

MARKING TIME

BY KAREN HANMER



A Short Course in Recollection.

Susan Collard. 10" x 7" x 4". (2009). Alphabet

blocks and clock parts, fragments of children's tales, and nineteenth-century machinery merge in an intricate toy. When the book is set up and placed in motion, steel balls roll and clatter through a series of ramps, toggles, and switchbacks. I designed this intricate, functional marble raceway as a metaphor for memory. Marking time in that direct, mechanistic, clattering fashion appealed to me, as did the technical challenge of building one as a book. Probably my favorite thing about this book was integrating more childish elements (the fairy tales, alphabet blocks, even the colors of the milk paint) with the very intricate mechanisms and depictions of machinery – as if to suggest childhood is a serious and convoluted endeavor, or that understanding the world requires great leaps of nonsense and whimsy. Pages are an inch thick, with slotted brass hinges that allow them to move freely or butt together at right angles, so the balls can move between pages. Materials include poplar, birch aircraft plywood, and other woods, plus clear polyester sheets and various metals. Collage and assemblage with milk paint, acrylic, and gouache.



One Bridge, One River, One Year. *Bridget O'Malley. 9¼" x 6" x 8". (2009). A visual diary of the Mississippi River. The vantage point is the west side of the river looking east toward the bridge that connects Boom Island to Nicolett Island in Minnesota. One photo per day was taken. From page-to-page, the passage of time (one year) is recorded. Seasons shift subtly and sometimes abruptly. Life on the river: passing boats, geese, the wind, the weather, and the flow. All perfect daily meditations before heading to the paper studio's flow. I've often explored the relationship between pattern and randomness in my artwork. I'm particularly interested in the junction where these elements collide. So the constants were the bridge and the river. The randomness takes the form of time and weather. The bridge became an anchoring element and recurring element in each photo, so it made sense to use the image of the bridge as the spine of the book, which is where all the pages are anchored. Cover: handmade flax. Text pages: pulp-painted cotton and embedded photos on tissue. Binding: long stitch.*

Time has long captured the imagination of artists, writers, scientists, philosophers, and theologians. Guild of Book Workers members, both established masters and gifted emerging artists, were invited to interpret a theme, marking time, for a traveling exhibition juried by North Bennet Street School bookbinding instructor Jeff Altepeter; book and installation artist and teacher Melissa Jay Craig; and past Guild of Book Workers exhibitions chair, binder, and *Bonefolder* publisher Peter Verheyen. Marking Time features fifty works that will travel across the U.S. until March 2011.

Marking Time showcases the rich diversity of backgrounds, talents, and interests that has been a hallmark of Guild membership for over 100 years. Exhibitors are conservators, bookbinders, arts educators, fulltime studio artists, and people with jobs outside the arts. A number of works in this exhibition reference or incorporate actual parts of timekeeping devices. Some reference the end of time. Others suggest historical structures or formats. Several create contemporary "books of hours." Some celebrate the cycles of

nature. Others track deterioration of an environment or of the environment. Some deal with a literal or figurative journey or a cultural or personal history.

Traditional leather bindings stand alongside contemporary bindings that have been dyed, collaged, or incorporate photographs or handwriting. Texts selected to be bound are as likely to be poetry or classics as they are science fiction or hard science. The show includes work in the codex format, complex folded structures, wooden constructions, handheld toys, and sculptural objects. Text and imagery is produced by the most ancient and the most modern mark-making methods: calligraphy, painting, woodcut, letterpress, and digital output.

The show opened at the Minnesota Center for Book Arts in Minneapolis and will tour through March 2011 to nine venues, including book arts centers and public and university libraries. A complete tour schedule is provided on the following page.

A handful of the works are presented in this article, with comments by the artists to provide insight into their thoughts and process. ☺



Date Due: It's Not A Popularity Contest. Jody Alexander. 7" x 5" x 1¾". (2008). For years, I have been saving the date due pockets from withdrawn library books. The different date stamps, the black and red inks, the order and disorder, and the handwritten dates and notes all appealed to me. But above all is the history of the book, its past, its popularity, or disuse. When stitching together the pockets, I found myself feeling sorry for the books that were checked out once or twice, and thinking that the slips filled up with dates were somehow gloating. It is not a popularity contest, I would remind them. I was going for a patchwork crazy quilt kind of look. I loved how layered the stamped dates looked on the pockets and then further layered with each other on each page span. I also loved how each pocket told of the history of each library book and the life that it lead – kind of like an obituary since the book's life as it was originally intended is now over. Decorative long stitch binding, date due pockets, mull, and thread.

Marking Time Tour Schedule

University of Washington Seattle, Allen Library,
December 7, 2009–January 6, 2010,
Suzzallo Library & Allen Library,
January 6–February 19, 2010,
Sponsored by the Special Collections Division,
University of Washington Libraries

Book Arts Program at the J. Willard Marriott
Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah
March 5–April 23, 2010

Denver Public Library
Western History/Genealogy Department,
5th Floor Gallery
Denver, Colorado
May 3–June 25, 2010

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton
County - Main Library
Cincinnati, Ohio
July 5–August 26, 2010

Special Collections and College Archives
William E. Simon Room
David Bishop Skillman Library
Lafayette College
Easton, Pennsylvania
September 5–October 25, 2010

Dartmouth College Library
Hanover, New Hampshire
November 5, 2010–January 2, 2011

A full color, printed catalog for *Marking Time* is available for \$35 (includes postage in the USA). Mail check or credit card information to Alicia Bailey, GBW, POB 200984, Denver, CO 80220-0984. The catalog will also be for sale at most venues. Credit card orders may be faxed to 303-479-9556. More images from the exhibition are available at www.guildofbookworkers.org.



Losing Ground. Dorothy Simpson Krause. 12" x 12" x 1/2". (2009). A plea for awareness of our role as stewards of the environment, *Losing Ground* combines traditional and print-on-demand technologies. Printed by Acme Bookbinding with the HP Indigo press 5500, a limited edition of 100 was bound by Acme in black Brillianta, and a deluxe edition of six bound by Harcourt Bindery in aubergine Nigerian goat. An embossed and patinated 8" x 8" copper title plate was set into each cover. Details, printed on vellum, silver, and photo gloss papers, were tipped in, and graphite, colored pencils, markers, metallic pigments, embossing powder, and leaf were used to add texture and reflectivity.



Crumpling a Thin Sheet by Matan, Williams, Witten & Nagel. Rutherford Wifthus. 15" x 14 1/2" x 1". (2007). This reprint of a complete scientific article from *Physical Review Letters* is illustrated with paper that was crumpled randomly using John Cage's method of chance-determined selection or controlled spontaneity. The scientists were delighted to have an artistic interpretation of their article. The typography is inspired by early texts with contrasting color notes placed in the margins and by Didier Mutel's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* with its outrageous and enlarged typography. The time of crumpling is precisely measured, e.g., crumpled for twenty seconds on June 22, 2007 at 9:43:02 A.M. The paper binding is sewn on twisted paper supports with linen thread. The book's motto is from Heraclitus: *If we do not expect the unexpected, we will never find it.*