali
m̄ay. s. gliam immortalitatis nre
mus maifeste. r̄ i missa a p̄facōe i
p̄ntat' ut tenacius r̄ fidelit' memo
autē est. q̄ eoz q̄m lege cōment
alia mystica. **Moralia** sūt q̄ mores
ligēda sūt put ip̄a ūba sonat. ut
p̄ez. n̄ occides. r̄ huiusmodi. **M**
que aliud significat p̄ter id qd̄ lra
sūt sacramēta. alia ceremonialia
de q̄bz rō reddi potest. q̄re ad lras
de circūciōe r̄ de obsequia sabb̄
r̄inomialia sūt. de q̄bz rō reddi nō
fuerit. ut nō arabis i boue r̄ asino.
lanaq; d̄extā. n̄ serēs agz d̄uiso
Siquide q̄ntā ad moralia. lex nō
q̄ntū ad sacramēta. r̄ ceremonialia
ficiē lre. mystic? tñ eoz intellcus m̄
lex m̄ta. q̄nis m̄lato m̄ nos fac
Sciendū q̄ est. q̄ m̄ diuis scriptu
ricus allegoric? tropologicus r̄
boeciū. **Om̄is** diuis auctas ā est
allegoico ā ex vtroq; d̄vota mell

FEATURES

10
Digging the Medieval
Appreciating the work of
medieval masters in the
Digital Age.

12
In Pursuit of Perfection
A newly acquired library
offers stunning examples of
book design and illustration.

18
Art of the Book
Over centuries, the form
evolved from its origins to
wildly expressive objects.

■ Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer printed this large, red and blue initial in Mainz, Germany, in 1459, just five years after the printing of the Gutenberg Bible. *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*

LCM

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS MAGAZINE

JANUARY / FEBRUARY 2021

VOL. 10 NO. 1

Mission of the Library of Congress

The Library's mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people with a universal and enduring source of knowledge and creativity.

Library of Congress Magazine is issued bimonthly by the Office of Communications of the Library of Congress and distributed free of charge to publicly supported libraries and research institutions, donors, academic libraries, learned societies and allied organizations in the United States. Research institutions and educational organizations in other countries may arrange to receive Library of Congress Magazine on an exchange basis by applying in writing to the Library's Director for Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access, 101 Independence Ave. S.E., Washington DC 20540-4100. LCM is also available on the web at loc.gov/lcm/. All other correspondence should be addressed to the Office of Communications, Library of Congress, 101 Independence Ave. S.E., Washington DC 20540-1610.

news@loc.gov
loc.gov/lcm
ISSN 2169-0855 (print)
ISSN 2169-0863 (online)

Carla Hayden
Librarian of Congress

April Slayton
Executive Editor

Mark Hartsell
Editor

Ashley Jones
Designer

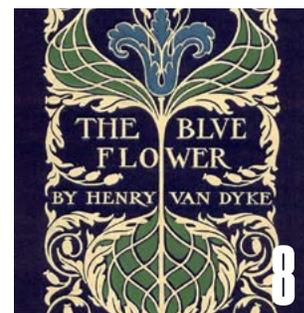
Shawn Miller
Photo Editor

Contributors
Mark Dimunation
Eric Frazier
Sybille Jagusch
Russell Maret
Marianna Stell
Stephanie Stillo
Neely Tucker

■ On the cover: In her "Random Thoughts on Hope," Laura Davidson challenges conceptions of what defines a book as well as what constitutes poetry by creating a poem that changes randomly each time a wheel of words is spun. *John Polak*

DEPARTMENTS

- 2 Off the Shelf
- 3 Trending
- 4 Extremes
- 6 Technology
- 7 Page from the Past
- 8 Curator's Picks
- 22 Online Offerings
- 23 Favorite Place
- 24 My Job
- 25 News Briefs
- 26 Shop the Library
- 27 Support the Library
- 28 Last Word



CONNECT ON

loc.gov/connect





■ Victor Hammer engraved and cut this capital G in brass, testing his theory of how early printers managed to create perfectly registered, two-color initials using only rudimentary tools. *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*

DESIGNING A MYSTERY

Collections offer a clue to how early book printers produced two-color initials.

The big, elaborate initial letters found in early printed books are a beautiful hallmark of the form – and a modern mystery.

Scholars aren't quite certain how the first makers of printed books, working 400 years ago with only rudimentary tools, managed to produce the near-perfect registration of these two-color, decorated initials.

Library collections offer a potential answer.

Painter and typographer Victor Hammer is best known in America for creating several new typefaces. His wife, Carolyn Reading Hammer, founded the King Library Press at the University of Kentucky in Lexington, where Victor eventually settled after fleeing Vienna during World War II and where he died in 1967.

The Victor and Carolyn Hammer Collection at the Library contains correspondence, prints, engravings, photographs and publications created between 1920 and

1999. Some of the most interesting pieces involve Victor's attempt to explain how early printers were able to achieve such excellent registration of these two-color initials.

Johann Fust and Peter Schoeffer served, respectively, as the financier and apprentice to Johann Gutenberg, the inventor who introduced the mechanical moveable type printing press in Europe in the mid-1400s. They would produce some of the most beautiful work in the first 50 years of printing (see inside front cover).

How Fust and Schoeffer created these nearly perfectly registered two-color decorative initials long left bibliographers guessing.

Hammer proposed that the early printers may have cut the letter from its decorative border, inked it separately with a hand roller (a brayer) and carefully slipped it back into the printing block. The Hammer collection holds his examples of the process; each initial is engraved in brass and cut by Hammer himself. Without this process, the page would have to go through the press once for each color, lining up each page perfectly. This process explored by Hammer may have been a faster, more-effective way of producing these beautiful images.

–Eric Frazier is a reference specialist in the *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*.

MORE OF LESSING

An ongoing digitization project makes a magnificent collection more widely accessible.

The Rare Book and Special Collections Division recently launched a multiyear initiative to digitize one of the most important illustrated book collections in the Western Hemisphere – the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection.

Upon its donation in 1943, then-Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish called the collection “one of the most exciting and welcome gifts ever received” by the Library.

It’s easy to see why.

Throughout his life, Lessing Rosenwald (1891-1979), son of notable philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, collected prints and illustrated books that visualized the most important moments in Western history: the dawn of printing, the Reformation, the Scientific Revolution, the Enlightenment and more.

The collection Rosenwald amassed eventually came to include, among many other examples, such magnificent rarities as the 15th-century Giant Bible of Mainz; four complete books produced by William Caxton, England’s finest printer; and one of only two known copies of the 1495 edition of *Epistolae et Evangelia*, called by some the finest book of the 15th century.

While digitization is ongoing, book lovers can access thousands of pages of text and illustration, from 15th-century medical treatises and folk tales to 18th-century architecture.

Particularly exciting is the availability of material associated with 18th-century poet, painter and illustrator William Blake. Blake used his printing press to engage with topics as far ranging as inequality and exploitation to rebellion and rebirth. The Rosenwald Collection contains copies of all his illustrated books, including a comprehensive corpus of his continental prophecies, illustrated epics and commissioned books, as well as rarely seen drawings, canceled plates and personal letters.

This digitization project will make such great works more readily available to the public – and, hopefully, inspire curiosity about the history of the book and encourage interest in one of America’s greatest book collectors.

–Stephanie Stillo is a collections specialist in the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.



■ This fanciful illustration of a dragon-shaped siege machine appears in “De re militari” (“On military matters”), a 15th-century volume drawn from the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection. Rare Book and Special Collections Division



■ This Japanese scroll, measuring nearly 13 yards in length, depicts scenes from the historic visit of Commodore Perry's fleet to Japan in 1854. *Shawn Miller*

PERRY AT EDO BAY

A 38-foot scroll chronicles the dawn of the U.S.-Japanese relationship.

The Black Ship scrolls are a genre of Japanese artwork that capture the historic meeting of two alien cultures: That 1854 moment when U.S. Commodore Matthew Perry and his fleet barged into Edo Bay, guns at the ready, to negotiate a treaty with a Japanese government that had been almost completely isolated for two centuries.

It was an astonishing moment. Perry insisted he was bringing “civilization” to “heathens” who had expelled Christian missionaries early in the 17th century. To the Japanese, Perry’s crew were “barbarians” and their black-hulled steamships, billowing black smoke, were monstrous behemoths from another world.

One of the most famous depictions of those tense days is “Kinkai kikan” (“Strange View off the Coast of Kanagawa”) by Japanese artist, scholar and educator Otsuki Bankei. Bankei, with the help of two assistant painters, created a pictorial scroll nearly 38 feet long – 30 sections of rice paper, delicately glued together, depicting 20 scenes from the Americans’ four-month stay. Wrapped around a spindle and stored in a wooden box for most of the past 150 years, it was acquired by the Library from a rare book dealer in 2018 and is not yet on public display.

Japan had been sealed off from most of the outside world for nearly 200 years. U.S. President Millard Fillmore dispatched Perry with an audacious plan – to open up Japan to a relationship with the United States.

Perry first sailed into Edo (now Tokyo) Bay in July 1853 and presented a letter intended for the emperor. He returned the next year with nine ships and nearly 2,000 sailors to get a response – gunboat diplomacy in its most basic form. Perry came ashore, negotiated with emissaries and signed the landmark Kanagawa Treaty on March 31, 1854. Japan would no longer be a closed country – a major turning point in international affairs.

In this hubbub, Bankei and other artists sketched away, creating the only visual records of the event. Bankei depicted the blues and greens of the bay, with Perry’s fleet off shore. He painted each ship and showed the Americans coming ashore and greeting Japanese dignitaries. Ever the journalist, he even sketched out the seating chart at a formal dinner. Finally, he painted portraits of the American leaders and a few soldiers. Many were unflattering, almost caricatures – the Americans appear in two dimensions, with enormous noses and dull eyes. Perry called them “exceedingly rude and inartistic.”

Still, Bankei’s scroll catches the two cultures on the cusp of vast change, in his own hand, as it transpired in front of him. As art, it is invaluable reportage; as reportage, it is delicate art.

–Neely Tucker is a writer–editor in the Office of Communications.

六番船帆
 蘇氣フシカツト船船主トヤシ
 今年六月ハリ此船案表ル
 今使使節ハリ居此船
 但蘇氣フシカツト船船主トヤシ
 今使使節ハリ居此船

セドニヤ 大砲共八門
 人数三百人
 フレカツト船除火輪船外
 此船爲大 船主アコホツト

スシスレツビ 大砲八門
 人数三四十人
 蘇氣フシカツト船船主トヤシ

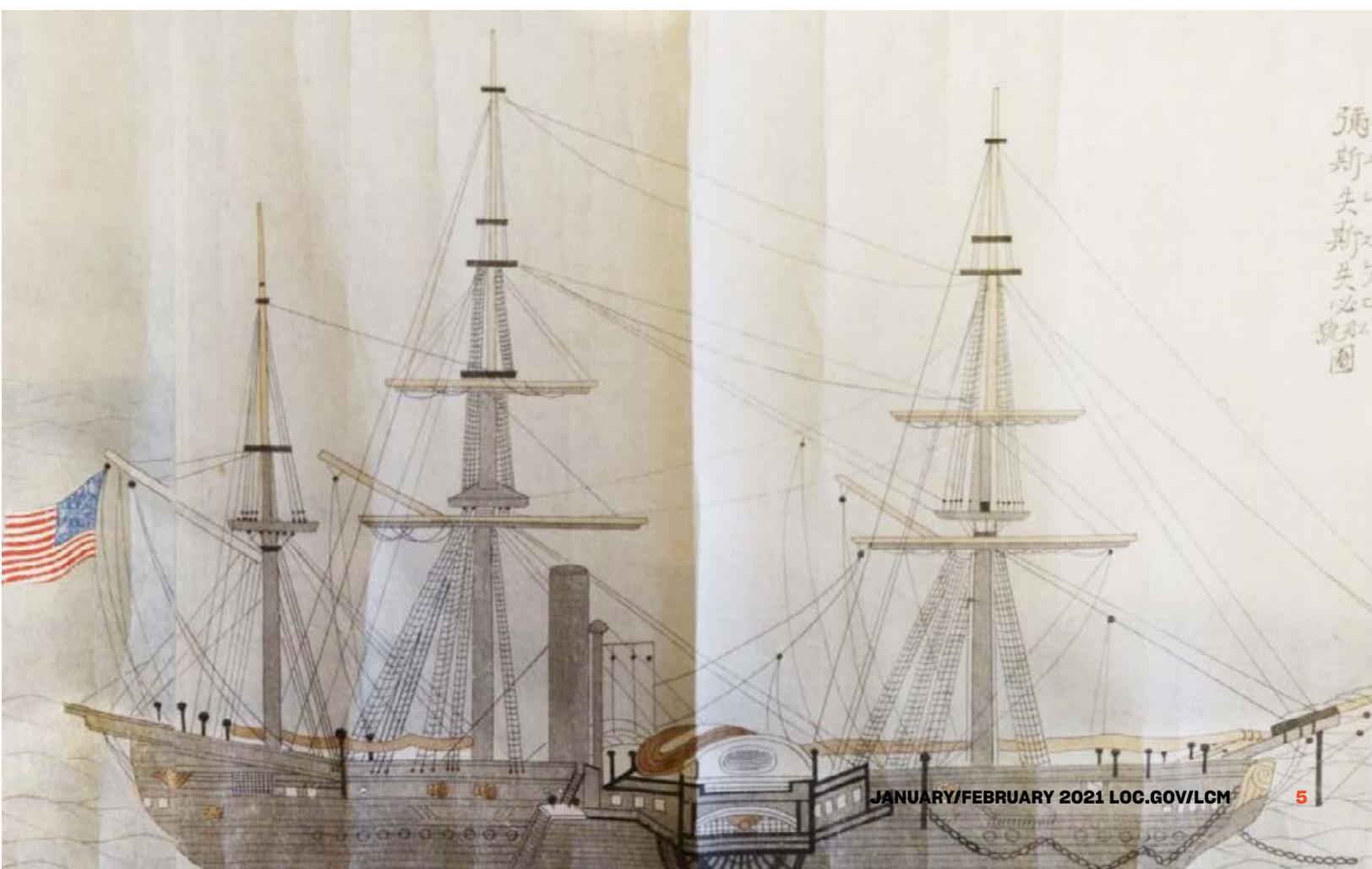
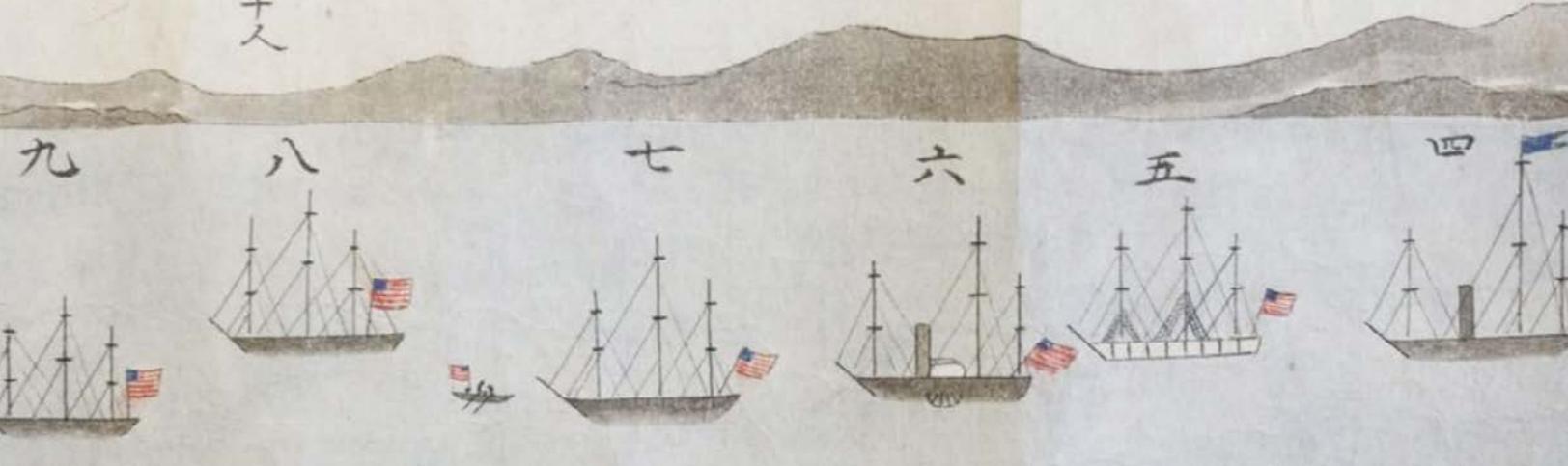
ハンタリヤ 大砲廿門
 人数三百人
 エルハツト船 主役エウスホイ

サラダヒボン 大砲六門
 人数五十人
 エルハツト船 主役エウスホイ

月六日入
 サラトガ 大砲廿門
 人数二百人

三月廿日帰帆
 通計大砲百廿八門人数千六百四十人

印ハ去年六月来者



彌斯失斯兵必就圖



■ Tamara Ohanyan of the Conservation Division built this model to help conservators better understand the methods bookmakers used in their work centuries ago. *Tamara Ohanyan*

INSIDE STORY

Models give conservators insight into the inner structure of historical books.

Inside every historical book is a hidden story, one that reveals how the object itself was made.

Conservators at the Library of Congress study the construction of ancient volumes in order to learn more about their inner structure and how to better preserve them for future generations.

One way they do so is by building models that let them “see inside” a book’s covers to its invisible or hidden structural components – the board attachments, endbands, fastenings and sewing that hold a book together and allow it to withstand centuries of use.

Books from different regions and eras have unique methods of construction and are built from place-specific materials: A book made in England in the 1400s was not made in the same way as one crafted in Armenia even during the same time period. The textblock and endbands were sewn in distinctive and completely different ways, as well as the board attachment and the decoration.

The models help conservators identify construction methods and materials specific

to regions and to identify damage that has been caused over time by use, such as how the boards have become loose or detached, or the sewing or sewing supports have weakened or broken. Then, armed with a better understanding, conservators can chart the best course for treatment.

Tamara Ohanyan of the Library’s Conservation Division has built models of works both from Library collections and those of other institutions: Armenian, Byzantine, European, Persian and Ethiopian bindings as well as bindings of the Nag Hammadi library, a cache of leather-bound, Gnostic Christian texts from the fourth-century that were discovered buried in a sealed jar in Egypt in 1945.

That books in the Library’s collections still can serve their purpose centuries after they were made attests to the skill of their original makers and the durability of their creations.

“There are hundreds of books in our collections with contemporary bindings and in very good condition,” Ohanyan says. “This is another proof of highly developed craftsmanship in ancient bookbinding traditions.”

Finding new ways of looking at old books helps ensure that they will be around for centuries to come, for new generations of readers.

—Mark Hartsell

■ This 18th-century hornbook holds a page that introduced children to the alphabet and the Lord's Prayer; the strings of beads served as an abacus to help them learn to count and add. *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*

JUST FOR KIDS

Hornbooks served as a primer and classroom for children.

It was not until the late 18th century that school-aged children had teaching materials designed expressly for their use. Children were viewed as small adults, and their education developed accordingly.

Small books for small hands were uncommon. And other than chapbooks and word lists, few devices were available to introduce a child to the world of reading and mathematics. So, from the mid-16th century to the 19th century, the hornbook took on the roles of the primer and classroom for children.

A child's introduction to the alphabet and numbers was found on a small, paddle-shaped object made of wood, leather or bone. Attached was a small printed sheet, usually displaying the alphabet in upper and lower case, the vowels and consonants, a run of numbers or Roman numerals, and the Lord's Prayer. The sheet was covered by a transparent shaving of horn, hence the designation of hornbook, or occasionally by a sheet of mica.

Some hornbooks also had a string of beads, a childlike abacus for counting. Intended to hang from a child's belt, the hornbook was a constant companion, an aid in reciting and memorizing the fundamentals of reading and mathematics. Depending on the circumstances of their use, the object ranged from primitive to luxurious, and the function of the hornbook ranged from didactic to ornamental.

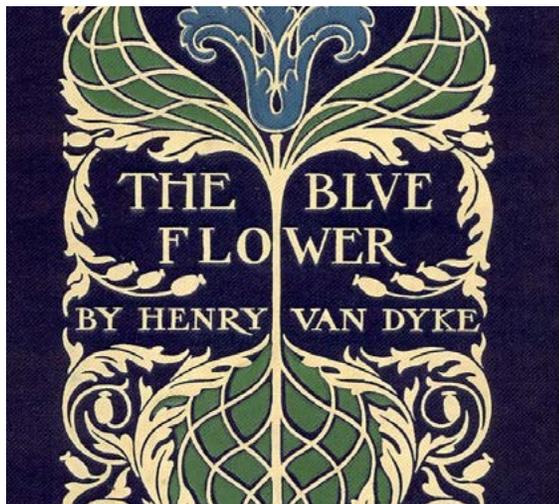
—Mark Dimunation is chief of the Rare Book and Special Collections Division.



CURATOR'S PICKS

THE BEAUTIFUL BOOK

Mark Dimunation and Stephanie Stillo choose favorite examples of decorated books from Library collections.



CLOTH PUBLISHERS' BINDINGS

The introduction of steam-powered machinery in the mid-19th century changed the fundamental nature of the book. Machines made it possible, among other advances, to replace hand-sewn stitched-in leather bindings with case bindings – a flat, cloth-covered cardboard glued to the spine. The new binding allowed bookmakers to run the cover through the press, resulting in covers that blazed with detail and colorful decoration such as blind stamping, gold embossing and color printing. Most notable among cover designers was Margaret Armstrong, whose stylized works – such as this one, stamped in bold, contrasting colors and enhanced with gold and silver leaf – have exceptional visual appeal.



EMBROIDERED BINDINGS

Elaborate embroidered bindings, modeled after popular images in books and paintings, reached popularity in 17th-century England. This Book of Psalms is bound in a purple satin embroidered with pearls, bullion and colored silks. Small embroidered prayer books such as this most often were luxury devotional objects reserved for women.



FORE-EDGE PAINTINGS

The urge to enhance the physical book dates as far back as the arrival of the codex. The fore edge (the outer edge of the book other than the spine) has been painted, incised, labeled, gilded and decorated in various ways for centuries. During the Renaissance, artists began to paint on the surface of the fore edge, creating scenes easily visible when the book was closed. By the 17th century, binders discovered that if the fore edge was planed when clamped at an angle, it created a surface for painting that would be viewable only when the book was fanned open. With a scene painted on the angle and the straight edges marbled or gilded, the book was now decorated with an undetectable image, viewable only when the book was read.



VOLVELLES

This extravagant Renaissance astronomy manual, entitled the "Astronomicum Caesareum" ("Emperor's Astronomy," 1540), employed an elaborate layering of concentric, rotatable circles called "volvelles" to calculate everything from the longitude of Mercury to the altitude of stars. Volvelles still can be found in the books of modern artists, such as Laura Davidson's "Random Thoughts on Hope," which entices readers to use a volvelle of words to create poetry.



THE MEDIEVAL BOOKMARK

Large medieval manuscripts and early printed books often were a difficult read, lacking the organizing prompts – page numbers, for example – that modern books possess. To help readers find their way, bookmakers developed a variety of helpful guides and place keepers, such as these bookmarks. The medieval version of the modern thumb index notches found in dictionaries, these devices helped mark often-consulted pages of Bibles, choir books and legal works. They could be vellum tabs or knotted strips of tawed leather attached to the fore edge of a book, guiding the way to easy access.

Sprich in xij buch Ethy
 narium das das fleisch von
 elementen zw Cammen ge
 ist et cetera



Die sel in nem Spiegel von in nem
 gyl drualig vnd em ynner tuget
 er macht dem gotes pube gro ge
 yn amen liecht der chunst yn yn
 stalt der heligh drualichait die sich
 beweist em verlicher philosophus
 leuch vnd ist redlich vnd ist ledlich
 ersten p spricht er der weisheit das selb
 in die such macht der weisheit
 en p spricht er von dem dñemend
 it zu sich weist in die weisheit des
 s dritt beweist vnd die dñung des
 az vns weist yn die gute der hei
 l. Das tait sich yn die chunst die do
 ethaphica mathematica et physica
 erst p spricht er von den dñgn des
 in dem p spricht er von der gal yn
 in dem wo der natur yn vnder
 vnd wo s empfinden machun dar
 weist er em dar erst weggym des
 in and er in dem pild des suns das
 er gab des heligen geist in dem an
 es sich in die chunst grammatice die
 gewaltig aufflager der chunst die
 logica rethorica Die dñstent ist yn dem
 is die heilig drualichait in dem
 is tait er yn die chunst die do hasset
 a ycomica vnd ylica in dem
 s vaterb stettichait in dem and
 in dem dritin der hei
 stlichait Alle die chunst habent
 emlich vnd vntugentlich Recht als
 vnd das gestirn gien vnde ewigh
 ser gemüt dar vmb vnser gemüt
 in pulchres leuchtes mit erfüllt vnd
 in nile es gae blint es mag per in
 reiffen das ewig liecht in



Gregorius in dem achente puche
 moralium spricht alles das do ist
 das man in dem menschn arger
 Das menschn ist der hylmel van er mit
 wegerung anhengent dem obriste dñ
 gen vnd auch ist er die helle vrom er
 mit soner chodung seht selbn betrubt
 mit den vndersten vrom star muss. Er
 ist auch der ertracht das do mit gutten
 werck mit guter hoffnung frucht
 pringet. Er ist dar mer der do mett
 licher sachtin p dmet vnd das nett
 mit soner vnstet ragende ist. Als au
 gustin spricht in dem xij puche
 von der stat plinius der ander vrom
 galatist menschn lemer der mocht
 der werlt lauff vnd leibes natur
 vngent ist ye mer das fleische das
 menschn genaget ist in der werlt

Philosophie docet
 inquire quid sit hone
 sti Quod mare quod ce
 lu q homo quid terra quid
 aer ytes dulcor artes quid
 in vntutes sacre parentes
 Grammatica qua recte loque abq
 ligu. **Rethorice laudes verba**
polie in Sautare recti pibit
 dyalectica veni. **Invigilia nris**
sic arlineet ex methar spadat
 tarum geometra **Dat modulos sac**
musica doctalux moralis tra lib
 acadomorum. **vite gutta pie puit**
omni philosophie

Dolui maiores vita stullop
 priores corpe mientes for
 tenere gigantis periquem ves
 nos ipos equi pandle. Si p
 cantamur sendi suo dogma
 ta vero

ON THE SHOULDERS OF GIANTS

Appreciating medieval manuscripts in the digital age.

BY MARIANNA STELL

Like contemporary digital interfaces, medieval manuscripts anticipate an engaged user. Imagine that you are viewing a well-designed webpage from behind the glass of a museum case. The glass would prevent you from interacting with the page as the designer intended. You would be an observer, not a user.

Viewing a medieval manuscript without information about its historical context can be a similarly limited experience. Medieval manuscripts are not static products. Like a website, a manuscript realizes its purpose in its dynamic engagement with its user. Rather than simply instructing readers, a manuscript's compositional program is designed to move viewers to some action. The nature of the action depends upon the context for which the manuscript was created to function.

An illuminated prayer book, like the one at right by the Boucicaut Master, is designed to catch the user's attention. Light dances off the many flecks of gold leaf used in the borders and the miniatures, catching the eye with even the smallest motion and making the page appear as though it is illumined from within. Books of Hours like this one were created to allow laypersons to participate in the cycle of prayers that priests and monastic orders kept.

Intended to be portable, Books of Hours were sometimes fashioned as a girdle book. A length of cloth attached to the binding was tied in a knot and often tucked into a belt for easy transport. As a consequence, Books of Hours were used at home, at church and even at gravesides.

Not all medieval manuscripts were created for a ritual context, however. Some manuscripts were created to

prompt mental rather than physical engagement. Manuscripts created for personal study assumed use in the active theater of the reader's mind. A 15th-century encyclopedic manuscript in the Rosenwald Collection, at left, contains compositions that are built to generate mental associations. The design is a testament to the medieval creator's ability to nest layers of information into a central image so that the reader might more easily remember the content.

A 15th-century reader would recognize an image of what looks to be a piggyback ride as referring to a famous metaphor attributed to Bernard of Chartres, who claimed that modern scholars (i.e., those working around 1150 A.D.) are like dwarves being carried by giants. The modern scholar can see further into the horizon only because the ancients, like the giant, have given him a leg up. Modern knowledge therefore rests in a privileged position only because of those giants who wrote and studied beforehand. Illustrating this point, the giant's surcoat is inscribed with references to the seven liberal arts, which the medieval educational system inherited from the Romans.

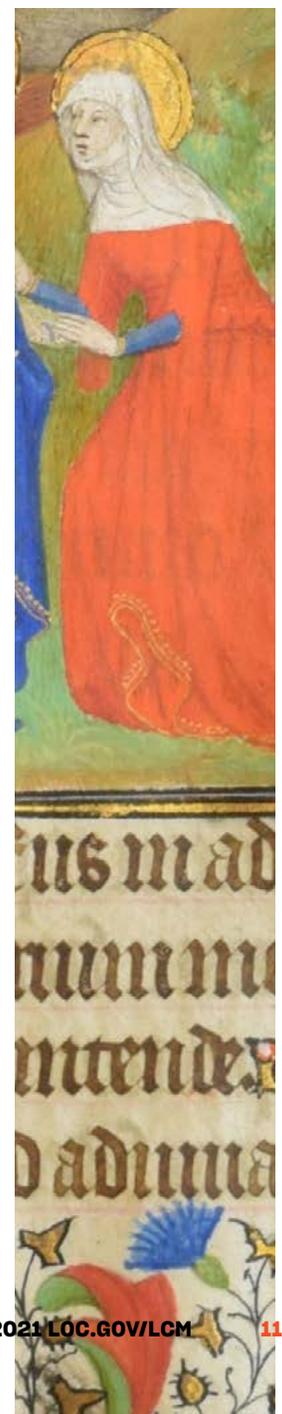
The design of the composition moves the reader around in a circle, like the one labeled "macrocosm" above the head of the dwarf. By following the internal itinerary of the page, the reader actively experiences and internalizes its informational content. In so doing the reader becomes part of the manuscript's larger message: Each human being is a microcosm of the greater macrocosm of the universe.

For those of us studying book arts in the digital age, we are the dwarves and the medieval manuscript designers are our giants.



■ **Opposite:** This 15th-century encyclopedic manuscript contains compositions that are built to generate mental associations.

Below: Sumptuously illuminated prayer books, such as this one by the Boucicaut Master, helped laypersons to participate in church rituals. *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*



■ In this 1959 work "Constellations," pochoir renderings of Joan Miró's famous "Constellations" accompany commentary by surrealist poet Andre Breton.

Opposite: This sunburst binding by Paul Bonet announces "Circus of the Shooting Star," a portfolio by French artist Georges Rouault. *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*



IN PURSUIT OF PERFECTION

Newly acquired Aramont Library offers stunning examples of book design, illustration and binding.

BY STEPHANIE STILLO

What makes a perfect book? Is it the typography? The illustrations? The binding? Is it what someone adds, like a signature, a note or a drawing? Or is it what they take away, like a perfectly trimmed edge?

For the collector of the Aramont Library, a recent donation of over 1,700 volumes to the Rare Book and Special Collections Division, the answer is clear: A perfect book is one that is unique, surprising or personal.

It is a rare first edition of James Joyce's "Ulysses" with a curious annotated anatomical drawing tipped in. It is a signed 23-volume set of the collected works of Joseph Conrad with a unique leather vignette on every single cover. It is a 20th-century edition of the poems of Baroque poet Luis de Góngora with original illustrations and commentary by Pablo Picasso and bound by Paul Bonet. While beauty certainly resides in the eye of the beholder, it is quite easy to share the vision of the collector of the Aramont Library.

In private hands for over 40 years, the Aramont Library consists of literary first editions, illustrated books, and an astonishing collection livres d'artiste (books by artists) by some of the most important artists of the 20th century. Many of the books in the collection are enclosed in fine bindings; stunning expressions of craft that are more appropriately described as works of art than simple bindings.

The library began in the early 1980s with signed and inscribed first editions of modernist literature, a genre that critically explored topics such as alienation, disillusionment and fragmentation in the industrial, postwar West. These range from the poetry of Miguel de Unamuno and Ezra Pound to the novels of William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf and Willa Cather.

Nothing captures the Aramont Library's hunt for perfection better than the collection's three first editions of Joyce's bawdy, stream-of-consciousness novel "Ulysses," first published in Paris in 1922 by Shakespeare & Company. Loosely based on Homer's "Odyssey," the novel follows Joyce's protagonists as they meander the streets of Dublin one day in June, exploring the drama and



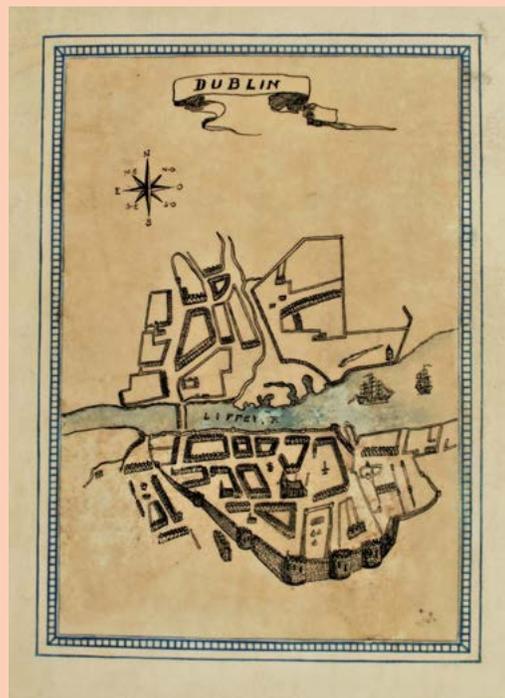
heroism of everyday people. The rare, and highly sought-after, first editions in the Aramont Library include inscriptions, signed letters by Joyce, photographs, a rare copy of Joyce's 1920 schema for his "damned monster novel," as well as a unique and unusual anatomical figure that corresponds to the structure of the book, potentially in the author's hand.

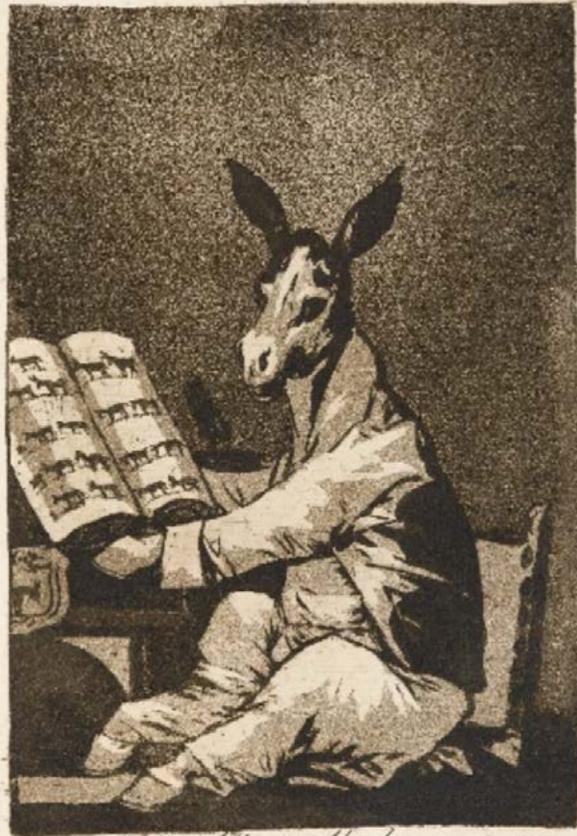
The heart of the Aramont collection is a thoughtful assemblage of illustrated books and livres d'artiste that span from the late 18th to 20th centuries. The Aramont Library begins its exploration of illustration with the most important Spanish painter and graphic artist of the Baroque period, Francisco Goya (1746–1828). Goya used the technique of printing to level piercing critiques about the world around him. His two most famous series, both in the Aramont Library, are "Los Caprichos" (1799), a visual critique of the hypocrisy and foolishness of the Spanish Royal Court, and "Los Desastres de la Guerra" (1810–20, published posthumously in 1863), a graphic and disturbing expose about the horrors of the Peninsular War.

From the continental conflicts of the early modern period to the aesthetics movements of the 19th century, the Aramont Library focuses specifically on the illustration and bindings of the arts and crafts and art nouveau movements. Disillusioned with the impact of industrialization on the aesthetics of the everyday, notable artists and intellectuals like William Morris (1834–1896) sought to reestablish the close relationship between artists, craftsman and final product.

The Aramont Library demonstrates how the arts and craft movement held a special significance for book binders. From the bejeweled bindings of Sangorski & Sutcliffe to the intricate pointelle patterns of Doves Bindery, binders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries challenged the mass production of commercial binderies by crafting customized binding for everything from single books to multivolume sets.

The late 19th century also witnessed the rise of art nouveau. Defined by an artistic preference for the sensual, wild and unkempt, the art nouveau aesthetic shaped the appearance of everything from commercial advertising to furniture design until the start of World War I.





89

■ Clockwise from top left:
This hand-drawn map of Dublin appears in a rare first edition of James Joyce's 1922 masterpiece, "Ulysses"; artist Francisco Goya critiqued the hypocrisy and foolishness of the Spanish royal court in his 1799 work "Los Caprichos"; Aubrey Beardsley created this and other illustrations to accompany the 1894 English translation of Oscar Wilde's play about a biblical femme fatale, "Salome."
Rare Book and Special Collections Division

The impact of art nouveau in graphic art is best represented in the Aramont Library by the illustrations of Aubrey Beardsley. In 1894, Beardsley created illustrations for the English translation of Oscar Wilde's play about the biblical femme fatale, Salome. Wilde's play (by the same name) dramatized an evening of carnal desire that concluded in the decapitation of the itinerant prophet John the Baptist. Banned from stage performances until 1896, Beardsley's illustrations offered the play its first visual performance through fantastic and erotic imagery that skillfully elucidated Wilde's story of female domination, sexual desire and death.

The Aramont Library's greatest strength is its assemblage of livres d'artiste, a corpus of material that reveals the deep and meaningful collaborations between artists, authors and publishers during the 20th century. These range from the early post-Impressionist work of Pierre Bonnard and Henri Matisse to the fauvist revelations of George Rouault and André Derain. From the geometric cubism of George Braque and Jacques Villon to the unbridled surrealist visions of Marc Chagall, Max Ernst and Dorothea Tanning. For example, "À Toute Épreuve" (1958) was a visual meditation on the surrealist poetry of Paul Eluard.

In the early 1940s, Swiss art dealer and publisher Gérald Cramer enlisted the expert vision of surrealist painter Joan Miró to illustrate Eluard's prose. The now-iconic "À Toute Épreuve" was the result of a 10-year collaboration between the

**THE ARAMONT
LIBRARY CONTAINS AN
ASTONISHING COLLECTION
OF BOOKS BY SOME OF THE
MOST IMPORTANT ARTISTS
OF THE 20TH CENTURY.**



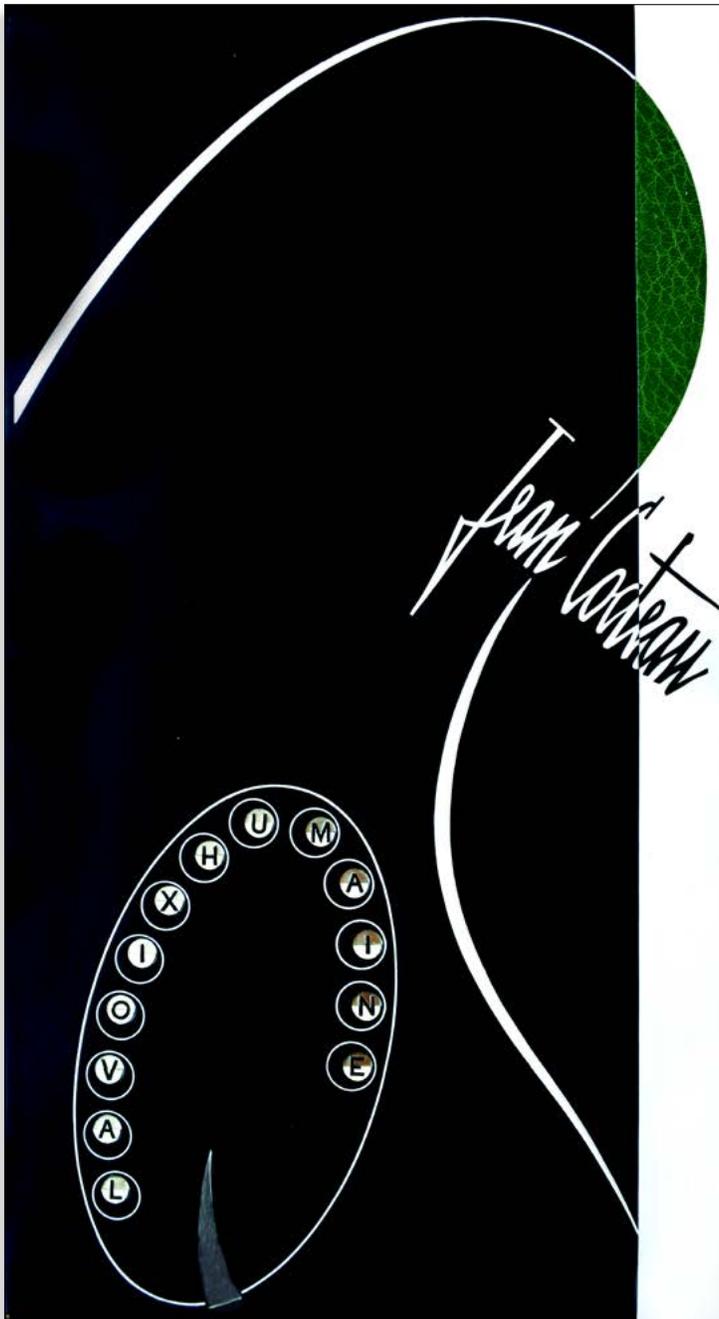
Pierre Reverdy

Le Chant
des Morts

Poèmes

Lithographies originales
de
Pablo Picasso

Vériade Editeur



artist, poet and publisher, cut short only by the death of Eluard in 1952. The result was a monument to the book as an art object. To create distinctive graphic texture to the images that would interlace the letterpress pose, Miró glued wire, stones, bark and sand to his woodcuts, assembled discrete collages from old prints and added visual embellishments from mail order catalogs.

Many of the livres d'artiste in the Aramont Library are enclosed in bespoke bindings that meditate on the major themes of the text or the visual contribution of the artist.

Rose Adler's binding for Jean Cocteau's "The Human Voice," with illustrations by French expressionist Bernard Buffet, used an assemblage of dyed leather and abalone shells to depict a large rotary phone, a gesture to Cocteau's emotionally charged narrative about a woman on the phone with her former lover. The Aramont Library also holds six bindings by the most celebrated binder of the 20th century, Paul Bonet. This gathering includes Bonet's famous sunburst pattern. Perfected by Bonet in the 1930s and 1940s, the pattern uses a combination of gold lines and colored leather to create the illusion of dimensionality and depth. In the Aramont Library, Bonet's sunburst announces Georges Rouault's "Circus of the Shooting Star," an illustrated rumination on human frailty as seen through the daily lives of circus performers, a common theme for many post-impressionist artists.

When taken as a whole, the Aramont Library is both a measure of Western creativity over the last two centuries and a reflection of a collector's pursuit of the perfect balance between book design, illustration and binding. We in Rare Book look forward to sharing more with you about this extraordinary collection in the months and years to come.

■ **The Aramont Library reveals collaborations between artists, authors and publishers, such as these by painter Pablo Picasso and poet Pierre Riverdy (left) and binder Rose Adler and writer and filmmaker Jean Cocteau (right).** *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*

THE ART OF THE BOOK

■ Claire Van Vliet created this layered, quilt-pattern design for “Aunt Sallie’s Lament,” a 1988 work by Margaret Kaufman in which a Southern quilter bittersweetly looks back on her life and past loves. *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*

Over the years, the form evolved from its origins to wildly innovative and expressive objects.

BY MARK DIMUNATION

When William Morris produced his Kelmscott Chaucer in 1896, he did more than create a monument to his notion of the handcrafted book – he launched the revival of letterpress printing in England and America. More than a century later, that impulse has emerged as its own art form.

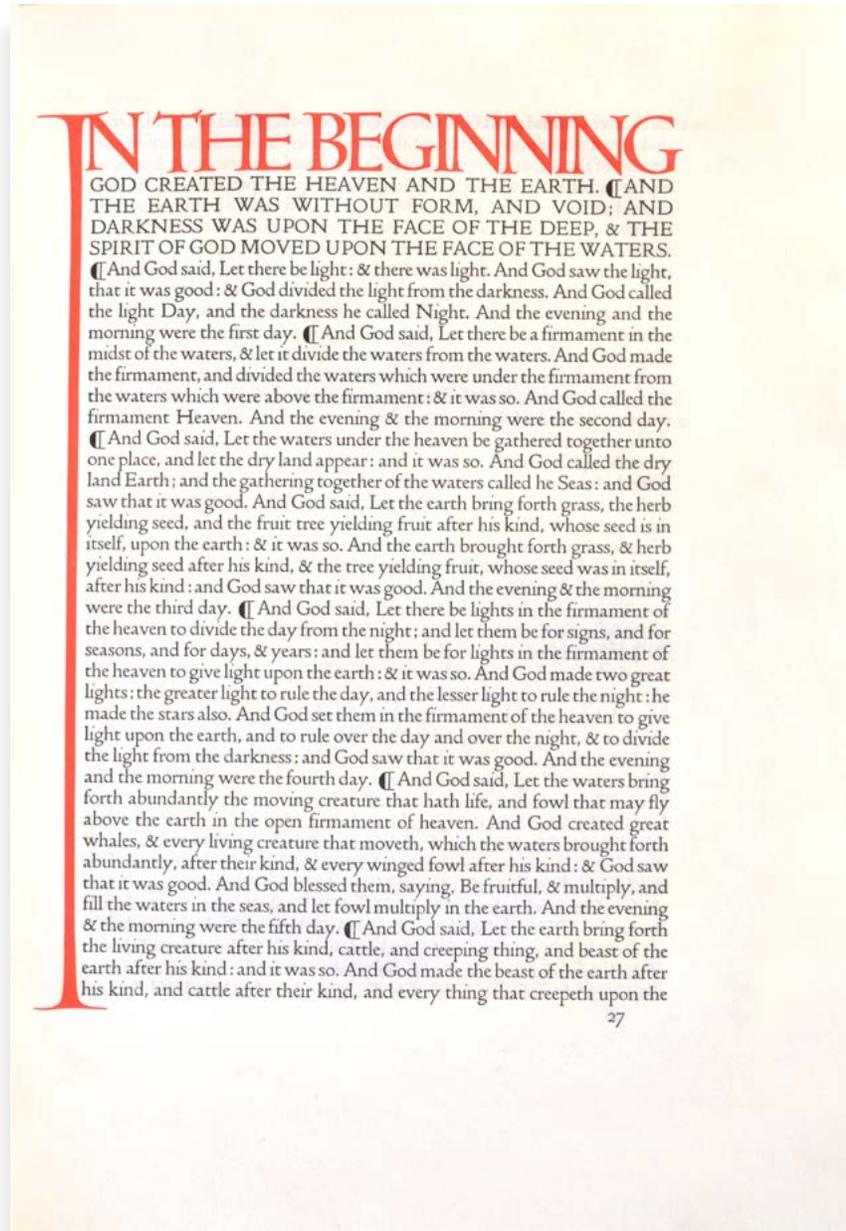
Books printed on the handpress using hand-set type, fine paper, woodcut and engraved illustrations and hand-sewn bindings have been the mainstay of the fine press movement. Over the years, they have transformed from their origins as an elegant and restrained homage to quality and the craft to wildly innovative and expressive print objects that celebrate the blending of text, type and image into a singular artistic vision.

Because this movement in many ways continues the story first told by Gutenberg and the introduction of the printed book, the Rare Book and Special Collections Division collects exemplars of the fine press movement. The foundation of the Library's holdings of book arts is built on the narrative thread of the story of letterpress printing. With 500 years of the history of the printed book preceding the Fine Press Collection, it is, in effect, the extension of the rare book collection into the contemporary realm of the fine press book.

An extremely strong book arts collection has been built over the years – one that is highly representative of the field and, in many cases, comprehensive. Thousands of titles plot the chronology of the modern letterpress tradition, beginning with a comprehensive collection of the Kelmscott Press, then moving through the decades of presswork from the early English movement to the American fine presses, from the California printers to the present.

Many printers and printmakers are represented by complete and comprehensive holdings, such as those by artist Leonard Baskin and his Gehenna Press, printmaker and printer Claire Van Vliet and her Janus Press, Steve Clay's Granary Books, the publications produced by the Women's Studio Workshop, and many others representing the work of printers such as Ken Campbell, Peter Rutledge Koch, Carolee Campbell and Julie Chen.

■ In 1905, the Doves Press produced this English Bible, distinguished by an elegant use of space and a straightforward typographic sensibility. Rare Book and Special Collections Division



■ Book artist and typographer Russell Maret considers the study of geometry from a personal perspective via color illustrations and commentary in his 2014 work, "Interstices & Intersections or, An Autodidact Comprehends a Cube. Thirteen Euclidean Propositions." *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*

But the division also holds in other collections large gatherings of materials that sit at the fringe of our consideration – shaped books, graphic novels, pop-up books, miniatures. All in all, the Library has a vast collection of the modern fine press tradition and one of the earliest established efforts in collecting artists' books.

The books tell the story of how contemporary book arts have transformed over time. Leaving behind the elaborately designed pages of the arts and crafts movement, letterpress printers in America and England turned their attention to the simply crafted, beautifully printed book. New movements brought with them a new visualization of the page – new type, new layout design, new materials, new visions of traditional texts. Those that were to follow closely after Morris brought their own viewpoints forward. In its English Bible (1905), the Doves Press countered with a spare, unmanipulated space with a straightforward typographic sensibility.

In the decades that followed, the Grabhorn Press, the Ward Ritchie Press, John Henry Nash, William Everson and Adrian Wilson at the Press at Tuscany Alley all experimented with the printed page and the relationship between words and illustrations. English book illustrator and typographer Eric Gill, for example, was uniquely innovative in combining typography and the figurative arts. For the "Four Gospels," Gill designed both the typeface and the wood-engraved initials.

Beginning in the 1960s, book artists reconsidered the entire notion of the book. Artists' books arrived on the scene, breaking all boundaries in terms of format, content and production. They issued the challenge, demanding to be placed in juxtaposition with more traditional book arts and redefining the notion of the book as a material object. Some arrived at wholly new ideas of a book. Koch created a book with lead pages, Chen produced books that could be manipulated and reshaped and Laura Davidson made unique book objects



heard them laid them up in their hearts, saying, What manner of child shall this be! And the hand of the Lord was with him. * And his father Zacharias was filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesied, saying,

BLESSED BE THE LORD GOD OF ISRAEL;
For he hath visited and redeemed his people,
And hath raised up an horn of salvation for us
In the house of his servant David;
As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which
have been since the world began:
That we should be saved from our enemies, and from
the hand of all that hate us;
To perform the mercy promised to our fathers,
And to remember his holy covenant;
The oath which he sware to our father Abraham,
That he would grant unto us, that we being delivered
out of the hand of our enemies
Might serve him without fear,
In holiness and righteousness before him, all the days
of our life.
And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Highest:
For thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare
his ways;
To give knowledge of salvation unto his people
By the remission of their sins,
Through the tender mercy of our God:
Whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us,
To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the
shadow of death,
To guide our feet into the way of peace.
And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in
the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel.

136



**IT CAME TO PASS IN
THOSE DAYS, THAT**

**THERE WENT OUT A DECREE
FROM CÆSAR AUGUSTUS, THAT ALL THE WORLD
SHOULD BE TAXED. (AND THIS TAXING WAS FIRST
made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) And all went to
be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went
up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa,
unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem: (because
he was of the house and lineage of David:) To be taxed with
Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And so it
was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished
that she should be delivered. And she brought forth her**

137

that paired her exquisite handwork with the book format. In "Random Thoughts on Hope" (2003), Davidson offers a poem that changes randomly as wheels of words are spun to fashion another line of poetry.

These collections are bolstered by archival collections in the book arts that provide significant opportunities for research. The division holds the archives of two of the greatest American book designers of the first half of the 20th century: Frederic Goudy and Bruce Rogers. Goudy commands a special place in American book arts. In addition to his work as a printer, book designer and writer, he was the first American to make the designing of type a separate profession. Rogers, a typographer and type designer, is known for his classical style, his own design of the Centaur typeface and the production of the Oxford Lectern Bible.

Recent additions include the papers of the artist cooperative Booklyn, the archives

and publications of innovative printer and designer Walter Hamady and his Perishable Press, and the papers and a comprehensive collection of the work of typographer and printer Russell Maret, whose recent work has redefined the relationship between the letterform and the illustration.

Finally, printmaking is documented directly in the division's Artists' Books Collection, which includes examples of illustrations from the traditional livre d'artiste to the dynamic experiments of futurism. Today, this collection is the repository for hundreds of contemporary artists' books, highlighting collaborative ventures between artist, printer and binder that characterize the postmodern book.

Artists' Books challenge the notion of a book. New materials, new processes, new formats and new approaches to content are highlighted in these contemporary efforts, and they make up an important part of the story of the book told at the Library.

■ English book illustrator and typographer Eric Gill designed both the typeface and the wood-engraved initials found in the "Four Gospels," published by Golden Cockerel Press in 1931. Rare Book and Special Collections Division

ONLINE OFFERINGS



■ This exquisite 19th-century volume of Persian poetry features lacquer covers decorated with floral designs and miniature paintings that depict the works of the poet Nizāmī. *African and Middle Eastern Division*

A GEM IN THE POCKET

Exquisite, tiny volume preserves great works from Persian literature.

The Library's collections of Persian rare books rank among the most important in the world, outside of Iran itself.

One of the greatest examples is a manuscript of classical Persian poetry small enough to fit inside the coat pocket of a 19th-century Iranian nobleman.

This palm-sized, handwritten book collects the most-beloved works of great poets from earlier centuries – Sa'di, Hāfiz, Jāmī and others. Befitting its affluent owner, the volume is exquisitely illustrated with miniature paintings in gold leaf and lapis that depict the ballads or poetic love tales of another great poet, Nizāmī.

The book, "Excerpts from Classical Persian Poetry," was produced in 1833 and measures just 5 by 2.75 inches. It was made for a Persian nobleman to carry, as evidenced by the extravagant materials and craftsmanship.

Ornate bindings and covers have been an important part of Persian manuscript and bookmaking for over a thousand years. This volume is bound within two lacquer covers bearing elaborate

floral designs from the Qajar period.

Inside, each page contains eight couplets of text, delicately written within a painted, gold-leaf border by a scribe using ink and a single-haired brush. The text itself is inscribed in Shikastah, calligraphy done in an elongated style – everything appears stretched, pulled out.

Interspersed among the poems are eight elaborate miniature paintings, executed in rich, traditional materials, such as ground-up pomegranates, lapis, turquoise and gold. The paintings illustrate great tales from Persian literature, such as the tragic love story of "Khusraw and Shirin" – sort of a Persian version of "Romeo and Juliet."

Today, this fine little volume preserves the aesthetic style prevalent in Iran nearly two centuries ago and the work of literary masters, such as the famous Ghazal, or ode, written in the 14th century by Hāfiz of Shiraz:

"O pious of the heart, I am lost in a love,
so great
O pain the hidden secrets will become
open debate.
Shipwrecked we just float, O favorable
wind arise,
May we one more time gaze upon that
familiar trait."

—Mark Hartsell

MORE INFORMATION

"Excerpts from Classical Persian Poetry"
go.usa.gov/xAXQA



STEPHANIE STILLLO

LESSING J. ROSENWALD ROOM

Across from the Rare Book and Special Collections Reading Room in the Thomas Jefferson Building is the Lessing J. Rosenwald Room, named after the collector and philanthropist who, beginning in 1943, gifted a magnificent collection of rare books to the Library.

The Rosenwald Room is many things to many people. For scholars, it is a venue to share their research. For students, it is a place to see a rare book or object, often for the first time. For the division's staff, the Rosenwald Room is the space where we implement the Library's mission to engage, inspire and inform.

Modeled after Lessing J. Rosenwald's art deco mansion outside Philadelphia, the Rosenwald Room includes multiple gestures to the original design – silver and copper walls, furniture and fixtures from the Rosenwald estate, an active research library, a permanently installed iron head of Orpheus by Swedish-born sculpture Carl Milles.

Today, in honor of Rosenwald's commitment to education, Rare Book and Special Collections uses the room to share material ranging from medieval manuscripts to modern book arts to audiences as far reaching as Girl Scout troops and high school honors classes to members of Congress and heads of state.

–Stephanie Stilllo

Sybille Jagusch acquires historical materials for the Children's Literature Center.

Describe your work at the Library.

The main focus of my job as director of the Children's Literature Center is acquiring rare and special children's book materials. The finest source of my discoveries remains the annual New York antiquarian book fair, but throughout the year I peruse dealers' catalogs and work with dealers here and abroad. I welcome visitors to the beautiful space of the Children's Literature Center and give impromptu and more formal presentations about children's books. I answer reference questions from people all over the world and Library staff. I have organized many symposia, lectures and exhibitions.

How did you prepare for your position?

I did not really "prepare" for this dream job. Only in hindsight does it seem that way. In my first position, teaching school in Germany, I often brought picture books to show to my young students. Later, in the U.S., as a children's librarian I tried to read as many American children's books as I could.

Even before I came to the Library, I was active in national and international children's book activities. For example, I served as an editor for *Phaedrus: An International Journal of Children's Literature Research*; as secretary of the International Research Society of Children's Literature; and as a jury member of the Hans Christian Andersen Awards, the Biennial of Illustration Bratislava and the New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Book. I hold a Bachelor of Arts degree as well as a master's in library science and a doctorate.

What have been your most memorable experiences at the Library?

There are many. Here are just three: Presenting Robert McCloskey the Library's Living Legend award in the sunny garden on his island in Maine. And playing my harmonica for him. Welcoming Empress Michiko of Japan and showing her children's books during an intimate tea on the mezzanine of the Main Reading Room. Meeting first lady Suzanne Mubarak in her house in Cairo and telling her that I had not accomplished enough as her consultant. Her answer with a smile: Did you expect



SHAWN MILLER

to achieve in a few weeks what took the ancient Egyptians thousands of years?

What are your favorite collection items?

Among the many items I have added to the collection over the years are original art, moveable, folding, tunnel and hornbooks, books in little cupboards, optical games (a zoetrope, a book with mirrors), card and table games, globes and books in foreign languages.

Among my favorites are "Orbis Sensualium Pictus" (1664), the "visible world in pictures," the first children's book; a lovely set of handmade paper dolls of a Chinese family from the late Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) with their gorgeous clothes; and "Mushi no Uta-Awase," a full-color, 17th-century manuscript illuminating a whimsical insect poetry contest – a superb example of Japanese bookmaking.

Another is "Märchen-Panorama" (1890?), perhaps the most beautiful of all the toy theaters I have acquired. By moving a crank, famous fairy tale scenes scroll across the stage accompanied by the kling-klang sound of a music box.

As with all of the items I acquire, they are enlightening and intriguing and make for charming displays.

Librarian Names Perlmutter 14th Register of Copyrights

Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden recently announced her selection of Shira Perlmutter as the 14th register of copyrights.

Prior to her appointment, Perlmutter served as chief policy officer and director for international affairs at the United States Patent and Trademark Office, working in all areas of intellectual property, including copyright.

She previously served as the executive vice president for global legal policy at the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry in London; as vice president and associate general counsel for intellectual property policy at Time Warner Inc.; and as the associate register for policy and international affairs at the U.S. Copyright Office.

Perlmutter earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Harvard University and a Juris Doctor from the University of Pennsylvania Law School.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-20-064

2020 Literacy Awards Recipients Announced

Five organizations working to expand literacy and promote reading were named recipients of the 2020 Library of Congress Literacy Awards by Librarian of Congress Carla Hayden.

The Literacy Awards, originated by David M. Rubenstein in 2013, honor organizations doing exemplary, innovative and replicable work. The awards spotlight the great efforts underway to promote literacy and respond to the needs of our time.

The Immigrant Learning Center of Malden, Massachusetts, was named recipient of the \$50,000 American Prize, and the Pakistan Reading Project of the International Rescue Committee in New York City received the \$50,000 International Prize.

In addition, three organizations were named recipients of \$50,000 David M. Rubenstein Special Response Awards for their work during the COVID-19 pandemic: the National Center for Families Learning of Louisville, Kentucky; Pratham Books of Bengaluru, India; and Room to Read of San Francisco.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-20-058

'Hold Your Fire' Wins Lavine/Burns Award

The Better Angels Society, the Library of Congress and the Crimson Lion/Lavine Family Foundation announced that the second annual Library of Congress Lavine/Ken Burns Prize for Film has been awarded to "Hold Your Fire," a new film directed by Stefan Forbes. The film will receive a \$200,000 finishing grant to assist with post-production costs.

Produced by Amir Soltani and Tia Wou, the film is a feature-length documentary that uncovers the untold story behind the longest hostage siege in New York Police Department history. It happened in January 1973 at a Brooklyn sporting goods store, when four young Black men stealing guns for self-defense were cornered by police.

Established in 2019, the prize recognizes a filmmaker whose documentary uses original research and compelling narrative to tell stories that touch on some aspect of American history.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-20-068

Library, Park Service to Receive NWP Collection

The National Woman's Party (NWP) announced the gift of its historic collection spanning women's suffrage and the movement for women's equality to the Library and the National Park Service. The NWP also established a fund to support researchers working in the Library's collections.

The Library, already the repository for a large majority of NWP papers and related women's history collections, will serve as home for the remainder of the NWP's records – approximately 310,000 documents, 100 scrapbooks, 50 political cartoons, 4,500 photographs, 750 volumes of periodicals, 2,400 books from the NWP's Florence Bayard Hilles Library and other paper and digital materials.

The National Park Service will receive the NWP's textiles, banners, furniture, paintings, sculpture and other artifacts, including the banners held by women picketing the White House for suffrage; keys to the District of Columbia jail where picketing suffragists were incarcerated; and Susan B. Anthony's desk.

MORE: loc.gov/item/prn-20-066

SHOP



Framed Book Art
Product # see website
Price: \$299

The beauty of the printed word is captured in these framed 3D carvings inspired by the classic novels "To Kill a Mockingbird," "Pride and Prejudice" and "The Great Gatsby."



'Ex Libris' Postcards
Product #21402059
Price: \$16.95

The postcards in this set take their inspiration from antique bookplates, which long ago were commissioned by avid readers and pasted in books to signify ownership.



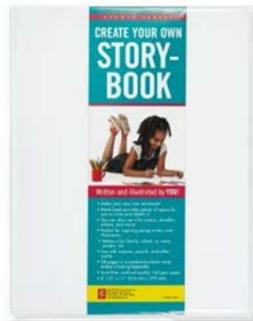
Classic Stories Accessories
Product # see website
Price: \$12

These leather purses, pouches, key rings and pencil cases show off the spines of classic books such as "Wuthering Heights," "Catcher in the Rye," "East of Eden" and more.



Antiquarian's Haven Kit
Product #21504316
Price: \$39.95

Build your own little library with this antiquarian kit featuring a miniature wooden room filled with fabric furniture, lighting, artwork and books. Assembly required.



Create a Storybook
Product #21106942
Price: \$5.99

Make your own storybook in this blank hardcover book, with plenty of space for pictures and words. Perfect for aspiring young writers and illustrators. Use with crayons, pencils and other media.



Comic Illustration Kit
Product #21504475
Price: \$29.99

Bring your ideas and characters to life with this comics illustration kit. This beginner set includes graphite pencils, sharpener, pens, ink refills and an eraser.

Order online: loc.gov/shop Order by phone: 888.682.3557

EXTRAORDINARY GIFTS

Public-spirited citizens help build the Library's collections through donations of important material.

The collections of the Library of Congress constitute the most comprehensive repository of knowledge ever assembled, a chronicle of centuries of human creativity and learning.

Those collections were built, in part, through the generosity of public-spirited citizens who over the decades have donated important material to the Library.

The Aramont Library, donated to the Rare Book and Special Collections Division in early 2020, is just the latest in a tradition of extraordinary gifts.

A comprehensive array of modern literature and art, the Aramont Library consists of 1,700 volumes of important literary editions, illustrated books, exhibition bindings, finely bound author collections and a singular assemblage of books from the early and mid-20th-century *livre d'artiste* movement (see page 12).

The collection includes early editions from authors ranging from Albert Camus to Virginia Wolfe, artists from Édouard Manet to Pablo Picasso and fine binders from Paul Bonet to Sangorski & Sutcliffe.

When taken together, the Aramont Library is one of the finest collections on the modern book in America, and this extraordinary gift further enhances the Library's leadership in documenting the history and art of the book.

The Aramont Library joins other distinguished collections donated to the Library over the decades – among them, the Lessing J. Rosenwald Collection of rare books; the five Stradivari instruments given by Gertrude Clarke Whittall; the Jay I. Kislak Collection of the Archaeology and History of the Early Americas; the Seth MacFarlane Collection of the Carl Sagan and Ann Druyan Archive; the Alan Lomax Collection of ethnographic material; and the papers of soprano Jessye Norman and composers



George and Ira Gershwin, Leonard Bernstein, Irving Berlin, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein.

Great collections of rare and important material, gathered by private citizens and preserved for posterity for the public at the Library of Congress.

■ Leaves, roses and tulips adorn the blue morocco binding of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's "Poems," published by Dove's Bindery in 1870. Rare Book and Special Collections Division

LAST WORD

RUSSELL MARET

Two of the earliest-known pieces of European printing made with moveable metal type are an indulgence – a promissory note granting its holder a shorter stay in purgatory in exchange for a small fee – and the Gutenberg Bible, widely considered one of the most beautiful books ever printed.

These two objects describe the outer limits of what we now call the book arts, an amorphous field populated by printers, papermakers, type designers, engravers and bookbinders – craftspeople who spend their lives reckoning with their materials, trying to find some middle ground between Gutenberg’s lofty heights and the more ephemeral objects of commerce.

Like any creative field, each branch of the book arts is characterized by a kind of alchemical awe, that out of these base materials of paper, lead and ink we can make something that is greater than the sum of its parts. To print is literally to transform a blank piece of paper into a messenger of ideas, and it is a permanent transformation.

That last bit is one of the trickier aspects of printing to navigate – its permanence. It is why we are so careful about committing thoughts to paper, and why opponents of ideas are so determined to prevent their being printed or distributed (The Tyndale Bible, “Ulysses,” etc). But even permanence is relative, in as much as the permanence of an idea is subject to the shifting interpretations of time (The earth is the center of the universe!). And books, as we all know, can be burned.

In my experience, the transformational power of print is not only technical, it is existential. In 1989, I inked up a printing press and pulled a proof for the first time. I was 18 years old, and in that instant I changed from a dreamy kid who had never worked with his hands into a determined apprentice. Printing was literally the first thing I ever wanted to do and now, over 30 years later, I am still determined to do it better.

Then, in 1996 I had a sudden vision for the design of a typeface, having never studied type design or calligraphy before. Since then type design and alphabetical form have become the primary focus of my work. The



ANNIE SCHLECHTER

books that I make likewise feed from and into each other, changing the way I think of the work I made 10 years or 10 days ago. They map new pathways for me to pursue in my books and, in the process, they change my understanding of myself.

Making a book is not an easy task. It involves hard physical work, a high level of attentiveness and, ideally, a willingness to reevaluate and change. It is a pursuit that is simultaneously primed with the excitement of permanence and transformation while being undercut with the melancholic knowledge that one’s efforts might fall short of both.

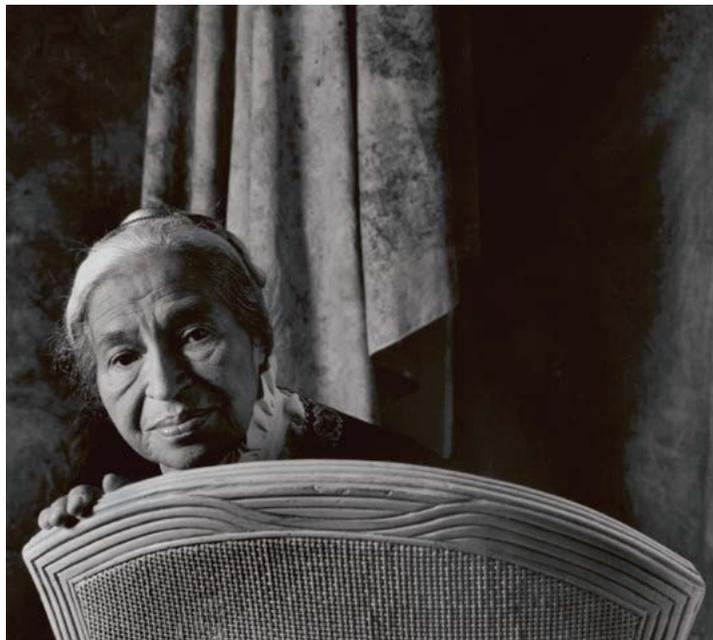
I have made some books that have come close to communicating what I wanted to say. I have made others that I would prefer not to see distributed, and I have made a few books that I would not mind burning. But when I was making each of them, no one could have persuaded me that I was doing anything short of transforming the world.

–Russell Maret is a book artist, type designer and private-press printer working in New York City.



■ In 1946, Henri Creuzevault created this harlequin design binding for "Fêtes galantes," a 19th-century work by Paul Verlaine that is now part of the Aramont Library. *Rare Book and Special Collections Division*

CURRENT EXHIBITS



ROSA PARKS: IN HER OWN WORDS

COMIC ART: 120 YEARS OF PANELS AND PAGES

SHALL NOT BE DENIED: WOMEN FIGHT FOR THE VOTE



More information
loc.gov/exhibits